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EDITORIAL

With all sorts of bangs and whizzing sounds filling the night sky, there is a feeling one of those rockets might well be aimed at your Editor for the delay in producing a Notebook. The only excuse is heavier than expected involvement in other activities and an inclination to nod off after the evening meal following a day's participation in said activities. In case this is conjuring up any wrong impressions, let it be admitted we refer to playing with the trains on the Bluebell Railway. With the end of the summer season, arrears of many matters were cleared and a start made with our journal. There is enough material for the rest of this year but those of you with an item of news, recently acquired cover(s) (surely some one in LPHG had success in auctions this year?) contributions will be received with much thanks.

There has been a slight change in the size of the text used in this issue ; it is hoped this is acceptable to all readers. This means there is rather more in this issue than usual; do comment.

Turning to the matter of stamp fairs, can it be collectors are all as well served as those of us who live south of the Thames ? There are at least five major annual shows in London. We enjoy the opportunity of at least two or three local fairs, of no mean quality it must be said, most months during the year. In short, we are quite spoilt for choice. This no doubt accounts, in part at least, for the decline in numbers attending the major London National events but one wonders whether this is altogether a good thing. We would be interested in hearing members' views. The fairs and shows are, after all, designed to attract you.

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LONDON STREETS, PLACES AND NUMBERS SINCE 1855

By Alan Ruston

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One of the most successful publishing ventures of the Society has been the A to Z maps of London and its environs from Elizabethan to Victorian times [1]. The possession of reprints of well known but rare maps is a boon to all types of historian and, in particular, those with social, local and family history interests. A significant advantage of each of these books is the indexes of street names, specially prepared to accompany each map. These indexes enable the researcher to locate, for example, an obscure alley quickly and easily and to compare map with map, to see how the names of the streets, places and alleys in particular areas have changed over the centuries.

This article concentrates on this last point by giving an account of the development of the official naming and numbering of streets within London and analyses the formal publications of listings produced by the metropolitan local authority from the late nineteenth century until 1967. These listings are important in that they show the nomenclature as it developed. They also give details of the place names, chiefly originating in the period from the 1830s to the 1850s, abolished after 1856 and the new names and numbers adopted over the whole period. However, it is first necessary to consider the complexities introduced in the previous centuries.

The Eighteenth Century Background

A quote by Isaac Taylor from his pioneering and popular book, *Words and Places*, first published in 1864 sets the scene:

"Local names...are never mere arbitrary sounds, devoid of meaning. They may always be regarded as records of the past, inviting and rewarding a careful historical interpretation.....The history of many cities has been deciphered from inscriptions and so the history of Old London may, much of it, be deciphered from the inscriptions which we find written up at the corner of its streets. These familiar names, which catch the eye as we pace the pavement, perpetually remind us of the London of bygone centuries, recall the stages by which the unlovely avenues of streets have replaced the elms and hedgerows , have spread over miles of pleasant fields, till scores of outlying villages have been absorbed into a 'a boundless contiguity' of bricks and mortar"[2]

Street names sometimes recall a link with the past or a local association but it often difficult to identify the connection with any degree of certainty. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries changes were made away from the traditional names for no apparent reason. They often were more improbable than the original and so, in the centre of London, there are several examples of reversions to a former name. In the sixteenth century houses were not numbered, the shops were distinguished by painted or sculptured signs which could be easily and widely recognised. Locating individual people in poor areas must have been very difficult, even if it were attempted, and disappearing in London was, no doubt, as easy then as in later centuries. During the early eighteenth century the situation worsened as the names of many of the less important streets and places were continually altered to correspond with changes in ownership, or of the signs hung in the streets.[3]

By the 1750s signboards and posts had become so numerous, they became a nuisance. An Act of 1762 provided for the removal in some London parishes of hanging signs and for fixing them to the houses to which they belonged.[4] Changes were also taking place governing street pavements:

"In fact down to 1762 when the Westminster Paving Act was passed from which we may date all those improvements and conveniences which have made this country the boast and envy of the world, the streets of the Metropolis were obstructed with stalls, sheds, signposts and projections of various kinds and each inhabitant paved before his own door in such manner and with such materials as pride, poverty or caprice might suggest. Kerb stones were unknown and the footway was exposed to the carriage way except in some of the principal streets where a line of posts and chains, or wooden paling, afforded occasional protection." [5]

Although the various Acts did not require the numbering of the houses, a further provision in 1765 did introduce this requirement for the City of London; however, this was repealed two years later.[6]

The first recorded instance of a street being numbered is Prescot Street, in Goodmans Fields, about which Edward Hatton in 1708 stated, "Instead of signs the houses here are distinguished by numbers, as the staircases in the Inns of Court and Chancery."[7] Numbering gradually spread until the 1760s after which it appears a wider adoption of the practice took place.[8] By the end of the century, the numbering of houses had become well established and seems to have done on the consecutive rather than the odd and even principle with which we have become very familiar.

None of this sensible enterprise was regulated of course and the numbering system varied even in the same street. For example, about 1780 Craven Street in the Strand had three sets of numbers. There were irregularities everywhere; the naming of streets and parts of streets was left to the idiosyncrasy or whim of the owner. The repetition of the same names was very common.

The Nineteenth Century And The Move Towards Regulation

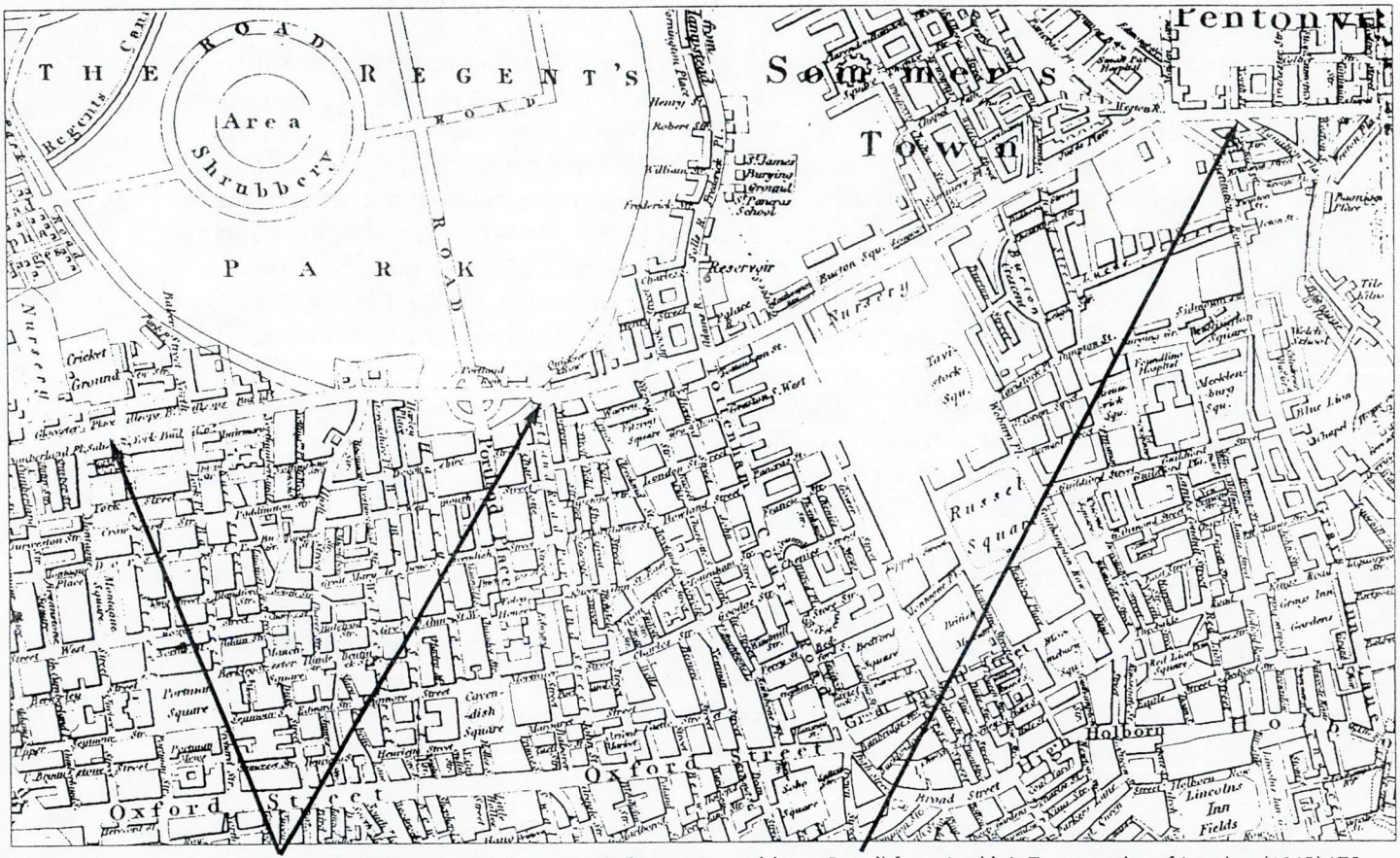
The situation in the first half of the nineteenth century was a mess, made all the worse by the fast pace of urban development. A correspondent to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1811 made a point about the renaming of streets:

