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THE HISTORY
— OF THE —
EARLY POSTMARKS OF
THE BRITISH ISLES.

Yours Ever faithfully
W. H. Stendy

THE HISTORY
— OF THE —
EARLY POSTMARKS OF
THE BRITISH ISLES.

FROM THEIR INTRODUCTION
DOWN TO 1840.

WITH SPECIAL REMARKS ON AND REFERENCE TO THE
SECTIONS OF THE POSTAL SERVICE TO WHICH
THEY PARTICULARLY APPLIED.
COMPILED CHIEFLY FROM
OFFICIAL RECORDS.



BY JOHN G. HENDY,
Curator of the Record Room, General Post Office.



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THE HISTORY
OF THE
EARLY POSTMARKS OF
THE BRITISH ISLES.

INTRODUCTION.

THE general interest taken in the subject of postmarks, and the many enquiries respecting the various marks found upon letters anterior to the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage in 1840, induced me to study the subject with a view to compiling from official and other sources a reliable History of the Early Postmarks of the British Isles. In revising for publication in book form the articles which have already appeared in *The Bazaar, Exchange and Mart*, I have carefully arranged them in sections, so that each class can be dealt with separately and chronologically. This should tend to facilitate the identification of the different types of marks. I have endeavoured to describe and illustrate the various changes in postmarks that have taken place from

their introduction down to 1840, giving as clearly as possible an accurate description of the various marks, their history, and the reasons for their use. It is hoped that the information now brought together may prove instructive, not only to those in the Post Office service, but also to those who are engaged in the collection of postmarks, which is admitted to have a stimulating effect on geographical study, and to many others who, from entirely different motives, may be interested in the subject.

In re-writing the work I have taken the opportunity of supplying some particulars and history of the use and origin of certain postmarks, as well as of the sections of the postal service to which they particularly applied. At the end will be found a list of the various postal rates introduced between 1660 and 1840. To those readers who may consider the subject not unworthy of study, these additions should be of considerable interest.

The practice of dating the covers of letters would appear to have been in existence at least since the reign of Henry VIII. As an instance, Thomas Cromwell, in a communication to Sir Brian Tuke, Master of the Posts, complains of the delay of letters by the Court Posts and Messengers. Tuke's explanation, dated 17th August, 1533, is certainly ingenious. "But, sir," says he, "not taking upon me to excuse the postes, I wol advertise you that I have knowen in tymes past folkes whiche for their own thanke, have dated their letters a day or 2 more before they wer written, and the conveyers have had the blame." Tuke goes on to say, "I wrote unto my Lorde of Northumberlande, to write

on the bak of his pacquettes the houre and day of the despeche, and so I did to other, but it is seldome observed."

About the year 1590, the custom of endorsing the dates on letters by the senders was succeeded by a system of endorsing by the successive postmasters at each stage. For instance, a letter dated 15th April, 1595, was marked "Dover, the 15 April, half-an-hour past XI in the night," "Canterbury past 2 in the morning," "Syttynghorne past 6 mornynge," "Rochester past eyght in the mornynge," "Dartforde the 16 April at past 10 afternoone."

After the Restoration, in 1660, the Post Office was established under Act of Parliament, and in the same year was leased to Henry Bishopp for an annual rental of £21,500. Bishopp had only held the office about one year, when various charges of abuses were made against him. Writing on 2nd August, 1661, in reply to these charges, Bishopp enumerates the precautions which he had taken to rectify such abuses as existed when he took over the office, and among the improvements mentioned is the stamping of letters. "A stamp is invented," says Bishopp, "that is putt upon every letter shewing the day of the moneth that every letter comes to the office, so that no Letter Carryer may dare to detayne a letter from post to post, which before was usual," so that the date when post-marking of letters was introduced can accurately be fixed as 1660-1661.

LONDON CHIEF OFFICE.

In dealing with the stamps or postmarks of the Chief Post Office it has been found necessary to illustrate and describe them and their history in sections. The first part deals entirely with the stamps and various marks in use in the Inland Sorting Office and its branch offices established in 1829. The other sections are those for "Paid," "Free," and "Sunday" marks, and the "Returned," "Ship," and "Foreign" Letter Branches.



Fig. 1.

The use of the date stamp introduced by Bishopp (referred to in the Introduction) was confined strictly to the Chief Office in London, the instructions issued to the officers being "to keep distinct the paid and



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.

unpaid letters, first stamping them with the day of the month." Fig. 1, taken from a letter dated 22nd May, 1678, represents 24th May of the same year.

This type of mark remained in use for many years. Fig. 2 is from a letter dated 1777. It was superseded by Fig. 3 about the year 1786.



Fig. 4.

All letters passing through London were impressed with a date stamp (Fig. 4), the same stamps being used for both morning and evening duties until the end of the year 1794. A sorter, named Russell



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.

Farmer, was brought up for trial at the December sessions, 1794, held at the Old Bailey, on a charge of stealing a letter. During the trial a question arose as to whether it was possible to prove by a postmark

upon a letter the identity of the person who stamped that letter, and whether it was even possible to show that the letter was dealt with on the morning or the evening duty. It had to be admitted that, as the same stamp was used both morning and evening, there was no means of identification. However, this admission did not save the unfortunate Farmer, who was found guilty and hanged at Tyburn, but it led to an immediate alteration in the date stamps (on 1st February, 1795) used on the morning and evening duties (Figs. 5 to 7), the single rim being used on the morning and the double rim on the evening letters. The



Fig. 7.

initial letter, most frequently found on the left hand, inside the circle, and in some types outside the



Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.

circle, indicated the table or division in the Inland branch where the letter was stamped.

A peculiarity will be noticed about this type of mark, that from the year 1800 the first figure is

dropped, so that the years read 800 to 822 (Figs. 8 and 9), whereas in 1823 the date appeared in full (Fig. 10). On the 2nd April, 1798, an order was issued that all letters were to be stamped in front with the stamp of the office where handed in. From 5th July, 1794, missent letters were in every instance returned to London to be dealt with in the Dead Letter Office, then first established. This treatment caused serious delay, and it was decided that letters missent should be forwarded direct to their destination from the post



Fig. 10.

**MISSENT TO
LONDON**

Fig. 11.

town where the missending was discovered. To make the scheme workable, and to prevent a second postage charge upon such letters, a new type of mark was introduced, Fig. 11 being brought into use in the London office in August, 1795.



Fig. 12.

As early as December, 1794, those employed in examining the Letter-carriers' charges were warned "not to suffer to escape them any letter bearing two taxes without putting to the surcharge their initials and the crown stamp" (Fig. 12). This rule applied both

to paid and to unpaid letters. Figs. 13 to 16 were marks in common use in the Inland Office. Figs. 13 and 14 were used on letters out of course; Figs. 15 and 16 on letters wrongly charged.



Fig. 13.



Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.



Fig. 16.

An entirely new type of stamp (Figs. 17 and 18) was brought into use in May, 1797. These marks were impressed on letters taken in at the window each evening between 7 and 7.45, upon payment of a late fee of 6d.



Fig. 17.

Another small type of mark came into use in July, 1797, being impressed in red on letters transferred from the Inland Office to the Penny Post Delivery (Fig. 19).



Fig. 18.

Fig. 20 is a distinguishing mark that was impressed on letters delayed or missing despatch. This mark was also placed on letters posted at the Chief Office for delivery in London, and all such letters were charged 3d. ; whereas if they had been posted in the Twopenny Post Office the charge was 2d. only.



Fig. 19.

Fig. 21 refers to a system of registration which came into operation in England on 1st October, 1792. The first instruction on the subject issued to the public was "That all persons sending money in letters do deliver their packets to the clerk at the window, or the postmaster in the country, by way of giving additional security to its conveyance."

The postmasters were instructed that if any letter put into or passing through their offices appeared to contain money, rings, or jewels, they were to write on it in red ink "Money Letter," and enter the direction of such letter on their letter bill.

The system was this: Any letter containing cash tendered at a post office as a Money Letter



Fig. 20.

MONEY LETTER

Fig. 21.

was received and registered, no fee or additional charge being made for this special treatment.

Letters containing bank notes, drafts, bills, &c., no matter what their value might be, were not so treated; but anyone desiring to have his letters registered, no matter what their contents were, had only to place inside one farthing, and the letter received exceptional treatment.



Fig. 22.

All money letters were, however, charged as double, and accordingly had to pay two postage rates. The privilege ceased in 1838, when the present system of registration was introduced.

In 1803 the stamp-maker committed an error in substituting the letter "V" for the figure "5" without considering how it would apply when used in conjunction with another figure. The mistake was not noticed until the 15th of January, when the



Fig. 23.



Fig. 24.

date was "IV" instead of "15." The greater part of the morning mails were stamped and disposed of before the error was detected. An impression of this error is given in Fig. 22.

About the year 1798 a new type of stamp came into use known as a "table stamp," there being

seven tables in use lettered A to G (Figs. 23 and 24).

All letters which, either from imperfect addresses or some other cause, could not in the first instance be sorted to their respective destinations, were referred to the inspectors of blind letters, who added to or otherwise perfected the directions by the assistance of indexes provided for that purpose. These letters bore on their back the mark shown in Fig. 25.

