

NOTEBOOK

IN THIS ISSUE.....

- page 2 Notice of Annual General Meeting
The Jubilee of Uniform Penny Postage 1890, by A.J. Kirk
- 3 Packet Secretary's Report
- 4 Office Initial Stamps of the London District Post, from Michael Jackson
A Major Prestamp Discovery - transcript of notice
- 5 Instructional Stamps of the Foreign Office, from Grace Dove
- 6 Interpostal '88
- 7 Skeletons in the Cupboard
- 8 Postal District / EC Envelope, from Simon Burke
- 9 Machine Shudders, from E. Webb
Three From The Pot - owner discovered !
- 10 Out of Date Redirection, by Simon Burke
- 12 Manuscript 'A' in the Twopenny Post, from Robert Preston
- 14 Improperly Posted, Robert Preston
For Sale.....
- 15 The Post From Hampton Court, by Keith Romig
- 16 London's Post Before Penny Postage, by F.H.D. Bushnell

© 1988 LPHG/Contributor

Editor : Peter Forrestier Smith,
24 Dovercourt Road, Dulwich, London SE22 8ST

EDITORIAL.....

All Editors suffer from the problem of constantly being in search of material to fill the magazine pages with something which will be of interest to the readers. This is true for older established journals as well as comparative newcomers, though with over seventeen years publishing behind us, quite where we fit into this is not certain. There is a starter for the next issue but it would be useful to have a contribution about a local area, Alf Kirk's Southwark material is a good example, and there are several others who do have local collections, so please do send in a report of your material and share it with all of us.

To improve the quality of Notebook, the purchase of a WP is to be made during the year as and when the Editor has settled into his new home, about which more when it happens, as we have no wish to tempt the gremlins which seemingly infest such transactions, let alone the two fingered typed pages of Notebook.

The A G M will be on Saturday September 17th at 2.30 p.m. at the Union Jack Club, Waterloo.

Agenda

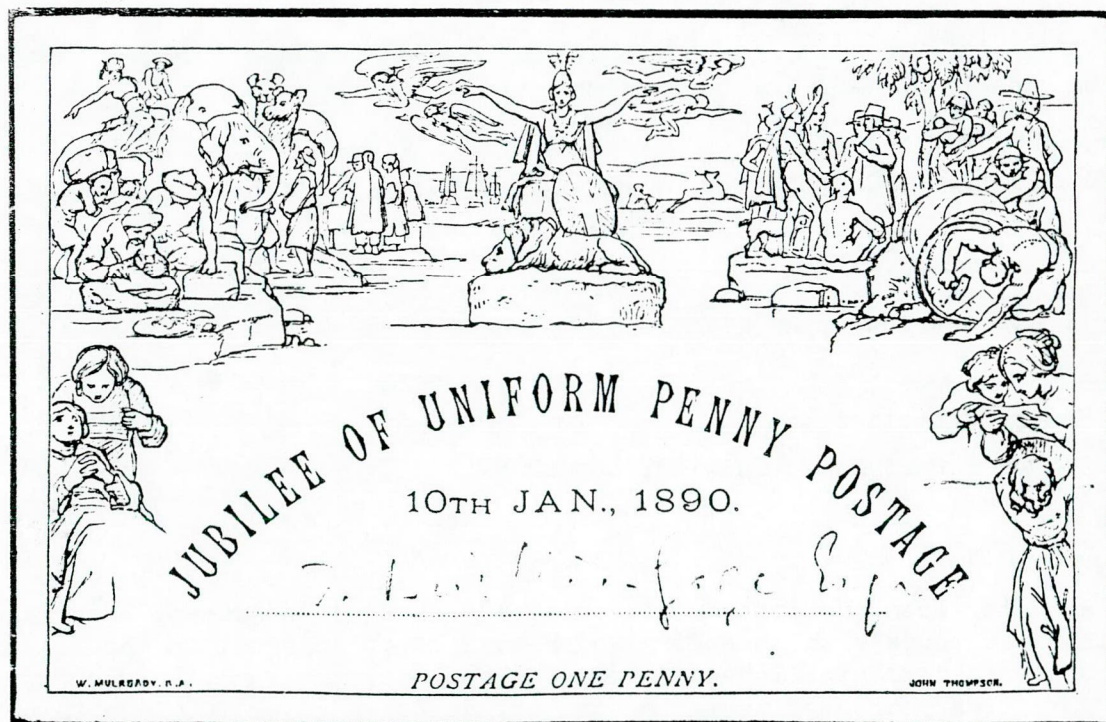
1. Chairman's Report
2. Hon. Treasurer's Report
3. Hon. Packet Secretary's Report
4. Hon. Secretary's Report (in this issue of Notebook)
5. Election of Officers (as above)
6. Appointment of Hon. Auditor
7. Proposals Programme 1989
8. Any Other Business.

The AGM will be followed by

STAMPS USED OTHER THAN AS CANCELLATIONS FROM 1857

If it does not cancel an adhesive, please bring it to the meeting (subject does not include charge and explanatory marks unless themselves cancelled by the stamp, e.g. 50 diamond cancelling PD marks).

THE JUBILEE OF UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE 1890 by A.J. Kirk



With the centenary of the Jubilee celebrations just two years away and the exhibition of the decade looming at the same time, the photocopy of a ' place card ' used at the Post Office dinner held at the Holborn Restaurant in May 1890. I understand only three hundred were issued, which by any standard must make these distinctly scarce. It was truly a postal affair with Mr. Raikes, the Post Master General in the chair.

The name is rather faint but appears to be " T. Baillie - Gage '.

PACKET SECRETARY'S REPORT

87/3

YEAR ENDED 30TH. APRIL, 1988

The packet has been very active during the year with all of the regular contributors providing material and, plus a quantity received from an outside source, some 16 packets were filled. There are currently 7 on circuit with a good stock left to produce some more. Nevertheless, material of all kinds is still required to add to the variety of the packets.

Our biggest problem during the year has been insurance, which has become so costly with the recognised companies that when renewal was due half way through the year it was decided to operate our own fund, which you will see stands at £64.78 at the end of the year. Both subscribers and vendors contribute to the fund and it expected a full year at the current rate will nett £100 towards this. In addition there will be the profit to the Group bearing printing, stationery and postage costs only. It is anticipated a reprint of both the remittance advices and labels due in this year will cost about £60.

Brian SmithPackets Completed Year Ended 30th. April, 1988

Ref	Insurance Received	Sales	Commission	Expenses	Profit
	£	£	£	£	£
1/87	2.00	74.50	8.94	1.91	7.03
2/87	2.00	102.20	12.26	2.13	10.13
3/87	2.00	77.75	9.33	2.05	7.28
4/87	2.20	62.60	7.50	1.65	5.85
5/87	2.13	56.75	6.80	1.88	4.92
6/87	1.87	81.32	9.74	2.89	6.94
7/87	1.90	135.95	16.31	1.95	14.36
8/87	3.37	71.95	7.19	1.91	5.28
9/87	3.51	80.75	8.07	2.00	6.07
10/87	6.58	129.20	12.92	3.00	9.92
11/87	7.75	152.56	15.24	4.10	11.14
12/87	7.21	135.20	13.52	2.40	11.12
13/87	4.71	60.55	6.04	1.70	4.34
14/87	6.41	100.40	10.04	2.47	7.57
1/88	5.24	111.95	11.19	2.40	8.79
2/88	5.90	65.15	6.51	2.45	4.06
	<u>64.78</u>	<u>1500.78</u>	<u>161.60</u>	<u>36.80</u>	<u>124.80</u>

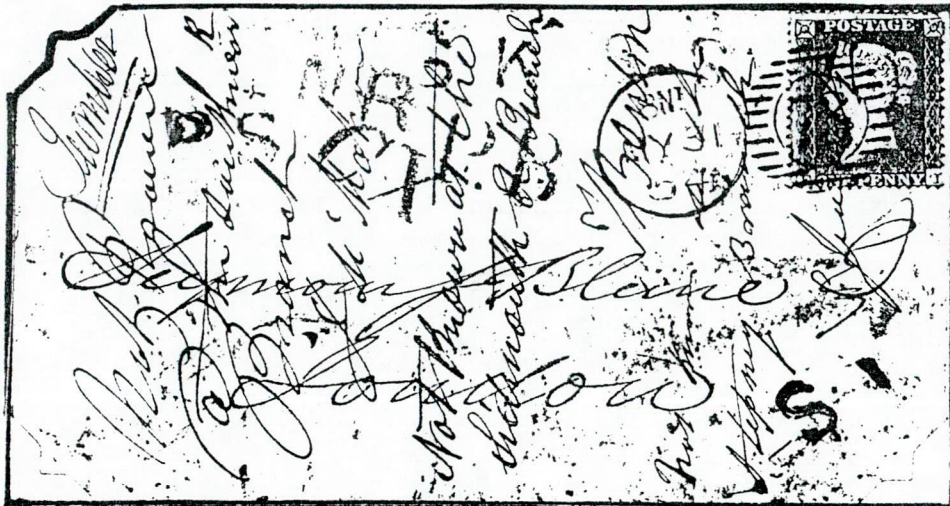
Balance per Bank Statement		592.26
Less unrepresented cheques	138	14.71
	139	42.29
		<u>57.00</u>
		<u>£535.26</u>

