

BRANCH OFFICE HANDSTAMPS

Following Keith Romig's contribution in Notebook 64 there has been but one response with more information, this from Michael Champness, whose interest in these undated stamps is well known to most readers.

The listing thusfar is given in the hope of stimulating other readers, with material, to forward the details.

Stamp	Type	size	Proof date	Color	Early and late dates
CHARING CROSS BRANCH W C	B2	42 x 10	31. 3.57	blue green	3. 4.57 10. 7.57
PIMLICO - BRANCH SW	B2	42 x 11	31. 3.57	black blue	10. 7.57 - 18. 1.58 13. 6.57 - 12. 7.58
Shoreditch Branch	F1	50 x 5 44 x 5	20. 1.57 21. 2.57	? black	? 4. 3.57
SIDMOUTH-ST-BRANCH W.C.	B2	43 x 11	31. 3.57	blue	23. 5.57
SOUTHWARK BRANCH S E	B2	42 x 12	?	black	3. 6.57
STEPNEY-BRANCH E.	B2	42 x 11	31. 3.57	black	5. 8.57 - 25.12.57



type B2

type F1

SAUNTERINGS IN AND ABOUT LONDON : THE POST OFFICE

Leslie Bond has discovered a delightful book, published in English from a German original, in 1853. It deals with many aspects of London life, including a chapter largely devoted to the Post Office which, although it contains much of which may not be new, it does draw comparisons with the continent, not usual in writings of the period. The Editor found it of great interest and believes 'Notebook' readers will do likewise. We start well into the chapter with..." we turn to the left, and stop in the front of the post-office at St.Martin's-le-Grand.

The existing arrangements of the English post-office, and the penny-postage, which, in 1840, was introduced by Rowland Hill, have proved so excellent in their results, that the majority of continental states have been induced to approximate their institutions to Mr.Hill's principle. Men of business and post-office clerks are not yet satisfied; they desire a system of cheap international postage, and it is devoutly to be hoped that those pious wishes will, in the end, be gratified. But the majority of the continental governments hesitate before they commit themselves to an experiment, which, in the most favorable case, only promises a future increase of revenue, while in every case it is certain to entail losses on the present. In England, however, the experiment has been made, and the system works well and pays. The arrangements of the post-office have been brought to a degree of perfection unknown even to the wildest dreams of the boldest political economist of the last century.

With the general penny postage for England, Scotland, Ireland, and the Channel Islands, with a regular, rapid and frequent transmission of the mails from and to the provinces, there is, moreover, an admirable system adopted for the distribution of letters throughout the metropolis. London is divided into two postal districts: one of them embraces the area within three miles from the Chief Office at St.Martin's-le-Grand; the second district includes those parts of the town which lie beyond the three miles' circle.

The postage, of course, is the same for either district; but the difference lies in the number of deliveries. In the inner circle there are not less than ten deliveries a day.

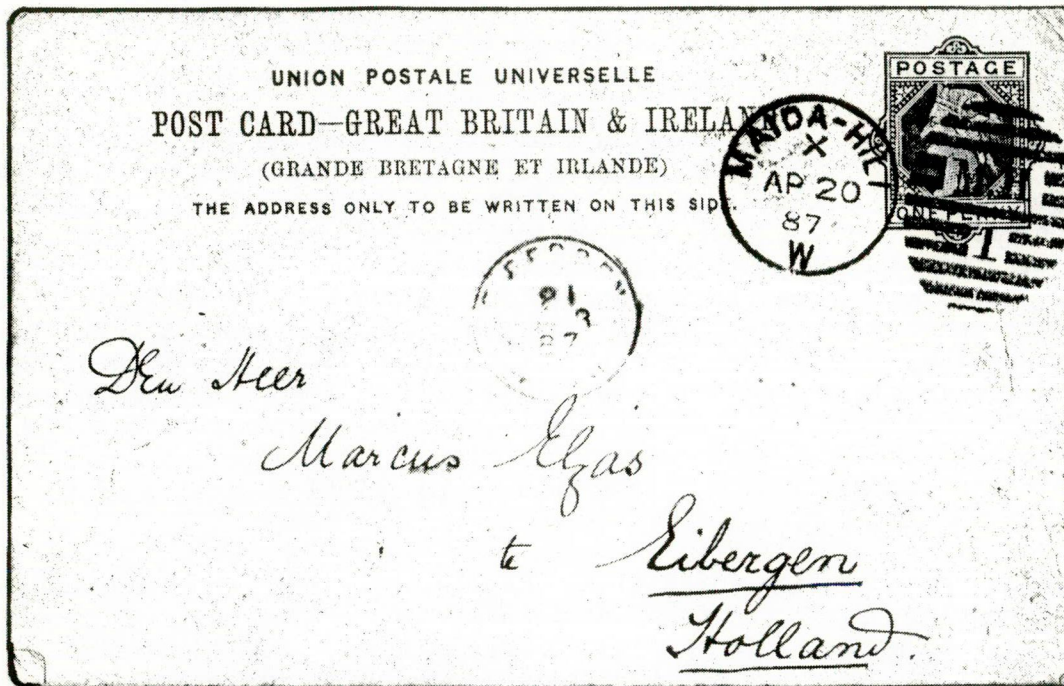
The construction of the houses contributes much to the efficiency of the system. The postman's functions are here much easier than those of his continental colleagues. He is not required to go up and down stairs, he gives his double knock; and as the majority of letters are inland letters, and as such prepaid, no time is lost with paying and giving change. The frequency of letter-boxes at the house doors tends still more to simplify the proceeding.

At the time of the great Exhibition, these letter-boxes gave occasion to many a comical mistake. Many of our continental friends entrusted their correspondence to the keeping of private boxes, under the erroneous presumption that every door - slit with "Letters" over it, stood in some mysterious connection with the General Post Office. But when once properly understood, the practical advantages of these private letter-boxes were so apparent, that they moved all our stranger friends to the most joyful admiration. The system however is nothing without the pre-payment of letters, without the English style of buildings, and the English domestic arrangements, according to which each family inhabits its own house. The South-German system of crowding many families into one large house, and dividing even flats into separate lodgings, places insuperable difficulties in the way of any such arrangement, even if the Germans, generally, could be induced to prepay their letters. And the Paris fashion of delivering all the letters at the porter's lodge, is disagreeable, even for those who are not engaged in treasonable correspondence, and who have no desire to elude the vigilance of the police.

After all, Rowland Hill's system of cheap postage is one of the best practical jokes that was ever perpetrated by an Englishman. This famous cheapness is nothing but a snare for the unwary, for the especial gratification of the Postmaster-General and

BRANCH OFFICE AT MAIDA HILL

Norman Mounsdon telephones to say he had something interesting to show me, could I pop down to Royale during lunch? It seemed that in sorting through some material recently to hand he had discovered a very fine Maida Hill duplex on a post card to Holland.



As owners of the recently published Branch Office Handbook section will appreciate this particular item was hitherto unrecorded as used on cover, though part on adhesive was known.

That these Branch Offices sometimes produce such a rarity should be no mystery, since their cancelling work was surely confined to local mail and the survival rate for much of this is clearly near zero. This particular item was acquired in Europe, nearly a hundred years after it was posted, presumably just one from a batch which were processed on 20th. April, 1887.

Keep looking.

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Saunterings.....

the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In no other country is here so much money expended on postage as in England. A letter is only one penny; and what is a penny? The infinitesimal fraction of that power which men call capital; that miraculous Nothing out of which the world was made, and out of which some very odd fellows managed to make large fortunes, as it may be well and truly read in juvenile books of first-class morality. But what Londoner can condescend to establish his household arrangements on the decimal system, or on the theory of miracles? Consequently, he writes short letters to his cousins and nieces across the way, and to all his near and dear relations in Yorkshire and the Shetland Islands. It is an incontestable fact, that Englishmen spend more money in postage than the citizens of any other country.

And how cleverly does the Post Office contrive to facilitate the means of correspondence! Besides the large branch offices, there are above five hundred receiving houses in London, all of them established in small shops, to induce you to enter; and that you may have no trouble in finding them, a small board with a hand, and the

PENNY POST RECEIVERS 1680 to 1794, from A.J. Kirk

As will be seen from Postal History Catalogue No.3, London, Barrie Jay has listed the Handstamps of the Penny Post Receivers from 1680 to 1794. However, nothing seems to have been done in respect of the manuscript marks of Receivers, some of whom may have used handstamps at some time also.