"The practice of giving new names to streets appears to me to increase very much of late and is, in my opinion, generally speaking, very absurd; it tends to make confusion, and lead people into mistakes...(I) hope to have the opinion of your readers on what may be called this street-naming innovation." [9]

The duplication in the names of streets was a headache, especially for the delivery of letters. John Lockie's *Topography of London*, published in 1813, which listed the names of London Streets and places shows, for example, there were fifty places called Crown Court in London, thirty-eight thoroughfares named Charles Street, thirty-six named John Street and thirty-two named Queen Street. In addition, where several slight variations were used for other streets, courts and alleys, for example St John Street, the whole haphazard arrangement became totally confusing. Formal adoption as a street by local Highways Boards from the 1830s onwards did not extend to control over its name or numbering.

Regulation did not take place until 1855 with the passing of the Metropolitan management Act (18 & 19 Vict. Chapter 120). This Act was one of many enacted in the 1850s which attempted to regulate and control the streets and sewers of London and to place its financing on a proper footing. This particular Act was important as it laid down rules for sewers and set up the Metropolitan Board of Works to superintend the changes for London. For the first time the power to control and regulate the naming and numbering of streets and houses was provided for and given to the new Board of Works (sections 141 and 142). Section

142 was simple and to the point: this signal requirement proved to be an important factor in facilitating the fast urban development which took place over subsequent decades:



The New Road from Paddington to Islington was 5,115 yards (4,677 metres) long. Detail from Lockie's Topography of London (1813) LTS Publication No.148.

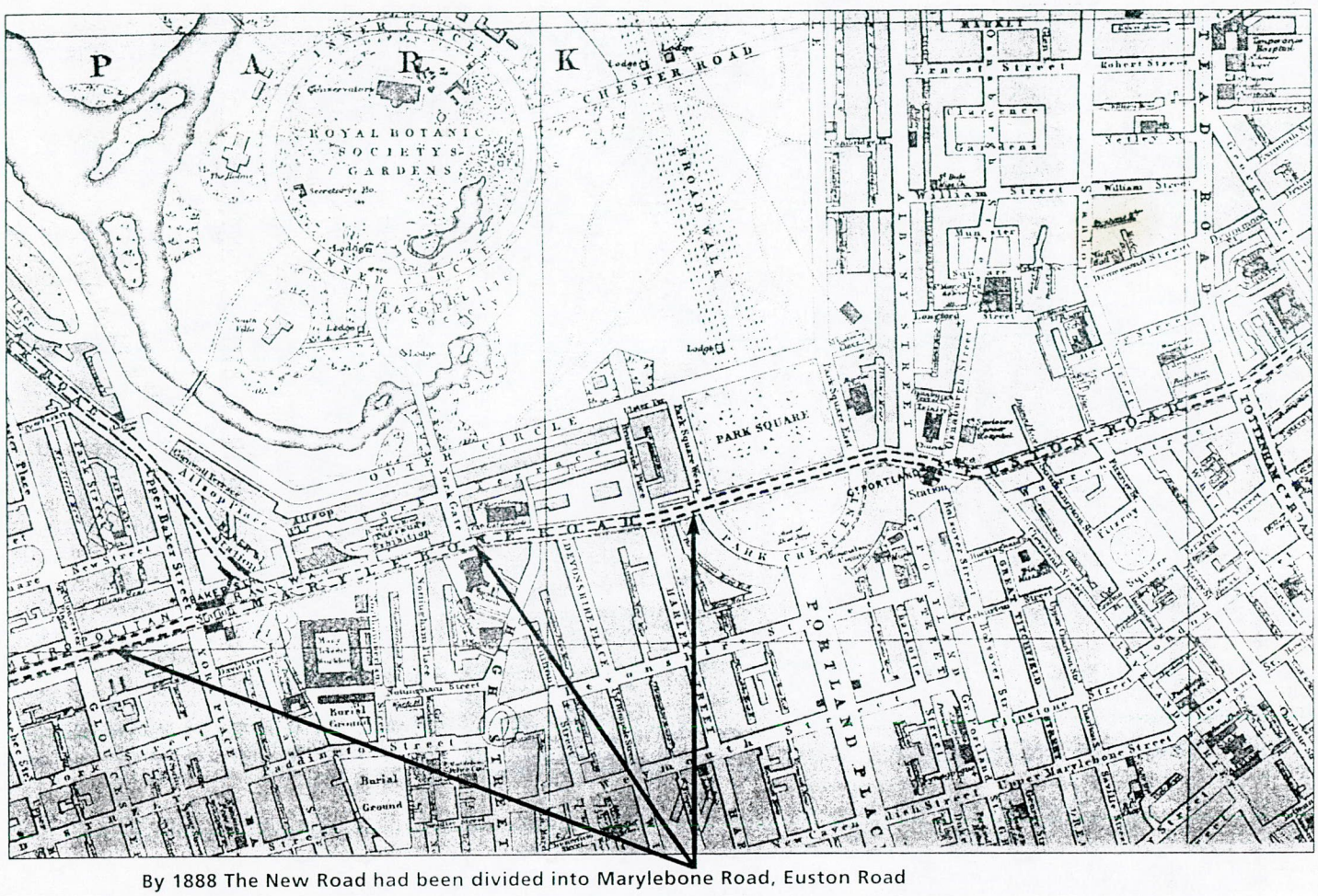
"The said Metropolitan Board shall keep a Register of all Alterations made by them in the Names of Streets, and such Register shall be kept in such Form as to show the Date of every such alteration, and the Name of the Street previous to such Alteration as well as the new Name thereof".

This Register set up by the Board of Works maintained and such developed under later legislation by its successors the London County Council and the Greater London Council, has proved an important record in detailing the growth and expansion of London during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the 1850s it was the means by which order was secured out of a chaotic situation.

It appears the Post Office was the driving force behind the insertion of these clauses. This is made clear in a letter, dated 5th April 1856, from Sir Rowland Hill, Secretary of the General Post Office, to the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works:

"I am directed by the Postmaster-general to address you on the subject of the power vested in the Board for regulating the nomenclature of streets and the numbering of houses in London...Regarding the matter as one in which the Post Office is greatly interested. His Lordship was desirous of seeing the controlling power vested in a central authority - and was instrumental in getting a clause proposed to that effect - in the hope that the power so given might be exercised on more comprehensive and general principles than would probably be observed were it placed in the hands of the district Vestries... His Grace desires to point out that a reform of the street nomenclature of London, by doing away with the multiplication of the same names for streets, now carried to a perplexing extent, especially if accompanied by a

more accurate numbering of houses, would be of great importance to the Post Office service, and consequently to the public interests and convenience, in promoting the expeditious and correct sorting and distribution of the correspondence.....(the) report upon the Post Office for