Represented By:

Monies received on account (including insurance)

packet	3/88	49.75	
	4/88	81.80	
	5/88	126.65	
	6/88	57.65	
	7/88	29.60	
		<u>345.45</u>	
Insurance Fund			64.78
Due to LPHG			118.92
Packet Secretary			6.11
			<u>£535.26</u>
Commission			161.60
LESS Postage etc	36.80		
Packet Boxes	5.88		<u>42.68</u>
Nett to LPHG			<u>£118.92</u>

The item here comes from the Lillywhite collection and must be the most stamped in captivity and apart from all the stamps has a fine collection of endorsements.



The original cancellation is for 8NT MY 31 54 duplex 73 with the rather short address of " Seymour J Bleine Esqr., London " with the following endorsements and Office Initial stamps:

" Not known at the Southwark Branch.J.McMahon "	S K - Southwark
" Not known at the Sidmouth St Branch.F.Benson "	S S - Sidmouth Street
" Not known at the Stepney Branch.C.Jencock "	S Y - Stepney
" Not known at the Portland St Branch.F.Day "	P S - Portland Street
" Not known at the Chief Office.C.Bowler "	
" Not known at the Charing Cross Branch.Wm.Tapping "	C X - Charing Cross
" Not known at Pimlico Branch.J. Sheahan "	P B - Pimlico Branch
" Not known at the North Row Office.E.Nash "	N R - North Row

The London time and date stamps on the reverse are far too numerous to identify and mostly obliterate each other. The only other handstamp is " Grays Inn " at which office the item was originally posted.

The use of the Office Initials for this purpose is unusual and in this quantity must be unique.

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

A MAJOR PRESTAMP DISCOVERY

The notice appearing on page 86.3 was far from clear and several members have asked for a transcription.

PENNY - POST OFFICE

IT being apprehended that all Miscarriages of Penny-Post Letters are imputed to Negligence in the Office, whereas Directions frequently cannot be made out, especially to Persons in Lodgings for want of their Landlord's Name, or Sign, as also many Letters are refused on account of paying the Second Penny due on Delivery according to Act of Parliament. Now as a Proof of the Attention paid to the Correspondence of the Public, all Letters returned by the Letter Carriers after Three Days Inquiry will be sent back, as the inclosed is, to the Writer, gratis, if His or Her Place of Residence can be discovered, to the end that in case the Reason alledged on the Reverse of the Cover does not appear satisfactory, the Writer may have an Opportunity by complaining to this Office of discovering where the Fault lays.

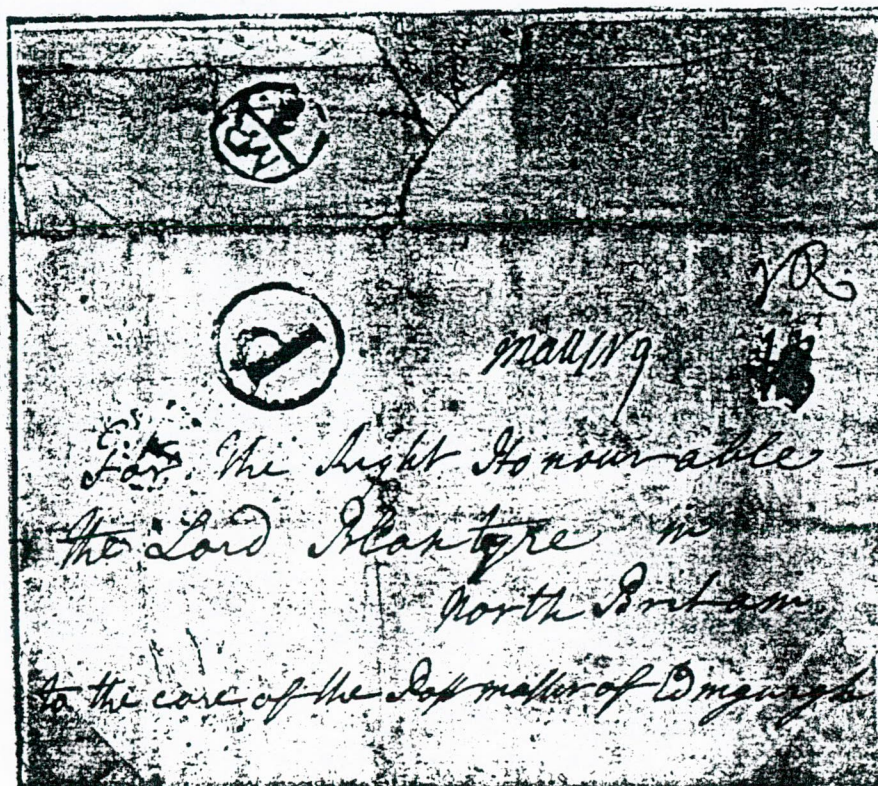
By Order of the Comptroller

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

Recently I added to my Foreign Office material with two interesting items, one of which is un-recorded and I would be delighted to learn of others extant to confirm its use.

According to Jay, the enclosed P was in use from 1726 to 1798, albeit it with a recorded usage gap between 1736 and 1796 and with the late use being a rather larger size. They are all, apparently, recorded on letters from Spain and Portugal to, or passing through, London. The example shown here confirms this pattern with a quite delightful address to Lord Blantyre in North Britain, passing through London. The letter is also of great interest as these few details reveal:

The letter is headed " Mahon " from Minorca (first occupied by Britain in 1715) and mentions "...my travels in Egypt and the Holy Land....I was twice robb'd by the ArabsI was shipwrecked.....I was stripp'd almost naked by ye Country people at my getting ashore.....and was carried as far as Cadiz our of my way homewards...."



There is a mss endorsement " inall1N9 ", unusually initialled and the London Foreign Bishop on the reverse. The " to the care of the Postmaster of Edinburg " notation is worth a mention. There is a mss dating for 1718.

The second item, illustrated overleaf, looks better in color for this would show the stamps to advantage. It is dated 1828, originated in Belgium and addressed to Hercules Buildings, Lambeth, London, endorsed " Franco Ostende " with a " BRUSSEL / FRANCO " mark in red alongside. On the reverse are the F(oreign) P(ost) O(ffice) cds and the Twopenny Post Chief Office timestamp for 12 noon, both for 21st. July, 1828. The letter is charged " 1/4 " - the standard incoming Belgium mail charge to central London.

In addition to all this is the hitherto un-recorded " F.P " in an ink which appears to match the very distinctive Twopenny Post timestamp. The use of this latter mark indicates the method of delivery and it is contended the FP is the equivalent of the well documented GP marks (L674 et seq) where letters were transferred from the General to the Twopenny Post for delivery and upon which no local charges were due.

[illegible]

While it pleasant for a collector to have a unique item, the use of this as a London mark would be welcome. There surely must be other examples, possibly unrecognised.

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

Although hardly a meaningful enquiry, would members drop a card to the Editor to say whether they knew the event was taking place and how they heard of it.

Or rather Travellers used in, for Travellers is, it is understood the official name for these temporary handstamps. Many years since, George Crabb produced a monograph on the subject but, as with all published works, as the years go by the information to be recorded accumulates. LPHG has not published much on these very collectable marks and one of our members has kindly offered to act as collator.