Together with Martin Willcocks I propose to research these manuscript marks to attempt to identify them with a particular area, preferably a Receiving House, or at least, their use in conjunction with a particular Dockwra Mark.

Would readers let me have the following information :

1. Name of the Receiver
2. Office Letter B, G, H, P, S, T, or W. (a) Dockwra
(b) Time Stamp
3. Date
4. Address from which the letter was written
5. Address to which the letter was sent

A photocopy of the signature would be helpful, or an accurate tracing.

My thanks in appreciation : please send c/o the Editor

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Saunterings.....

words " Post Office ", is affixed to the nearest lamp-post, so that you need only look at the lamp-posts to find the place for the reception of your letters. How simple, and how practical !

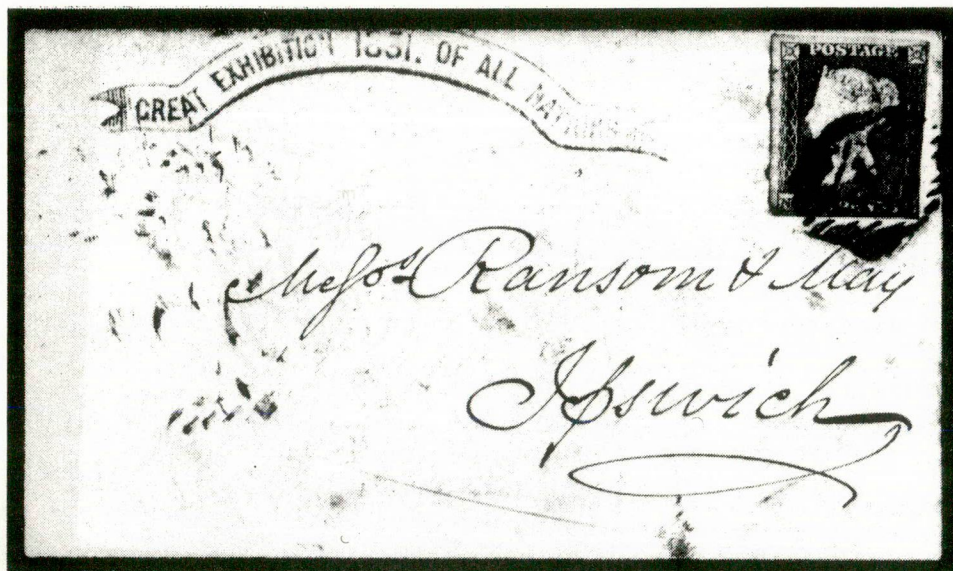
But there is more behind ! Many a man thinks it too great a tax upon his time and patience to put the penny stamp on the envelope; the Postmaster-General steps in and saves him the trouble. He manufactures envelopes with the Queen's head printed on them, and he sells them a penny a piece, so that you have the envelope gratis. They are gummed, too, and do not want sealing. You have nothing to do but to write your letter, put it into the envelope, and post it at the receivinghouse over the way or round the corner. These are some of the sly tricks on which the Post Office thrives so that, with its expenditure exceeding one million sterling, it manages to hand over a large sum of surplus receipts to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Nor ought it to be supposed, that, having attained so high a degree of perfection, the English postal administration reclines on its laurels. No ! it strains every nerve to effect further improvements; and it has to deal with a public fully competent to understand its merits, and disposed to value them. The greatest praise of a public institution is to be found, not in the eulogies of the press, but in the readiness of the public to avail themselves of the advantages that institution offers, and the improvements and facilities it effects. And the English do this readily and joyfully, whenever their practical common sense becomes alive to the usefulness of an innovation.

In this respect, and in many others, the English Government is in a more favorable position than the continental governments. Its dealings are with a great and generous nation : great ideas find a great public in England. That is the reason why the continental estimates of men and affairs appear so small, compared to the one which the English are in habit of applying. Particularly with respect to creating facilities to traffic, the Government may venture on almost any experiment. The public support every scheme of the kind, and the public support makes it pay. Take, for instance, the system of money-orders, which was introduced a few years

GREAT EXHIBITION 1851 : THE DE LA RUE ENVELOPE

Roger Hudson has kindly forwarded a photocopy of an item which appears to be new in the record of the de laRue machine folded covers. This example is dated September 17th., 1851 and the reverse would seem to be as illustrated on Plate 12 of Maurice Bristow's "The Postal History of the Crystal Palace". It is the obverse which is different, bearing, in the same blue/green ink of the reverse inscription, a fancy scroll with the words "GREAT EXHIBITION 1851. OF ALL NATIONS".



It is addressed the Ransome & May, who even today are known for their machinery.

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Saunterings.....

back. Small sums under £5 are to be sent ; and in spite of the enormous difficulties and expenses which the scheme had to encounter in its commencement, it is more firmly establishing from day to day ; its popularity is on the increase, and above £8,000,000 was, in the year 1851, transmitted in this manner.

Let us now see how the Post Office deals with books, pamphlets, and newspapers. Political papers which publish "news", says the act for that purpose made and provided - "political journals", according to the continental mode of expression - pass from province to province free of postage, with only a small sum for transmission to the Colonies, that is to say, to the Cape and the Antipodes. The penny stamp, which each copy of a political journal is required to have, franks it throughout the whole of Great Britain and Ireland - not once, but several times. A letter stamp is blackened over at the Post Office, to prevent its being used again ; but the newspaper stamp has nothing to fear from the postmaster's blacking apparatus. I read my copy of the "Times" in the morning, and am at liberty to send it to a friend, say at Greenwich. That friend sends the same copy to another friend, say at Glasgow, Edinburgh, or Dublin ; and the same copy, after various peregrinations through country post offices, and out-of-the-way villages, finds its way back to London to the shop of a dealer in waste paper. No charge is made by the Post Office for these manifold transmissions ; and thus it happens that friends conspire to - together to defraud the Post Office, and that information finds its way from one end of the kingdom to another without any advantage to the public purse.

I will quote an example of a trick which is still popular with many English families. Suppose a husband and father has reason to expect an addition to his family

Saunterings...

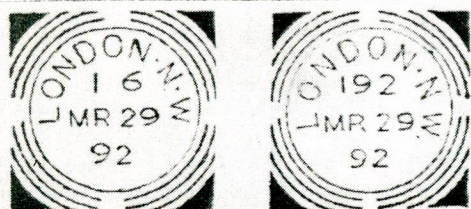
circle. His friends and relations are desirous to be informed of the event as soon as it shall have come off, but letters, however short, take time to write; and, after all, its a pity to pay so many pence for postage, and children, too, are very expensive creatures. The matter has been arranged beforehand. An old copy of the "Times" is sent, if the little stranger turns out a boy; if a girl, the father sends a copy of the "Herald". The child is born, and the papers are posted. Letters of congratulations follow in due time. Her Majesty has gained another subject, but the Exchequer has lost a few pence. This method has not much political morality to recommend it; but it weighs very lightly on an Englishman's conscience, since the proceeding, after all, is not downright illegal.

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer and I" - says John Bull - "are on the best terms; he cheats me whenever he can; he makes me pay in every conceivable manner; he taxes my wine, my tea, the sunlight, my horse, my land, and my carriage; he is always at it, and he squeezes me as I would an orange. That's his right, and that's why he is Chancellor of the Exchequer. How else could he manage to pay the interest on the national debt, and the army and navy estimates, and all the sundries? We, the nation, are the state, and that's why we ought to pay. But in return, the right honorable gentleman must give us leave to cheat him whenever, as it will happen with the sharpest of financiers, his financial laws want a clause or two, and thus favor the operation. "Horses above a certain size are taxed to such and such an extent", says he. Very Well.' say I. But I move heaven and earth to produce horses under that size, and avoid paying the tax. Carriages with wheels above 21 inches in diameter are taxed. Very well. I get a small carriage made, one which suits the size of my pony. Newspaper advertisements pay a duty of eighteen-pence. Well and good.

cont 65/8

SQUARED CIRCLE CODING - A LATE ANSWER TO AN OLD QUERY, by Maurice Barette

Going through a back issue of the Notebook (48/9) I came across a query from F.J. Bradley about squared circle coding. I do not remember having seen an answer. The example reported showed a LONDON.N.W./197/AP 7/93, type I.



The proof of this die (or hammer) can be seen on page 340 of volume 46 of the Proof Impression Books held in Post Office Archives. Shown also are 18 other dies on pages 339, 340 and 341.