The duties of the Inland Office were of such a complicated character that it would be vain to attempt to give anything more than the merest outline of its principal duties; for their real nature and extent, even to-day, can only be known by personal experience. All country letters reaching the Foreign, Ship Letter, or Twopenny Post Offices were transferred to the Inland Office, there to be stamped and sorted to certain specified divisions. Before being sorted finally to their "roads" they were taxed by clerks, whose duty it was to examine every letter by strong candle or lamp light in order to see whether such letter was single or double. Such close examination was necessary, because letters were charged according to the number of enclosures, *i.e.*, a single sheet, one postage charge; one enclosure in single sheet, double postage charge; two enclosures, treble postage charge; one ounce in weight, four postage charges.

Letters passing through London from one part of the country to another part were retaxed, or



Fig. 25.

"In alled," as it was officially termed. Take, for instance, a single letter, posted after the 9th July, 1812, from Norwich to Glasgow; the postmaster of Norwich would tax the same from Norwich to

In All

Fig. 26.

London 9d., while in London another tax would be added to Glasgow 1s. 1½d., making "In all" (Fig. 26) 1s. 10½d.

Foreign letters passing through London were charged on much the same principle. Thus: A single letter, Hamburg to Leeds—

	s.	d.
Foreign postage to London	1	8
London to Leeds (190 miles)	0	11
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	
In all	2	7
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	

Lisbon to Norwich—

Packet postage, Lisbon to Falmouth	1	6
Falmouth to Norwich (387 miles) ...	1	1
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	
In all	2	7
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	

New York or West Indies to Dover—

Packet postage to Falmouth	2	2
Falmouth to Dover, <i>via</i> London (345 miles)	1	1
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	
In all	3	3
	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	

Letters from places in the Twopenny Post delivery for the country were stamped with a figure "2" in



Fig. 27.

black until the year 1831. The "2" shown in Fig. 27 is cancelled and taxed 4d. (Fig. 28) "In all."

Where letters were fully paid for delivery in London, and subsequently redirected to the country, they were surcharged with the amount of postage due from London to their new address, and postmarked with the stamp, "POSTAGE NOT PAID IN LONDON" (Fig. 29), and with Fig. 30 when redirected from the provinces to London.

Letters were collected and delivered among the shipping lying in the Thames by a "river" postman. These letters were liable to a charge of 1d. in



Fig. 28.



Fig. 29.

addition to any other postage due upon them. When fully paid they bore a mark as in Fig. 31. This mark was also used on franked letters when delivered by Penny Posts.

When in 1823 the figure "1" was included to complete the year, two classes of the old type of

*Postage to London
Not Paid*

Fig. 30.

mark were introduced (Figs. 32 and 33). In this class the inner circle was dropped. The mark however, remained in use for some years and was cut in brass.

Early in the year 1825, Mr. Alfred Payne, an engraver, of Birmingham, introduced a steel circular stamp which is stated to have given a very clear impression. A trial of this particular mark was

TO PAY 1^d ONLY

Fig. 31.—Used in red ink before 12th August, 1829.

made in the London Chief Office. The composition then in use for stamping was a water-colour solution, and when the steel stamps were tried they became so rusty that they could not be employed on account of the type becoming fixed.

A composition containing oil was suggested by the maker, and this gave a good impression; but the stampers, one and all, objected to the use of oil on account of its offensive smell. The result was that steel stamps did not come into use in the London Chief Office until some years later.

In connection with the stamping of letters a most extraordinary accident occurred in the Chief Office on the evening of 11th October, 1826. A small brown paper packet reached the Inland Office from Woodford, having marked upon it the



Fig. 32.



Fig. 33.

word "glass." The packet was passed on to a stamper named Westbrook to be postmarked. No sooner had the unfortunate man pressed the stamp upon the packet than "it exploded with the noise of an 18-pounder." The poor fellow was dashed to the ground with the nails torn from his fingers, and in other respects was most seriously injured—so much so indeed, that it was feared that at least one arm would have to be amputated. The cause of the explosion was an ounce of fulminate of mercury, which was posted by a doctor's assistant named Jones. The force of the explosion is described as terrific, the charge penetrating a board

3in. in thickness upon which the packet was stamped, and injuring three other officers. The case excited much public comment and sympathy for the injured. By command of the Postmaster-



Fig. 34.—Lombard Street.



Fig. 35.—Charing Cross.

General an action was brought against the sender of the packet, when a jury assessed damages at £200. Poor Jones could not pay anything like this sum, and the result was that his body was



Fig. 36.—Borough.



Fig. 37.—Charing Cross.

taken in execution. After having been detained in prison a considerable time, he obtained his discharge under the Insolvent Debtors Act.

Following on this accident came a proposal from a Mr. Wake, of Worksop, to supply a stamping machine to be worked by liquid. According to the

inventor the machine would cost £90, and was capable of stamping 250 letters a minute. As it was considered that an ordinary stamper could by his own hand stamp as quickly as the machine,



Fig. 38.—Lombard Street.



Fig. 39.—Vere Street.

the offer was not entertained. This is the first proposal of a machine stamp that I have met with.

The General or Chief Post Office was removed from Lombard Street to the new Post Office



Fig. 40.—House of Commons.

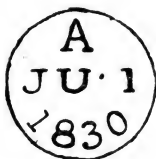


Fig. 41.

buildings in St. Martin's-le-Grand on 23rd September, 1829, and shortly afterwards branch offices were established at Lombard Street, Charing Cross, Borough, Old Cavendish Street, and Vere Street. The types of stamps in use at these offices will be seen from Figs. 34 to 39. There is another of this

type of mark bearing the letters C. H., which was in use at the Post Office in the House of Commons (Fig. 40).

Steel date stamps were introduced into the Chief Office in 1830, and the composition used for making the impression was changed from a water to an oil colour, which gave a clearer and more indelible mark (Fig. 41). The following is a list of the principal stamps in use in the Inland Office, and the prices then paid for them :

14 Table stamps—Unpaid	}	These were all date stamps, and cost 36/- each. The price was reduced in 1833 to 24/- each.
14 " " Paid		
4 Frank or Free stamps		
1 Late Fee stamp		
1 Evening Paid stamp		
1 Sunday stamp—Unpaid		
1 " " Paid		
1 Banker's Parcel stamp		

	EACH.	
14 Crown stamps ...	5/-	}
7 More to Pay ...	7/6	
7 Not according to the Act ...	7/6	
1 Above Number ...	7/6	
1 Above Weight ...	7/6	
1 To pay 1d. only	7/6	
1 "Cross" stamp ...	4/6	
1 "Cross" stamp. Letters out of course ...	4/6	
1 Missent to London	7/6	

Some years later another type of steel stamp (Fig. 42) came into use.

The "In all" duty was considerably reduced in 1837, when country postmasters were instructed to tax letters originating in their offices and passing through London with the full postage to destination instead of marking them with postage to London only. An exception was made in regard to letters within the Twopenny Post delivery, which were only to be charged with postage to London, the further tax, if any, being afterwards added.



Fig. 42.

In the year 1837, Mr. Frederick Karstadt, son of a Post Office Surveyor, suggested the use of Travelling Post Offices in connection with the railway system, then so rapidly developing. In



Fig. 43.



Fig. 44.

January, 1838, it was decided as an experiment to run a carriage between Birmingham and Liverpool. The experiment was so successful that a writer of the day remarked: "Here is a specimen of that

exhaustless ingenuity which bids fair to annihilate time and space." Fig. 43 is a type of the mark in the first Travelling Post Office (Grand Northern Railway Post Office).

Fig. 44 is another mark in use in the Travelling Post Office between Lancaster and Preston.

With the advent of railways many changes in the postal arrangements took place. Distances were changed, which altered the rates of postage in most cases to the detriment of the public. Thus :

Walsall by road	was	118	miles,	by rail	120
Congleton	"	162	"	"	176
Middlewich	"	167	"	"	171
Sandbach	"	162	"	"	175

In each instance this meant an increased postage of 1d.

Another important change was the inauguration of day mails. The first of these to be established was what was known as the Irish Express, which commenced running on 5th September, 1837, starting from the General Post Office at 8 o'clock every morning (altered in January, 1839, to 9 a.m.). Other day mails were established : From London to Brighton, 23rd July, 1838 ; to Edinburgh and Glasgow, 8th November, 1838 ; to Dover, 27th August, 1839 ; to Southampton, Portsmouth and Cheltenham, 17th December, 1839. All these mails left London at 10.30 a.m. There can be but little doubt that Rowland Hill based the success of his scheme on railways, for without their aid it is difficult to imagine a successful "Penny Post."

The most important change of all, however, was quickly approaching, when it would be no longer necessary for letters to be held to the light for the detection of enclosures. The taxing, re-taxing and final "In alling" were to cease, and weight alone was to determine the charge. On 5th December, 1839, a Treasury warrant authorised an experimental uniform 4d. inland postage rate to be established, the postage being prepaid in money. Such letters were impressed with a mark like Fig. 45.



Fig. 45.

This halting measure caused so much public dissatisfaction that the Lords of the Treasury were



Fig. 46.



Fig. 47.

quickly convinced that they had made a mistake, and it was accordingly resolved to give the Uniform Penny Post measure a full and fair trial, and that the experimental rate should cease on 10th January, 1840, from which date the Uniform Penny Post commenced. Until 6th May, 1840,



Fig. 48.

all letters had to be paid in cash, and bore various "Paid" marks (as illustrated in Figs. 46 to 52),

A handwritten mark in a cursive script consisting of the letters 'Pd' followed by a large, stylized numeral '2'.

Fig. 49.

A handwritten mark in a cursive script consisting of the letters 'Pd' followed by a large, stylized numeral '1'.