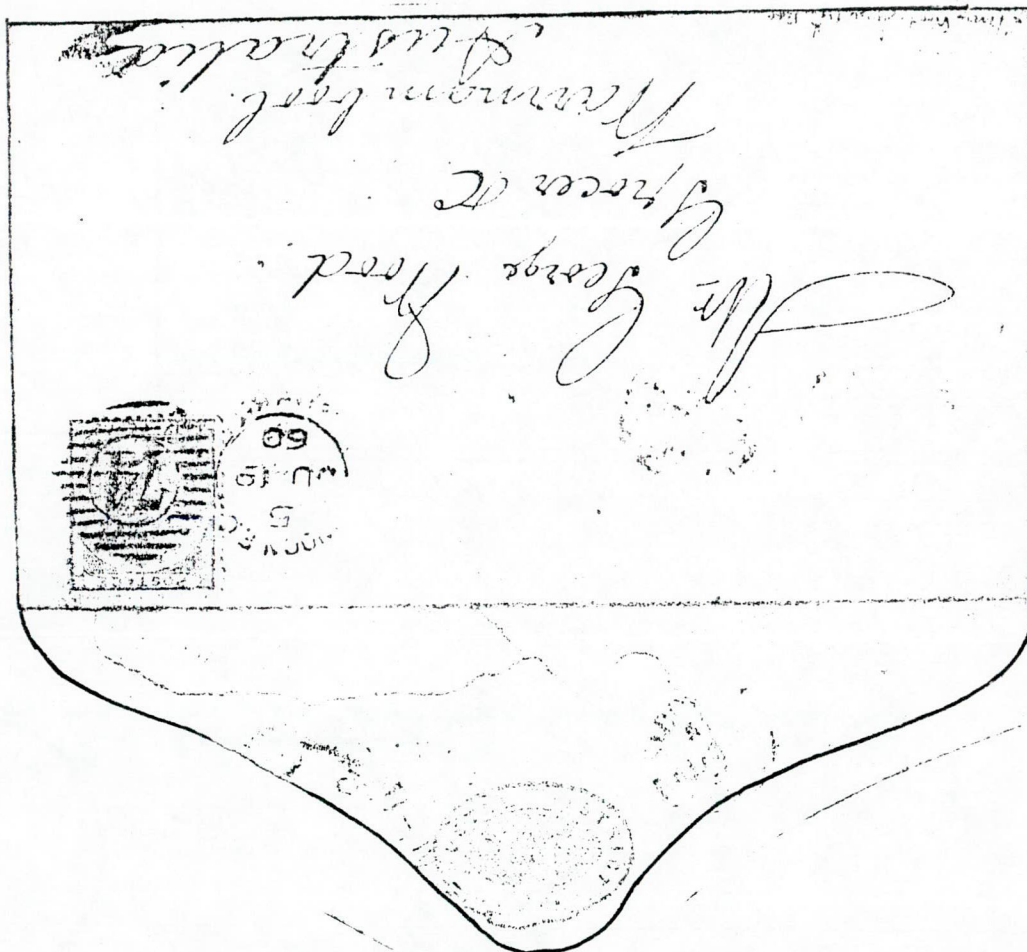
These two examples from Peckham in late May and early June 1911, both times showing 9.15 A.M. and the " 67 " of Peckham at the base of the stamp, appear on post cards addressed to Nunhead, rather than Peckham, which might account for the Peckham office applying a datestamp. Apart from the recording of these marks, the problem is to establish why they were used.

It is simple enough to know that, for some reason, the regular datestamp was not in use or had to be supplemented by another. The reason for the use would have been recorded in the Office Incident Book. These, however, have rarely survived, except where the postmaster failed to comply with regulations and forwarded completed volumes to regional HQ.

In the first instance, let LPHG record the stamps and perhaps, as a supplementary exercise, establish the reasons.

In the first instance would members forward details, including photocopies if at all possible, to the Editor.

In Notebook 16, Michael Champness contributed an article on the proposed district labels and envelopes relating to the introduction of the division of London into districts 1856/7. The proposals were not accepted by the Post Office for official production but were content to leave this to commercial enterprise. The envelopes had not been recorded in 1974 and neither the Museum nor Archives possessed an example. A used example dated June 19th, 1860 is shown below, which as a bonus appears to carry the endorsement " Henry Wood June 19th.1860 " ????



In view of the time lapse, it seems reasonable to reprint the abstracts from the PMG Minutes No. 6458:

1. The extensive use of such labels as Mr. Kelly suggests would no doubt greatly facilitate the operations of the Post Office, though I am somewhat inclined to think that to a person writing, it would be less trouble to give the District initials at the end of his address and add a few explanatory words (as for instance " Please address me as above ---") than to have to seek a label and affix it to his letter.
2. Be this as it may, I consider it undesirable for the Post Office to undertake to provide and distribute such labels. Should there be any extensive demand for them, a supply will doubtless be furnished by stationers, as a matter of business, and I am led to understand that Mr. Standford of Charing Cross (who supplied District maps for official use) intends issuing something of the kind.
3. The enclosed envelopes bearing the district initials on a coloured ground, which have been sent to me, shows the readiness with which the trade takes up such matters.

The PMG's note alongside reads: " I think we must trust to the Trade for supplying further facilities for the Public - the request to send a letter with a label to each of one's correspondents is one which would never be extensively complied with
Dec 26 1856 A (uckland) "

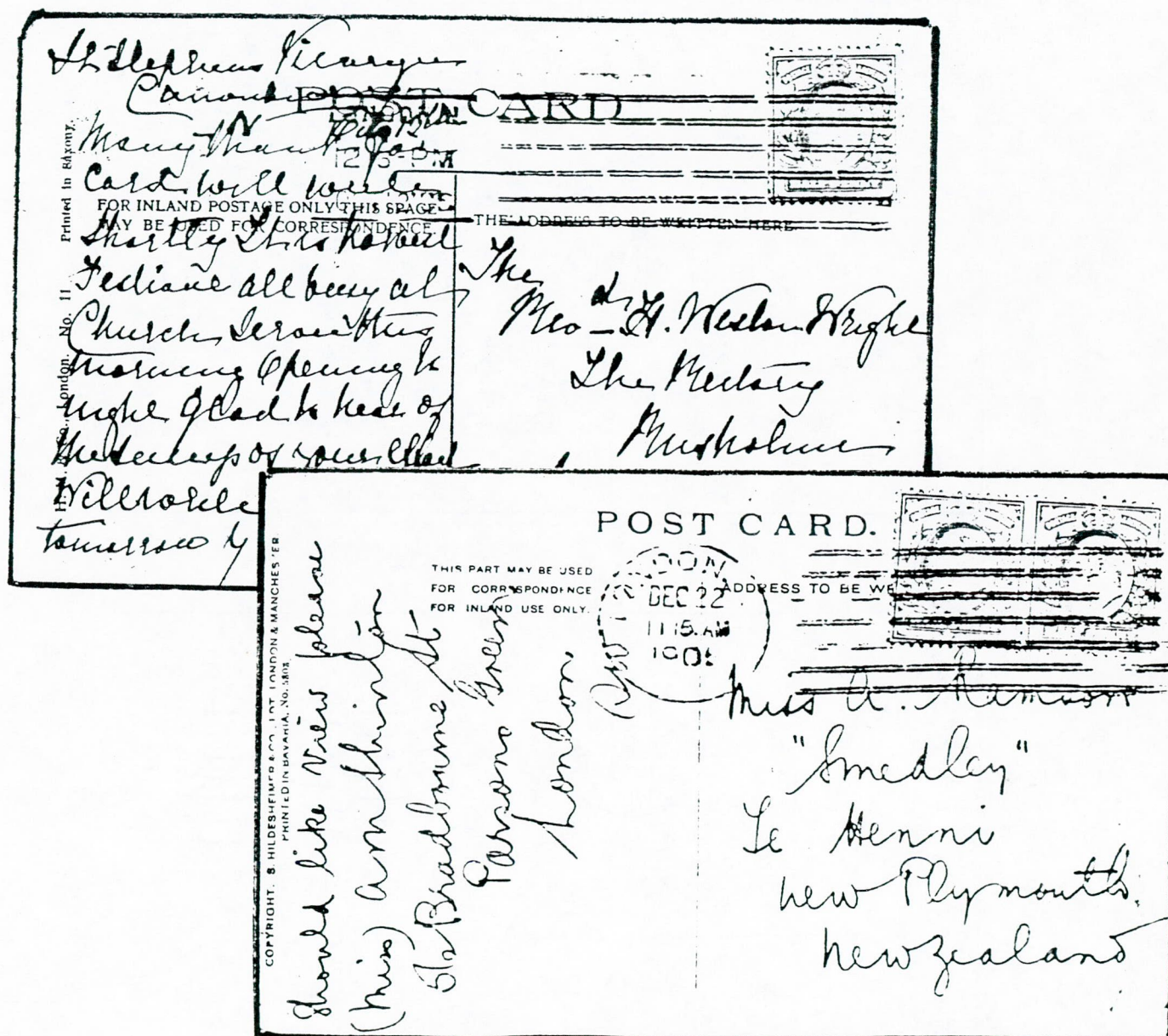
The matter was not allowed to rest, however, for a month later suggestions came from

Mr. Archer (minute 388 and M. le Lorief (minute 389) along the same lines. These too were turned down for the same reasons.