They form a new series of handstamps issued on March 29, 1892 for the London North-West office. The code number of these handstamps has to be split into two parts:

- the left portion, numbers running 1 to 19, being an identification figure, different for each hammer and constant for that hammer.
- the right part is a time code and can be a figure or a number from 1 to 12 or letters X, Z, XZ, or ZZ, which could have performed special duties.

This way of identifying handstamps was the normal one until the clock code in 1893 or the clear time in 1895 occupied the slot previously used by the identifying elements (letters or figures), which had to be moved to the lower corners of the square, i.e. sub-types D, or under the date, sub-types E, F or G.

The full information on the Hammer Identification scheme can be found in the work of S.F. Cohen and D.G. Rosenblat, "Squared Circle Postmarks of the London Suburban District Offices".

Illustrations of the proofs with the kind permission of the Post Office Archives.

Saunterings.....

I advertise the birth of my child by means of an old copy of the " Times ". That's fair dealing, which none can find fault with. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and I know what we are about. We are a couple of sly ones. John Bull after all pays for everything : but he fights for his money to the best of his abilities. Of course!"

Thus reasons the Englishman, whom the Germans love to consider as an adorer of the law.

The difference between the English adoration and the German contempt of the law, may be found in the fact, that an Englishman takes delight in outwitting the law, if it can be done in a loyal and honest manner. The German believes he is justified in ignoring the law, since it was imposed upon him without his consent. In other words : the subject of an absolute government does not think the laws - except the laws of nature and morality - to be binding, because such laws were imposed by superior force. The citizen of a free country respects every law, because it pre-supposes an agreement to which he has either indirectly or directly assented. But let us return to the Post-office.

Though the newspaper-stamp franks the journals throughout England, still it has not been thought advisable to extend the privilege to the postal districts within three miles from St.Martin's-le-Grand. All journals posted within that circle must have an additional penny stamp. My copy of the " Times " goes free to Dublin ; but if I address it to a friend in the next street, it pays the postage. But for this salutary regulation, all the news-vendors would post their papers, and the Post-office would want the means on conveyance and delivery for the loads of printed matter which,

cont 65/

PROVINCIAL TYPE DATE STAMPS

Mention has been made of these stamps, being adopted for some places within London, in the pages of Notebook. A few more examples have been recorded since the last note and the current listing is given below.

RICHMOND	EV	NO	24	1847	
RICHMOND	MG	SP	12	1849	
STOKE NEWINGTON	MG	AP	7	1858	
BOW	EV	JU	16	1856	
BOW	EV	JA	18	1855	
LIMEHOUSE		MY	8	1847	*
86 HACKNEY RD		DE	18	1857	*
FINCHLEY	EV	DE	2	1852	
FINCHLEY	MG	MY	18	1853	
TOWER STREET		OC	06	1848	

* these were rather carelessly recorded at a meeting and the times were not noted. Would the owners drop a line to the Editor with the details.

We now have rather more than just the two with which we started this particular line of enquiry and it is now clear there was an wide issue, although possibly not a general issue.

Saunterings in and About London....

in such a case, would find their way into the chief office.

The advantages of the newspaper stamp are, however, large enough to induce its being solicited by papers, that are not by law compelled to take it. "Punch", for instance, is not considered a political paper. To find out the reason why, is a task I leave to the principal Secretaries of State of her Britannic Majesty. The whole of England is agreed on the point that there is much more sound policy in the old fellow's humped back than can be found in the heads of the Privy Council ; and many an agitator in search of an ally would prefer Toby to the Iron Duke.* "Punch", then, consults his own convenience and takes or refuses the stamp according to circumstances. And as "Punch" does, so do many other papers, whom the law considers as unpolitical.

We turn again to the General Post-office. It is a grand and majestic structure, with colossal columns in the pure Greek style ; and with an air of classic antiquity, derived from the London atmosphere of fog and smoke. It is easy to raise antique structures in London, for the rain and the coals assist the architect. Hence those imposing tints ! How happy would the Berliners be, if Messrs. Fox and Henderson, instead of constructing water-works, could undertake to blacken the town, and give it an antique old-established, instead of its parvenue and stuck-up, appearance. They are sadly in want of London smoke and of some other English institutions which I cannot, for the sake my own safety, venture to specify.

Those who are not awed by the architectural beauties of the London Post-office, should enter and take a stroll down those roomy high walls, where on either side there are numbers of office windows and little tablets. How small are, in the presence of those tablets, all the ideas which Continentals form of a large central Post-office. There are so many sign-posts, that direct you to all the quarters of the world ; to the East and West Indies, to Australia, China, the Canary Islands, the Cape, Canada, etc. Every part of the globe has its own letter box ; and the stranger who, about six o'clock P.M., enters these halls, or takes up his post of observation near the great City Branch Office, in Lombard-street, would almost deem that all the nations of the world were rushing in through the gates, and as if this were the last day for the reception and transmission of letters.

Breathless come the bankers' clerks, rushing in just before the closing hour ; they open their parcels, and drop their letters into the various compartments. There are messengers groaning under the weight of heavy sacks, which they empty into a vast gulf in the flooring ; they come from the offices of the great journals, and the papers themselves are sorted by the Post-office clerks. Here and there, among this crowd of business people, you are struck with the half comfortable, half nervous bearing of a citizen. Just now an old gentleman, with steel spectacles, hurries by, casting an anxious look at the clock, lest he be too late. Probably he wishes to post a paternal epistle to his son, who is on a fishing excursion in Switzerland, and the letter is important, for in it the son is adjured not by any means to discontinue wearing a flannel under-jacket. Or an old lady has to post a letter to her grand-daughter at school in the country, about the apple-pudding, for which the grand-daughter sent her the receipt ; and what a capital pudding it was, and that the school must be a first-rate school - to be sure ! And lo ! just as the clock strikes, a fair-haired and chaste English woman, with a thick blue veil, makes her way to one of the compartments and drops a letter. Thank goodness, she is in time ! Heaven knows how sorry the poor lad would have been if that letter had not reached him in due course. For an English lover, they say, is often in a hanging mood, specially in November, when the fogs are densest.

Now the wooden doors are closed ; the hall is empty as if by magic, and the tall columns throw their lengthened shadows on the stone flooring.

* The first part of this work left the press early in 1852, when the Duke of Wellington was still alive. It has not been thought convenient to alter this passage, and some others to meet the change of circumstances - (Ed)

Saunterings in and About London....

This is the most arduous period of the day for the clerks within. All that heap of letters and newspapers which has accumulated in the course of the day is to be sorted, stamped, and packed in time for the various mail-trains. Clerks, servants, sorters, and messengers, hurry to and fro in the subterraneous passage between the two wings of the building. Clerks suspended by ropes, mount up to the ceiling and take down the parcels which, in the course of the day, were deposited on high shelves. And the large red carts come rattling in receive their load of bags, and rattle off to the various stations ; the rooms are getting empty ; the clerks have got through their work ; the gas is put out, and silence and darkness reign supreme. Here and there only in some little room a clerk may be seen busy with accounts and long lists of places and figures. When he retires to rest, the work of the day has already commenced in the other offices. In this building, business is going on at all hours of the day and the night. The loss of a minute would be felt by thousands, at a distance of thousands of miles.

Hence it does happen that at no time is there a want of complaints about the Post-office clerks and post-masters, while the officials, in their turn, complain of the carelessness and negligence of the public. The public's grievances find their way into the Journals, in a " Letter " to the " Editor ". The sorrows of the Post-office clerks obtain a less amount of publicity ; but they may be observed on the walls of the great hall, where, daily, there is a list of misdirected letters, which have cost the post-men a deal of trouble. Directions such as -

" To Mr. Robinson, / in / America "

Or;-

" To Miss Henrietta Hobson, / Just by the Church, / in London "

However rich (some may think), these are not by any means rare ; and such small mistakes, I dare say, will happen in other countries besides England, wherever there are simple-minded people who put their trust in Providence and the royal Post-office. In Germany, where every man, woman, and child is registered by the police, the post-man may, as a last resource, apply to that omniscient institution; but in England, where the chief commissioner of the police is so abandoned as to be actually ignorant of the whereabouts of honest and decent citizens, the Post-office is deprived even of this last resource. The case would be pitiable in the extreme, but for the comfortable reflection that in England the police do not interfere with the post. The convenience, on the one hand, is by far greater than the inconvenience on the other.