Fig. 50.

which were impressed at the different offices where the postage was paid.

Letters not prepaid were then, as now, subjected to a charge of a double rate. These unpaid letters



Fig. 51.



Fig. 52.

were impressed with various 2d. marks, of which Fig. 53 is the most remarkable that I have seen.

On 6th May, 1840, the 1d. adhesive postage label which had to be cut with scissors from a sheet or strip of the same, and the artistically drawn cover of Mulready, came into use, which brought forth the first obliterating stamp (Fig. 54).



Fig. 53.



Fig. 54.

The earlier impressions of this mark will be found in red ink, which was changed to black on account of the ease with which the red ink was removed from the stamps. All this type of marks were cut in wood, and cost 1s. each.

PAID LETTERS.

One section of the Inland Office was known as the "Paid Letter Office," the business of which was carried on in a separate room, the object being to prevent collusion between the clerks employed there and in the other branches of the Inland Office. Prepaid letters from country post towns were entered on a "letter bill" enclosed in the mail bag under a heading "Paid Letters," and

these letters, when the mail was opened, were carried to the Paid Letter Room, where they were closely examined to ascertain that the postage



Fig. 55.



Fig. 56.

charged upon them was correct. If the charge was found deficient, they were surcharged and marked with the stamp shown in Fig. 55. The principal



Fig. 57.



Fig. 58.

work of this branch was in connection with the post paid letters handed in at the window of the Chief Office, London, and the General Post receiving

houses. These letters, if found correctly charged, were forwarded and franked with the "Paid" stamp, which denoted that the postage to destination



Fig. 59.



Fig. 60.

was prepaid. They were then made up in parcels of £5 and transferred to the Sorting Office, where they were again checked. The types of



Fig. 61.

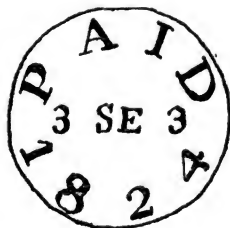


Fig. 62.

stamps shown in Figs. 56 to 62 were in use for paid letters and all of them were impressed in red ink.

SUNDAY STAMPS.

Mail coaches arriving in London on a Sunday morning delivered their correspondence at the Chief Office in Lombard Street, where it was divided. The London letters were separated from the country ones, and those for the Government offices were picked out and delivered by special messenger.

In 1793, when war broke out with France, it was arranged that when a mail from the Continent arrived on Saturday night or Sunday morning, the letters should be delivered at the window of the Chief Office to callers, until 3 p.m. on Sunday. The Irish letters which were due on Sunday morning received similar treatment during the Irish Rebellion of 1798.

On 29th December, 1799, this special delivery of letters on Sunday ceased. No mail was ever despatched on Sunday until the establishment of the railway system. Government letters, such as extraordinary *Gazettes*, were sent by Express. The mail coaches leaving London on Sunday evening carried no mails whatever. Upon two occasions, however, they appear to have been detained for Government despatches. The first occasion was the glorious victory of Salamanca, the news of which only reached London on Sunday, 16th August, 1812, twenty-five days after the battle was fought. Lord Castlereagh, who was then Foreign Minister, decided upon the news being printed immediately in an extraordinary *Gazette*, and circulated throughout the country. Instructions were issued that all

the mail coaches which usually left London at 5 p.m. on Sundays, were to draw up and wait at the post office in Lombard Street for the Government despatches. The last of the coaches to depart upon this occasion left the General Post Office at 10.50 p.m. The fact of the mail coaches being detained gave rise to some extraordinary scenes of jubilation, not only in London, but throughout the country, the coaches being decked with laurels and other emblems of victory. The other occasion was the death of the King (George III.), on 30th January, 1820. No letters of the public were upon such special occasions despatched by these mails, and no post mark was used.

There were, however, Sunday stamps in use in the Chief Office. At the window of the latter, a



Fig. 63.



Fig. 64.



Fig. 65.

receiving box was always open for the posting of public and franked letters, the regulation being that all letters posted in this box after the despatch of mails on Saturday night, should be collected on

Monday morning, before the duty commenced at 5 a.m., and stamped in front with the "Sunday" mark (Fig. 63). An order issued on 23rd January, 1808, gave instructions for the Sunday stamp to be used in black ink, but the later marks I have noticed (Figs. 64 and 65) are in red. These Sunday marks remained in use for many years after Uniform Penny Postage was established.

THE RETURNED LETTER OFFICE.

Previous to the year 1811 no "dead" or undeliverable letters were returned to senders, except such as were supposed to be of real importance. In the year 1811 the experiment was tried of returning all such letters, and charging the original postage upon them. The system, when first adopted, was

RETURN^d-FROM IPSWICH

Fig. 66.

to place a number on the letter to be returned, which was put under cover to the postmaster of the town where the sender resided. The latter was then written to and informed that an undeliverable letter, bearing a certain number, was lying at such a post office, and would be returned to him on payment of the postage due. Such letters were

frequently stamped at the town whence they were returned as in Fig. 66. They were also endorsed with the reason for their non-delivery to the addressee. Another small and neat mark was placed on such letters, evidently in the Returned Letter Office (Fig. 67, taken from a letter bearing date 1840).



Fig. 67.

FRANKS OR FREE STAMPS.

In the Post Office Bill of 1660 an amendment was moved to permit the correspondence of Members of Parliament to pass free of postage, and although the Speaker (Sir Harbottle Grimston) refused to put the question, stating that "he was ashamed of it," nevertheless the proposal was carried and became part of the bill. When the bill came before the House of Lords the clause was expunged; not that their lordships objected to it, but because there was no provision in the bill for their own letters to pass free. Owing to the dissolution of Parliament which was then pending, the action of the Lords caused some difficulty to the Government of the time. With a view, however, to facilitating the passing of the measure, Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State, gave the Members assurance that their letters should pass free. This promise was kept, and the difficulty was got over by the issue of a King's warrant, giving Peers, Members of Parliament, and officers of state the privilege

of franking their correspondence during the session of Parliament. From the beginning the privilege was abused. Members and officers of state did not scruple to send under their frank the letters of their friends as well as their own.

In 1764 franking became for the first time the subject of Parliamentary enactment. Heretofore it had been enough for those possessing the privilege

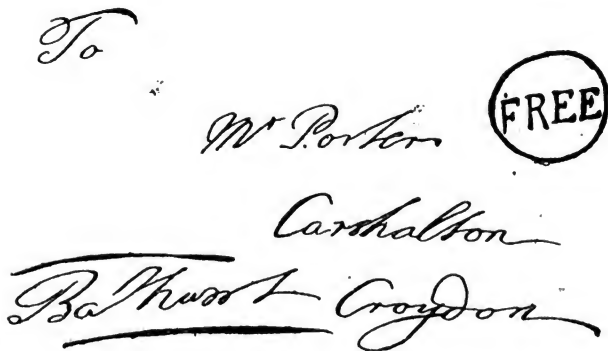


Fig. 68.

simply to sign their names on the outside. It was, however, decided that in future, with a view to curtailing abuses, not only should the letter bear the writer's signature, but the whole of the address was also to be in his own handwriting (*e.g.*, Fig. 68). Even this restriction failed to stay the abuse, and the following figures will show how heavily the franking system bore on the postal revenue. The loss by free or franked letters increased from

£51,000 in 1765 to £97,000 in 1772, and to £119,000 in 1776. Besides the loss of revenue arising from this system, the greatest encouragement was given to forgery. Fig. 69 is the earliest Free mark I have seen.

In the Post Office Act of 1784 further restrictions were made, and the superscription now to be given was to include the full date of the letter, the day, the month, and the year, all to be in the Member's own handwriting, and the letter was to be posted on the date which the superscription bore (Fig. 70).



Fig. 69.

London February eleventh 1788
 To
 W. A. Roberts Esq
 Frank Bewdley
 Sandwich




Fig. 70.

It was confidently expected that these restrictions would have a correcting effect upon the worst abuses; but such was not the case. Members continued to distribute their franks amongst their constituents and friends, at the same time post-dating them for their use.

Some of the earlier types of "Free" marks were of excellent design, as for instance, Fig. 71, taken from a letter-sheet dated 14th April, 1791, and Fig. 72, 2nd November, 1793. Both were well-defined postmarks.



Fig. 71.

In respect of the franking privilege there was one very peculiar arrangement allowed to Members of Parliament. The Acts of Parliament controlling the matter permitted any Member in ill-health to delegate his franking privilege. On 10th April, 1795, General Tarleton, Member for Liverpool, on a question of breach of privilege, brought forward in the House of Commons a charge of abuse of the franking privilege against Sir Benjamin Hammet, Member for Taunton, and a banker of London. At this period a banker's frank (more commonly known as a "banker's wheelbarrow") was a byword, it being well known that the Members of Parliament who were bankers were the chief offenders. In one day in October, 1794, no fewer than 103,805 letters were franked by bankers and passed through the London office. It appeared that in the year 1793, when in ill-health, Sir Benjamin



Fig. 72.

appointed his son to frank his correspondence, and although restored to health, had for two years left in his son's hands the use of his franking privilege.

In the debate on the subject many charges of abuses of the privilege were made, and among them that Members, under the plea of ill-health, "had delegated their privilege of franking to their wives, daughters, and other ladies." Being put to the vote the debate terminated in Sir B. Hammet's favour by 59 votes to 27. The particular result, however, of this debate was the passing of the Act of Parliament of 1795, by which a limit was fixed, and no Member was allowed to send more than ten letters or receive more than fifteen in one day free of charge. The counterfeiting of franks was made a felony, the forgers on conviction being liable to seven years' transportation.

