

## NOTEBOOK

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### EDITORIAL

The advent of holidays and retirement has provided the long awaited opportunity to catch up on the publication schedule, not the least on the sections for the *Handbook*. It is anticipated the long awaited work on *Diamonds* will be available before Christmas; Peter Bathe's study on the *Shooters Hill Cross Posts* is ready to go to press and Don Franks monograph on *Carshalton* is at the final edit stage. Simon Kelly, when not chasing penguins, is completing his opus on the *Hoods*. The Editor, when these arrears have been dealt with will be attending to the *Maritime* section of the *Handbook* [it has been on hold for ages]. Hopefully, members will be encouraged to put quill to parchment, or digit to keyboard, with material for both *Notebook* and *Handbook*.



The Old Home of the Post Office  
[continued from Notebook No. 90]

In reading accounts of Post Office work in the last century and in the early years of this, one is struck by the similarity between the methods and system of those times and of the present. Allowance must, of course, be made for the cheapening of postage, for the custom of prepayment and the enormous increase in the volume of the business necessitating certain mechanical improvements; but otherwise a visitor to the old Inland Office would hardly have noticed much change could have been transported across the intervening years to the Circulation Department to the present day. Especially he would have observed the similarity in the construction of the sorting tables. I think indeed it is not impossible that some of the old tables, transported from Lombard Street in 1828, may still be in use at St. Martin's-le-Grand.

The following account of the work of the Office I have chiefly taken from a work called "The Microcosm of London", published in 1808, in which was published a plate stated to represent the Inland Office as rebuilt in 1702; the date should have been 1782.

The duty at the Inland Office was under the management of a Supertending President, assisted by three Presidents and three Vice-Presidents. It commenced at six in the morning and was usually finished between ten and eleven o'clock. The mail bags received from the inward mails were first emptied and then their contents were carefully counted and the amount of the postage reckoned, to check the accounts furnished by the country Postmasters, or rather Deputy Postmasters, there being properly only one Postmaster, the Postmaster-General. As the letters were not then prepaid, it is to be presumed that this check must have had reference to some payment by commission on the number and value of letters and not to the collection of Revenue. The letters then passed through another set of hands and the charges marked on them were again checked. They were afterwards stamped and sorted out for the different districts, to each of which one or more letter carriers were assigned. Before the letters were handed to the carriers they were tied up in bundles, an account being made of the postage due on each bundle; [Ed - is this not confirmation one must be careful about accepting too readily apparently highly rated items] and the letter carrier to whom it was given thereupon became responsible for the amount. The postage collected on delivery was paid into the office of the Receiver-General three times a week and receipts given to the letter carriers for the amounts charged against them. This system, as we may imagine, was troublesome and somewhat complicated. In many cases questions arose about postage which could not be collected, or about charges of which the correctness was challenged; the letter carriers were not always able to make up the amounts due and there was often great difficulty in squaring the accounts. Besides the Receiver-General's Office there was also an Accountant-General's Office, which presumably had at one time an independent system of accounting, as a complete check on the Receiver-General. But, when the dual systems were examined about thirty years ago by a Parliamentary Committee, it was found that the books in one office were always copied from the books in the other and that, therefore, the supposed check was no check at all. The Receiver-General was thereupon abolished and the present office of Receiver and Accountant-General established. In the account to which I have referred, the writer, whom, from internal evidence, I believe to have been a Post office Official, did not hint at the condition of affairs above described, but said "the utmost care and diligence is



exerted in order to prevent the public and the Revenue from suffering from the numerous hands through which the letters must pass before they reach the owners. The apparently precarious mode of collecting these levies is regulated by plans that ensure the Revenue from frauds that might otherwise so easily exist". Whether many frauds did occur, I do not know; but it is on record in the evidence given in 1788 before a committee on the Post Office, that, while some of the letter carriers made as much as £100 a year from salary, the pence given for letters collected by "Bellmen" and Christmas boxes, they often paid substitutes only eight or ten shillings a week to do their work. To some extent, possibly, the system of "substitutes" was then officially recognised in the lower ranks of the Service, as it most certainly then was in many highly paid department, of the Civil Service and it probable that the present system of substitutes and the rules until quite recently were in force in the Circulation Department were quite naturally developed from the old practice. Here is a subject of study for any Officer interested in Post Office evolution. The general morning delivery of letters is said to have been accomplished before the business of the day began, an advantage to be enjoyed in London only. If so, either our grandfathers must have begun business later than we do, or the early delivery could have been extended only to the neighbourhood of the General Post Office. When the work did not begin until 6 a.m., the outlying parts of London, such as Bloomsbury and Islington, could not have received their letters until four or five hours afterwards. The writer I have quoted says that the delivery was rendered possible by "the circumstances of this great engine to the commercial world commencing its operations at so early an hour".

In the evening another staff of clerks came on duty. Their hours were from half-past four o'clock till eight o'clock. The letters posted at the Chief Office during the day and those brought in from the receiving houses were stamped and sorted for the different divisions of the office, each division being named, it is said "from the mail despatched thither". This statement strikes one as being rather Hibernian. Presumably the division and the mail were named, as now, from the line of the country followed by the mail. This process of primary sorting was entrusted to junior clerks. After being so sorted each letter was marked with the proper rate of postage, each individual letter being examined by being held up to a strong light to detect double and treble letters. Care was taken also to avoid charging letters to and from members of Parliament. This part of the duty was entrusted to the senior clerks and it said that on an average they could charge in this manner from sixty to seventy letters in a minute. The letters were then placed in boxes labelled with the names of the post towns. The clerks who did this required to know very completely the names of all the hamlets and villages in the locality of the post towns and also the names of the noblemen and Members of Parliament who lived near each. After seven o'clock the number of letters and the postage were reckoned for each town and an account sent in the bag with the letters. The bags were then gathered in groups for the various mails and taken in charge by the guards. This stage is said always to have been reached by eight o'clock in summer and winter alike. The system, it will be seen, differed only slightly from the present one, and very considerable skill and energy must have been required to despatch all the mails in time. The General Post Office took letters till six o'clock, as at present, and the receiving houses until five o'clock. Between five and six o'clock the letter carriers and their assistants, with bells, perambulated the streets beyond the neighbourhood of the Chief Office, and received letters for despatch on payment of a fee of one penny for each letter. These pennies were kept by the "bellmen" and formed a considerable part of their income. In the days before mail coaches were started, i.e., before 1784, the bags were conveyed on horseback and could be despatched at once from the General Post Office, but when coaches were used for conveyance the narrow lanes and streets round the office prevented the despatch of any large number of



coaches from that vicinity; many of the mails, therefore, started from the various inns and coffee houses in Oxford Street and Piccadilly. A subsidiary system of mail carts - which the use of railways has immensely increased - was therefore required and these light, swift carts soon became a marked feature of Post Office work.