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UPDATING HANDBOOK AND CATALOGUES

Since L.P.H.G. started publishing ' Handbook ', we have been well pleased with the number of members who have forwarded details of their finds, corrections and date extensions. Hopefully these have always been acknowledged but if not, apologies and thanks. The contributions will be included in supplements to be issued from time to time, the first being included with Notebook No.50 and another is now on the production stocks for release early in the New Year.

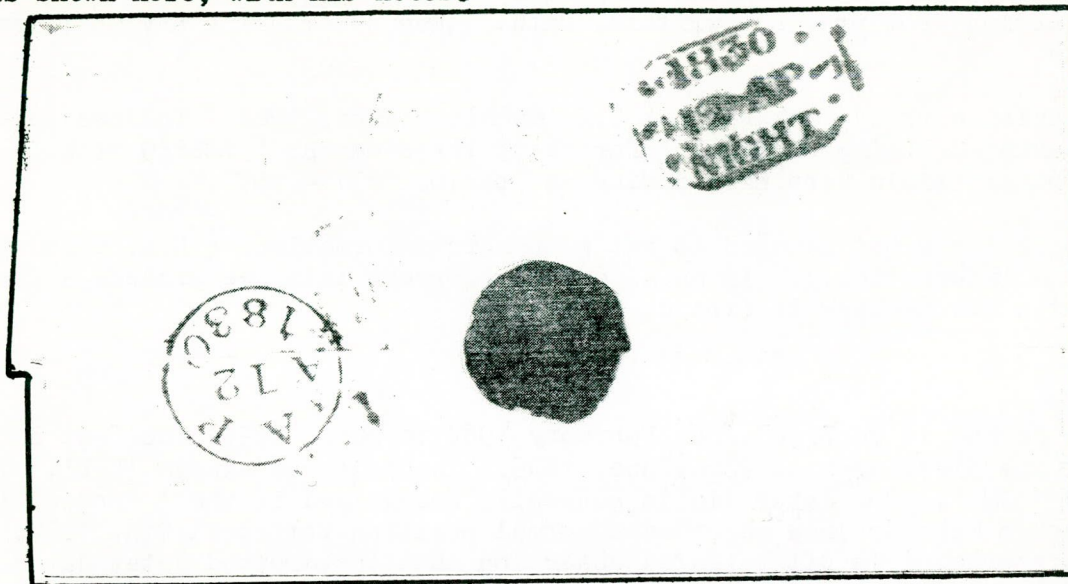
A great stimulus to this has been the publication of the London catalogue by Willcocks and Jay. This provides a basic framework to which the Group will be able to add through the Handbook and, by means of the Supplements, and expand on the information. The Editor has received a number of additional listings and everyone is urged to send in all further details possible. The Editor derives no small pleasure in being the proud owner of one datestamp which is the only example (so far recorded !).

A gem shared with other collectors has given the Editor greater pleasure than when it remained tucked away.

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TWOPENNY POST : TRANSFER STAMPS by John H.S. Harrison

The London catalogue records the reversed 7 time stamp in 1830, see also Notebook 56, page 7. Some time ago John Harrison sent in a further very fine example from 1830 which is shown here, with his notes.



The well known hour stamps showing reversed time figures used by both principal offices of the London Twopenny Post in 1823, and now also 1830, have interested me for many years. Anyone who has attempted to assemble a complete collection of these handstamps will know how elusive some of these fascinating errors can be. I make a point of looking out for these marks whenever the chance of sifting through material of the period presents itself. During one such occasion, I came across an entire to Cromer, Norfolk of the 12th April, 1830, showing a rectangular framed 'Kensington Gravel Pits in Brumell type 106' (the stamp for Kensington Gravel Pits in Brumell type 106) and a handstruck '2' on the obverse. On the reverse a near good octagonal framed black '7 NIGHT 7' transfer stamp of the Westminster with both 7's reversed.

This fits in with the April recording in Notebook and the London catalogue.

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TWOPENNY POST : TRANSFER STAMPS TO THE GENERAL POST

These are listed by Barrie Jay at L 470 - L 474, with L 470 - L 472 showing in black and red, the latter color being rather scarcer.

Among a run of family correspondence recently acquired was an example of L472d but used on a local London item, addressed to Kensington from the Town area, the black '3' charge mark featuring on the obverse. Dated 9 AP 1827 for 7 Night it comes early in the first year of recorded use.

The use of these transfer stamps on mail confined to the London local post has long been known but do they represent a deliberate use in red on mail from Town to Country, or are they merely 'one of those things'? The catalogue does admit to 'other uses'; can we pin it down a little more?

Another very interesting find were no less than two fine examples of L 472e, showing both '7's reversed and struck in black for 8th. and 12th. February 1830, a time not in the catalogue. These occur on mail going out of town via the General Post.

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AZEMAR MACHINE

Following a query from one of our members about the period of use of the Azemar, the Editor undertook to make some enquiries. To his surprise, the several books to which he turned gave much the same imprecise information, rather as if one author was quoting from previous writers, rather than undertaking any positive further study.

The very detailed work by Jack Peach (U.K. Machine Marks, 1982) follows this pattern, speaking of being on trial ' for about three months ' 1868/9 with the comment " Further trials were made during the period 1871 - 1873."

Even ' Notebook ' has not managed to get much more information, (Nos. 8 and 9 providing some information.). In an attempt to correct this, we produce a few notes and dates for members to expand.

First Trial

Dubus states he had it recorded from February 1969 to June 1869. The best datings found so far are 31st.March to 23rd.June, 1869. The code was always 'Y L'. June was rendered ' JE '. The dater die is generally recognised in the ' dropped ' position, though Mike Goodman recorded a normal position for April 7th.,1869. This makes nonsense of the oft repeated assertion that the dropped dater die was during the first month of use, since it is known thus as late as June 8th.

Second Trial

These we have recorded 10th.May to 5th. December, 1871. The dater die is in the ' normal ' position and is 21mm against 20mm for the first trial. This slightly larger size has to be confirmed. The coding recorded runs for both this and the third trial as 'AA','AB','BB','CB','BR','CR'.

Third Trial

Here we have dates from 17th.May,1872 to 18th.November,1872. Dater dies in the 'normal' position. Please check the size, 21mm ? Codes as noted for Second Trial.

Oblitering Bars

With a clear impression one can see the various sections which can comprise the obliterating portion of this stamp. Some of the arrangements are very scarce. Dubus records the changing patterns and it is proposed to deal with these at a later date. Here we are concerned to put some dates to the trial periods and to avoid future references being so vague.

All information to the Editor please. If you do have access to a photocopier, this would be most useful.



Early date oddity
of the third trial



First
Trial



Second
Trial

OFFICIAL MAIL TO THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE 1815 - 1818, by M. Scott Archer

During the period late 1815 to 1818, Lt. Col. William Warre was District Quarter-master General at the Cape. Letters addressed to him are in the National Army Museum Archive and I have recorded another addressed to him during the same period.

A family letter of the 29th. November, 1815 bears L1288 and a manuscript rate mark for 3/6. It reached the Cape on the 27th. February, 1816.

On Saturday the 24th. February, 1816, his father wrote at length, congratulating him on a daughter born to his wife, Selina, and complaining bitterly about the state of the Country - " it is certain Canning is sent for and is offered a seat in the Cabinet " for which he is very glad. He mentions promotions in the Army in Portugal and items of Family news. The letter was sent through Official channels, as it is signed outside by S.R. Chapman - Secretary to the Master General of Ordnance : the Cabinet Member, the Earl of Mulgrave. It bears a strike of the rare L 1292, in red, with the Crowned FREE double rim, L 801, this in a different shade of red, both being dated 24th. February, 1816. Both marks are over written by Warre on receipt (date ? May 19) and they overlap.