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

MACHINE SHUDDERS from R. Webb

Contrary to first impressions these two cancellations are neither dubbling of throughput nor hitherto unrecorded twin track cancellations but the result of a very curious " shudder ". However, if anyone can produce further examples and proof positive of a twin track cancellation, we will be pleased to record the evidence in " Notebook ".



THREE FROM THE POT.....

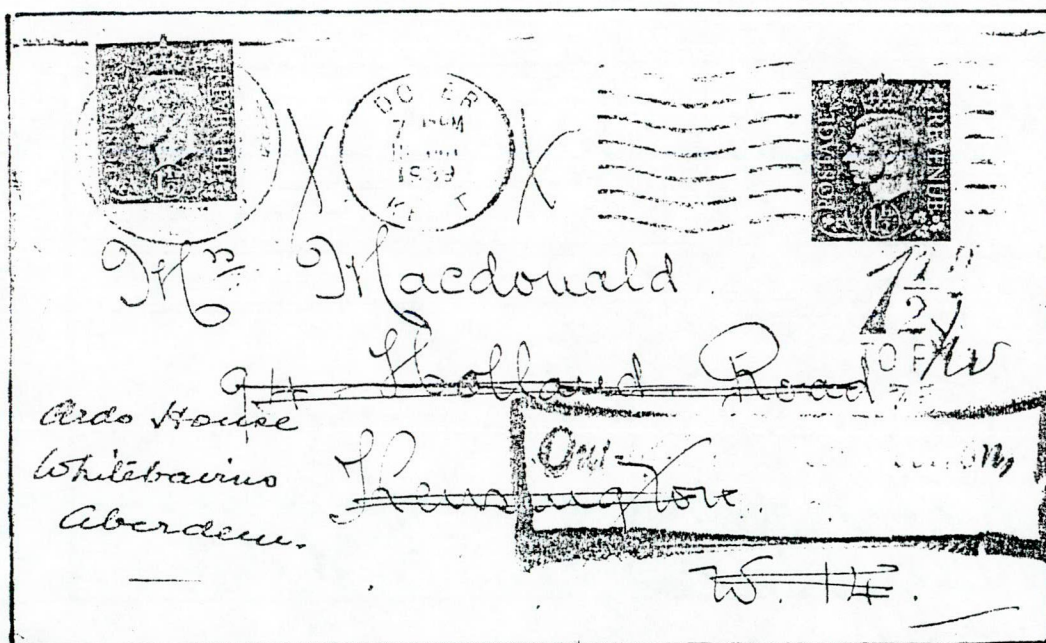
In Notebook 86/16, the material shown was from Martin Willcocks, to whom our thanks for the illustrations and advising ownership !

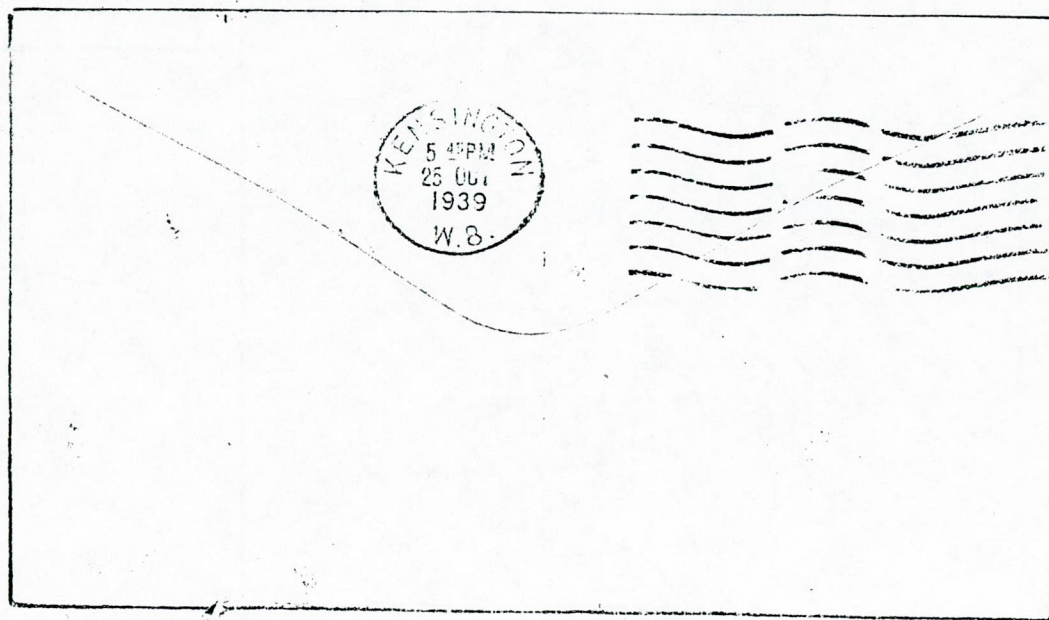
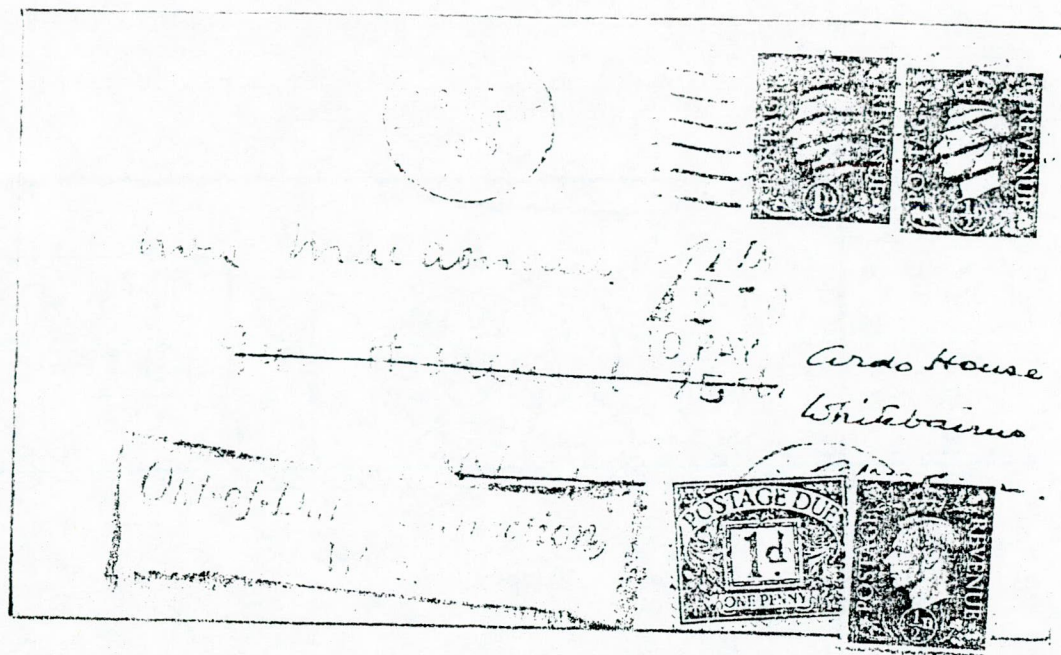
-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

The Post Office regulations on re-direction given in the current Guide have not altered over the years and read :

Letters, cards and newspapers are retransmitted by the same class of service in which they were originally posted, without additional charge, provided that the packet is re-posted not later than the day after delivery, Sundays and public holidays not being counted, and that it has not, previous to redirection, been opened or tampered with. If an adhesive label is used for the purpose of indicating the new address, the name of the original addressee must not be obscured, otherwise the packet will be liable to surcharge as unpaid.

Whether the Post Office would provide such interesting covers as those shown here if they discovered an infraction nowadays.