At the beginning of the century, from 170,000 to 200,000 letters a week passed through the Chief Office. On one occasion, it is stated, the postage on the Manchester mail amounted to £300. A contemporary writer said that "the immense number of letters that are nightly despatched from hence excite sensations of astonishment in the mind of a bystander that can only be exceeded by the rapidly and accuracy with which every part of the duty is managed". The statement is a little mixed in its mode of expression, but it is clear that on the mind of orthodox spectators very much the same impression was made as at the present day. About 1800, the speed of mail coaches was reckoned at eight miles an hour, including stoppages, five minutes being allowed for each change. This was said to be a speed unequalled in any other country and was viewed with considerable apprehension by the more sober-minded part of the community.

Coaches left London every night for the following places:- Dover, Exeter, Shrewsbury, Manchester, Norwich, Cambridge, Poole, Taunton, Worcester, Leeds, Ipswich, Rye, Brighton, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Chichester, Bristol, Chester and York.

In 1808 the expenditure of the Post Office was stated to be about £200,000 but the nett revenue, clear of all deductions, paid into the exchequer to the credit of the Sinking Fund, amounted in that year to no less than £1,200,000. When it is remembered that newspapers, of which very large numbers were sent by post, although subject to a stamp duty, did not pay postage and that the number of ranked letters was also very great, it will be seen how very profitable was the ordinary conveyance of letters in the old coaching days. It is, I believe, an undoubted fact that the cost of carriage of a letter by coach was considerable less than the cost of conveyance by railway in the present day of a letter on which a postage of one penny only has been paid. Had the ordinary modes of expenditure been subject formerly to the same checks as in the present day, the disproportion between revenue and expenditure would have been even greater.

Early in the eighteenth century the office of Secretary to the Postmaster-General increased very greatly in importance. Between 1730 and 1740 Mr. Anthony Todd was appointed Secretary and he is remarkable as having filled that office for the longest period on record. He was sixty-one years Secretary and is said by a contemporary to have been a man of singular abilities and to have been greatly beloved. The introduction of the mail coach system between 1784 and 1790 we may imagine to have been a great shock to his system and to have led to his retirement a few years later. He died in 1796. We hope some day to give an adequate account of the life and actions of so distinguished a Post Office worthy. He was succeeded by Mr., afterwards Sir, Francis Freeling, who also held office for a long period of considerably over forty years. It is probably impossible to find another instance of an important public office being filled by two persons in succession for more than a century. Those, indeed, were the palmy days of the Office. In the General Post Office, Lombard Street, a handsome residence was provided for the Secretary and his salaries and fees in



the early years of this century are said to have amounted to over £4,000 a year. It is no wonder that Sir Francis Freeling was able to become a director of the South Sea Company and of numerous other companies and to have been a person of much importance in commercial and official circles.

In 1808 the other principal officers were the Superintending President of the Inland Office, Daniel Stow, Esq., whose name was represented until comparatively recently in the Service; the Comptroller of the Foreign Office, Arthur Stanhope, Esq.; the Receiver-General, T. Mortlock, Esq.; the Accomptant General, the Hon. John Spencer; the Superintendent of Mail Coaches, T. Hasker, Esq.; the Solicitor, A. Parkin, Esq.; and the Architect, J. Groves, Esq. The District Surveyors, not styled esquires, were G. Hodgson, S. Woodcock, Christopher Saverland, George Western, J.B. Bartlett, Leonard Aust and A. Scott. The Inspector of Dead and Mis-sent Letters was R.P. Barlow, Esq. J. Wyldbore, Esq., was Accomptant of the By and Cross Road Letter Office, a survival of the early days of Ralph Allen, when the by posts were his private enterprise and Mr. Buller was Superintendent of the Ship Letter Office. The number of clerks in the Chief Office was 62 with 25 messengers. There were 130 letter carriers, with 30 supernumeraries and 28 foreign letter carriers.

Some of the Chief Officers were men of great energy and capacity but these qualities were certainly not always considered necessary. Mr. Hyde in his latest work quotes a document, apparently addressed to the Treasury, in which, towards the close of the last century, Mr. Bush, son of Mr. Gervas Parker Bush, complained that the Patent of Resident Surveyor of the Post Office, given him as a reward for his father's services, made the office tenable during good behaviour only, and not for life, as he had expected. He added that it was given him as a complete sinecure and, indeed, at such an early age that it would have been impossible for him to have the duty. Even in the humbler ranks of something of the same sort occurred, as we have already seen as regards the letter carriers. Besides their salaries the Clerks had other emoluments, such as feast money and beer money paid to the Clerks of the Inland Office; allowances for lodgings, which were not accepted, in the neighbourhood of the General Post Office and allowances for coals and candles. It appeared before the Committee of Enquiry on the Post Office in 1788, that these latter amounted in the year to above three hundred chaldrons of coals and twenty thousand pounds of candles, costing for the year 1784 no less a sum than £4,418 4s. 1d.

I have already given some description of the Lombard Street Office as it was in the early years of the 18th. century and I must now attempt to give some idea of it at the beginning of this century (19th!!Ed.) The main front was then, as always, towards Lombard Street but had extended farther eastward and occupied about 120 feet of the south side from the church of St. Mary Woolnoth, to Abchurch Lane.