By 1888 The New Road had been divided into Marylebone Road, Euston Road

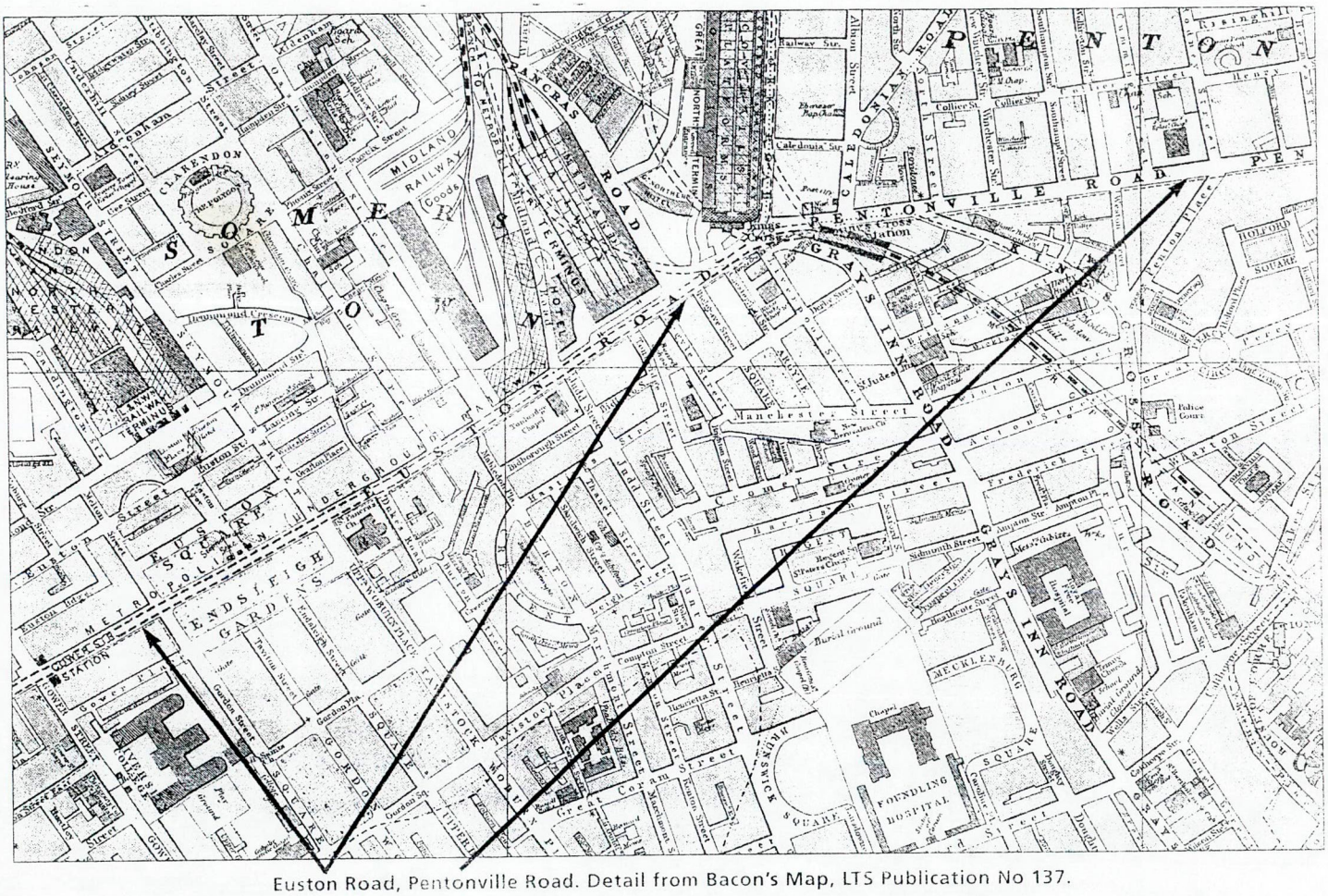
the year 1855... adverted to these points when describing the measures contemplated, or in progress for the acceleration of the London deliveries; and His Grace feels that the co-operation of the Board, in correcting the present abuses of street nomenclature, would be valuable in facilitating the accomplishment of that object."[10]

The Postmaster General argued "there should not be two streets of the same name in London", an impossible request never fulfilled. The Post Office cited some forty-eight Charles Streets in London (an increase of ten from 1813), thirty-two John Streets and thirty-six Queen Streets, which presented them with a growing problem of location to a specific area. An assertive line was taken by the Post Office. Early in 1857 the Board started on the work of simplification of street names and numbering by working through the list given them by the Post Office.

W.E. Riley described how they set about their task first in the first and most extreme case:

"The New Road was formed in 1756-7 by an Act of Parliament, between the Angel at Islington and Edgware Road, as a continuation of City Road to connect Paddington with the City. The number of subsidiary names or places, such as Angel Terrace, Euston Place, York Buildings, etc in the thoroughfare was no less than fifty-five. The Board divided The New Road up into Marylebone Road, Euston Road and Pentonville Road, names we know today,

and abolished all the separate names existing in the line of the former thoroughfare. the numbers were applied on the odd and even principle, and this system has been used ever since."[10,11]



Euston Road, Pentonville Road. Detail from Bacon's Map, LTS Publication No 137.

Our London street and numbering system, therefore, can be said to date from the division of the New Road by the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1857 under powers given to it under the Metropolitan Management Act.

Development of Street Names and Numbering.

The Board's employees in the Street Nomenclature Office set about their job methodically, recording and eliminating names where possible. Their powers were strengthened in the Metropolitan Management Amendment Act 1862. In section 87 the Board was empowered to object to any new name and "to order and direct that any Row of Houses or Buildings in any Street or in any Line of Road in the Metropolis shall, for the Purpose of distinguishing the same, be marked with such Numbers or Names as they shall deem convenient and proper for that Purpose, and which they shall specify in their Order".[12]

Their first street list, made public in 1868, showed disturbing trends. Using the previously quoted examples, the number of thoroughfares named Charles Street had risen to sixty-five, John Street to sixty-eight and Queen Street to thirty-nine. However, the area incorporated within London was growing; later codifications in 1875 and 1887 provided a firm base for rationalization.[13]

The list published in 1887 consists of 594 pages and gives the street name, postal district, locality, parish and year of adoption. This book is a landmark and, while the Board had not met the Post Office's impossible demand of 1856 for near complete eradication of duplicated street names, it does provide the postal district and locality for every street or place to aid identification. This must have become the postmen's bible in the closing decade of the nineteenth century in carrying out the task of directing the ever increasing number of letters to the right place in the fast expanding metropolis.[14]

The Advent of the London County Council

The Board gave way to the London County Council in 1889, which took over these responsibilities. The L.C.C. sought a new and specific mandate for itself and obtained it in Part IV of the London Building Act 1894. Clearing away previous legislation, the Act gave the Council the power to alter any street name, govern the provision of new names and require the local authority to number houses as it ordered. In addition Section 38 required "the Council shall keep a register of all alterations made by them in the names of streets and in the numbers of the houses therein, and such register shall be kept in such form as to show the date of every such alteration and the name of the street previous to such alteration, as well as the new name thereof".[15]

Although individuals had the right to inspect this record, the L.C.C. decided to make the whole generally available in the form of a published list. The first edition appeared in a large volume in 1901. It has proved a significant resource for historians to plot the changes in street, terrace and place names and to locate particular addresses long since altered or demolished. No commercially produced map could provide this detailed and consistent approach to the geography of the 23,000 street names to be found in London.[16]

The second edition, which appeared in 1912, supplied more information and included a comprehensive introduction from the Superintending Architect, W.E. Riley. He was able to announce since 1889 about 1,500 streets bearing repeated names had been renamed and 3,500 subsidiary names abolished, despite "the opposition of local residents affected, who regard themselves as arbitrarily chosen victims of reform, and plead that not theirs but the other streets of the same name should be renamed". All the alterations in street nomenclature and numbering which had occurred since 1856 are shown in this edition; a separate section is included of abolished terrace or place names recorded under the current name of each street.[17]

The third edition, which appeared in 1929, was the most comprehensive produced by the L.C.C. A detailed municipal map at six inches to the mile had been prepared and each street had a precise reference to it in the body of the text as well as to the Ordnance Survey map. Alterations in the block allocation of numbers to houses in each street in the period 1856 to 1928 are included as well as the date of the Order. An entirely new section appears containing the notes on the origins of street names, both old and new.

Former street names are cross referenced, as are the abolished subsidiary terrace or place names in certain streets too numerous to incorporate in the main text. The arrival on the scene of blocks of flats is also reflected, with parks and open spaces being systematically recorded for the first time. What is surprising is even with the expansion of the metropolis, the number of streets in the administrative county had dropped to 17,660.[18]

The 1929 L.C.C. list has an appendix containing about 350 streets within London which before the reforms made after 1856 had terrace or place names only and no numbers. Streets containing only two or three examples, of which there are many, are shown in the main body of the List. The appendix includes seemingly endless examples of Albion Villas, Grove Terrace, Rose Cottages and the like and these were often, in the 1840s, the only locating address within a street. The number of terrace or place names rose sharply during the period of the 1830s to the 1850s, when property development in certain parts of London was fast and furious.