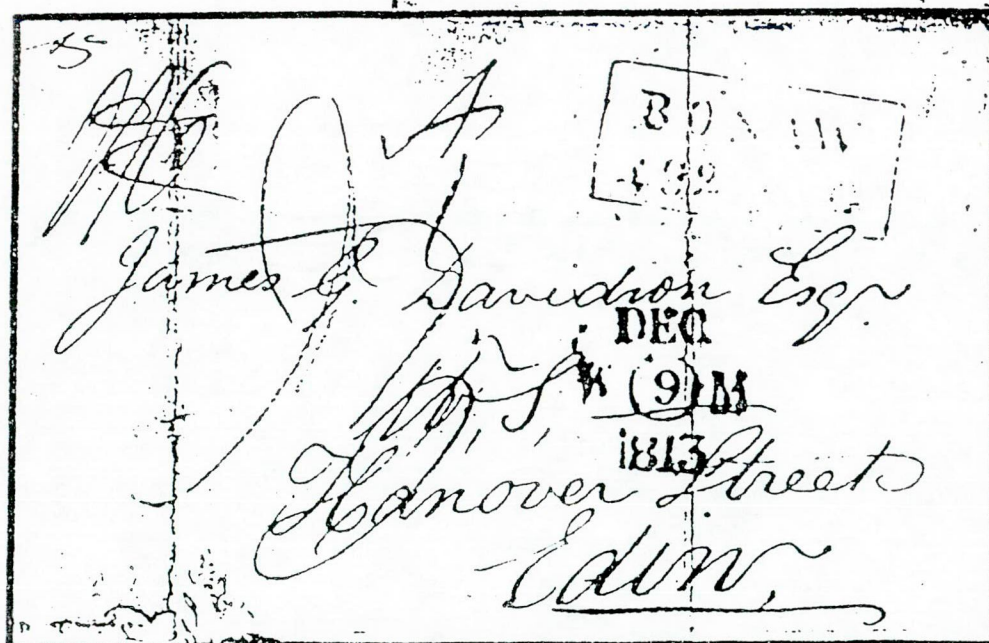
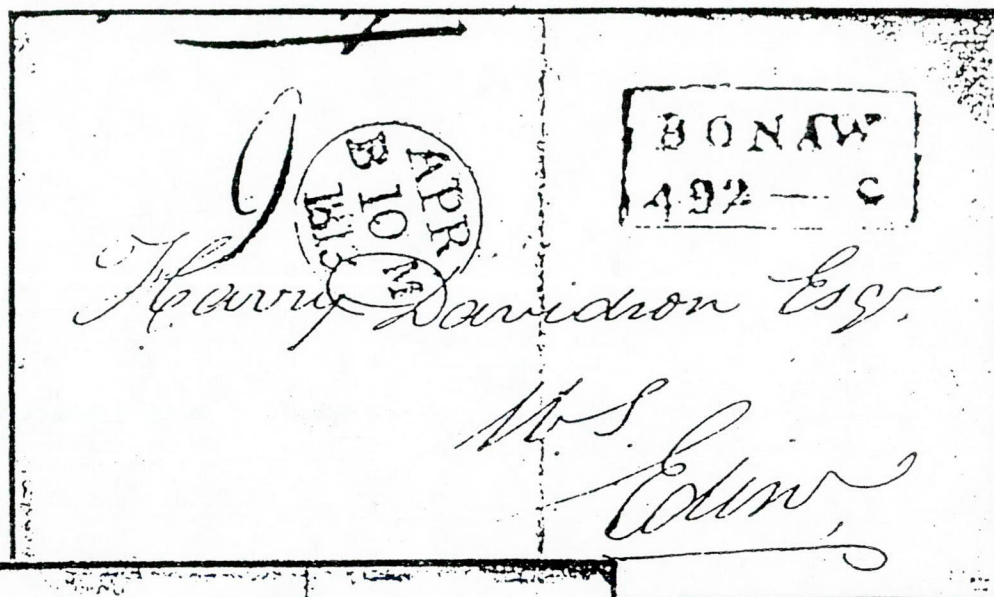


What adds greatly to the interest is the use of ordinary adhesives, one in combination with a postage due label, to record the charges on both letters, not in London (to judge by the positioning of the " combination " adhesives on the later cover).

Aberdonians do have a reputation !

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

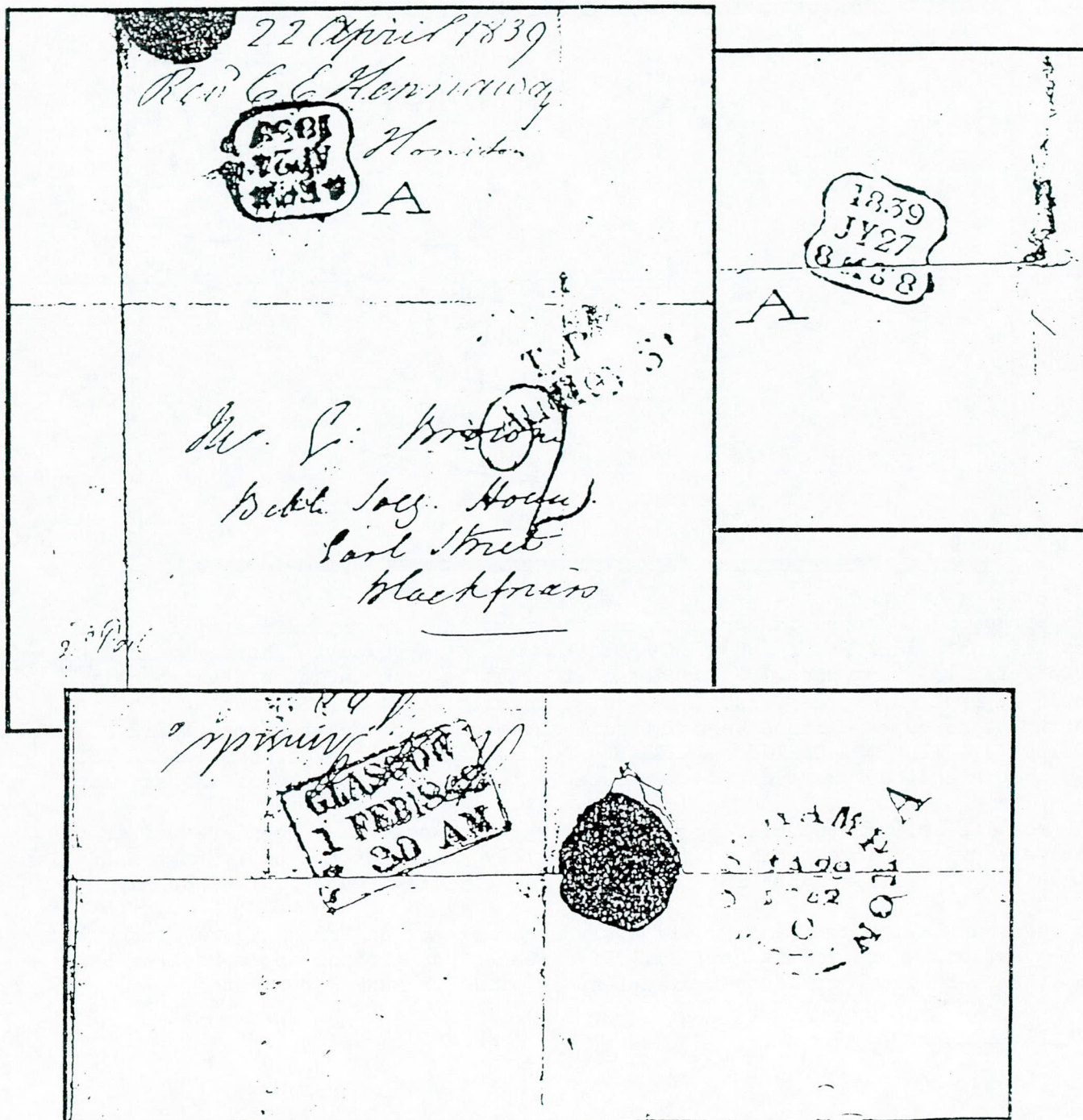
By way of introduction are two Scottish covers, Bonaw to Edinburgh in 1813, the first year of the additional halfpenny mailcoach tax. The first is without the extra, the second shows it. It may have been entered by the Bonaw postmaster to highlight this new fangled expense for the benefit of the more outraged postal user or it might have been an Edinburgh Inspector's initial.