Up to 1828, the year in which the office was finally removed to St. Martin's-le-Grand, all the space between Lombard Street and Cannon Street was covered with a network of narrow lanes, which were afterwards cleared away in great part by the opening of King William Street as an approach to London Bridge. That street, with St. Mary's Church at the corner passes over a great part of the premises which the Post office had gradually adsorbed as its business extended in the course of the 18th. century. In one of the two plans published with this paper is shown a general sketch of the locality between the two main streets. This plan is taken from a map published in the 1754 Edition



of "Stow's Survey" but it practically represents the arrangements of the streets for the next eighty years. The second plan is copied from that issued in 1831 by the Auctioneer, Mr. Hogart, who, on the 6th. May in that year, at the Auction Mart, sold the "important and valuable estates comprising the late General Post Office, in fourteen lots". From this plan it will be seen that the office had gradually extended so as to occupy all the ground between Abchurch Lane and Sherborne Lane. The front premises, which are marked as belonging to the Guradian Fire Company and Messrs. Robarts, Curtis & Co., had previously been disposed of and practically represented the site of the old Inland Office and letter Carriers' room. The house between the entrance passage and St. Mary's was the old Mail Coach Office. Then looking at Abchurch Lane, we find that a rather handsome house (marked lot 12 on the plan) was chiefly used as the Secretary's residence, although some part of the ground floor appears to have been occupied by the "Frank Office" and the office of the Inspector of Letter Carriers. At the back of this house was another, marked lot 13, the lowest floor of which was part of the letter carriers' office, while on the first floor was the Board Room, in which the Postmaster-General transacted business with their chief officers, "a lofty room about 27ft. by 23ft., with a room adjoining about 21ft. by 18ft., with bow and a small room at the back". In the description of the Secretary's drawing-room, "a statuary marble chimney-piece" is mentioned as a mark of great distinction. Lower down Abchurch Lane, and across the passage, was a house occupied by "the Stamp Office" in 1831 but previously it was probably part of the Receiver-General's Office, which also occupied the ground floor of the next two houses, with the Accountant-General's office on the upper floors. The last house in Abchurch Lane, shown in the second plan, was "the Ship Letter Office". At the back of all these premises there were spaces of vacant ground used at times by the foreign merchants and their clerks waiting for their letters, which often arrived at most unreasonable and irregular times. It is said that in these spaces from 500 to 700 persons would often be waiting at one time. In order to deal promptly with the mails when they did arrive, the foreign sorters who, even in 1815, were only sixteen in number, were lodged in some houses on the other side of the open ground and fronting the lower part of Sherborne Lane. Higher up that lane, marked on the plan lot 3, came the Twopenny Post Office, which was to a great extent a separate institution, with a separate staff of letter carriers, who dealt only with local London letters. On the other side of the public passage was a large house occupied by the Secretary's office. The side windows looked on to the churchyard of St. Mary's and in was no doubt in one of the basement rooms of this house that Sir John Tilley began his official career, as he told us last year at the Penny Post Jubilee dinner. The rectory adjoining St. Mary's is now the property of the department but I think it must have been acquired in later years.

The old Inland Office building was pulled down in 1810 and rebuilt in a very handsome manner "for the purpose of forming new checks on the sorting of letters and expediting the public business with new sorting tables, divisions, &c". In 1809 the offices in Abchurch lane were rebuilt at a cost of £5,520, so that we may imagine them to have been, in later days, tolerably commodious. At this time apparently the Dead Letter office, previously in one of the houses in Sherborne Lane, was moved to Abchurch Lane. When the premises were sold in 1831 they realised only £11,670 in all, a good deal less apparently than their estimated value, which with the value of those in Lombard Street previously disposed of, is said to have been £32,375.

It was the introduction of mail coaches which made the Lombard Street office unsuitable for its purpose. Only in Lombard Street itself could coaches



stand to take up mails and even there only two or three at a time. The extension of London westwards and the development of its suburbs in that direction also made Lombard Street a less convenient centre than it had been when correspondence was almost entirely limited to the merchants and bankers in and around that spot. In 1814, a committee of the House of Commons was appointed to take evidence but separated without any decision. Again in the next year another committee was appointed and, after much evidence and deliberation, recommended the present site as the best, not however without considering others. Furnival's Inn was offered to the Postmaster-General as a site. The Goldsmiths' Company wished to sell large premises bounded by Fetter Lane and Shoe Lane, lying between Holborn and Fleet Street. A proposition was also submitted to the Treasury that the Post Office should be built on the west side of the Old Bailey, a proposal which, if carried out, would have given our predecessors a good view of the executions in front of Newgate. Lastly, the College of Physicians offered their premises in Warwick Lane. None of these sites however commended themselves to the official mind, which was disposed to prefer a large new building erected on the Lombard Street site and to that end Mr. Joseph Kay, architect to the Post Office, then a permanent officer, prepared a plan showing how this might be arranged. But the committee decided wisely that more space was wanted and, as the Corporation were anxious to clear away the rookeries within the liberty of St. Martin's and to widen Cheapside and Newgate Street, as well as to secure a fine public building in an imposing site, an arrangement was to come under with the Post Office was to assist by purchasing part of the ground when cleared. The committee, however, feared the civic thirst for architectural beauty and wound up their report with a warning that "ornamental decorations, introduced for the mere purpose of embellishment and unconnected with utility, while they prodigiously enhance the cost, rarely produce an effect in point of elegance and grandeur which can compensate for it". And they finished with these severe words: "an office for receiving and delivery of letters which should be concealed behind a front fit for a palace, and flanked by triumphal arches, would present an incongruity no less offensive to good taste than inconsistent with rational economy". Surely that committee would have enjoyed the modern improvements of Smirke's masterpiece.