Franks in no case were exempt from postage, either by Penny Posts in the country, or by the Penny, and afterwards the Twopenny Post in London. In Scotland the franking privilege was very generally abused, and various were the methods practised by both great and small in counterfeiting Members' franks, while much difficulty was experienced by the postal authorities in obtaining a conviction—the Member whose frank was counterfeited would frequently screen the party charged with the offence. Still, convictions were by no means rare. Perhaps the most notorious offender was John Hatfield, the history of whose career as an impostor, swindler, bigamist, and felon is too long to summarise here. Suffice it to say, that he was well educated, handsome, and a fluent speaker. He managed to evade the law until, his forged franks having come under the

notice of the Post Office, he was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to seven years' transportation. Among others brought to justice was an Admiral.

On a dissolution of Parliament the franking privilege ceased, and the late Members' letters

**NOT ACCORDING
TO THE ACT**

Fig. 73.

became chargeable with postage on the same day as Parliament was dissolved.

The duty of "Inspectors of Franks" was an important one. Every frank had to be carefully

ABOVE WEIGHT

Fig. 74.

examined as to its genuineness, and to see that the regulations of Parliament were complied with.

After the passing of the Act of 1795, which laid down certain restrictions on the franking privilege,

ABOVE NUMBER

Fig. 75.

it was found necessary to introduce postmarks to be used on letters where privilege was not admitted. One of the main restrictions was that the Member

of Parliament should, on the day or the day before that on which the letter was posted, be within 20 miles of the town where posted. If this regulation was not complied with the mark shown in Fig. 73 was used. Another restriction was the limiting of weight to one ounce (Fig. 74); whilst, as stated above, no Member was allowed to send more than ten or receive more than fifteen letters a day free of charge (Fig. 75).

Before 1790 some difficulty was experienced in preventing franks from passing through the post more than once. Orders were issued that in addition to the "Free" mark being impressed on the front, the letters were to be carefully date-stamped on the back.

When, a little later, the dated "Free" mark was brought into use, the double stamping was abolished, and for a short time the initial letter of the Inspector of Franks was inserted in the stamp. In May, 1797, a double-rimmed stamp was introduced for use on the evening duty (Fig. 76), and instructions were given for the insertion of the initial letter of the Inspector of Franks to cease.

Various types of "Free" marks are illustrated in Figs. 77 to 84.

When Fig. 85 was placed on a franked letter it denoted that the letter was charged on account of the sender and addressee of the letter having no privilege.



Fig. 76.

Among those who contested their right to the franking privilege were the Roman Catholic Peers, who time after time had protested against the outrage which precluded them from exercising the privilege



Fig. 77.



Fig. 78.

on the score of their religion ; but, upon the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Bill in April, 1829, they had the satisfaction of having the privilege conceded to them.



Fig. 79.



Fig. 80.—1810.

A number of different societies and charitable institutions had at various times been authorised by Government to send correspondence free under the



Fig. 81.



Fig. 82.



Fig. 83.—1832.



Fig. 84.

“frank” of the Secretary of the Post Office. When, however, the Post Offices of England and Ireland were consolidated in 1831, all such privileges

ceased. Even Lloyd's, who from time immemorial had received their shipping intelligence free of postage, were now refused the privilege, so far as the sending of certain reports of surveys made at out ports was concerned.

One of the greatest abuses of the franking privilege was in connection with the transmission of newspapers through the post. A newspaper, to be exempt from



Fig. 85.

postage, had to bear the frank of a Member of Parliament in his own handwriting. An Act passed in 1825 still insisted on the newspaper wrapper bearing a Member's name, without which the full letter rate of postage would be charged. The Act, however, made no provision as to whom the name should be written by, or whether it need only be printed, and so well was this omission understood that newsvendors and the public made use of Members' names with the greatest impunity, and without the slightest authority from the Member concerned for so doing. Even Rowland Hill himself relates that, as a young man with slender means and travelling for the benefit of his health, he carried with him a number of old newspapers, which he franked with the name of a Member of Parliament, leaving the postmark with its date to show where he then was. The state of his health was indicated by the use of names of both political parties.

Abuses were by no means confined to Members of Parliament, or to the general public. The bags in use for Government Departments were regularly packed with private correspondence, and upon at

least one occasion a Postmaster-General, having his suspicions aroused, opened with his own hands a bag for the Colonial Office, which was found to be full of letters for bankers, army agents, and others, representing postage to the amount of £60.

The Report of the Select Committee on Postage, dated 13th August, 1838, referring to the franking privilege, says, "It is liable to the abuse which no vigilance can effectually guard against of being made the vehicle for private correspondence;" and concludes by recommending that upon reduction of postage rates the privilege be abolished. The postage at this period (1837) represented by franked correspondence for the year is estimated by the Select Committee to have amounted to the sum of £1,064,874 8s. 4d., which meant about seven millions of letters and packets carried free.

With the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage, one of the most glaring abuses from which the Post Office and the public revenue ever suffered was swept away—let us hope for ever!

THE FOREIGN POST OFFICE.

This branch of the Chief Office was independent of the Inland Office. Its main business consisted in dealing with the correspondence to and from the Continent. Like the Inland Office and the Twopenny Post, it had its own separate class of clerks

and letter-carriers. The latter delivered all foreign mails reaching London within their particular boundary. Letters for places outside the Foreign Post Boundary were delivered by the Twopenny Post, a charge of 2d. being made for delivery.



Fig. 86.

All letters for foreign parts had to be prepaid with the inland postage, otherwise they were opened and returned to the senders. Arthur Stanhope, Controller of the Foreign Office (as it was then called), writes on 9th February, 1797, to the Postmasters-General* : "I think it my duty to represent to

your Lordships that a stamp has never been made use of in this office, and as a check to a great evil, namely a temptation to defraud the revenue, that I am desirous of introducing one in future." Fig. 86 is the type of mark then brought

PACKET-LETTER

Fig. 87.

into use. Letters conveyed by the Post Office packet boats, and reaching the Foreign Letter Office without being impressed with the packet stamp, were as early as May, 1801, ordered to be

* From the year 1690 down to 1823 there were always two Postmasters-General, but when the Marquis of Salisbury died in the latter year the joint office was, in accordance with a Parliamentary decision, abolished.

impressed with the stamp as in Fig. 87, so as to distinguish them from ship letters.

With regard to the foreign letters, a rather peculiar arrangement was in existence, namely, that by the payment of a certain fee to the clerks of the



Fig. 88.



Fig. 89.

Foreign Department of the Post Office, any firm or individual located in any part of the country could have all its or his foreign and ship letters detained, or, in official terms, "stopped," in London, and handed over to whomsoever the firm or individual nominated. By this arrangement any inland postage which might become due on the letter was saved in favour of the addressee.

In December, 1817, the Law Officers of the Crown advised the Postmasters-General that all such letters were legally liable to be charged the inland postage rate in accordance with the superscription which the letter bore, and upon this decision the privilege ceased. A particular type of postmark (Figs. 88 and 89) was in use



Fig. 90.

in the Foreign Letter Office. A similar type of mark was in use at Bristol (Fig. 90), Edinburgh, Dundee,



Fig. 91.

and a few other places, and a correspondent has suggested that they may have been a special distinctive type used for Continental letters only. I have not, however, been able to find any connection existing between the use of this particular type in different offices.



Fig. 92.

In July, 1836, a new postal treaty was concluded with France, and under this treaty the prepayment of postage between the two countries for the first time became optional.

When letters were post paid in this country to

**POSTAGE TO LONDON
NOT - PAID**

Fig. 93.

their destination in France, they were impressed with a stamp as in Fig. 91, in addition to the ordinary "Paid" stamp.

To other countries inland postage had still to be prepaid. In many instances upon letters originating in the country the foreign postage was paid from London, but in such cases the letters were stamped as in Figs. 92 and 93, and returned to the senders for the collection of the inland postage.

SHIP - LETTERS.

Letters described under this heading were either foreign or colonial letters, conveyed in ships which

Q^NBOROUGH
SHIP LRE

Fig. 94.

were neither the property of nor hired or contracted for by the Post Office. The regulations affecting letters so conveyed are contained in several Statutes.

These letters, according to the Act of 1660, were to be given up to the postmaster at the port of arrival, so that they might be forwarded to London, and despatched thence to their destination, after having been



Fig. 95.

charged with the proper amount of postage. Under this Act no inducement was offered to masters of vessels to give up whatever letters they might convey, and they were liable to no penalty if they omitted to



Fig. 96.



Fig. 97.

do so. To secure co-operation and obedience to the law, Bishopp and the other farmers of the Post Office revenue who succeeded him undertook to pay 1d. for every letter that a shipmaster might bring to this



Fig. 98.

country, and this was the origin of "ship letters." This form of payment received legal sanction in the Act of 1710, which states that "for the encouragement of all such masters of ships and vessels from any parts beyond the seas to deliver unto the deputy of such Post-

master-General for such place or post town as they may touch at all such letters and packets

as they shall have on board, for every letter they so deliver they shall receive the sum of one penny." These letters were impressed with a special



Fig. 99.

ship letter mark at the port where they arrived (Fig. 94). The sum of 2d. was charged upon such letters in addition to whatever amount of inland postage might become due.