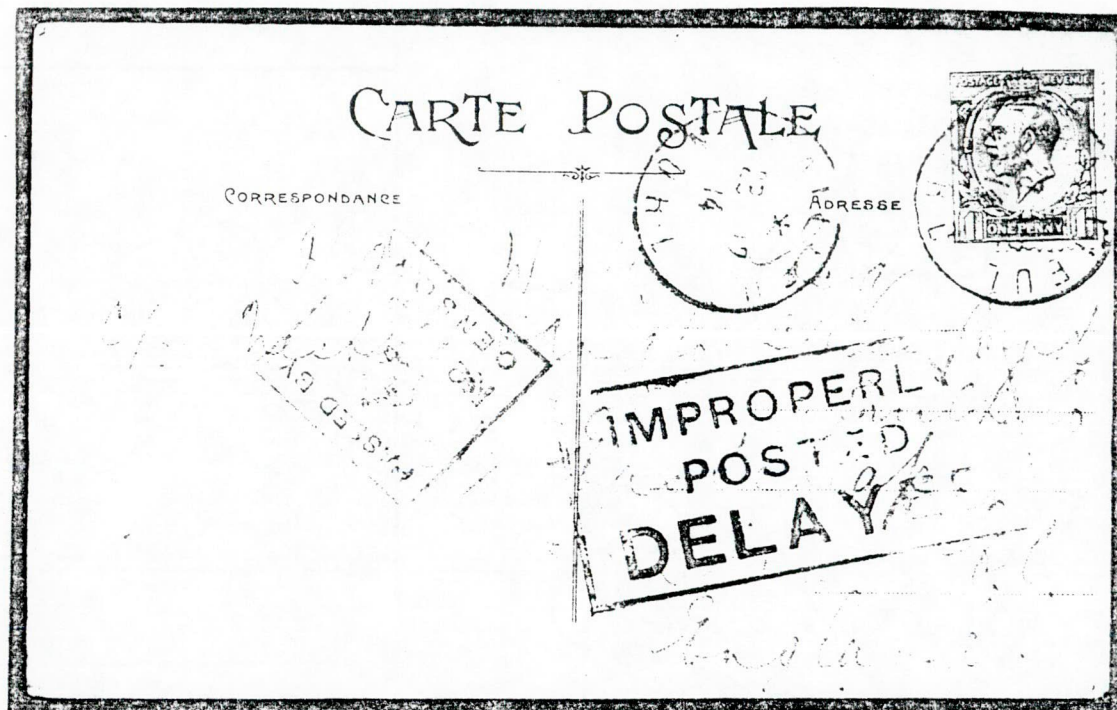
The two local London items also show an 'A', curiously neat and well drawn, not at all like the usual postal clerk's scrawl. These are both in 1839, both are addressed to Earl Street, Blackfriars and the mark is close to the time stamp. There is no obvious cause for either to have been the subject of the delaying attention of an Inspector.

Finally, a total red herring. A cover from Southampton to Glasgow, with an "A" next to the datestamp. In this case, it is attributed to a town sub-office receiving mark, although one might be inclined to link all three "A" marks into a common function.

The Editor attributes the Scots item to the reduction from 1/6 to 9d., the initial of the officer effecting the alteration. The two London items, either a precise bit of doodling or possibly "A"nswered. The Southampton one is already explained. More sympathetic explanations sought.



Robert Preston sends the photocopy of a French view card, posted in a French civilian post office, Bailleul, on the 28th. December, 1918 but bearing a GV 1d and addressed to London.



The censor mark showed it went through the British military mail system but where was the boxed IMPROPERLY / POSTED / DELAYED cachet applied? The delay is clearly attributed to being wrongly posted and it might be reasonable to presume this would be applied at the point this was discovered, that is, in France. It was fortunate to survive since Kennedy and Crabb show at cachet reading LETTER DESTROYED/ POSTED IN CIVIL POST OFFICE / CONTRARY TO REGULATIONS, though examples of this survive is another question !! (Presumably the actual letter, not the envelope ?)

Why would a soldier put a stamp on anyway when it would have been treated as on active service and cost him nothing? Possibly acting on the basis that a British adhesive was good anywhere and the use of the civilian post required prepayment?

It seems unlikely the French would apply a cachet not in French so we return to the question, where was it applied. If a reader can produce an impression book or other reference, or further examples, it would be much appreciated.

Robert Preston

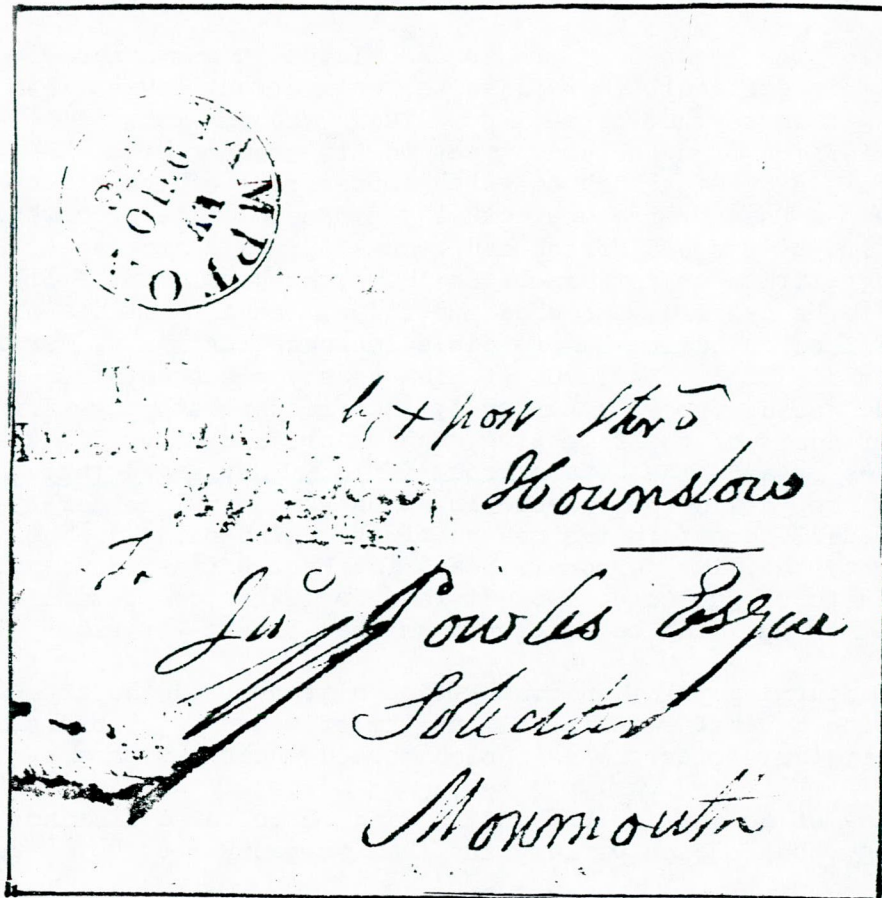
-O-O-O-O-O-

FOR SALE.....

A complete copy for Sunday, April 8, 1860 (Town Edition) of " BELL'S LIFE IN LONDON AND SPORTING CHRONICLE " comprising eight pages and a two page supplement, with a long and interesting reprint from the Times headed " The General Post Office ". Some damage to about four inches of one edge but apart from PO article, it is packed with life in London of nearly one hundred and thirty years ago.

Offers over £12 invited c/o the Editor please.....

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



The EL illustrated here is a " first " to me for it bears endorsements by the writer which clearly demonstrate he was aware of the facilities afforded by the Post Office.

On the front can be seen " by X post thro' Hounslow " and inside appears :

addm
"
Hampton Court
Hounslow
Dec 10 1838

The postal markings comprise the local receiving house, the unframed T.P Hampton Court, the framed Hounslow Py Post (Jay L 730, 1835-38) and the Hampton EV CSO for 10th. December, 1838.

The contents of the letter give a clue to the writer's source of knowledge of the postal services with a reference to the " next Turnpike Meeting " but it is likely delays had been experienced in his correspondence, hence the very precise instructions for the address.