In looking through old papers connected with the removal of the Chief Office, one comes across odd bits of information. For instance, it appears that, whereas the office was originally lighted by candles, it was, at the beginning of this century, lighted by oil lamps. Then coal-gas was introduced but the company's charges - 15s 6d. per 1,000 feet - were too high and plant was set up in order that oil gas might be manufactured on the premises. Dismal, however, were the complaints of the unfortunate officers obliged to work in the consequent odours and prolonged was their sick leave. Finally, the old oil lamps were put up again and it was not until the move was made to St. Martin's that coal-gas lighting was regularly introduced in the Post Office. We have all heard of the method of "charging" single and double letters according to the number of sheets which they contained. From the statement of Sir Francis Freeling it appears that this duty was always done by holding up the letters to artificial light close behind them. Daylight was not sufficient for the purpose. Then again, from the evidence of Mr. E. Johnson, Comptroller of the Twopenny Post Office, we learn that on Monday, March 6th., 1815, the number of persons entering the Chief Office between 8 and 11 a.m. was 285, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. 560, between 2 and 5 p.m. 563 and between 5 and 8 p.m. 559, which altogether, allowing 33 persons as the number before 8 a.m., make up a round 2,000. By a curious slip this number was enlarged by Sir Francis Freeling in his evidence before the committee to 20,000.



Between 1800 and 1815 no less a sum than £88,000 appears to have been spent in repairs and alterations at the Chief Office and this was done although it had been in contemplation for twenty-five years to build a new office. The amount of Foreign correspondence in 1815 as compared with the whole Inland correspondence was as one to five.

In considering the position of the new office the great object was to secure a "central" position and many details of business East and West of Lombard Street were given.

Thus, it appears that East of Cheapside there were only 9 receiving houses in 1815 and 54 to the Westward. Of Bellmen only 33 perambulated the streets to the East, while 74 collected the letters of the West.

There were then about 110 bankers in London, of whom 78 had their offices East of the Post Office and 32 resided to the West. The number of Assurances Companies was 14, all of which did business West of Lombard Street, as well as nearly all the law agents for country attornies, of whom it was touchingly remarked that "their postage inwards was immense, and still more so was their postage outwards to their country correspondents". During the week from the 4th. to the 9th. July, 1814, the number of letters delivered and the postage for the two sides of the Chief Office were carefully reckoned and the following table gives the result:-

		EAST				WEST			
Date, 1814		No. of Letters	Postage			No. of Letters	Postage		
			£	s	d		£	s	d
Monday,	July 4th.	11, 508	618	9	11	31, 163	1, 090	3	1
Tuesday,	" 5th.	6, 449	315	15	11	17, 386	601	19	1
Wednesday,	" 6th.	7, 384	349	19	0	20, 197	717	2	8
Thursday,	" 7th.	7, 631	404	9	10	20, 447	766	5	6
Friday,	" 8th.	9, 837	865	2	0	22, 666	1, 132	17	10
Saturday,	" 9th.	8, 733	521	16	0	22, 156	876	7	3
		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
		51, 542	3, 075	12	8	134, 015	5, 184	15	5

In concluding this paper I must remind my readers that all I promised was a selection of odd bits of gossip about our old home and that is all I have been able to give. In old newspapers, the public records and elsewhere there is abundant information to be obtained.

A. M. OGILVIE

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## THE GREGORIAN AND JULIAN CALENDERS

by J. Beveridge

Julius Caesar, accepting the advice of the Egyptian Sosthenes, decided to alter the calendar to agree with the SUN time. The calendar in use at that time was based on the measurement of the length of a year as being a little different from the actual time taken by the Earth to travel round the Sun.

It was ordered that the year should not cease in March, as had been the practice, but should continue until till a time when, according to Sosthenes, the calendar would be correct with Sun time if the date were arbitrarily said to be January 1st. The extended year lasted over 400 days: the day on which the new calendar year began was, henceforth, to be the first day of every succeeding year. [ Caesar did not know but this all took place about 46 BC - think about it Ed ]. Unfortunately Sosthenes calculated the year to be 365 days 6 hours and the leap year day was added every four years. The actual time is some 11 minutes 11 or so seconds less than 6 hours and as a result, by the sixteenth century Earth calendar was out of step with that of the Sun with an accumulated error of some 10 days.

To eliminate the accumulated error and prevent its continuation, the Gregorian Calendar was introduced. This was adopted by Italy, France, Spain and Portugal in 1582; by Prussia and the German Catholic States, Switzerland, Holland and Flanders on January 1st., 1583, Poland 1586, Hungary 1587, the German and Netherlands Protestant States and Denmark in 1700, Sweden from 1700 to 1740 by the omission of eleven leap days; Great Britain and her colonies [including North American Colonies ] in 1752 by the omission of eleven day, September 3rd being taken as September 14th.

Japan adopted the calender in 1872, China in 1912, Bulgaria in 1915, Turkey and Soviet Russia in 1918, Juyoslavia and Romania in 1919 and Greece in February 1923.

This listing shows how mail from the Continent to Britain, as late as 1923, could arrive before it was written.

In Britain there was a further complication. Our year started on the 25th. March, this not being officially re-set to 1st. January until 1752. [ It is a curious reflection to note the Government financial year is the 5th. April, the old March 25th. ] As a result of this British year start a letter or business document or the record of a birth, marriage or death could be the subject of some confusion if the date were not clearly related to the calendar



in use at the time and place. This can be simply illustrated.

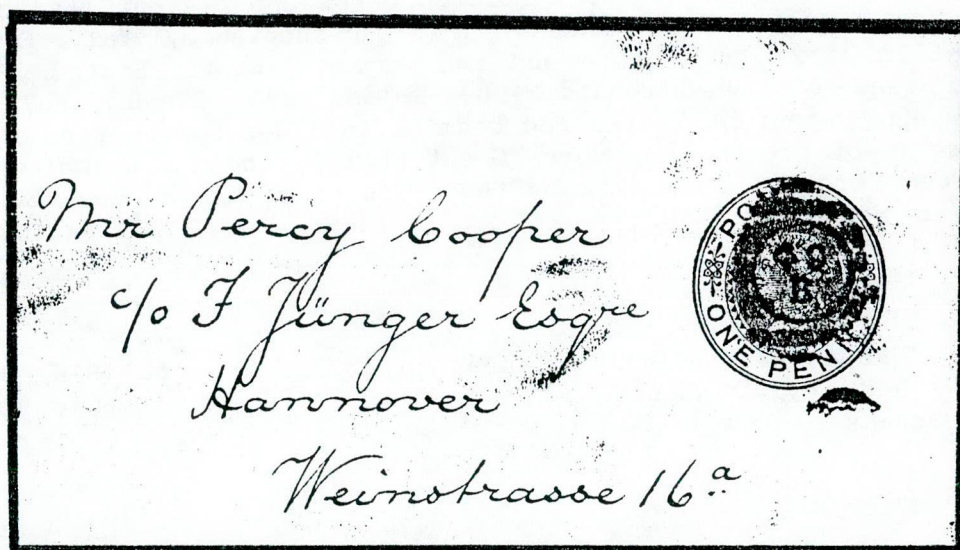
England.....	Jan 7.....	March 25.....	
up to 1752	1701	New Year	1702
Continent.....	Jan 1....X.....		
from 1582	1701	New Year	1702

A letter dated in England for 7th. January could carry 1701 for the year whereas one from Italy would be dated 7th. January 1702.