An analysis of these 350 streets shows they are located in areas that form a kind of ring around old London - Putney, Wandsworth, Balham, Brixton, Dulwich, Norwood, Sydenham, Penge, Lewisham, Brockley, Plumstead, Peckham, Greenwich, Camberwell to the south; Fulham, Hammersmith, Kensington, Shepherd's Bush, Holloway, Islington, Highbury, Hackney, Dalston and Stoke Newington in the north.

The section on the origins of street names often states the obvious. For example, Faraday Street in Newington, south London, could only be named after the discoverer of the electromagnetic induction who was born in the area. However, there are other inclusions that bring out some obscure associations. For example, Czar Street in Deptford is recorded as being named after Peter the Great, who lodged in Sayes Court in 1698 (Evelyn's Diary). Finsen Road, Herne Hill is named after Niels Finsen, the pioneer in the medical use of ultra violet light: Ella Road, Crouch Hill is derived from "Casella" which was the name of the person upon whose behalf application for sanction of the street was made. Kemp Street, Hoxton named for James Kemp (died 1819), a cobbler who is reputed to have founded the first Sunday school in London at Hoxton. The section is most valuable and, I suspect, neglected by researchers as a source of information not to be found elsewhere.

Post War and the Greater London Council

The effect of bombing during World War II and later development meant there were significant changes in London streets and the fourth edition of the L.C.C. list did not appear until 1955.[19] "the decade from 1929 to 1939 saw an intensification in the L.C.C.'s programme for abolishing duplicated and subsidiary names. parish boundaries now coincided with those of the Metropolitan Boroughs...(Likewise) particulars of old street names abolished before 1 August 1929 and notes on the origins of street names have been omitted".[20]

This made for a less comprehensive volume which, while smaller in format, had grown to 870 pages. For the historian these omissions are disappointing, if understandable, in meeting the laudable objective of keeping the whole in one volume. Comparing the alterations with the 1929 edition shows how much, and yet how little, London had changed in twenty-six years of building turbulence.

The arrival of the G.L.C. expanded but made little difference to the operation of the L.C.C. street nomenclature section and the Orders which determined street names and house numbers.[21] A final supplement of just forty-two pages appeared in 1967 completes the story of the official publication of lists of street names.[22] The details and accuracy of each book is a tribute to the three metropolitan authorities who successively produced them for nearly a century.

NOTES

1. LTS, *A-Z of Elizabethan London* (1979), *A-Z of Restoration London* (1992), *A-Z of Georgian London* (1982), *A-Z of Regency London* (1985), *A-Z of Victorian London* (1987).
2. Isaac Taylor, *Words and Places* (1873) Chapter 11 is devoted to the history of London street names.
3. W.E. Riley, *Kist of Street Places...in the Administrative County of London* (1912) p.iii. Riley was the Council's Superintending Architect.
4. 2 Geo. III chapter 21: An Act for Paving, Cleaning and Lighting the Squares Streets etc. in certain parishes and liberties and for preventing Annoyances therein; and for other Purposes therein mentioned. 3 Geo. III chapter 23 is similar covering other parishes. See also Riley, above.
5. Peter Cunningham, *Handbook of London Past and Present* (1850) p.xxxi.
6. 6 Geo. III chapter 26 : An Act for the better paving, cleaning and enlightenment of the City of London, and the Liberties thereof; and for preventing Obstructions and Annoyances

within the same; and for other Purposes therein mentioned. the Act was repealed by 8 Geo. III chapter 21.

7. Edward Hatton, *A New View of London* (1708) vol. I p.65. It was originally published anonymously and in section I there is, perhaps, the fullest descriptive listing of places that could be desired - "Streets, squares, Lanes, Markets, Courts, Alleys, rents, Yards and Inns in London, Westminster and Southwark".

8. Riley, *op cit*, pp.iii and iv. It cites Peter Cunningham, *op cit*, Introduction, which states that New Burlington Street was the first and Lincoln's Inn Fields was the second to be numbered in 1764.

9 *Gentleman's Magazine* (1811) vol. I supplement p.634. There was a response from "LT" of Brompton and "RM" in 1811 vol. ii September 1811 p.238: "some changes, perhaps, have been changed for more reputable names, as the streets have been improved by more respectable inhabitants".

10. Riley, *op cit* p.iv. The text of the letter is given in full.

11. Cunningham, *op cit* p.xxviii, states the New Road was 5115 yards in length, far exceeding Oxford Street, the next in length at 2304 yards.

12. 25 & 26 Vict., chapter 102.

13. Riley, *op cit* p.v. Much of Riley's introduction is quoted verbatim in George H. Cunningham, *London, a comprehensive survey of its history etc.* (1927) pp.xix - xxi.

14. Metropolitan Board of Works, *Names of Streets and Places within the Metropolitan County as defined by the Local Government Act 1855 showing postal districts, localities and parishes and an appendix of names adopted during the progress of this work* Compiled in the Street Nomenclature Office of the Superintending Architects Department (1887). In the twentieth century when numbered postal areas were in operation, HMSO published an official list of street names on behalf of the Post Office: *Names of Streets and Places in the London Postal Area showing the initials of the Postal Districts and the number of the Office of Delivery* (1929).

15. 57 & 58 Vict., chapter 213, sections 32 to 38

16. L.C.C., *List of Streets and Places within the Administrative County of London* compiled by the Superintending Architect of the Council, Introduction by G.L. Gomme (1901). The volume in the Guildhall Library includes supplements of amendments and corrections up to 31 December 1904. The text provides the following information for each street; Name / Locality / Postal District /Parish / City or Metropolitan Borough / County, Electoral and Parliamentary Division / Ordnance Sheet reference 5 ft to the mile / year of approval/ Alterations giving the date of Order, number of the plan, names abolished / Remarks.

17. L.C.C., *List of Streets and Places within the Administrative County of London* showing localities, postal districts, parishes, metropolitan boroughs, electoral divisions, Ordnance and municipal map references , with alterations in street nomenclature and numbering since 1856 (1912). The volume in the Guildhall Library includes supplements of amendments and corrections covering the period 1918 to 1922. the Year of Approval column is replaced by Reference to Municipal Map and Name Approval. Where a street is located in more than one Borough, or goes beyond the County boundary, the numbering of each is separately recorded.

18. L.C.C., *List...County of London* including the names of blocks of dwellings, parks and open spaces showing localities, postal districts with delivery office number, parishes, Metropolitan and municipal map references, with the alterations in street nomenclature and numbering since 1856 and the origin of certain names (1929). The volume in the Guildhall Library includes Supplements of amendments, corrections and additions covering the period 1929 to 1934, while a copy in private possession also includes similar supplements for 1935 and 1936.

19. L.C.C., *List...County of London* including the names of blocks of dwellings, parks and open spaces..with particulars of Orders made since 1856 relating to street names and numbers (1955).

20. L.C.C., *List...County of London* (1955). Introduction by J.L. Martin, Superintending Architect of Metropolitan Buildings and Architect to the Council.

21. The G.L.C. took over the administration of street naming and numbering within London and, each year, issued a volume of Orders. these were made under the London Building Acts (Amendment) Act 1939, Part 2 (2 and 3 Geo. 6 chapter 97), an enactment which codified existing legislation in this area, which the London Government Act 1963 extended the Greater London area.

22. G.L.C., *Supplement to the Names of Streets and Places in the former Administrative County of London for 1955 to 1967* (1967). references to the municipal map were deleted. Besides the new street names and former titles for renamed streets, the supplement includes details of the Orders made in the period relating to the numbering and renumbering of streets and buildings.

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Readers of *Notebook* will find membership of the Society very worth while. For information write to the

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LATE FEE STAMPS
and the absence of charge marks

This article started with a discussion between Martin Willcocks and the Editor. Although the points made can be attributed to Martin in many instances, the Editor accepts the responsibility for any misunderstandings on his part and resultant errors. No doubt readers will put him right.

The London Catalogue starts the small section on Late Fee Stamps thus :

"From 1797, letters handed in at the GPO between 7 p.m. and 7.45 p.m. and on which a late fee of 6d was prepaid, received a special stamp to distinguish them." The section concludes with a reference to "Late Fee and Too Late Stamps" by W.G. Stitt Dibden (Great Britain Philatelic Society, 1966 and 1971).