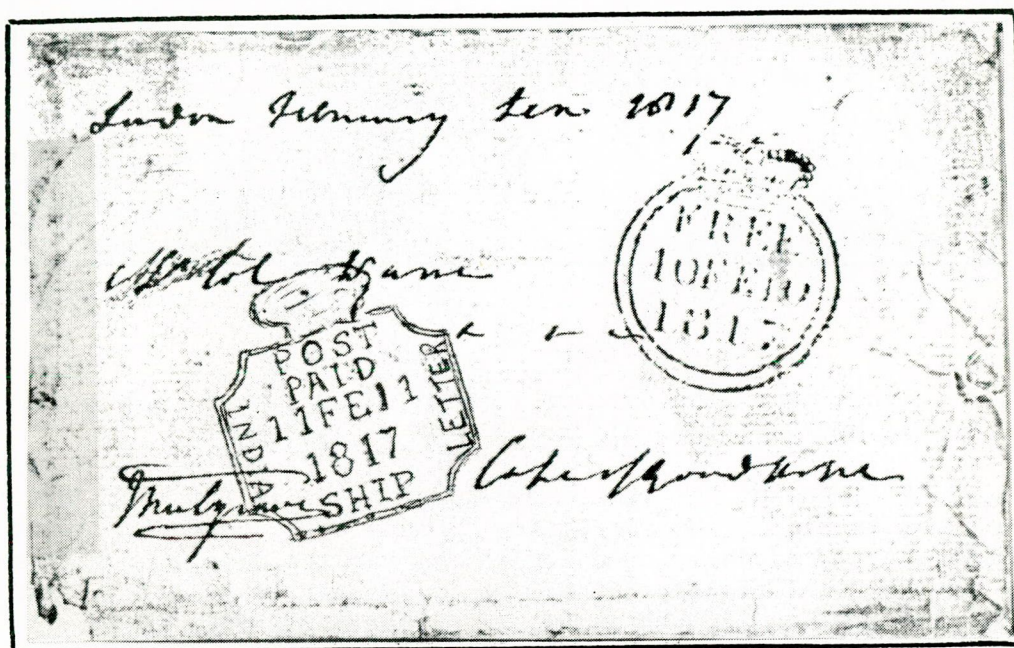


fig. 1

The next letter of interest consists of a wrapper containing a personal letter from the Earl of Mulgrave regretting that he cannot move the name of a fatherless boy, sponsored by Warre, up the Army List for a number of reasons and enclosing a copy of the Regulations for the " Admission of Gentlemen Cadets to the Woolwich Academy "; the letter is in warm and friendly terms to Warre. It is dated the 10th. February, 1817 and bears an L 801 double ring Free stamp and a very faint " Post Paid India Ship Letter ". This is illustrated in fig.1 but the photocopy has been inked in to show the wording clearly. The two stamps are in different shades of red ink and are dated, respectively, 10th. and 11th. February. The wrapper is signed Mulgrave. There is no indication when this letter reached the Cape.

A letter, written by Warre's mother in an execrable hand, is lengthy and newsy. This, too, is signed by S.R. Chapman and bears a fair strike of L 801 double ring Free, dated 15th. April, 1818. On the reverse, in black, is L 1424 of the same date. This possibly in an inspection date stamp indicating an awareness of a

Official Mail to the Cape.....

delay because the Free India Letter London, fig.2, is dated a week later, the 22nd. April, 1818. As before the two Free stamps are in different shades of red.

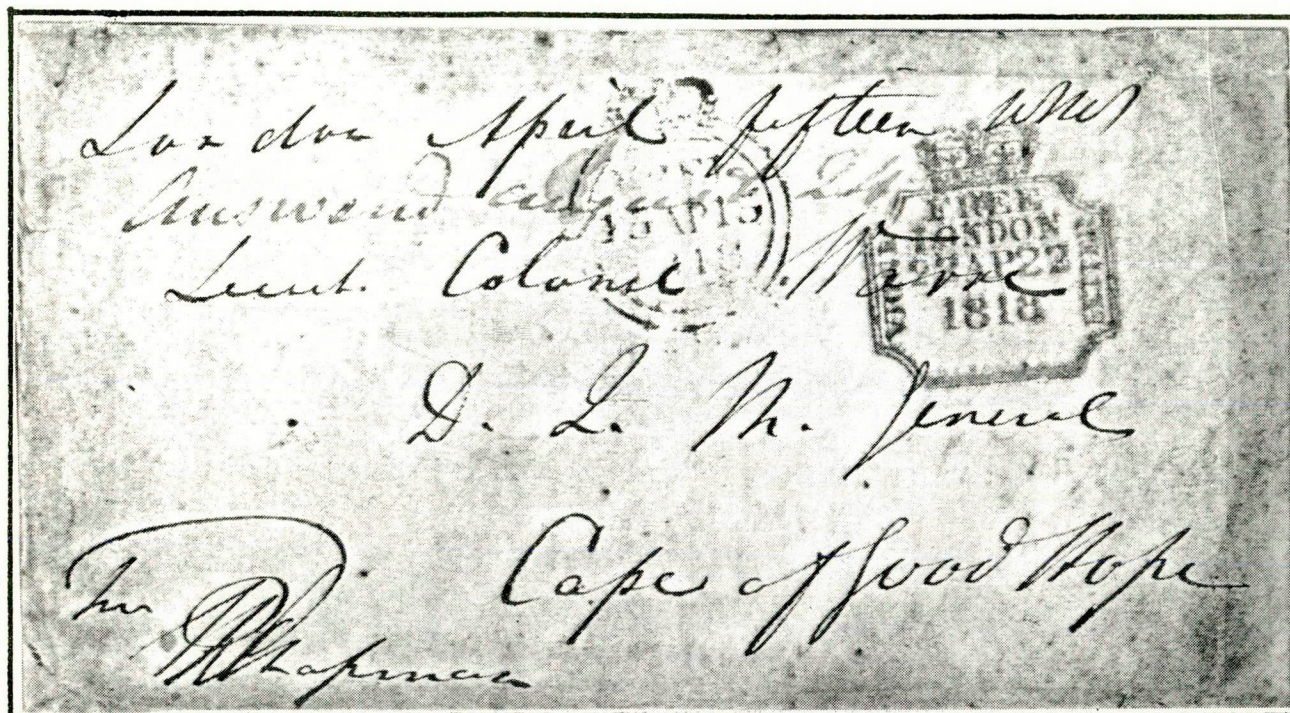


fig.2

Again there is no indication of the date of receipt, though Warre notes that it was answered on August 24th - but he did not always reply very promptly.

On the 11th. July, 1815, an Act was passed establishing Mails for the East Indies by Packet Boats or other ships; the Act states " Mails could be carried by Ships of War or Store Ships : to be despatched to India (via the Cape) once in every month as far as may be found practicable either by Vessels to be established and hired by the Postmaster General or by a Ship of War, or by a Ship in Service of the East India Company or by a Ship in private trade to and from India ".

Free postage was available to Chairman and Deputy of the East India Company, provided the letters were addressed in their own hand ! Public Officers who hitherto had free postage to and from India would continue to do so.