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SOUTH NORWOOD 49B : NO LONGER RARITY G. P. O.  
from P. Steenbruggen

This cancellation [49B.D] is listed as unrecorded in the Handbook but I am pleased to offer an illustration of an undated part wrapper to Germany showing this. Unhappily, someone has removed the additional adhesive from the lower right corner, leaving just a trace of the top of the second cancellation.



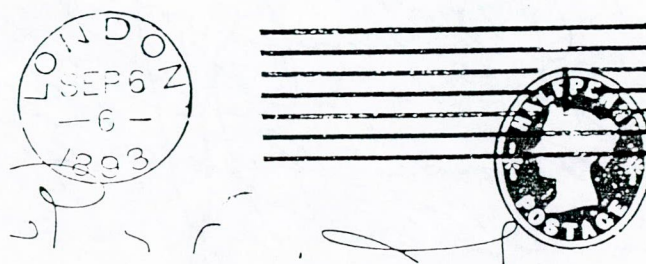
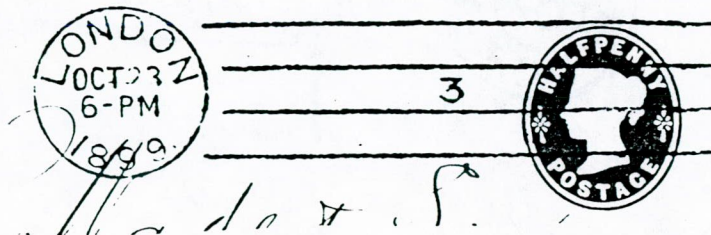
-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

BOSTON AND INTERNATIONAL MACHINES  
from R. Webb

Two marks, both extending the information given by Jack Peach, may be of interest to readers.



The Boston, dated 3rd. October, 1899 presents a dater/canceller [DI/C3] combination not recorded.



The International for the 6th. September, 1893, die number 6, is six days earlier than that Peach has illustrated [ which bears the initials "M.G." as the source ]

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**ST MARTINS LANE GP RECEIVING HOUSE**

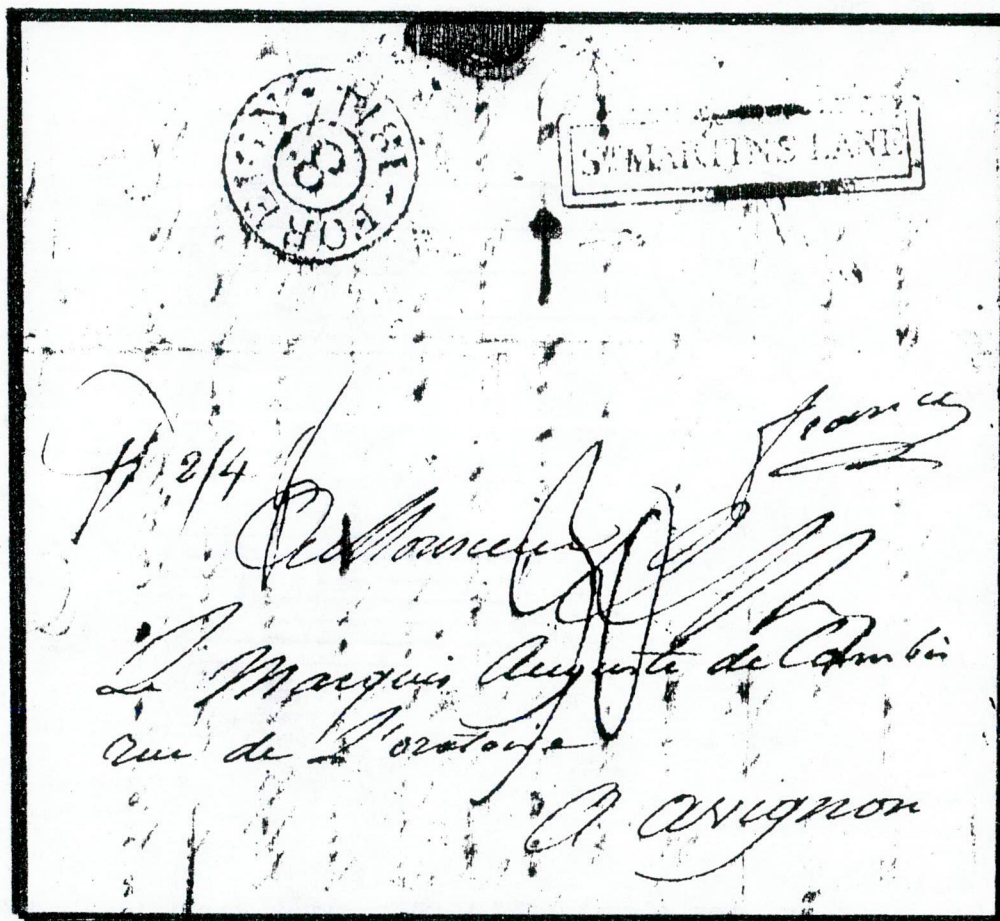
from Mike Burt

The item illustrated overleaf is not recorded in the London Catalogue and, as can be seen, is the double framed, upper case ST MARTINS LANE General Post Receiving House namestamp, struck in black.