It is intended to quote from the SD book but Martin made an important and interesting point in connection with the Late Fee Stamps.

As can be seen, to the eye not versed in Post Office ways, these appear to be nothing more than date stamps. They differ in shape, size and layout to other date stamps but this would be unlikely to arouse the interest of most of the public. This shows into sharp relief the Post Office policy of dividing the stamps into two distinct categories. Those intended to inform the public, for example, a Receiving House name, whether the letter had been prepaid and so on. The second group consists of those stamps which by their design and, no doubt, special instructions issued to postal employees, were intended to convey at least some information exclusively to those employees. It is to this second group the late fee date stamps belong. Other than the date they told the recipient nothing.

There is a further twist to this state of affairs. The Post Office did not indicate the prepayment of the late fee on the mails, showing only prepayment of the postage or what was due for payment. Thus the addressee, who might be charged by his solicitor for post disbursements, would not be able to reconcile his record of postage paid with the account when rendered. There must have been interesting acrimonious correspondence generated.

not true

answered

Since the facility had been advised to the public for their convenience when wishing to mail urgent letters late in the day, why the Post Office should not wish to record prepayment is difficult to understand. As far as is known, there is no instruction to post office employees *not* to enter the late fee payment on the letter.

Stitt quotes from the President's Order Book regarding the service. In volume 7, page 61 in an entry dated 4th. May 1797 appears the following "Mr Stow has this day ordered a stamp to be made for the use of the messengers after 7 o'clock, upon duty at the window in order to distinguish these letters as there arises great difficulty in accounting sometimes for letters which have been delayed not knowing whether they came in due course or put in with a fee.

with or without late fee being paid!

The stamp is to be used upon every letter taken in at the window after 7.0. p.m.". Stitt added 'This service applied only to the Chief Office'. The "new stamp" was L.36.

It is clear the stamp was designed to advise only the messengers, there being nothing in its design to give the public any clue as to the purpose. There is nothing in the quotation from the P.O.B. regarding any records kept on the monies collected or recording the payment on letters. It would seem although London Inland Office Late Fees were paid into the Revenue, though the same could not be said of either the Foreign or Ship Letter Offices. Provincial Post Masters regarded the Late Fee as their income. So much for the instruction of "accounting" mentioned previously.

To repeat the point by Martin: there are two basic groups of stamps; one tells the public what is going on, the other tells only the Post office.

good point can expand to private stamps

The September meeting dealt, in part, with Too Late and Late Fees. First the question of recording the prepayment of the late fee.

With the advent of the adhesive stamp, payment of the late fee in cash remained a limited option. To quote from Pigot's Post Directory of 1846:

LETTERS TO PASS BY THE INLAND EVENING MAILS

can be posted at the Receiving Houses till 5.30 P.M.; by the Letter Carriers ringing bells (on payment of one penny with each) from 4.30 to 5.30 P.M.; at the Branch Post Offices, at Charing Cross; Old Cavendish Street, and 108 Blackman Street, Borough, till 6 P.M. and with a *fee* of *one penny* (which must be paid by a *Stamp affixed to the letter*) until 6.45 P.M.; at the

Branch Office in Lombard Street in Lombard Street, will 6 P.M.; and till 7 P.M., with a fee paid by means of a *penny Stamp affixed to the letter*; at the General Post Office, St. Martin's le Grand, until 6 P.M. and until 7 P.M. upon payment of a fee of one penny (or an *affixed stamp*), in addition to the postage, which must *then* be paid in advance, and from 7 till half-past 7 upon payment of a fee of 6d. with each.

FOREIGN MAILS

Foreign mails were generally accepted up to 8 P.M. without additional payment with the General Post Office at St. Martins and Lombard Street Branch Office accepting until 10 P.M. The Directory adds "*and at St. Martins le Grand only* from 10 until a quarter past 10 P.M. on payment of a *fee of one penny*, and until half-past 10 P.M. *on payment of a fee of sixpence.*"

From the wording it would appear, with the exception of St. Martin's le Grand, the *fee* had to be paid by means of *an affixed Stamp.*

Stitt quotes a General Notice issued to the Public in April 1847 which contains the phrases "..on payment of the Late Fee of one Penny provided the postage as well as the Late Letter Fee on such letters be paid by attaching the requisite number of stamps".

"Any letter not bearing the requisite number of stamps will be detained till the next despatch."

It would appear even the limited option at St. Martins no longer applied. Any covers not bearing evidence of late fee payment by means of the appropriate late fee adhesive stamps would not be treated as a late fee letter.

How does it arise, therefore, one finds countless examples of cancellations, regarded universally as "Late Fee" cancellations on covers which show only the rate of postage and not the late fee. The answer provided at the September meeting was :

THE SO CALLED LATE FEE CANCELLATIONS WERE NOTHING OF THE SORT : THEY WERE CANCELLATIONS APPLIED TO ALL MAIL POSTED *DURING THE PERIOD WHEN LATE FEES SHOULD BE PAID.*

John Parmenter is preparing a monograph on the Late Fee and Too Late cancellations to be found after 1856. To help with this he is preparing an illustrated questionnaire to be sent to members in the near future. He will be asking for *YOUR* help by furnishing full details of any of the marks *YOU* have.

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A NEW POSTAL ORDER ?

Ray Haffner

Driving up to London early one Wednesday morning on my monthly pilgrimage to the Strand Stamp Fair, I took my usual route through Norwood. The main focus in Westow Street is a Safeway supermarket but, a little further along, on the right hand side, I saw, with some surprise, something new - *"The Postal Order"* - a brand new pub.

Returning in the afternoon I had time to check out this new hostelry. Although attractively styled with various decorations of a postal nature, the one thing lacking was ... *a postal order* !

Apparently the pub's site and, presumably, the same building was the Norwood Chief District Post and Telegraph Office before the first world war. My 1978 edition of *London Post Offices and Streets* lists the office as the Norwood Branch Office situated at 35 Westow Street.

If one looks very hard, already hidden behind the obligatory fruit machine, one may discover an enlarged photograph of the District Office Staff.

I understand the pub opened in late November 1996, it having been opened some seven weeks when I visited on the 8th January.

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PLUMSTEAD

Peter Bathe

A little over a mile to the east of Woolwich is the village of Plumstead, which was, until the middle of the 19th century, the centre of a small rural community whose economy was based on agriculture rather than industry.

In 1801, this parish had a population of just 1,166 people, living on 3,388 acres, while in Woolwich, there were, at that time, over 10,000 people occupying some 1,000 acres. By 1841, the population of Plumstead had grown to 2,816 and in the next decade rose to 8,373. It then leapt to 24,500 by 1861 and to 68,000 by the end of the century.

The inhabitants of Plumstead at the beginning of the last century had a miscreant Woolwich letter carrier to thank for the establishment of a post office receiving house in the village.

From the early days of the London Penny Post at the end of the 17th century, the people who lived in Plumstead had to go to the receiving house in Woolwich to post their letters and little changed by the start of the 19th century. The nearest receiving house at that time was Woolwich East Office in Green's End and one of the Woolwich letter carriers would deliver the letters for Plumstead, at least within the village itself. While some other parts of the parish were served by the Shooters Hill letter carrier, there were large areas of Plumstead very sparsely populated and the letters for these places were left at pubs or shops near the end of the letter carriers' walks for the addressees to collect.

In 1804, it was reported even the limited official Plumstead delivery was not being properly done. The Plumstead letter carrier "had neglected to deliver the letters ... and had sent them by promiscuous conveyances".

Edward Johnson, deputy comptroller of the Twopenny Post, went to Plumstead where he "called on several of the Principal Inhabitants to enquire the truth of the irregular delivery"; having sorted out that problem, he reported in 12th September 1804 :

> "At this place the Inhabitants are also much inconvenienced by the want of a Receiving House, there being none nearer than Woolwich, at the distance of a mile & 1 ¼, I there think it proper also to recommend that a Receiving House be appointed at Plumstead, with a salary of £4 per annum (that being about the usual allowance to places of the same extent and importance) and the house of Mr Jas Blacknell a baker being most conveniently situated I beg to name Mr Blacknell to be the Letter receiver at Plumstead, if this measure should meet with their Lordships approbation."

Johnson's recommendations were accepted by the Post Masters General and stamps were issued within a few days. An example of L.501 is known used on 23rd October 1804, just over a month after the establishment of the office (Fig.1).