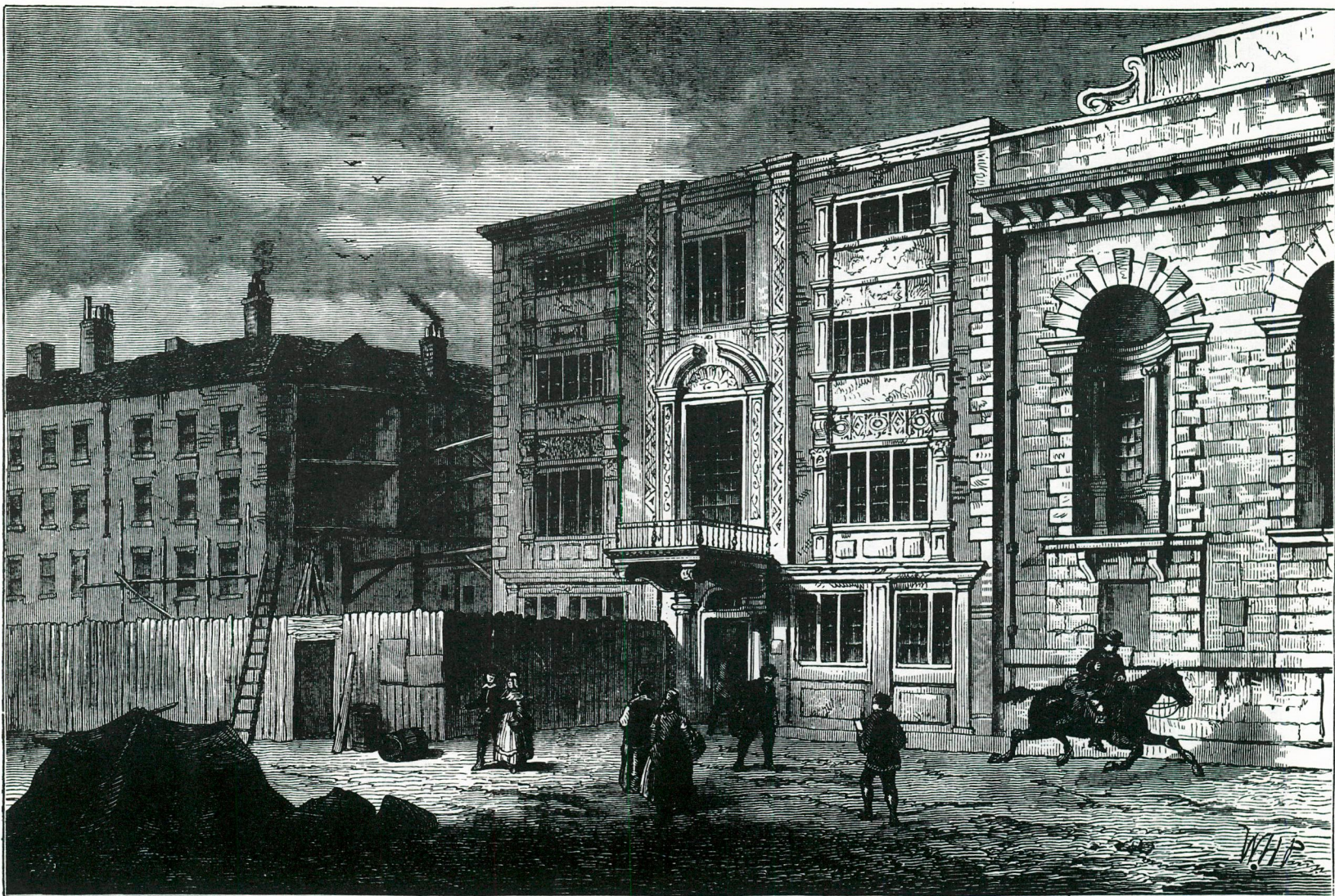
Whether the three distinctive handstamps, L 1292 and figs 1 & 2, existed concurrently or replaced each other is open to conjecture. They could relate, consecutively, to conveyance by Official Packet Boat : ' Free India Packet Letter ' : Ship of the East India Company or Private Ship : ' Post Paid India Ship Letter ' and thirdly Ship or War or Store Ship : " Free India Letter London ".

Research into dates of sailings from Britain of ships of all kinds to the East Indies might confirm or deny this thesis; unfortunately, neither text nor cover of any of these letters gives any clue as to the type of ship carrying them.

Finbury. J

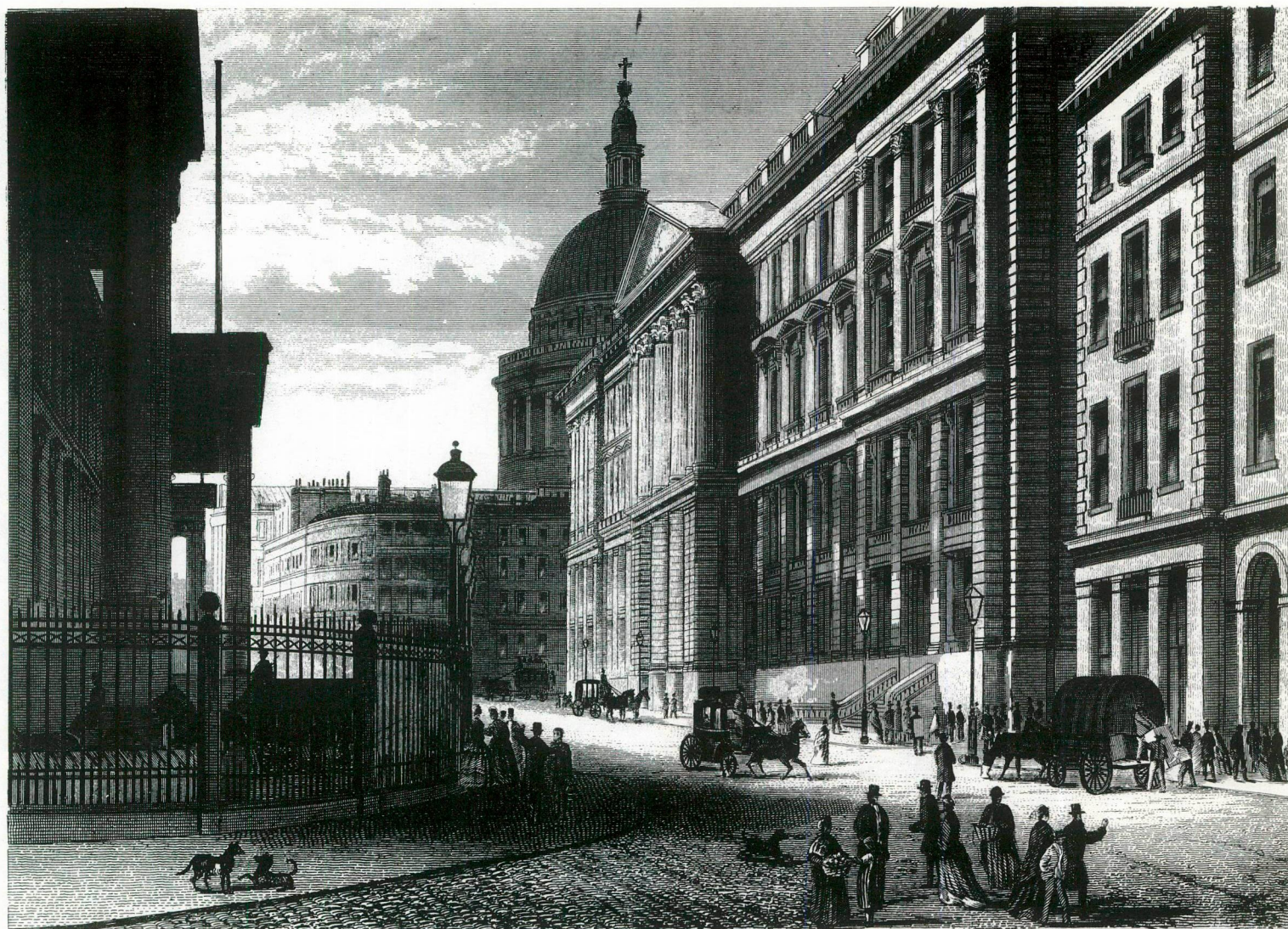
TEDIOUS NEGOTIATIONS.

205



THE OLD POST OFFICE, IN LOMBARD STREET, ABOUT 1800.

66-VOL. II.



CASSELL'S OLD & NEW LONDON, PLATE 13.

THE NEW POST-OFFICE SAVINGS BANK. (ST MARTIN'S-LE-GRAND)

TIME IN THE CLEAR

Reference books generally agree on the introduction of time in the clear for the date stamps, although the exact date is carefully avoided in most, being given as ' late 1894 ' or ' mid 1895 '. The notice reproduced below is dated 4th. December, 1894 and although it is a little ambiguous " With reference to previous instructions....", there seems to be proof positive by use of the future tense in stating " shall be replaced ".

Now let members set to and provide some early dated examples.

Circular to Surveyors and Selected Postmasters.

No. 29.

Reg. No. 15,286—94.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, LONDON,

4th December, 1894.

DATE STAMPS—CODE LETTERS TO BE REPLACED
BY CLOCK TIME.

SIR,

WITH reference to previous instructions on the subject the Postmaster General has decided that in all cases of new or altered date stamps the code letters at present used to indicate the time of stamping shall be replaced by plain figures showing clock time to the nearest quarter of an hour, *e.g.*, 10.15 a.m., 5.30 p.m.

It is intended that this change shall be carried out gradually, but the Postmaster General will be prepared to incur a moderate expenditure for the purpose of bringing the new system into operation without much delay at the large Provincial Offices.

Therefore, in all future requisitions for Stamps, the times to be indicated should be stated to the nearest quarter of an hour.

I am,

SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

S. WALPOLE,

Secretary.

G & S [3800] 400 11/94

Notice provided by Reg Sanders, many thanks. Ed.

—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—

TWOPENNY POST - TRANSFER STAMPS

In the London catalogue, three of the stamps in the section dealing with the marks on transfer from the General Post to the Twopenny Post (L 690 to 692). These cover the period from 1830 to 1839. General Post letters delivered in the Country Area had been subject to a 2d. delivery charge, this dating from the 1801 increase in rates which gave the service its name (imposed by general public use rather than official origination). There is no such charge specified in the Act but it appears to have been accepted by tradition and custom without protest until 1829. As far as we are aware the first expression of disapproval by the public was in the form of a letter to the " Times ". This pointed out the charge was not supported by the Postal Authorities by means of a charge mark. Such was the power of the paper in those distant days, in January 1830 the framed T.P./Rate 2 (L 690) was put into service.