[Ed. The item is undated by the writer and the Foreign Office date stamp [L 1006] appears to be 1811, though it *might* be 1814. David Robinson remarks that it appears doubtful if the rate of 1805 was ever implemented due to the closure of the posts by the war during 1803-1814.

Postage paid at 2/4 is noted. Assuming the date is 1814, the rate was 1/2 single plus the Inland 1801 scale from London, which was 6d single to Dover. Quite how 2/4 was calculated is not clear.]





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**A FACSIMILE EDITION OF CARY'S ROADS AROUND LONDON**

A Review by Martin Willcocks

Post Office Archives have published, in colour, a reprint of the 1790 series of strip maps "Survey of the High Roads from London" by Cary, worthy of any library, apart from its interest for the postal historian. I had not seen this set before and believe the original is rare but it is very helpful indeed.

Twenty-six roads are shown at a scale on one inch to the mile, to a town 25 - 40 miles distant, in 80 strips, showing toll gates, large houses visible from the road, numbered milestones [this could be very useful] and notable features. Country inns are marked, whilst those in towns are marked on each page.

Archives have divided them into North and South sets, so county collectors need not buy both. Each is in an attractive folder with the title page, a general map showing the strip number by each town and a Turnpike map showing which trusts were linked. Knowing little about the trusts I found this helpful; apparently on weekdays one payment freed all the gates in the area but each trust owned gates in four areas and on Sunday one payment freed all four areas.



A Deptford ticket freed Kensington, a crescent east from Kings Cross and the east end from Goswell St. to Hoxton.

I would recommend you to have both folders if, like me, you enjoy just looking at detailed maps : I doubt if anyone reading this knew there were country one-way roads in 1790 [did central London have them ?]. A stretch on the London side of Beaconsfield says " Carriages from London travel this road " with a loop road for those TO London. Had they "NO ENTRY" signs, with Bow Street Runners to enforce them ? There may be other examples.

Each folder [North or South roads] is £12.99 post free from

Post Office Archives,  
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LONDON EC1A 1BB

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**HOSPITAL FREE POST : AN ABSTRACT FROM THE POST OFFICE ARCHIVES**

There is often much debate on the subject of whether the Greenwich and Chelsea Hospitals were entitled to Franking privileges at any time and under what circumstances. This abstract from the PMG Reports at Post Office Records provides the details.

Post 42 Vol 51 No 341

General Post Office

28th. April, 1830

My Lord,

On receipt of the usual applications from Greenwich and Chelsea Hospitals for the return of postage charged upon Letters relating to the business of those Establishments, for the Quarter ended the 5th. inst, I thought it right to satisfy myself that we were proceeding upon the correct principal, in returning such large sums of the Public Revenue, and your Grace will see by the enclosed papers that I have been in communication with the proper Officers, and with the Solicitors upon the subject.

The question was discussed in the year 1819 when it was decided the best and safest course would be to charge all the Letters addressed to the Hospitals, in the first instance and then to return the postage on the production of the Covers with a Certificate from the Treasurer, or Deputy Treasurer, that they were on Official business, as in most instances the Acts of Parliament, giving the privilege or receiving such letters free to certain Officers were not strictly complied with, and the Acts themselves not very clearly defined.



I am glad to see that the practice has been continued in strict conformity to the rule there laid down, the Covers always being sent with a certified list : - The same principle is observed in the other Public Departments, where the letters are through the ignorance or misconception of the Writers addressed to individuals in those Departments, not having a privilege to receive them free, instead of to those who have that privilege - And the Solicitor is of opinion that under all the circumstances it is the best mode to pursue - Your Grace will be pleased to understand that the matter has not been agitated at this moment on account of any remonstrance against the present regulation, from either of the Hospitals but solely at my own instance, and in some desire to satisfy myself that in a case where the Revenue is so materially concerned, no laxity had crept into the system.

I should certainly be glad if these establishments could conveniently claim the sums in their own official Incidents - the result however as to the Public revenue generally, is the same and if your Grace see no objection, it can be understood that the existing practice is to be continued, while the circumstances which have given rise to it remain the same.

All which is humbly submitted by

F Freeling

approved Manchester

.....

Royal Hospital Chelsea

1st. April, 1830

Sir

With reference to my letter of the 25th Ultimo, I request that you will have the goodness to give directions for the Return of the Covers and the payment of the amount to be refunded, as early as convenient, in order that the Accounts for the Quarter just ended may be closed.

I am Sir Your most obedient Servant

N[?] Spicer

T. M. Musgrove Esq.,  
Twopenny Post Office,  
Gerrard Street.

I beg leave to submit this application to Sir J .....? with reference to the former [?]

T. M. Musgrove,  
Comptroller

T P P O      6 April



I am of opinion that all letters addressed to the Treasurer of either Chelsea or Greenwich Hospitals upon the business or affairs of such hospitals are entitled to pass free of postage whether addressed to "The Treasurer" or to the person holding the office.

The privilege does not seem to extend to letters addressed to the deputy Treasurer of the Chelsea Hospital.

Such a privilege was given by the 49 G3 c 123 but appears to have been taken away by the 54 G3 c 86.

By the 7 G4 c 16 all letters addressed to the Secretary of Chelsea Hospital or sent to or delivered at his office upon the business of the Hospital are entitled to pass free of postage.

The best mode of ascertaining whether the letters be official is, I think, to require them to be produced.

XXXXXXXXXXXXX

[scrawl - probably that of Peacock]

.....  
The above entry was made no doubt under an authority from the PMG exhibited at the time by the proper Officer from Greenwich Hospital - I have some recollection of the representation [I think from W. Lockyer] to our Board

DJ

see Letter to Mr. Bate 3 Decr 1806 [this in another hand]

The earliest entry in my Book is Decr 3 1806 when directions were given to the President to allow the sum of £148.16.0 for returned Covers to the Treasurer of Greenwich Hospital. This practice has been ever since continued.

DJ

Mr. Stow will be so good as to state by whom the entry in the Book was made & whether there was any authority from the Secretary, or any Correspondence with him upon the subject.