The Blacknell family lived in Greenwich for several generations before James Blacknell was born on 13th December 1770, the eldest son of John Blacknell, a carpenter, and Mary (nee Clemens).

When he was in his early 20s, James moved to Plumstead and set up as a baker. He was living there when he married Elizabeth Mills, a Plumstead girl, who was three years younger than him, on 21st October 1798. They had at least six children, although several died in infancy. Two who did survive to adulthood were William, born on 1st April 1804 and Edward, born three years later. The Blacknell family lived over their bakery in Plumstead High Street, next to what is now *The Volunteer* public house but which was then the vicarage (Fig.2).

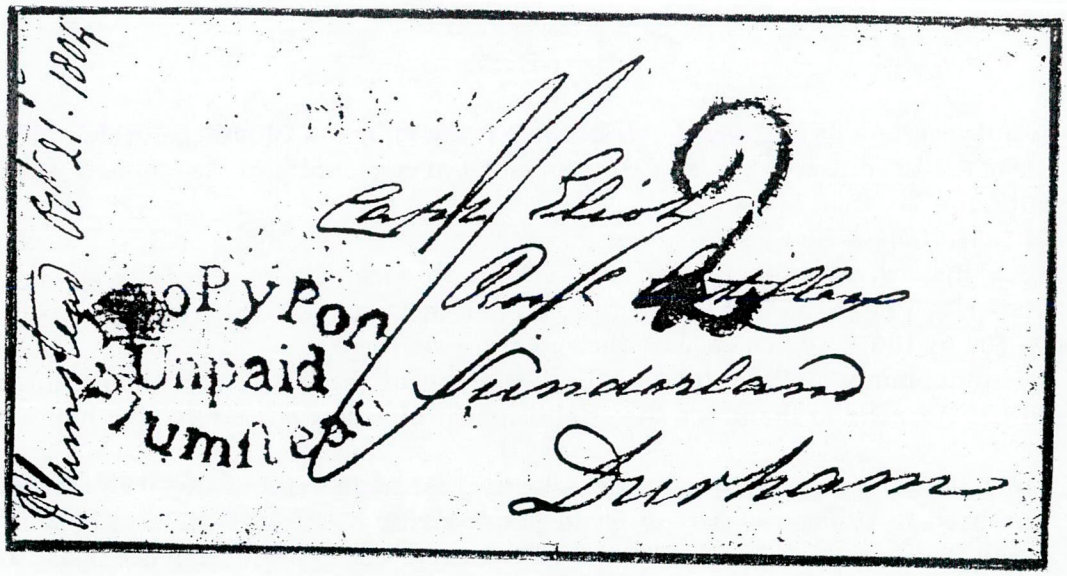

Fig.1

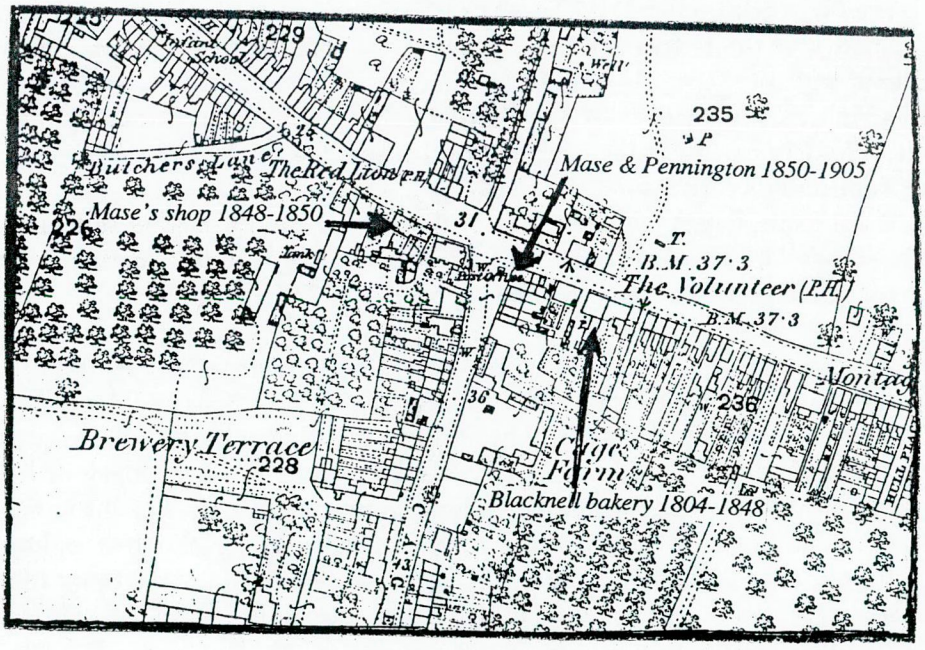

Fig. 2

James, who also served as a churchwarden at one time, died in November 1812, just short of his 42nd birthday and his widow, who was to survive him by more than 24 years, took over the business, both as the village baker and as Twopenny Post receiver.

Soon afterwards she petitioned for an increase in salary from the Twopenny Post Office, claiming there had been "a great increase" in number of letters handled at the Plumstead receiving house in the nine years since the office was established; further, Income Tax and Stamp Duty were now taking a slice of the salary, leaving her with only £3 7s 8d.

As with all applications for pay rises from Twopenny Post receivers, an account was kept of the number of letters taken in by Mrs Blacknell and, according to Johnson, the number did not warrant any increase in salary. This would mean that, in the spring of 1814 when the account was taken, the Plumstead office was handling fewer than 9,600 letters a year.

Elizabeth eventually resigned her position as Twopenny Post receiver on Christmas Day 1830 to allow the older of her surviving sons, William, then aged 26, to take over both the bakery and the post office duties. It is probably also about this time William married his cousin from Greenwich, Sarah Blacknell, who was born in May 1813, the daughter of Samuel and Sarah (nee Simmons).

Elizabeth and her younger son, Edward, about this time moved to Greenwich, where Edward also practised his father's trade of baker, first in South Street and later in Greenwich Road. Elizabeth died in Greenwich, aged 63, at the beginning of 1837; her body was brought to Plumstead for burial in the churchyard with her late husband.

In Plumstead, William and Sarah had at least seven children including Elizabeth (born May 1838). William Blacknell remained in his father's bakery until 1848, when he moved to new premises at 22 Burrage Place (later renumbered as 30 Burrage Road), giving up the position of letter receiver for Plumstead at this time. After his death, in the early 1870s, this new bakery was run by his daughter Elizabeth and her husband James Farrier, with other members of the Blacknell family, until World War I.

On 13th May 1848, Miss Caroline Anne Mase - then aged about 34, grocer of Plumstead Road - was appointed receiver at £7 a year.

At that time, much of what is now Plumstead High Street - as far east as the junction with Cage Lane and White Hart Road - was called Plumstead Road. Mase's grocers shop was only a few buildings to the west of Cage Lane (now Lakedale Road) on the south side of the road, not far from the former receiving house at Blacknell's bakery. The Mase shop was building No. 5111 on the Tithe Map.

Soon after Mase's appointment, two straight-line stamps were issued (proof book date 27th June 1848 (Fig.3). Examples of the unpaid stamp (L 514) are known used on 10th September 1853 (Fig.4), 29th April 1854 and 22nd 1856.

Caroline Mase was born in Woolwich in *c* 1815, the daughter of John Mariner Mase and Ann (nee Garthwaite).

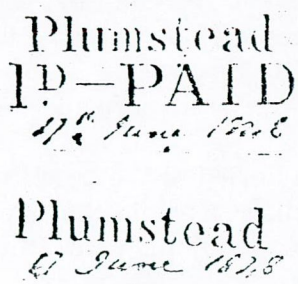

Fig. 3

John Mase was a Woolwich "bricklayer" who had been involved in the ill-fated Woolwich Ferry Company, set up in the early 19th century and a forerunner of the present Woolwich Free Ferry. He was among the proprietors named in the original Act of 1811 which set up the company, being one of the several small tradesmen - builders, carpenters, etc. - who had been induced to subscribe with the hope of securing contracts for work. His share holding was to be £200 and he had to contribute this in ten calls of £20 made during the first 21 months of the life of the company.