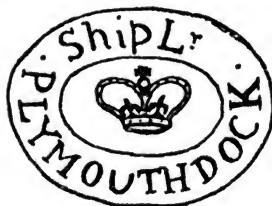


Fig. 100.

Another Ship Letter Act was passed in 1799, which authorised the sum of 4d. being collected upon all ship letters entering the kingdom. It was also enacted that "no vessel was to be allowed to make entry or break bulk until whatever letters

were aboard had been deposited" at the local post office. Upon the passing of this Act (September, 1799) a separate office was established in London to



Fig. 101.

deal with ship letter correspondence, and the marks illustrated in Figs. 95 to 98 came into use.

On account of war with France and the blocking of the North Sea ports against England, mails from



Fig. 102.



Fig. 103.

the Continent were landed wherever it was possible on our coast. These letters bore special marks (Figs. 99 to 101), because there were no packet boats

plying between Dover and France, hence such letters could only be charged as ship letters. While the war lasted all letters for the Continent, whether from the country or from London, were despatched to



Fig. 104.

their destination without any mark or designation of place of posting.

Another Ship Letter Act was passed in 1814, which raised the ship letter rate upon letters from 4d. to 6d.



Fig. 105.



Fig. 106.

This Act was replaced in the following year (1815) by another which gave power to the Post Office to establish a line of packets to India and the Cape,

to be despatched once a month by any vessel which the Post Office selected for the purpose.

The term "packet" included any ship, which in this instance might be a private vessel. The postage on

INDIA LETTER DARTMOUTH

Fig. 107.

a single letter by these packets was settled at 3s. 6d. ; by any private ship not a packet boat the postage outwards was 1s. 2d., and inwards 8d. This Act also made it compulsory on the owners of private

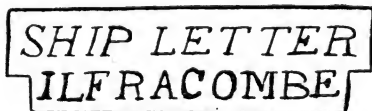


Fig. 108.



Fig. 109.

ships to convey mails as ship letters whenever they were required to do so by the Post Office. There was no settled port of departure or arrival for the

vessels carrying these particular mails for India and the Cape. Sometimes they were despatched by one of H.M. ships; at other times by the ships of the East India Company; but more frequently by vessels belonging to private owners. The letters

BRISTOL SHIP-LETTER

Fig. 110.

in many instances bore special postmarks (Fig. 102). There are other marks, such as Portsmouth, Liverpool, Deal, Hastings, Dartmouth, &c. (Figs. 103 to 107). Figs. 108 to 111 are types of marks which



Fig. 111.

continued in use at post towns for ship letters. All letters after being properly checked in the Ship Letter Office, whether for London or for the country, were transferred to the Inland Office to be sorted and distributed.

LONDON RECEIVERS—PENNY AND TWOPENNY POSTS.

THE first establishment of receiving houses in London took place about 1676-7. Previous to this date, the only receptacle for letters in the whole of London was at the General Post Office in Bishopsgate Street. There, and nowhere else, could letters be posted. A complete list of the appointed Letter Receivers in London in 1677 is as follows:

“Mrs. Grone; between the Temple Gates.
Wm. Nott; in the Pall Mall.
Geo. Luce; in King Street, Westminster.
John Lloyd; at Bedford House, in the Strand.
Nic Thatcher; at Graie's Inn Gate, Graie's
Inn Lane.
John Place; at Furnival's Inn Gate, Holborne.
James Magnes; in Russell Street, Covent Garden.
Mrs. Susan Roberts; by York Buildings, in the
Strand.”

To each of these receivers was appointed a different stamp, to distinguish their letters from one another. The official reason given for this precaution is “lest when wee come to examine their parcells, and finding paid letters mixt with unpaid

letters, under Rated and the like, they pretend ignorance of such letters, to the prejudice of the office and sometimes the owners of them." The type of stamp in use at these offices in each case bore the initials of the Receiver. Fig. 112 is taken from a letter written from Feens, a parish of White Waltham, near Maidenhead, Berks, and bears the date 7th November [1682]. This letter being addressed to Kings Weston, near Bristol, should have been sent down the road to Bristol, as a "way"

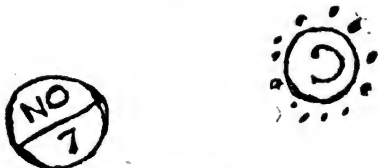


Fig. 112.

letter, but the London stamp which it also bears proves its arrival in London. The postmark "G" shows that the letter was not carried to London by the post. Upon examination of a carrier's list I find that the carrier or stage coach from Maidenhead arrived at and started from the "Bolt and Tun" Inn, Fleet Street. Whether the letter was conveyed purposely or accidentally to London it is impossible to say. The nearest receiving house to the "Bolt and Tun" Inn was that situated between the Temple Gates, and kept in 1682 by Mrs. Grone. The receiving office is accordingly identified by the letter G for Grone, instead of putting "between Temple Gates."

The General Post Office was removed to Lombard Street in March, 1678, and two years later (1680) William Dockwra started in London the first Penny Post. He appointed some four or five hundred receivers of letters in London and its suburbs, extending from Blackwall in the East to Westminster in the West, and from Hackney in the North to Lambeth in the South. These receivers made use of no postmark, but for the purpose of carrying on his undertaking, Dockwra



Fig. 113.



Fig. 114.



Fig. 115.

divided London and its suburbs into seven districts, with a Depôt or Sorting Office in each. These seven offices were supplied with stamps bearing their own initials. The Chief Office was at Dockwra's private dwelling house in Lyme Street. Thomas De Laune, Gent., in his work entitled "The Present State of London," 1681, gives three woodcuts of the marks used by Dockwra (Figs. 113 to 115), "of which," he says, "the First signifies eight in the morning, the Last four in the afternoon, and the Middlemost is the letter of the chief office in Lyme Street, each office having its proper Letter, and an acknowledgment that the Penny Post is paid to prevent the giving of anything at the delivery."

The earliest instance of this mark (Fig. 114) that I am cognisant of, is on a letter dated 9th December, 1681 (Fig. 116), written by the Bishop of London (Henchman) to Sir John Moore, when Lord Mayor of London. This letter was sent from Whitehall, and the district office is represented by the letter "W." in the centre of the stamp (Westminster).

Dockwra's Penny Post had been in existence since 1st April, 1680, when a decision was given in the Court of King's Bench, in the Michaelmas Term of 1682, which not only cast Dockwra in damages, but the undertaking, which had cost him £3000 to establish, was wrested out of his hands, and early in the year 1685 incorporated into the General Post Office. As Dockwra ceased to have any connection whatever with the management of the Penny Post until some twelve years later (in 1697), it is but natural to suppose that his original postmarks disappeared with him and his undertaking, for the latter was really suppressed and not annexed. The two types already given (Figs. 114 and 116) would certainly appear to be from Dockwra's original, and it is noticeable that the two "N's" in PENNY are joined.

When the Penny Post was re-established under the General Post Office in 1685 the number of offices was reduced to six, the Chief Office being at Crosby House, Bishopsgate, and the district offices at St. Paul's (Royal Bagnio Coffee House, Newgate Street), The Temple (Chichester Rents),



Fig. 116.

Westminster (Duke's Court), Southwark (Fowl Lane), and Hermitage (Queen Street, Little Tower Hill). The marks shown in Figs. 117 to 119, a facsimile of which appeared in the *Mirror*, vol. I. (1840), represent the Hermitage office, but it is evidently an error to describe them as Dockwra's marks. It would certainly be more feasible to assume that when the General Post Office re-established the Penny Post service in March, 1685, it adopted this type of postmark, which it will be noted differs in many respects from Dockwra's originals, more



Fig. 117.



Fig. 118.



Fig. 119.

especially in the hour marks. The triangular mark is also distinctly different, the spelling "PENY" and "PAYD" being noticeable.

Letters consigned to any of Dockwra's receiving offices were delivered in any part of what was then known as "London within the bills of mortality" for 1d., and in the suburbs 2d., and these charges would carry up to 1lb. in weight. Accordingly, so long as the charge by the General or Country Post for a distance not exceeding eighty miles stood at 2d., it was a mere question of convenience whether towns in the neighbourhood of London should be served by either post. The result of

this arrangement was that under the management of the General Post Office the Penny Post gradually extended to towns as far distant as twenty miles from London. An Act of Parliament (9 Anne, c. 10) completely remodelled the Post Office laws. Under this Act legal sanction was given to the Penny Post. As the same Act increased the initial postage charged by the General Post from 2d. to 3d. it was found necessary to assign a limit beyond which the Penny Post should not



Fig. 120.



Fig. 121.

extend, and this limit was fixed at ten miles measured from the General Post Office in Lombard Street. The notice to the public on the subject states that "All letters and packets directed to and sent from places distant ten miles or above from the said office in London which before the second of this instant June (1711) were received and delivered by the officers of the Penny Post, are now subjected to the same rates of postage as General Post letters; and that for the accommodation of the inhabitants of such places their letters will be conveyed with the same regularity and despatch as formerly, being first taxed and stamped with the mark of the General Post Office."

A correspondent has kindly forwarded to me tracings of these marks (Figs. 120 and 121) taken from a letter dated 1689, which came into his possession in a very curious way. He says: "A few years ago my brother was walking down one of the back streets of a southern naval port, when a curious little painting in a shop window took his fancy; he accordingly purchased it and hung it in his drawing-room. One night the picture fell down, and the frame broke to pieces. From the back fell out two letters, one of which bears the postmarks enclosed" (Figs. 120, 121). The spelling of "PENY"



Fig. 122.