Can readers provide further examples of the writer's understanding of the Cross and Bye Post facilities in and around London ?

reprinted from a Post Office magazine of 1895

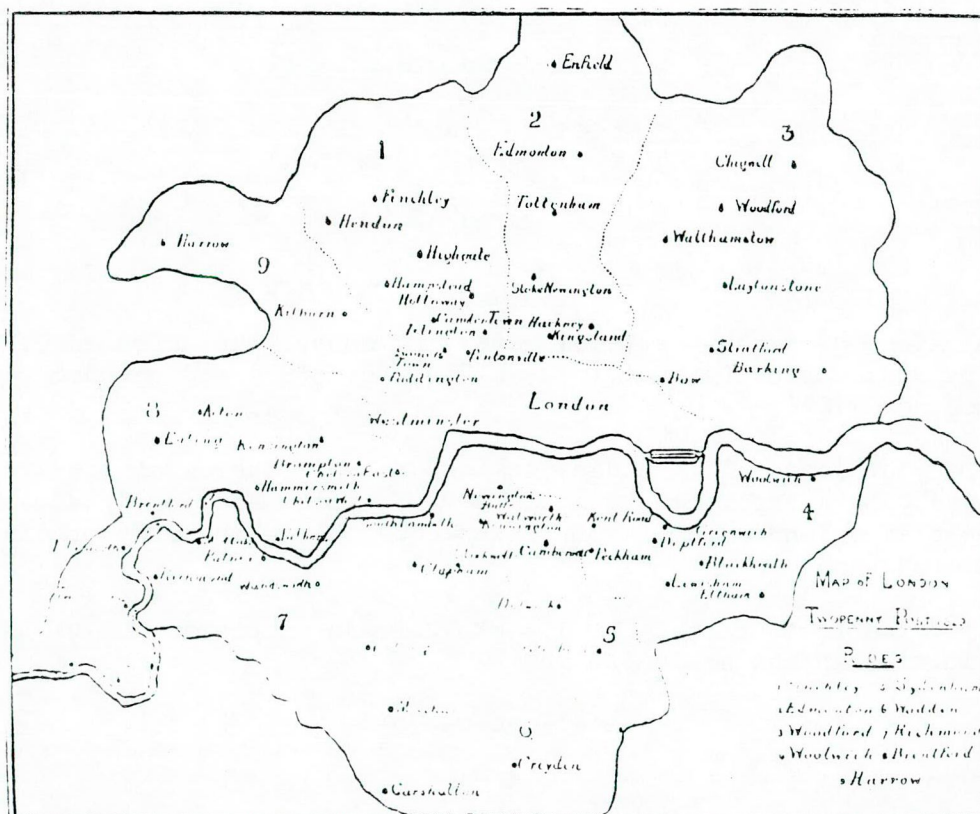
The headquarters of the Department are so associated in our minds with St. Martin's-le-Grand, that it is difficult to realise the connection between them is not of very long standing. Yet there must be many now living who can remember the removal of the General Post Office from Lombard Street to its present site, and the improvements in the thoroughfare and neighbourhood which formed part of the same scheme. Many years before the new Post Office was actually projected, the inconvenient situation and inadequate site of the old Office had become a public grievance; whilst, if we may judge from a petition to Parliament in 1809, the condition of St. Martin's-le-Grand left much to be desired. In their petition, the inhabitants of the Ward of Aldersgate complained in quaint but forcible language that "St. Martin's-le-Grand is so extremely narrow that the lives of His Majesty's subjects are constantly in great danger, and accidents often happen by the frequent stoppages of carriages, as the same will not admit of their passing each other, and great disturbances arise thereby," and, as regards the General Post Office, they urged that the Government should "promote the public convenience in a most essential manner by placing this grand National Establishment in the centre of the Metropolis." The scheme was taken up in 1815 by the City Corporation and the Post Office; and, with the expedition characteristic of public bodies, it was brought to completion within a period of 14 years, the new building being opened on the 23rd of September, 1829.

This date marks a turning point in Post Office history; and the organisation of the General Post Office at that time is well worthy of study as affording an insight into the postal system during the mailcoach period which was then passing away.

The Postal Service of London in 1829 was carried on in three distinct Departments; the Inland Office, the Foreign Office, and the Two-penny Post Department.

The two-penny Post Department performed the local service, and its operation extended for about 10 miles round, this area being divided into a town and a country district.

The town district was about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from north to south, and 7 miles from east to west; but the boundary, as will be seen from the accompanying map, was curiously irregular.



It touched the Serpentine on the west, and extended to Blackwall in the east; but it did not reach to the Angel in the north, nor to the New Kent Road in the south. It crossed the Goswell Road about a quarter of a mile south of the Angel, and, skirting the now almost forgotten Bagnigge Wells, it passed along the New Road (Euston Road) and took in the greater part of Regent's Park. The District was divided into the Westminster and London Divisions, which were served from the Head Offices at St. Martin's-le-Grand and Gerrard Street, the boundary line being Chancery Lane. There were six deliveries and collections, commencing at 8, 10, 12, 2, 4, and 7 o'clock; and riders maintained communication between the Head Offices in connection with each collection.

The Country district was divided into nine Rides, each containing several Sorting Offices, from which deliveries and collections were made at 8 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m. The map shews these Rides, also the villages from which the local letter-carriers worked. At most of these there were Sorting Offices, but in some instances two Walks were attached to a single Sorting Office. The Rides bore the names of the Sorting Offices at which they terminated, and were : - the Finchley Ride, the Edmonton Ride, the Woodford Ride, the Woolwich Ride, the Sydenham Ride, the Wadden (sic) Ride, the Richmond Ride, the Brentford Ride, and the Harrow Ride. Of these the two latter were attached to the Westminster Office. In each Ride communication was maintained between the Sorting Offices and with the Head Offices by Riders who conveyed bags in each direction at 9.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m.; while a third despatch from London was made by the outgoing mail coaches at 8 p.m.

Under these arrangements the circulation of correspondence was by no means rapid. In the town district a letter for the Borough, posted in Goswell Road at 9 a.m., would not be delivered until about 1 p.m.; and a reply, posted by 4 p.m., would not be received until 8 p.m. A letter for a country place, such as Islington, if posted at 9 a.m., would not be delivered until 7 p.m.; and a reply posted at 9 a.m. on the following day, would not be received until 1 p.m. Between country places in different Rides the circulation was even more slow owing to the absence of Cross Posts. A letter for Kingsland, posted at Islington at 9 a.m., would not be delivered until 7 p.m.; and a reply, posted at 9 a.m. on the following day, would not be received until 7 p.m.

The Twopenny Post had an unusually eventful history. It had been started as a Penny Post by William Dockwra, and it was originally intended for the conveyance of parcels as well as letters in London, Westminster, and Southwark, with their suburbs. Its promoter, however, so far from being officially recognised as a public benefactor, was prosecuted in 1683 for infringing the Post Office monopoly, and the Post was wrested from his hands. Subsequently Dockwra was appointed Controller, but was eventually dismissed for malpractices. Under Post Office management the rates were gradually raised, until in 1829 they were 2d and 3d for town and country, respectively, with a maximum weight of 4 ounces.

In the Inland Office the correspondence to and from the provinces was dealt with. There were as yet no railways, and the mails were brought in by coaches, which arrived about 6.30 a.m. The preparation of the letters for delivery occupied a considerable time, as it was a far more laborious process than it is at the present day. Postage was paid in money, and the amount of the paid as well as of the unpaid postage had to be calculated, and charged against the Deputies on the one hand and the letter-carriers on the other. The complexity of the accounts can best be seen by taking the case of a provincial Office. The Deputy of an important Office would be in communication not only with London but with many Bye-Offices or Post Towns on the same Road, and with several Offices with which there was a Cross Post to connect his own Road with another. On the letter bills sent to each of these Offices the amount of the paid and unpaid postage was shewn, and the totals corrected or accepted at the receiving Offices. The letter bills were then sent to the Letter Bill Office and the Bye and Cross Post Letter Office in London to be compared with the monthly statements furnished by the Deputies, and made the basis of their quarterly accounts. A monthly statement forwarded by St. Albans to the Bye and Cross Road

Letter Office in London, would contain the daily totals of the postage of paid and unpaid letters sent to and received from Barnet, Dunstable, Woburn, Newport, Northampton, Kettering, Harborough, and Leicester : whilst a busy office would be in communication with perhaps fifty others. In the Inland Office the work of preparation occupied about three hours, and the delivery was consequently not commenced until 9 a.m., and was often not completed until one o'clock. The area of delivery was more restricted than that of the town district of the Twopenny Post, and letters for places outside it were transferred to the Twopenny Post, where a charge of 2d. was imposed for delivery.

The lateness of the General-post delivery was to some extent compensated for by the delivery from the " Alphabet " at the window, an arrangement analagous to the present private box system, and one that was largely made use of in the business quarters of the City. But a more generally patronised arrangement was the Early Delivery. By this system letters for subscribers were delivered at once, either by special letter-carriers or by the ordinary letter-carriers who passed the residence of the subscribers on their way to their own Walks. Two-thirds of the letters were delivered in this way in half-an-hour, as the letter-carriers saved much time by not waiting for the payment of the postage, but leaving it to be collected by the regular letter-carrier of the Walk, after completion of the delivery. There were 71 Receiving Houses for General-post letters which were separate from those of the Twopenny Post, and these were closed at 5 p.m.; while from 5 to 6 o'clock the letter-carriers perambulated their walks ringing their bells, and accepted letters for a fee of 1d. At the Head Office, letters were received until 7 p.m., and on payment of 6d. until 7.45 p.m., the mails being despatched at 8 o'clock. As mails were received and despatched only once a day, letters passing through London sustained a delay of 14 hours; and the circulation of correspondence between places not connected by a Bye or Cross Post was extremely slow. A letter posted at Cheshunt on Monday would not be delivered in Hounslow until Wednesday morning, and a reply posted the same day would not be received until about mid-day on Friday.