23 March [in a different hand]

.....  
Mr. W. Peacock who will be good enough to advise whether under the Acts of Parliament it is necessary that the Letters on the business of Chelsea 7 Greenwich Hospitals should be addressed to "Treasurer" or "Deputy Treasurer" to entitle them to pass free.

Is it the practice at present to charge letters addressed to the Person holding the Office [Colonel Spicer for example] and to return the Postage on a certificate that the Contents were official.

Many letters purely official are directed to Clerks or Agents in or connected with the Treasurer or Deputy Treasurers Office - The Postage is also returned upon these on a similar Certificate.



Mr. Peacock's opinion is requested first as to the Law of the Case and next as to the discretionary practice which has obtained.

31st. March, 1830

End. Col Spencer 19 Apr

Royal Hospital Chelsea

20 April, 1830

Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th. inst and to acquaint you that the Act of Parliament which applies to the letters alluded to in my communication of the 15th. Inst is the Act 54 Geo 3 cap 86 Sec 32 by authority of which all letters addressed to me relative to Prize Matters or other business connected with this Hospital are to be received free of postage. I have the honor to add that the system of transmitting to the Post office at the end of each Quarter the covers of letters on which postage has been charged [such covers having my signature affixed thereto] and of being allowed the amount of such charge, has been acted upon ever since the passing of the Act above referred to, and adopted in consequence of an arrangement with yourself, which arrangement is recognised in your letter of 16th Jany 1819.

I have the honor to be Sir Your most obedient servant

N H Spicer

Post 14 Vol 25 page 366

December 3rd., 1806

The president will be pleased to Allow the Window by Monday next £148.16.0 for returned Covers, Addressed to the Treasurer of Greenwich Hospital.

Mr. Stow therefore proposes that to enable the Gentlemen at the paid Lre office to refund that Sum on Monday they shall be allowed £37.4.0 each Night 'till Saturday inclusive, which will make the above Amount.

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### RELOCATION OF POST OFFICE ARCHIVES

The Post Office Archives are being relocated , due to the expiry of the lease at Glasshill Street. However, the move offers the opportunity to unite the Archives and the Modern records centre [which is currently located in another building] at a single location in new, specially designed accommodation. This is being constructed in a wing at the Mount Pleasant Letters District office in Phoenix Place, London EC1.

As will be appreciated, this move is a major operation and it will mean the closure of the Archives Public Search Room to visitors until Monday 5th. November, 1991. Every effort is being made to ensure the facilities of the new Search Room will be as comfortable as possible for visitors and it hoped the temporary closure will not cause too many problems for LPHG members.

Our new address is :

Post Office Archives,  
Freeling House,  
Phoenix Place,  
LONDON EC1A 1BB

tel: 071-239-2570

Editor's Advice :

Phoenix Place is to the EAST of Gray's Inn Road, NORTH of Rosebery Avenue. It is about half way between FARRINGDON and KING'S CROSS stations and buses 19, 38, 63, 171, 171a, 196, 221 and 259 pass close by. Car parking will be a problem, so use Public Transport and walk from the nearest station or bus stop!!

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### TO TWO PENNY POST LETTER-MEN

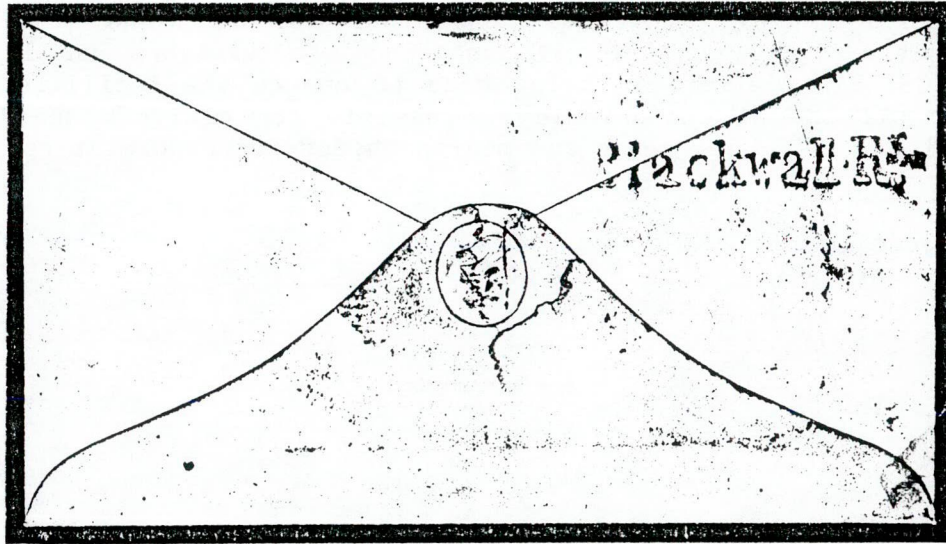
We are subject to the expence and mortification of receiving letters daily from Gentlemen in all the Twopenny Post Districts, complaining that you refuse to deliver the WEEKLY MESSENGER, as ordered by them, at the same time alleging that you are threatened by your superiors with dismissal from your situations as Letter-men, if you dare to deliver any paper but such as they have a direct interest in; this is therefore to inform you, that a formal complaint will be presented to the Post-Master General, as soon as the names of parties complaining, and of those complained against, can be properly arranged for that purpose. All persons who may feel any difficulty in obtaining the WEEKLY MESSENGERS within the district of the twopenny Post, are requested to favour Mr. BELL with their names and the causes of complaint, and every possible method shall be pursued to remedy the grievance.

[taken from BELL'S WEEKLY MESSENGER No. 462 for Sunday February 10th., 1805]



### MAIL GUARD STAMPS

Associated with the London District Post, the Mail Guard stamps appear not too infrequently, although with varying degrees of difficulty. Quite another difficulty arises with "Blackwall Ry" [Ward E 351]. As Ward points out there was no Railway Post Office on the London and Blackwall and Wilson makes no mention of this marks in his several publications.



MacKay assigns the use of these marks to missorted items detected in transit, albeit with a railway connection [p200 fig 3708 of "English & Welsh Postmarks Since 1840"].