Fig. 123.

and "PAYD" appears as in the previous specimen. It will be noticed that Mr. Gordon Smith, in his introduction to a "History of the Adhesive Stamps of the British Isles," published by the Philatelic Society of London (page xiii.), falls into a similar error by describing Fig. 122 as Dockwra's mark. This type of postmark continued to be used in the Penny Post Office for a great number of years. Fig. 123 was used on a letter dated 1754.

About the year 1766 the number of Penny Post Offices was reduced to five, the office at St. Paul's having been abolished. In 1777 the Chief Office

was located in Throgmorton Street, opposite Bartholomew Lane. The four principal or district offices were situated as follows :

Temple : Then called St. Clement's, in Blackmore Street, Clare Market.

Westminster : Gerrard Street.

Southwark : St. Saviour's Church Yard, Borough.

Hermitage : Queen Street, Little Tower Hill.

The triangular mark was still in use. A notice was issued in 1777 which stated that "The triangular stamp on all letters and parcels shows the day they were brought to a Principal Office, and the round stamp the hour they are given to the letter-carriers." I cannot say when the triangular mark ceased to be used, but it was probably about 1794. Fig. 124 is taken from a letter of 1788. The explanation of the letters in the centre of the triangular marks is as follows :



Fig. 124.

is as follows : Fig. 120, Temple, Monday ; Fig. 122, Temple, Wednesday ; Fig. 123, Westminster, Tuesday ; Fig. 124, Westminster, Thursday.

The Penny Post and the General Post each had its separate receiving houses. The Penny Post receivers used no stamps or marks on letters handed in at their offices, but marks still continued to be used by General Post receivers. The eight receivers of 1677 had increased in 1703 to thirteen. Three of their marks are given in Figs. 125 to 127.

Fig. 125 refers to Richard Sare, who was receiver at Gray's Inn in 1703; Fig. 126, dated from West-



Fig. 125.



Fig. 126.

minster, 7th November, 1702, was evidently posted at Robert Lovell's receiving house, St. James's; and



Fig. 127.

Fig. 127, dated 21st December, 1703, was posted at Mrs. Eliza Rumball's receiving house in Covent Garden.

By 1770 the number of General Post receivers was forty-four, and the following list shows the same number (note 21A and B) for the year 1782.

LETTER RECEIVERS, 1782.

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Mr. Pridden . . . | Fleet Street. |
| 2 | Richard Jones. . . | The Temple. |
| 3 | Edward Hawkins . . | Chancery Lane. |
| 4 | George Mortimer . . | Wytch Street. |
| 5 | Jas. Harris. . . . | Drury Lane. |
| 6 | Sarah Moule | King Street, Covent Garden. |
| 7 | Geo. Cross | Strand. |
| 8 | Matty Matilda . . . | Griffin, Round Court, Strand. |
| 9 | Wm. Craige | Chandos Street. |
| 10 | Thos. Stephenson . . | Charing Cross. |
| 11 | Edward Powell . . . | St. Martin's Lane. |
| 12 | Norah Day | Parliament Street. |
| 13 | Samuel Champrus . . | Tothill Street, Westminster. |
| 14 | Wm. Randall | Pall Mall. |
| 15 | Mary Davis | Sackville Street. |
| 16 | Elnea Keepe | St. James' Street. |
| 17 | Edward Hughes . . . | Jermyn Street. |
| 18 | Jas. Robson | New Bond Street. |
| 19 | John Kirby | Stafford Street, Old Bond Street. |
| 20 | Mrs. Clemson | Berkeley Square. |
| 21A | Gideon Hewitt . . . | Mount Street, Grosvenor Square. |
| 21B | Ann Cooke | Queen Street, Mayfair. |
| 22 | Thos. Cass | South Audley Street. |
| 23 | Jos. Grocer | Balsover Street. |
| 24 | Geo. Grimmett . . . | Terrace, Oxford Road. |
| 25 | Wm. Rouse | Wigmore Street. |
| 26 | Richard Erlam . . . | Park St., Upper Grosvenor St. |
| 27 | Thos. Withurst . . . | Coventry Street. |
| 28 | Eliz. Vaughan . . . | Vigo Lane, Golden Square. |
| 29 | John Jackson | King Street, St. Ann's. |
| 30 | Francis Searle . . . | Oxford St. (Poland St., Soho). |

- 31 Thos. Hinde . . . Charles Street, Soho.
 32 Wm. Boake . . . Bull and Gate, Holborn.
 33 Richard Rippin . . . Theobalds Road.
 34 Hugh Brocket . . . Hart Street, Bloomsbury.
 35 Wm. Hexney . . . Gray's Inn.
 36 Geo. Walter . . . Holborn Hill.
 37 John Chalfont . . . West Smithfield.
 38 Wm. Venables . . . Knightrider Street.
 39 Geo. Lambert . . . Tower Hill.
 40 Thos. Daking . . . Ratcliffe Cross.
 41 Geo. Sanders . . . Hermitage Stairs.
 42 John Allen . . . King Edward Stairs.
 43 Michael Ellis . . . Borough.

I have suspected that the numbers borne against each receiver may have actually denoted his or her particular office ; this, however, is purely supposition, as I have never seen any such mark, nor can I give the date when the old initial mark of the receivers was abolished. Fig. 128 is one taken



Fig. 128.

from a letter dated 27th July, 1776, posted at the receiving house of Thomas Wheeler, situated in the Strand. There is some difficulty in identifying these particular marks, on account of the continuous changing of receivers.

Somewhere about 1790 the General Post receiving

houses were distinguished by stamps bearing their names (Figs. 129 to 132). This type of receivers' postmark (General Post) continued in use for many years (possibly until about 1830).

In the year 1708 one Charles Povey set up a Halfpenny Post, or as he called it a "Halfpenny

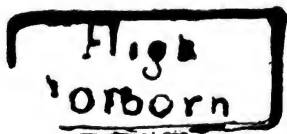


Fig. 129.

Carriage." For the sum of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. he undertook to do what the Postmasters-General were doing for 1d. The Penny Postage extended not only to London proper, but also to the remote suburbs ;

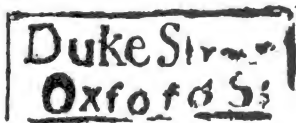


Fig. 130.

while Povey's "Halfpenny Carriage" was confined to the busy parts of the metropolis—"within the main pile of buildings," as he puts it—to the Borough of Southwark, and to the Cities of London and Westminster. He appointed a number of shopkeepers as receivers, and employed many messengers ;

these carried bells, which they rang as they passed along the streets, thereby giving notice of their approach. Povey's undertaking was a direct infringement of the rights of the Crown, and although the Postmasters-General called upon him to desist from his undertaking he refused to do so, and his

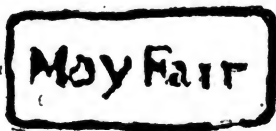


Fig. 131.

Halfpenny Post continued in full activity for seven months, from 4th October, 1708, to 4th May, 1709, when it was suppressed. During that period there is reason to believe that a particular postmark was used to distinguish his letters. The reason for this



Fig. 132.

supposition is that in nearly all details he had followed the lines on which Dockwra founded the Penny Post.

The Penny Post from its first establishment by Dockwra was carried on by compulsory prepayment.

This was altered in 1794 by Act of Parliament, which left to the persons using the Penny Post the option of prepaying their letters or not. The alteration brought forth new types of stamps (Figs. 133 to 135), impressed in red, black, and blue inks.

Penny Post
Pd 1d.
Hendon

Fig. 133.—31st January, 1797.

The five principal offices were then reduced to two, the Chief Office and the office in Gerrard Street. All the Penny Post receivers were at this time supplied with stamps. No date stamps had been in use in the Penny Post until 1794, when an]

Penny Post
Not Paid

Fig. 134.—25th March, 1798.

entirely new type of stamp was introduced by Mr. Edward Johnson, Controller of the Penny Post, expressing the year, month, day, and hour. These are the earliest types of combined stamps. Figs. 136 and 137 were in use at Gerrard Street, and

Figs. 138 and 139 at the Chief Office in the City. All these marks were in red. Combined date and "Paid" stamps (Figs. 140 and 141), in red, were also in use at the principal Penny Post offices.



Fig. 135.—14th July, 1800.

The same Act (1794) abolished the ten-mile limit of the London Penny Post, which had existed since the Penny Post was legalised in 1710, and



Fig. 136.—1797.



Fig. 137.—1799.

authorised the Postmasters-General to extend its radius at their discretion, with the result that where hitherto there had been a difference of postage between two letters, the one passing from London to a place "outside the bills of mortality," and the other passing from a place "outside the

bills of mortality" to London (in the first case the postage was 2d., *i.e.*, 1d. to receiving house and 1d. on delivery, and in the other 1d., being handed in at a receiving house and the letter



Fig. 138.—1799.

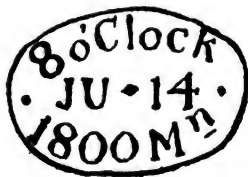


Fig. 139.

delivered in London free), the Act of 1794 imposed a postage of 2d. in both directions. This may be said to have been the origin of the Twopenny Post; for by Act of Parliament passed a few years



Fig. 140.

later (1801) the London Penny Post became a Twopenny Post, and the types of stamps shown in Figs. 142 to 145 remained in use at the Chief Offices. In fact, very little alteration appears to

have been made in the stamps beyond that from "Penny" to "Two Penny" (Figs. 146 to 148)—these marks were made of wood and were impressed in red ink. The same remark applies to the Twopenny Post receivers' marks, as in Figs. 149 to



Fig. 141.