According to the record, this first stamp was in use between 1830 and 1836, and was always struck in black. Readers will have to accept the fact that the item shown above refutes this assertion, being struck in the red-brown common to the time stamps of the day.

It originated in Pilltown, a village in Kilkenny and carries the appropriate endorsement across the top, with PILLTOWN struck in red, later overstruck by both the FREE and charge stamps. Posted, according to the inscription on the 29th. August, 1831, it arrived in London to receive the FREE datestamp for 1st. September and, en route to its address, Hyde Park Place, went to the Twopenny Office.

In the absence of any number of these transfer stamps recorded in red-brown, although an interesting and amusing item to add to ones collection, to be honest this must be regarded as a ' Fred ', merely demonstrating one cannot be totally positive in describing any stamp as being struck exclusively in one color or another. There will always be a ' Fred ' to prove the contrary.

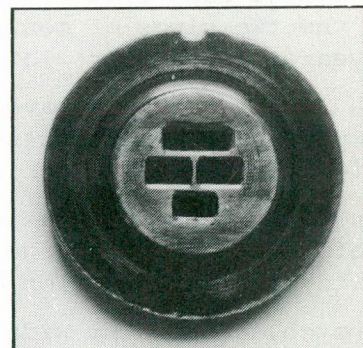
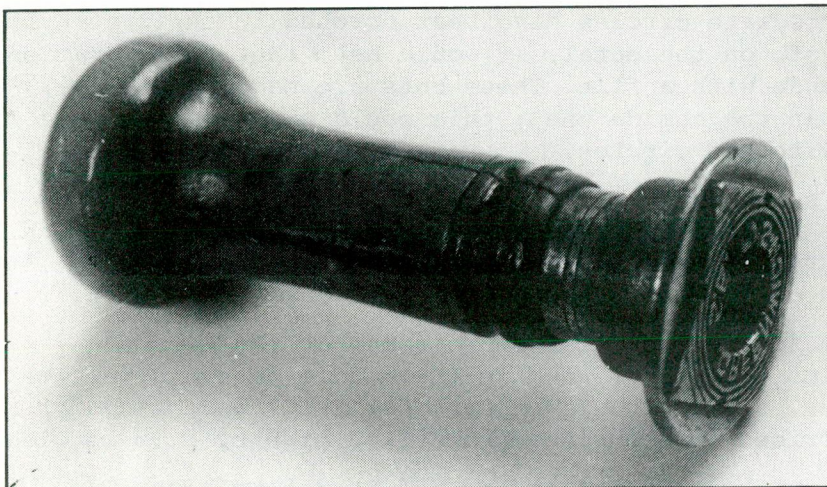
However, if a reader can produce further examples and some valid postal reason for the use of red-brown rather than black, the Editor will be delighted to add to the information for the write up on this item.

The **GREENWICH·S.O./S.E. Squared Circle Handstamp**, by Maurice Barette.

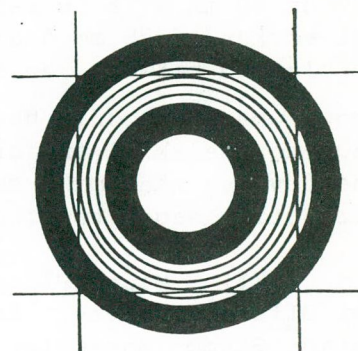
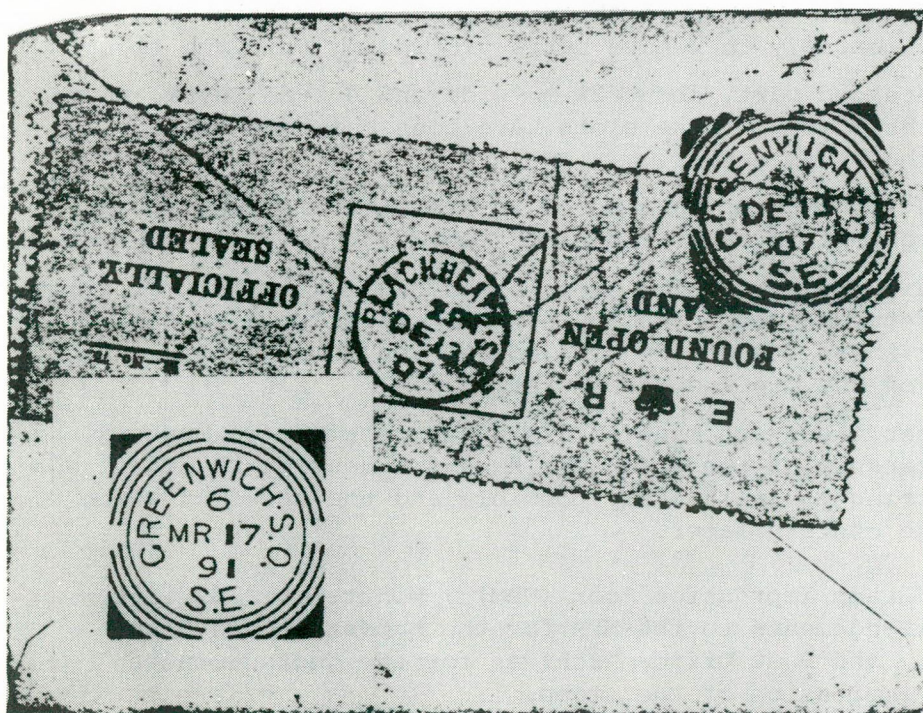
This handstamp is the only one Squared Circle device still in existence ; it is kept in the National Postal Museum and I am grateful to the Curator and his assistant for their kind permission to examine it and take some photographs. The die is quite worn out, which is not surprising, as this stamp has been struck in the Proof Impression Book on 17th March 1891 ; its first recorded usage is 4th July 1891 and it has been reported up to 24th December 1913. What is strange, on the contrary, is that so few strikes have turned up, and the small amount of them does not allow to ascertain which has been the usage of this stamp.

Such a handstamp is composed of three parts :

- A head or die on which are engraved or cut out the features and letters of the stamp ; this die shows a threaded part for fixation to the stock or handle and four rectangular slots for inserting the type slugs of codes and dates.
- Moveable type slugs, which now are standard to all handstamps. In that time, recutting of the dies resulted in reducing the thickness of their heads and type slugs had to be fitted to lengths adjusted to each die (1). The set of plugs appertaining to this very handstamp has not been left with it. These pieces have a square or rectangular section with a flange to clamp them between the die and the handle.



Present state of die



Probable original
lathe work and cuts

The GREENWICH•S.O./S.E. Squared Circle Handstamp..

- A wooden handle with a brass collar and a tapped socket for screwing on the die.

The die is a disc about 39 mm wide and 8 mm thick. The "stamp" side is still about 1.5 mm thick but the angles of the square are very worn down. This part seems to have been made from a cylindrical piece of metal - from mere sight, it is not possible to tell if it was taken from a rod, made of cast steel or wrought iron. A technological approach of the manufacture should suppose the following steps :

- The rough part should have been placed on a lathe to groove the "white circles" of the stamp and a central recess, now 3 mm deep and 13 mm wide. The metal surface was left untouched on a portion comprised between circles of 13 and 20.5 mm (the place for the letters of the name), on the circles of the stamp, which now measure about 22, 24.5, 27 and 29 mm, and on the circumference, from a circle of 32 mm, in which the angles of the square will be cut.

- This circular stamp was cut square by filing (about 26 mm) ; the work seems to have been done by hand as the tool marks are not parallel as should be those made by a machine ; but this is not certain, as the die being worn out, the lines may have been distorted, and anyhow, the stamp may have been repaired during its period of use.

- The filing work has formed the four angles of the square and changed the outside circle into four arcs. The two intermediate circles have been notched in their turn to obtain further arcs. From marks left on the metal, it would seem that the operation was performed with a chisel rather than with a file. These cuts are made on a bevel, the inside circle being less sunk than the outside one ; this could explain that some stamps getting worn showed strikes with two circles.