This particular example appears on an envelope which, on the obverse, carries the 2 A<sup>n</sup> JA 20 1857 timestamp and a large "2" [in black] postage due. There is no evidence of any rail connection shown on the envelope or from the seal.

Would any readers with examples provide full details [photocopy would help].

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

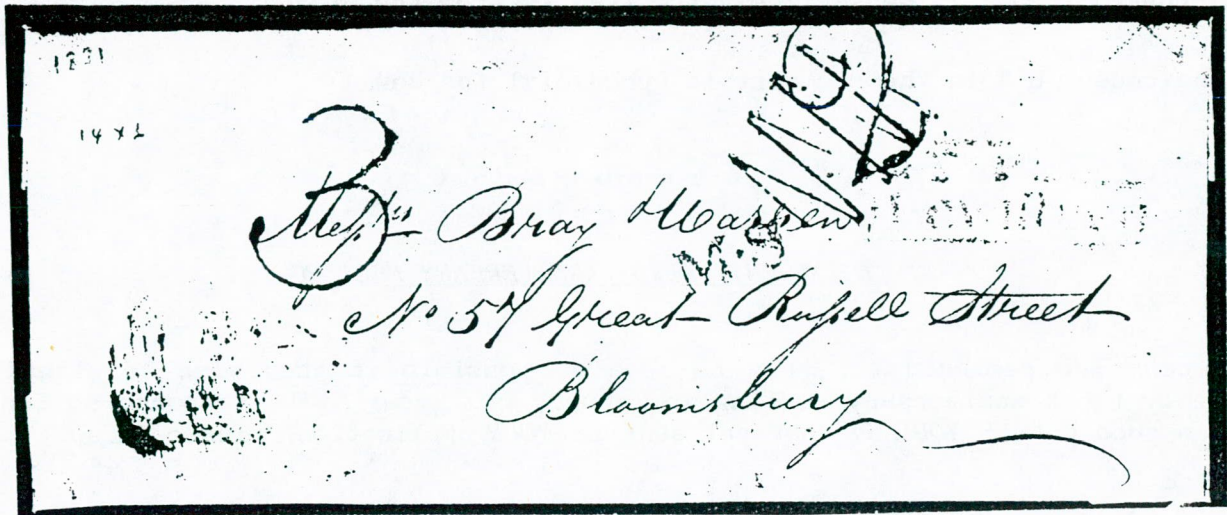
### THE MS MARK

In the London catalogue, Barrie Jay remarks there is some doubt as to the significance of the MS mark ; it may have indicated "missorted". Indeed, most collectors seem to assume this to be the case.

This example, and not listed, appears on an EL written from Lewisham and addressed to Bloomsbury.



The original "2", the charge for an item in the Country area for transfer to the General Post, was deleted and the "3" rate substituted. There is a transfer stamp for the 17th. March, 1831 and a GP, code "P" of the same date.



It seems clear this item was transferred to the General Post, although both office of posting and delivery were within the local post area.

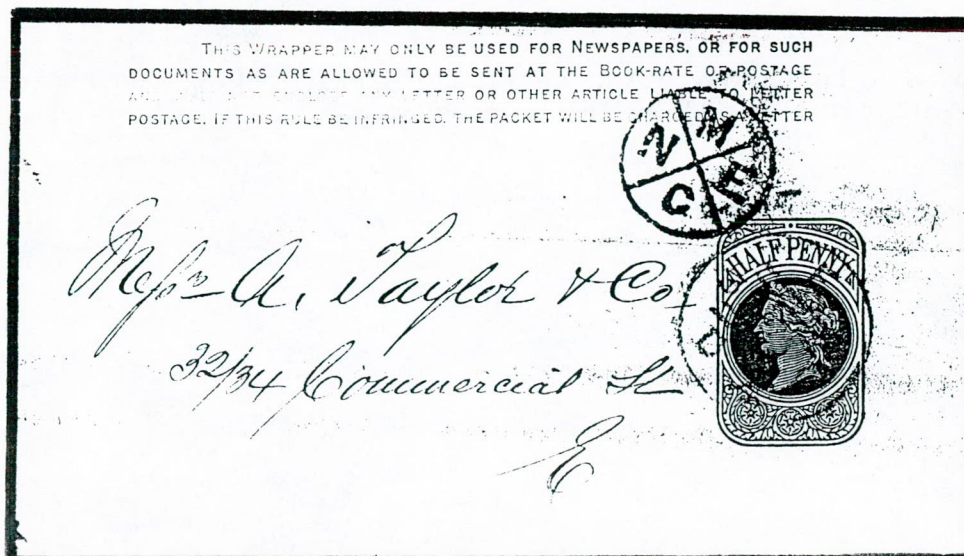
An example of missorting surely.

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# THE NORTH EAST MIS SORT STAMP

from P. Steenbruggen

The North East District was absorbed into the Eastern District from the 21st. January, 1867 but its stamps and cancellations continued in use for some time after this.





The item shown has the halfpenny cancelled by an Eastern District Book Post Stamp for the 31st. of \*\*\* 188[?]\* , so faint as to make dating impossible. The Eastern District Office received the first issue of the Book Post stamps on the 7th. July, 1875, the time code being replaced by time in the clear on the 6th. February, 1895. It seems likely the item is from the mid 80's.

The code " C " in the mis sort is [probably] for Bow.

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

THE TWENTY FIRST ANNIVERSARY MEETING

Members are reminded to apply as soon as possible if they wish to attend the twenty first anniversary meeting in January next year. The response so far has been good but if YOU have not yet sent in YOUR application, please do so.

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

PACKET MATERIAL

If you want material, visit all the fairs in your area.  
Another method is to be on the packet circulation list.  
Drop a line to

Brian Smith, Clwyd House, 54 Broad Lane  
Wilmington, DARTFORD, Kent  
DA2 7AG

MEETING DATES IN 1992

The programme for 1992 will be published at the end of the year but members may wish to pencil in the Saturday dates now: these are -

January 18th:

March 14th:

May 16th:

July 18th:

September 19th:

November 21st:

The auction will be on May 16th, so please start sorting our choice items for inclusion. Full details will be in the programme.