153 (all in black). There was, however, a new mark, as in Fig. 154, taken from a letter of 1806.

All letters put in at a Twopenny Post receiving house for delivery in the country, without the 2d. being paid, were marked as in Fig. 155 (page 70).



Fig. 142.



Fig. 143.

Another Act of Parliament, passed in 1805, converted the Twopenny Post, in respect to letters for places beyond the General Post limits, into a



Fig. 144.



Fig. 145.



Fig. 146.



Fig. 147.



Fig. 148.

Threepenny Post. Thus (in the North of London) Islington (beyond the "Angel"), Paddington (in

TwoPennyPost
Unpaid
Mill-Hill

Fig. 149.

TwoPennyPost
Unpaid
ChigwellRow

Fig. 150.

TwoPennyPost
Unpaid
Greenwich

Fig. 151.

the West), Bow (in the East), and Walworth (beyond the New Kent Road, in the South), were all placed in the Threepenny delivery of the Twopenny Post. Letters reaching London from the country

for delivery within the Threepenny Post limits, or posted at the Receiving House for the Country, were only charged 2d., and bore marks as shown in Figs. 156 to 158.

TWO PENNY
POST
Milk St.

Fig. 152.

TWO PENNY POST
Unpaid
Kennington

Fig. 153.

TWO PENNY POST
Unpaid
11 a.m.

Fig. 154.

The types of marks in use at the receiving offices outside the Twopenny Post limit differed as

indicated in Figs. 159 to 167, the circular marks being in use at the country offices of the Twopenny Post. Letters having in the date stamp the letters "Mg" were delivered at noon. Those having the letters "EV" were delivered the same evening.



Fig. 155.

A new type of receiver's mark was introduced about 1816. Specimens of these marks are shown in Figs. 168 to 175.

In December, 1817, it was decided to adopt a new type of date-stamp for use in the Twopenny Post (Figs. 176 to 180), to be impressed in black on the back of unpaid letters passing through the Twopenny Post for delivery by the General Post. This stamp denoted that such letters were liable to a charge of 2d. in addition to the General Post rate.



Fig. 156.



Fig. 157.

The Twopenny Post Department performed the purely local service of London, its operations being restricted to a radius of about ten miles from the

General Post Office. There were two districts: Town (Twopenny Post) and Country (Threepenny Post). The Town District was over six miles from East to West, and about two-and-a-half miles from North to South. The measurement was originally taken from Lombard Street, but for the purpose of simplifying what was generally admitted to be an arbitrary limit, one house frequently being in the Twopenny and the next door in the Threepenny Post, when the General Post Office was removed from



Fig. 158.

Lombard Street to St. Martin's-le-Grand, in 1829 the principle was adopted of charging 3d. upon all

Albany Road RH
3py Post Paid

Fig. 159.

Putney S.O
3py P. Paid

Fig. 160.

letters "when off the stones," *i.e.*, immediately beyond the town delivery, and the boundary of this delivery was curiously irregular. Islington and



Fig. 161.



Fig. 162.



Fig. 163.



Fig. 164.



Fig. 165.



Fig. 166.

Pentonville, for instance, were in the Country district; whilst the New (Euston) Road and the greater part of Regent's Park were included in the Town delivery. This irregularity of boundary was the cause of numerous complaints. In November, 1829, a gentleman residing in Tonbridge Place, New (Euston) Road, wrote to the *Times*, complaining of an extra charge of 2d. being made upon all his letters, because the delivery was "off the stones," and further that there was no mark on the letter showing that the charge was a legal one. To meet the latter complaint a new stamp was introduced (Fig. 181).

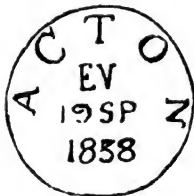


Fig. 167.



Fig. 168.

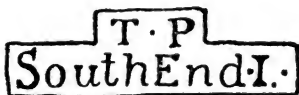


Fig. 169.

An important improvement took place in April, 1831, when the Twopenny Post delivery was extended to a circle of three miles from the General Post Office. This extension brought within its

T·P
Piccadilly

Fig. 170.

T·P
Fenchurch St

Fig. 171.

T·P **TP**
A c t o n **Kent Road**

Fig. 172.

Fig. 173.

T·P
Kings Road

Fig. 174.

PUTNEY
- 2 -

Fig. 175.

limits such populous districts round London as Camden Town, Somers Town, Islington, Pentonville, Kingsland, Hackney, Walworth, Kensington,



Fig. 176.



Fig. 177.



Fig. 178.



Fig. 179.



Fig. 180.

and Newington Butts, whilst Chelsea, Brompton, and Paddington, although beyond the three miles circle, were also included in the Twopenny Post

delivery. The reason given for this exceptional treatment was, that there were practically two Chief Offices in the Twopenny Post, one at the General Post Office, and the other at Gerrard Street, and that the latter office was not three miles from the districts included.



Fig. 181.

The following year (1832) saw the limits of the Threepenny Post extended to a circle of twelve miles from the General Post Office, which brought such towns as Kingston, Hounslow,



Fig. 182.



Fig. 183.



Fig. 184.



Fig. 185.

Southall, Edgware, Stanmore, Barnet, Waltham Cross, Romford, and Foots Cray within its delivery. In 1834 the Gerrard Street Office was

abolished, the sole Chief Office being then located in the General Post Office.

In the Twopenny Post an entirely different arrangement from that existing in the Inland Office prevailed in respect to the paid and unpaid marks, both being printed in red ink. The distinction was that the unpaid stamps bore a single rim (Figs. 182 and 183) and the paid stamps a double rim (Figs. 184 and 185).



Fig. 186.



Fig. 187.

In 1831, the consolidation of the Twopenny and General Post receiving houses was suggested. At this period there were 64 General and 169 Twopenny Post receiving houses within the London District. For instance, in Holborn there were no less than seven, four for the Twopenny, and three for the General Post. In the Strand there were five, two for the General, and three for the Twopenny Post. In Tottenham Court Road there were four, three for the Twopenny, and one for the General Post; and so throughout London. Where there were

several receiving houses in one thoroughfare or district, they were distinguished by initials, such as "W.O," "S.O," "C.O," "E.O," &c. (Figs. 186 to 189). These initials mean Western Office, Southern Office, Central Office, Eastern Office, &c.

The General Post receivers' marks were identified by the absence of "T.P" (Figs. 190 and 191).

There was considerable difference between the two classes of receivers. For instance, there were

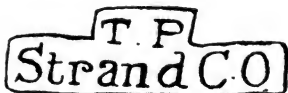


Fig. 188.

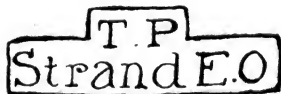


Fig. 189.

five or six collections daily from the Twopenny Post receiving houses, and only one from the General Post receivers'. Another difference was that when the despatch was made at 5 p.m. by the General Post receivers, their offices and receiving boxes were closed against Post Office work until the next morning, whereas the Twopenny Post receivers' offices were open from early morning until as late as 10 p.m. Any letter posted for the General Post, or for the country, at a Twopenny

Post receiver's, was charged 2d. in addition to the inland postage.

This charge was the cause of continuous complaint. The suggestion to consolidate the two classes of receivers had for one object the abolition of this charge of 2d. The Post Office officials,

SthAudleyS^tSO

Fig. 190.

however, feared to disturb a system which, from their point of view, worked admirably. To abolish the two classes of receivers "would confuse accounts," they said, "as one receiver would have to keep three separate accounts—Inland, Foreign, and Twopenny Post—which would lead to blunders,

NEWINGTON
CAUSEWAY

Fig. 191.

and blunders to delay and confusion." On these grounds it was considered advisable not to disturb the then existing arrangements; accordingly, the offices were not consolidated. Nevertheless, the charging of 2d. upon country letters put in at the Twopenny Post receiving houses was abolished. The public were also permitted to prepay postage upon country

letters handed in at the Twopenny Post receivers'. All such letters bore on the front the mark shown



Fig. 192.



Fig. 193.

in Fig. 192, which was impressed in red ink, before being transferred from the Twopenny to the General Post.

Outside the twelve miles circle of the Threepenny Post delivery there were several boundary towns,



Fig. 194.



Fig. 195.



Fig. 196.

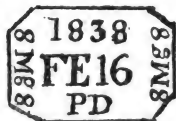


Fig. 197.



Fig. 198.

such as Orpington, Dartford, and Ewell on the South, and Potter's Bar, Cheshunt, and Pinner on

the North. Letters to these places were at times delivered by the Twopenny Post, in which instance the letters bore the mark shown in Fig. 193.

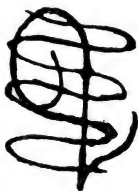


Fig. 199.



Fig. 200.

On 1st January, 1836, an entirely new type of stamp was introduced for use in the Chief Office of the Twopenny Post. The stamps (Figs. 194 to 198) were made of metal, and the rule of using

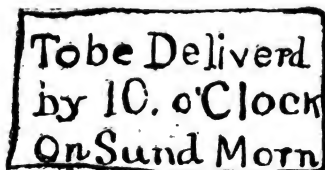


Fig. 201.

red ink for paid and black for unpaid letters was then adopted. These marks remained in use for many years after the introduction of the Uniform Penny Post.