The Foreign Office had its special area of delivery, which was even smaller than that of the General Post: in some parts it excluded large districts like Stepney, while in others the difference was very slight. Letters for places outside the Foreign boundary were delivered by the Twopenny Post; and, if they were for places beyond the General Post boundary, a charge of 2d. was imposed. The morning delivery did not commence until 10 o'clock, and was not completed until 1 o'clock; a second delivery was made at 2 p.m. when any Foreign mails were received late. The collections were made from the General Post Receiving Houses by the General Post letter-carriers, and mails were despatched to France four times a week, to Flanders and Holland twice a week, and to America and the West Indies twice a month. The Foreign Office does not appear to have been a very progressive Department, and a quaintly antique style characterised its arrangements. Its delivery boundary had not been revised for nearly a quarter of a century, although building had meanwhile been proceeding rapidly outside it, and the arrangement and nomenclature of its walks were even more out of date. There had at some early period been only nine walks, and these had been known by the names of the respective letter-carriers. By 1829 the walks had been divided into 32, but the resources of the Foreign Office were apparently unequal to the task of naming them, for only nine walks were recognised, and these still bore the names of the original letter-carriers.

The existence of three areas of delivery in the town originated in the narrow policy of the Government, which regarded the Post Office chiefly, if not solely, as a source of revenue. How much this was the case may be judged from the fact that the existing rates, which have been raised twice within thirty years, produced a profit of 100 per cent. in the General Post and 200 per cent. in the Twopenny Post. It is surprising, therefore, to find that, when in 1801 the Penny Post was converted into a Twopenny Post, it was reported that " the letter carriers collect the new postage without any difficulty, the public saying little or nothing on the subject. " In London an extension of the General Post delivery involved a loss of 2d. on General Post and Foreign letters, and of 1d. on Twopenny Post letters. Now, in the matter of delivery charges the Post Office had always assumed an unyielding attitude. It

had long contested the right to free delivery in Post towns, and, when defeated in the actions-in-law brought against it, it determined to comply with no more than the letter of the law, and fixed the limits of delivery at its own pleasure. Those living beyond the arbitrary boundary were charged for delivery; and it often happened that at one house letters were received free, whilst at the next a delivery fee upon each was exacted.

A want of readiness to meet the reasonable requirements of the public was shown in many other ways, and notably in connection with registered letters. In 1829 there was no legally authorised system of registration; but inland letters containing coin were entered on the letter bills, and receipts were obtained on delivery. This was done gratuitously, but no responsibility for loss was accepted, and letter containing paper money could not be registered. It appears to have been the practice to accept foreign letters for registration, but the fees - a guinea for outward letters and five shillings for inward letters - were almost prohibitive.

The early history of the Money Order Office has already been narrated in this magazine; and it need only be said that in 1829 it was still being carried on by Daniel Stow, the Superintending President of the Inland Office, and by two other officers, as a private concern. But this was not the only extra-official work which was allowed to be carried on by officials. A striking instance was that of the "newspaper privilege". This was a long-established arrangement by which the Superintending President and the Clerks of the Roads in the Inland Office were allowed to act as agents for the supply of London newspapers to subscribers in the country, and were permitted to post their newspapers an hour later than the newsvendors, and to make use of the Deputies in the country as their agents. A similar privilege was enjoyed by the Controller and others in the Foreign Office in connection with newspapers to and from abroad (except the British Colonies); and, as there was no special newspaper rate of postage, and the newspapers were officially franked, the privilege in this case was practically a monopoly. These were other difficulties in the way of the circulation of newspapers at this time besides the cost of postage. Foreign Governments by no means welcomed our newspapers; and in 1829 there were only two English dailies which were not prohibited from circulation in France. Owing to such difficulties, the cost of an English daily paper to a foreign subscriber was sometimes very high, and in the case of a resident in Russia is said to have amounted to £40 a year. The Foreign Office were also allowed to supply translated extracts from foreign newspapers to the London papers, which reproduced them almost verbatim, and seem to have relied largely upon this source of information.

The total amount of fees and perquisites received annually by officers in London was as much as £20,000, the Secretary heading the list with the handsome sum of £3,000. But these liberal emoluments did not secure a due return in zealous service. The attendance of many officers was very irregular, and that of some heads of Departments was merely nominal. The Receiver-General, whose salary was £800, was also Distributor of Stamps to the Excise Office with a salary of £1,000, yet, in addition to this, he could attend daily at the Treasury, where he was Private Secretary to the First Lord.

Considering the high rates of postage and the many vexatious fees and perquisites exacted from the public, it is not surprising that the services of the Post Office were dispensed with wherever possible. This was the obvious explanation of the fact that, although during the last quarter of a century population had been increasing rapidly, while trade had extended, and travel become more frequent, the Postal Revenue had remained stationary. Correspondence had enormously increased, but the business of the Post Office showed no growth. In spite of its legal monopoly the Post Office was losing hold of its business, and an extensive system of illicit conveyance of letters had long been growing up. Among business men it had become quite a practice to accept letters from customers and friends for transmission in parcels of goods, while their customers in the country who delivered them forwarded in return their own letters to be distributed in London. A well-known author stated that in this way he could correspond with any town where there was a book-seller.

Another plan adopted was to write orders for several houses in London on a single sheet of paper, and this, on its receipt in London, was cut into portions for distribution. Travellers, coachmen, boatmen, carmen, and pedlars joined in the illicit traffic; while in some parts the carriers collected and delivered letters openly, and were almost universally patronised. Only one letter in four, it was estimated, passed through the post.

As regards Foreign letters, there were well-known coffee-houses where bags for abroad were regularly made up, and there was hardly a shipbroker who did not keep an open bag in his office for his customers' correspondence; while the American packets sailing from the Thames were known to carry over 4,000 letters each journey. There was one obvious cure for this widespread evil, but it was, unfortunately, the last the Government was inclined to adopt. Repressive measures were tried in vain, until a reduction of rates became necessary to avert a catastrophe.

Glancing at headquarters we observe that recent changes have occurred of some significance. The Secretary's Office, which was originally what its name implies, has become, in Freeling's words, "the regulating and controlling office of the whole Department". The Postmaster-General no longer takes part in the immediate superintendence of his office, and the Secretary is already the regular medium of communication between the Postmaster-General and the various Departments. The important posts of Resident Surveyor and of Comptroller-General have been absorbed in that of the Secretary, and the Superintendent of Mail Coaches, whose duties were of great importance while the railways were not in existence, is reduced to a mere member of the Secretary's Office. Looking still higher, we see only a single Postmaster-General, although before 1823 there had for more than a century been two. But the joint Postmasters-General had possessed no power of separate action, and the advantage of the "plural unit" was not evident. It is, therefore, amusing to note this simple reform met with much opposition, and the subject was debated in the House of Commons with a gravity that would have led an uninstructed onlooker to believe interests of some magnitude were at stake. One honourable member, who hotly opposed the measure, declared that "he could not consent to pull down the ancient institutions of the country, those institutions under which the country had so long prospered"; a second affirmed that "if he was to be led on, step by step, last week having abolished two Lords of the Admiralty, to-day abolishing one joint Postmaster-General, and to-morrow the whole Board of Control (India), he should resist at once the destruction of that influence without which the government of the country could not be carried on"; whilst a third, an alderman, "trusted that on the present occasion every loyal man would rally round the throne to protect its just and constitutional privileges".

It is consoling to reflect the evils anticipated by these parliamentary Cassandras have not yet come to pass. The Post Office, with its army of 130,000 officers, its postal revenue of £10,000,000 and its business represented by 2,800,000,000 postal articles handled yearly, has not missed its duplicate Postmaster-General, whilst Crown and Constitution, "broad-based upon the people's will," stand more firmly now than they ever did in the good old times.

Registry, G.P.O.

F.H.D. Bushnell

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

Editorial comment:

There are a great many items of information in this 90 year old article which do not appear in modern reference books and contribute to our understanding. There are also some statements readers might wish to dispute, thus demonstrating one has to read widely and undertake some original research to distinguish fact from fact now.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-