As we are on the subject, it can be supposed that the scarce Squared Circle Type 4 of Stitt Dibden (four circles), Type 5 (3 circles and 1 arc) and unrecorded type with 2 circles and 2 arcs (Stanley Cohen type VI) could have been produced accidentally at that stage by an abnormal cutting or absence of cutting of the outside circles.

- The recess is pierced through with four rectangular slots : one at the top, to accommodate code letters or clear time type slugs, two in the middle part, to receive each the two slugs of months and days, one in the lower part for the figure slugs of the years. These four slots are inscribed in a surface about 11.2 high by 12.5 mm wide.

- The letters seem to have been cut out by hand ; they are 3.4 to 3.5 mm high. The bottom of the central recess does not show any lathe marks, but seems to be rough as if retouched with a chisel, possibly to remove burrs protruding from the slots.

- The back of the die has a threaded part, about 21 mm wide and 4.5 mm thick, where the aforesaid slots emerge ; the rims of these slots have been chamfered with a file to make introduction of the slugs easier.

- A notch, about 3 mm wide and 1.5 mm deep is grooved in the circumference of the die to show the stamper the right position of the handstamp.

The handle is about 95 mm high ; the part which is taken in hand has a maximum diameter of about 40 mm ; it is made of turned wood fixed by a brass collar to a circular steel socket of 25 mm diameter where the die is screwed on. The moveable type slugs were clamped between the base of the die and the socket.

Anyhow, whatever could have been the exact manufacture of the stamps, we must pay homage to the skill and craftsmanship of these men who have produced by the thousands these devices that make collecting postal history possible and the marks of which we are still eager to study one century later.

(1) - Mount Pleasant Stamp Impression Book (NPM) ; Minute M.13342/1932 (Post Office Archives). Acknowledgements to the NPM for the handstamp and Mount Pleasant Stamp Impression Book, and Post Office Archives for the quoted minute and illustration of the proof impression of the stamp.

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30TH.APRIL, 1983

<u>INCOME</u>		£	£	£
	Subscriptions due	953.00		
	less in arrears	<u>185.00</u>		
		768.00		
635.20	add 1980/81 arrears received	<u>40.54</u>	808.54	
80.00	Packet (nett)		69.63	
3.50	Donations		8.41	
49.93	Auctions		303.61	
37.41	Interest from Building Societies		<u>9.66</u>	1199.85
	Publications : Sales	980.33		
	Stock @ 1 May 1982	1720.50		
	Additions @ cost	50.00		
	Stock @ 30 April 1983	(1146.50)		
	Cost of Sales	<u>624.00</u>		
69.00	Nett Income From Sales			<u>356.33</u>
				1556.18
<u>EXPENSES</u>				
74.00	Meetings	126.00		
848.87	Notebook	909.66		
158.62	Printing, postage, sundries	177.36		
3.51	Bank Charges	6.31		
7.50	Programmes	-		<u>1219.33</u>
(217.46)	Surplus(Deficit)			<u>£ 336.85</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30TH. APRIL, 1983

<u>ACCUMULATED FUND</u>				
1621.72	Balance @ 1st.May,1982		1409.23	
4.97	arrears recovered		37.72	
(217.46)	Surplus(Deficit) for the year		<u>336.85</u>	
1409.23	Balance @ 30th.April, 1983			1783.80
<u>276.03</u>	LOANS FOR PUBLICATIONS			<u>279.03</u>
<u>1685.26</u>				<u>2062.83</u>
<u>REPRESENTED BY -</u>				
71.79	Cash and Bank		513.04	
13.87	Stamp Float		-	
95.58	Nationwide Building Society		604.74	
<u>4.89</u>	Abbey National Building Society		<u>5.39</u>	
186.13	Cash Resources			1123.17
191.14	Debtors and Prepayments		54.09	
1720.50	Stock and Publications and Binders		1146.50	
1.00	Library (nominal)		<u>1.00</u>	1201.59
				<u>2324.76</u>
	less: Creditors:Notebook	150.00		
	Subs in Advance	110.00		
	Others	<u>1.93</u>		<u>261.93</u>
<u>413.51</u>				<u>2062.83</u>
<u>1685.26</u>				

These Accounts have been compared with the books and vouchers and presents a true and fair statement of the affairs of the Group

R. PARKIN, F.C.A.

REG SANDERS
Hon.Treasurer
AIB,FFTCOM,FCOM, FRECONS
14th.May,1983

Edited by Peter Forrestier Smith
24 Dovercourt Road,
Dulwich, London, SE22 8ST

NOTEBOOK

IN THIS ISSUE.....

A long time ago a member sent a copy of " The London Postal Service of To-Day " by R.C. Tombs, Controller. The dating is 1891, so one may presume the Jubilee celebrations provided the inspiration for the work.

At first it had been the intention of publishing a few pages at a time with each issue of " Notebook ". On reflection this clearly had disadvantages so your Editorial Board of three, with two apologies for absence, decided to print the book in one double issue of " Notebook ".

The reader will find the writer has managed to include a great many nuggets of very useful postal history woven into much social history, itself of no small interest and which shapes the Postal Service.

We are sure even those who may not collect the immediate period of the book will find much of interest and entertainment.

Extra copies are to be printed for sale to non-members as part of the general publications.

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

PLEASE note in your diary:

July 21st. The annual auction lists are now at the printers and provide several hours carefull scrutiny and hefty bidding !!

September 15th: Free and Official Paid. Stimulated by John Scott's " Official Franking 1800 - 1840 " members will no doubt be able to show a useful range of this material, which will cover both before and after the limitation of dating in the title.

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING...was held on the 19th.May. Although LPHG from the start of its life has held meetings on the third Saturday, more and more Societies seem to have transferred their major meetings to the same day. To try and resolve this we hope to move, for the May AGM next year, to the 2nd Saturday, the 11th. Would readers, who are members also of other major Societies, pass on this to their Secretaries: it would be not unusual to learn others have taken the same action!

Speaking of Secretaries, Tony Potter has had to give up this task so usefully undertaken for a number of years and the Editor has added this to his work on the magazine. This, and other AGM matters, are reported overleaf.

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

Readers will require little reminding that Notebook is made up of their contributions. Many do provide ' copy ', be it a short note or comment or a many page article. There are others who, for some reason have not been able to contribute. As several unwitting contributors have discovered, when they have written in with a postal history query, both the question and answer have appeared as an article. Surely those who have not, thus far been in print, have at least a tiny query ? Please think about it.

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

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The LPHG are well known for the speed and brevity of their AGM. This year, however, set something of a record.

Our Chairman sent his apologies as he was fishing in Scotland, presumably as a just reward for his recently published work on Wales (a man of many interests). The Treasurer advised that the Auditor had, for reasons not related to contents or presentation, been unable to complete the audit and so no accounts were available. The major matter of immediate concern was the advice that the Treasurer saw no cause to seek an increase in subscriptions this year. On that point readers will find a standing order mandate or, if you prefer, a simple Giro transfer form.

Already mentioned was the news that Tony Potter had resigned his post as Secretary and that the Editor had taken on these duties.

During 1983 there had been two further Group publications. A revised Part IV of Section J of the Handbook, dealing with the Branch Offices and a very useful introduction to section J, a map of the London Postal District with its sub-divisions, originally issued in 1856. Outside the Group, but with the help of a number of our members, Stanley Cohen published the first part of the intended nation wide cover of Squared Circles, this dealing with London Suburban District Offices.

John Parmenter remains our Chairman and Reg Sanders our Hon.Treasurer. The Committee comprises those members attending the meeting at which a committee meeting is felt necessary.

Having established something of a record for casual presentation, fragmentation and brevity, the AGM was concluded. The publications record included above is just for information.

HANDBOOK BINDERS

We have now finished the sale of binders from stock and have re-ordered. Since the stock was a few years old, with a price to match, members must expect an increase in the price with the arrival of further supplies. They will still be much less expensive than similar quality and capacity items on sale in stationers and will continue to be very good value for money.

PACKET LETTER " BAGGING " DATE STAMP

Michael Scott-Archer is researching these marks and urgently asks that all members with any examples send him full details. From, to, date, color, rates etc and, if you can manage, a photocopy.

The example of the Devonport bag date stamp we show here is the only example the Editor has.

His example with 'N' in the centre fulfilled a different duty. It comes on an entire from Switerland to London and is clearly a Swiss Naval mark. Even those which do not appear to be maritime connected to be recorded and advised please.

Address: Pen Melin, Upper Llangynidr, Crick Howell, Powys NP 8 1NW