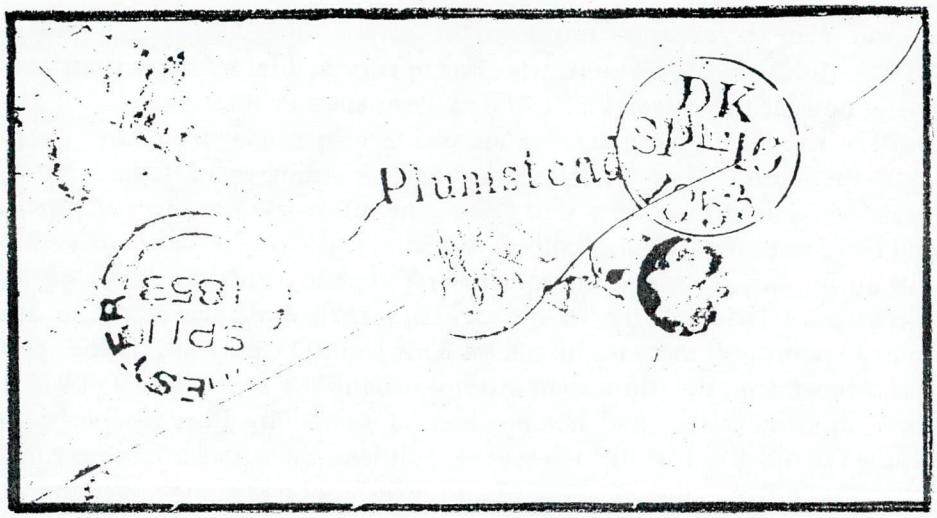

Fig.4

Mase and another bricklayer-shareholder, Thomas Mitchell, were asked "to build brickwork piers and arches on the Thames wall, at £15 15^{s} 0^{d} per rod plus 5^{s} 0^{d} for Dorking Lime". These arrangements were made a fortnight after the inaugural meeting but almost a year later the company was in such poor financial state, Mase and Mitchell with Joseph Hudson (carpenter) and John Cox (mason) - all of whom had performed various works for the company - were informed they could give receipts for the accounts owing them and these sums would be credited to their share subscriptions. Internal wrangling and financial problems meant the company was wound up in the 1840s without ever having made much of a profit, so it seems the investment by local craftsmen was a bad risk.

John died in 1831, aged 75, while his wife, who was much younger than him, survived him and lived on until the beginning of 1850, when she was 73.

They had as large a family as was usual for the early 19th century and, as often happened, several of the children died in infancy. However, at least two daughters reached maturity: Caroline Anne and her elder sister Francis Sophia who was born on 29th September 1799, as well as a son, Samuel, who took up his father's trade.

Frances Mase married William Watson Pennington, a Woolwich bachelor, at the parish church on 4th August 1829. The newlyweds soon went to live in Norfolk, first at Wells, later at Kings Lynn. Near to Wells is a small village, Saxingham-by-Holt, which appears to have been the original home of the Mase family before they moved to Woolwich.

The Penningtons had at least one son and three daughters - all born in Norfolk - including Frances Eliza Pennington, born 20th June 1835 at Wells.

On 9th March 1843, William - then aged 42 - died. He was buried at Woolwich and his gravestone is reported to have described him as "master mariner" , while the baptismal records for two of his three children born in Wells refer to him as "shipmaster", the third simply as "sailor".

Frances Pennington ran a haberdashery in Staith Street, Wells, until at least 1845. By 1850, however, she had moved back to south east London and had established a tobacconist shop in Plumstead village, at the junction of Cage Lane and Plumstead High Street, in a group of buildings collectively known as Agnes Place.

Caroline Mase moved in with her sister in 1853, taking the post office with her. Together they ran a grocery business known as "Mase & Pennington". Circular stamps reading simply Plumstead, both dated and undated, were issued on 11th June 1858 (Fig.5) but, with the establishment the following year of an office in Sussex Place, Plumstead Road, the designation of the office in the village was changed to Agnes Place, Plumstead. A stamp for that place was not issued until 4th March 1867 (Fig.6).

Fig. 5 Fig.6

Over the years, the official address of the shop changed several times: 1 Agnes Place, The Village; 1 Cage Lane (from 13th October 1882) and, finally, 1 Lakedale Road (from 11th December 1894) although the Agnes Place designation continued to be used in Post Office stamps.

According to the 1861 census, Mrs Pennington was considered as the "head" of the household, while Miss Mase was specifically listed as letter receiver. Also in the house were the Misses Frances and Caroline Pennington, the former listed as a schoolmistress and the latter, although 20, was jobless. When her mother died in the mid-1860s, Frances Pennington remained in the shop with her aunt who, in the 1871 census, was recorded as grocer and letter receiver, with Frances listed as a governess.

At the age of 49, Miss Pennington became the sole occupant of the shop when Caroline Mase died, aged 69, in 1884. Miss Mase had been postmistress of Plumstead for 36 years.

Miss Pennington was appointed to the post on 26th April and a second Agnes Place stamp was issued on 3rd June (Fig.7).

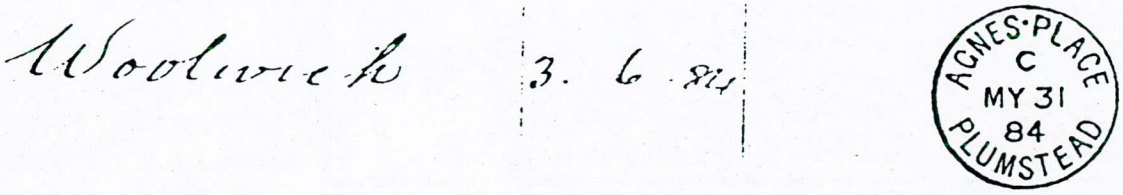

Fig. 7

Miss Pennington continued to operate the shop as a grocery until about 1893, when she changed the trade to that of stationer. She remained postmistress until 1905, when she was 70. The post office was demolished in that year when the site was taken over to build Plumstead Fire Station, open 20th June 1907, coincidentally Frances Pennington's birthday.

Further expansion of the Fire Station was envisaged for the 1980s and, consequently, the building once Blacknell's bakery and first Plumstead post office, one of the few remaining 18th century buildings in Plumstead, was threatened with demolition and allowed to deteriorate.

The first post office in Plumstead lasted for 100 years and the receivership stayed in the hands of just two families in that time. Blacknell husband, wife and son and then Mase/Pennington aunt/niece.

In the year before Frances Pennington became receiver, 1883, another office was established at 4 High Street, near the railway station, in the grocers shop of John Prentice. Within a few years , the shop was run by Albert William Prentice and from 1909 by Mrs L.A.Prentice.

The post office at 4 High Street was closed at that date and a new Branch Office opened at 63A High Street, effectively replacing both number 4 and the Agnes Place office, demolished a few years earlier.

After the demolition of Agnes Place, a pillar letter box had been set up on the opposite side of the High Street. However, once the new Branch Office had been established, this letter box was moved eastwards, away from the new office, to its present site at the corner of Barth Road and Plumstead High Street.

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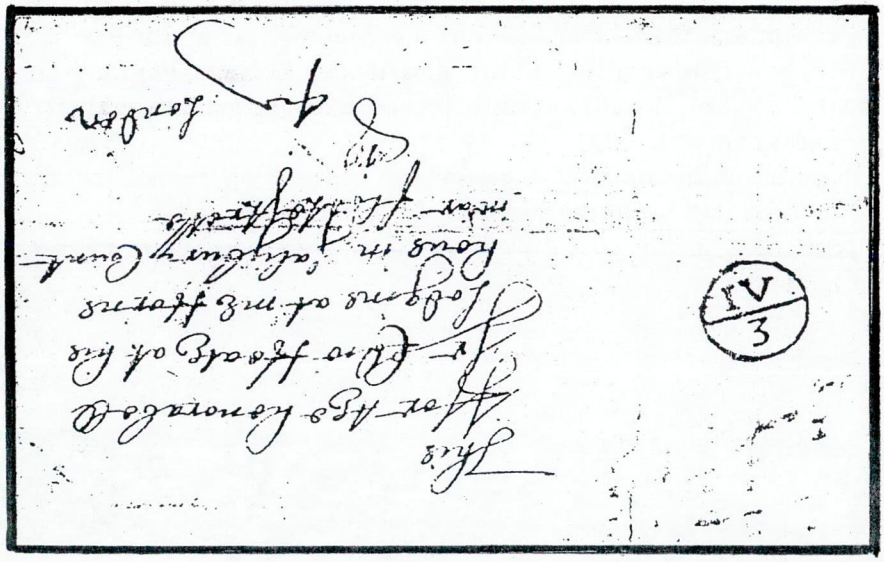
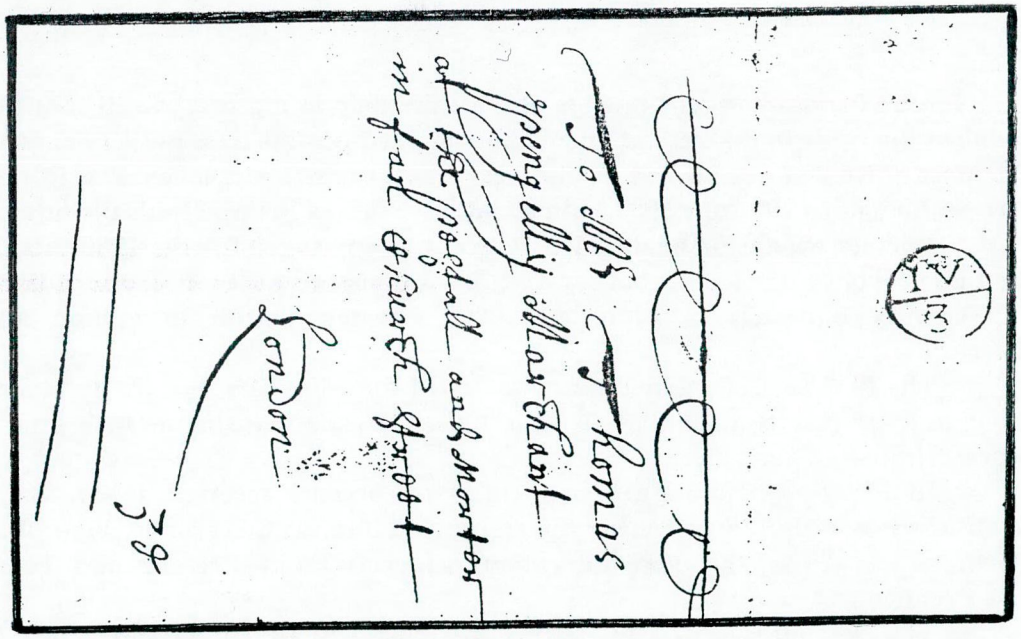
"A STAMP IS INVENTED....."

Mike Burtt

For interest , copies of two 1661 letters, both with a Bishop for the same day and both, clearly, different stamps. This appeared to conflict with what Henry Bishop wrote when responding the adverse comment on delays in the mail: "A stamp is invented that is put upon every letter shewing the day of the moneth that every letter comes to the office....".





As these clearly demonstrate, this does not mean "A" stamp was used each day, rather each day had stamps unique to each day, being carved in wood and without movable type.

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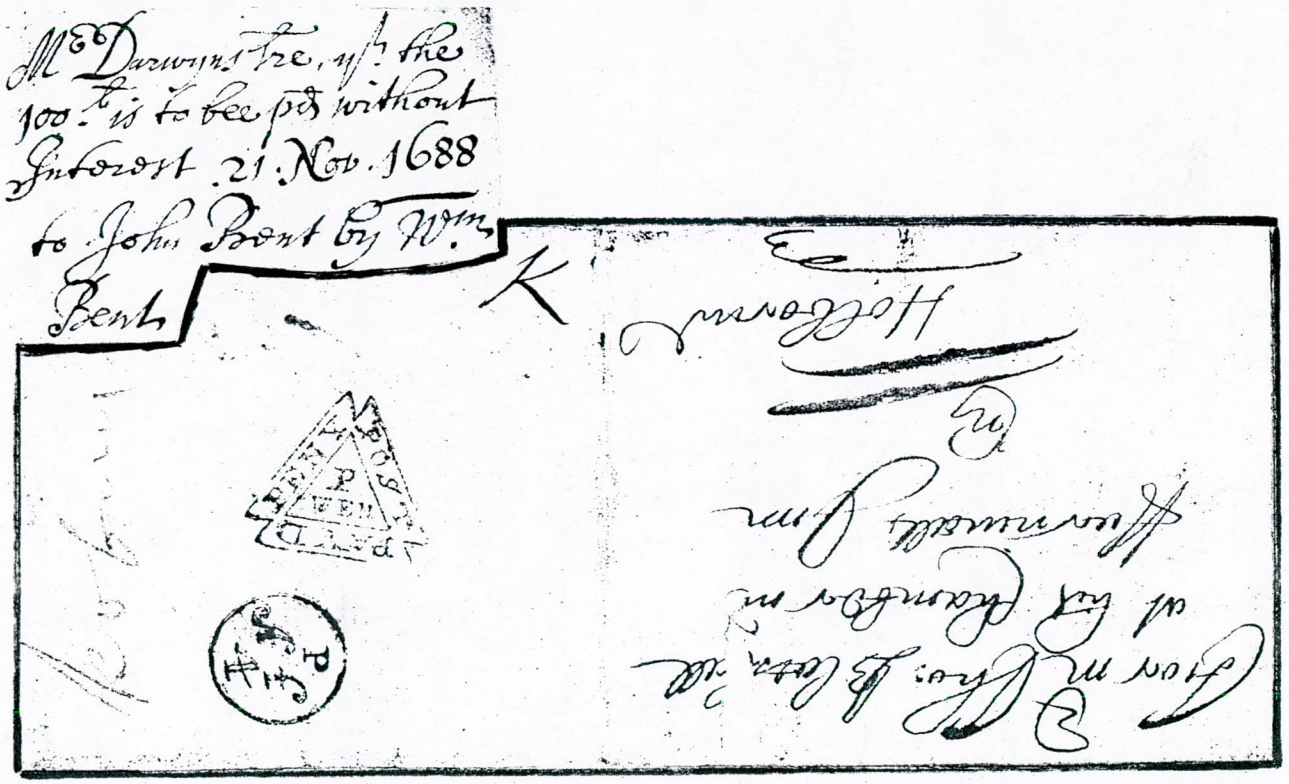
TYPE 2 DOCKWRA

Given the perception by Dockwra and the rest of the "Undertakers" for a profit potential in operating a Penny Post within London, one cannot but ponder the question of the scarcity of material, not only from the short lived private venture but, also, from the early years of the government controlled venture and even the later type 2 stamps.

From the work by Thos. de Laune *The Present State of London* **- which is to be published in a future issue of** *Notebook* **- some seven sorting offices, as we might call them, and up to 500 receiving houses were established. This suggests great expectations, or wild optimism, on the part of the organisers. Apparently before the end of two years receipts were exceeding expenses and the project showed every sign of becoming a financial success, at which stage the Duke of York took an interest, with results we all know. However, there are no volume figures given by Martin Willcocks (*England's Postal History*), Frank Staff (*The Penny Post)* nor Howard Robinson (*Britain's Post Office*), which is not to say such information does not exist. The point is, by 1682 the number of letters being handled by the Penny Post must have considerable. One is forced to the conclusion there was a large enough quantity of mail handled by the Penny Post, both before and after the intervention of the Duke of York, to generate an impressively large number of examples of both original and first type Dockwra marks but** ***where are these thousands of letters*** **?**

The reason for this speculation is a type 2 Dockwra in a recent Cavendish auction. Again one must ask ***why are these so thin on the ground*** **? Dated by the writer as "1699" but by the recipient as "1688", this underlined, the letter carries a St Paul's Office stamp for Wednesday with the same office's time stamp reading P / A f / 4.**



Also there is an interesting letter "K" with a pencil note reading "koburn" or "kobury" adjacent to the edge the edge of the flap. Would this be the initial and possible name of the Receiver?

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RETURNED LETTER OFFICE, LONDON E.

Frank Lane

Everything is not always what it seems, clearly demonstrated by the three wrappers shown here. The half penny "stamp" is cancelled by what looks like the illustration on the right. With the best will in the world, it is difficult to believe three wrappers, all with the same date in the R.L.Duty stamp, carry hitherto undiscovered and recorded cancellations.

As postmens' endorsements may be of interest, two of the wrappers are set to show the *"Not Known"* and *"Gone Away"*, complete with two signatures each (why two for a *"Gone Away"*?). The London E R(eturned) L(etter) duty date stamps put the items into a period context . An explanation of the obliterator would be welcome.