There are only five other marks in use in the Twopenny Post to which it is necessary to call attention. Two were peculiar cancelling marks (Figs. 199 and 200).



Fig. 202.

Fig. 201 is a mark impressed in red ink on a newspaper wrapper of 1803. The newspaper was addressed to a place (Barnet) outside the delivery of the Twopenny Post, which at this period had a



Fig. 203.

Sunday morning delivery, beyond the six mile circle. This newspaper was specially endorsed for delivery by the Twopenny Post. There is a smaller type of this mark (Fig. 202), and also a circular type (Fig. 203).

COUNTRY POSTMASTERS.

UNTIL about the year 1714, the provincial or country postmasters, then called "deputies," did not use any stamp or mark on the letters posted at, or delivered from, their offices, all letters being entered on what was termed a "labell" or waybill giving the time of arrival and despatch of the mails, and also the number of letters paid and unpaid.

In the year 1715 instructions were issued that each post town should make use of a stamp, "so that a check may be kept on letters passing from one stage to another," *i.e.*, intermediate stages on direct roads. One of the earliest instructions issued to the Post Office Surveyors (who were first appointed in 1715) was "to examine whether all letters are duly stamped." Some few years later (1720) Ralph Allen, the postmaster of Bath, took in farm the Bye and Cross Post letters.

It is necessary here to explain that letters exclusive of the Penny Post in London were divided into four classes—London letters, Country letters, Bye or Way letters, and Cross Post letters. A letter from Birmingham to London would be a London letter, and a letter from one part of the country to another which in course of transit passed through London would be termed a Country letter; a Bye or Way letter would be a letter passing

between any two towns on a direct post road and stopping short of London, while a Cross Post letter would be a letter crossing between two direct post roads. It was the last two classes of letters that Allen had taken in farm, and for which he agreed to pay an annual rental of £6000. This agreement was to continue in force for seven years; during that period he was to receive the whole revenue which these letters should produce. The contract was renewed from term to term until Allen's death in 1764.

Allen without doubt was a great postal reformer, and among his many improvements was the conversion of three day posts a week into six day posts, the whole expense of the alteration falling upon himself. The first of these six day posts commenced in 1741, and ran every day in the week (Sundays excepted) between London and Bristol, and between London and Norwich and Yarmouth. They were afterwards gradually extended all over the country.

Allen's original plan, which was designed with the intention of preventing the illegal conveyance of letters, consisted of a system of vouchers and what he called postbills, by means of which the postmasters might act as a check upon each other, by distinguishing the Bye and Cross Post letters from others, and to show the total amount of postage to be collected.

The postmasters and their postboys did not look kindly upon Allen's plan, which interfered with their clandestine conveying of letters for what they could get, a system of payment which by years of practice had come to be looked upon by

them as a legitimate part of their wages. Every device was resorted to by them in order to defeat his object. In fact it would be impossible to exaggerate the difficulties with which Allen had to contend. Dead and missent letters were

**ISLE OF
WIGHT**

Fig. 204.—1720.

purposely put into circulation, with the object of obtaining refundment of postage from him for them, as dead letters.

To suppress this dangerous abuse was no easy task, and apparently the only cure for the evil which occurred to Allen's mind was the stamping of letters. Instructions were issued to the

**WALTHAM
CROSS**

Fig. 205.—1750.

postmasters to the effect that no allowance would be made in respect to any dead or missent letters which did not bear on their covers the name of

**PET
WORTH**

Fig. 206.—1754.

the office whence the postmaster by whom the allowance was claimed had received them. If they bore the stamp of that office that was sufficient proof of their genuineness: without

stamping no check was possible. "I need not tell you," writes Allen to one of his surveyors, "the mischief which has already attended the omission

61 BUCKING
HAM

Fig. 207.—1765.

of this necessary part of their duty, nor the difficulty which I have hitherto met with to get this order observed; but when they find that their neglect will for the future hurt themselves this evil will be stopped."

46 FENNY
STRATFORD.

Fig. 208.—1765.

78 SOUTH
AMPTON

Fig. 209.—1768.

It is only too evident that the abuse did not cease at once, for month after month and year by year Allen reiterates to his surveyors much the same instructions. "At every office you pass

through," he writes to one, "I desire you will always call for the letters to examine whether there are any unstamped or missent letters amongst them, that those two abuses may be thoroughly suppressed." To another he says, "See if the letters

COVEN
TRY

Fig. 210.—1768.

YORK

Fig. 211.—1772.

MINE
HEAD

Fig. 212.—1774.

53 STONY
STRATFORD

Fig. 213.—1778.

are stamped from any cross road town, for otherwise it will be in the postmaster's power to enter any unlimited number and make demand on me for the postage." Again, "Throughout your survey examine whether the Bye letters are duly stamped."

Allen even had the postboys stopped on the highway, and their mails examined for the purpose of testing whether letters were stamped. Writing to

YAR
MOUTH.

Fig. 214.—1780.

another surveyor, on 6th February, 1737, he remarks: "In your former instructions I have frequently recommended the necessity of stamping all

137 HORN
CASTLE

Fig. 215.—1785.

WORKING
TON

Fig. 216.—1790.

the Bye and Cross Road letters. A new attempt to injure the revenue, by sending franked covers several times with different letters, makes this order more necessary."

From the above extracts it will be seen that in the early days considerable difficulty was experienced in making the use of stamps or postmarks compulsory. Types of stamps in use by Postmasters from 1720 to 1790 are shown in Figs. 204 to 216, with the date marked under each. The

BIRMINGHAM

Fig. 217.

WIRKSWORTH

Fig. 218.

numbers borne in front of the towns represented the mileage from London, and the introduction of these

BATH

Fig. 219.

was probably due to the increased postage rates of 1765. This type of mark appears to have remained

**PLYMOUTH
DOCK**

Fig. 220.

here and there at different towns until July, 1797, when an order was issued that the marking of miles on stamps should cease.

It is pretty certain that this particular type was not in general use, as will be seen from the different types of stamps employed at various towns (Figs.

**FERRY
BRIDGE**

Fig. 221.

217 to 221—the letters from which these postmarks are taken bear dates 1787 to 1798).

Another type was cut in concave curved lines (Figs. 222 to 226, all taken from letters bearing the year 1797).

MAIDSTONE

Fig. 222.

CAMBRIDGE

Fig. 223.

Another type was in convex curved lines (Figs. 227 and 228).

Some post towns had their names cut in two convex curved lines (Fig. 229 is from a letter bearing date 1st November, 1799).

An undulating or wavy type was also in use (Figs. 230 to 232 are taken from letters bearing date 1798-9, and are, I believe, somewhat scarce).

A unique type of marks are those of Jersey and Guernsey (Figs. 233 and 234), the former taken from a letter dated 1799. Until 1794, the Channel Islands Post Office was a private concern, not under the control of the Postmaster-General in

SUDBURY

Fig. 224.

READING

Fig. 225

GT. MISSENDEN

Fig. 226.

England. In the year named an Act of Parliament was passed which imposed rates of postage within the Islands similar to those that existed in England. The Act also authorised a line of packet boats to be established between England (Weymouth) and the Channel Islands. When inaugurated, this was essentially a war-post, due to the war then raging with France. The packet

rate was fixed at 2d. for a single letter. The cost of a single letter from London to the Channel Islands would thus be 7d., *i.e.*, postage to Weymouth 5d., and packet postage 2d.

The Isle of Man had been in possession of an official post since 1766. An Act of Parliament (7 Geo. III., c. 50) passed in the same year authorised the Postmasters-General to establish a packet boat between Whitehaven and Douglas in the Isle of Man for the conveyance of letters to and fro once a week. The same Act also authorised them to

SEVENOAKS

Fig. 227.

WINDSOR

Fig. 228.

establish post offices in the Island. In addition to a packet rate of 2d. for conveyance of a single letter to or from the Island and Whitehaven, the Act imposed within the Island similar rates of postage to those existing in England. Douglas was the only post office established in the Island, and letters passing through that office bore postmarks as Fig. 235, which is taken from a letter dated 1795. A later mark is that taken from a letter of 1820 (Fig. 236). Circular stamps were introduced in later years (Figs. 237 and 238). No

GERRARDS
CROSS

Fig. 229.

KINGSTON

Fig. 230.

BROMLEY

Fig. 231.

WOODSTOCK

Fig. 232.

JERSEY

Fig. 233.

GUERNSEY

Fig. 234.

other office was established in the Island until 1832, when sub-offices were opened at Castletown, Peel, and Ramsey.

**ISLE OF
MAN**

Fig. 235.

ISLE OF MAN

Fig. 236.



Fig. 237.



Fig. 238.

Fig. 239 is an early type of framed mark. Different types of circular and other stamps without dates appear to have come into use in the provinces

HOLKHAM

Fig. 239.

about 1795, and many of these are shown in Figs. 240 to 258. Figs. 247 and 251 are early undated marks bearing mileage from London.



Fig. 240.



Fig. 241.

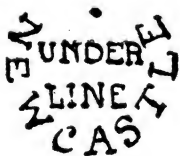


Fig. 242.

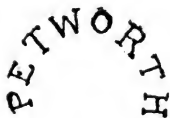


Fig. 243.



Fig. 244.



Fig. 245.



Fig. 246.

The use of the combined date stamp was first adopted among post towns at Liverpool in 1798 (Fig. 259), and at Bristol early in 1799. In most specimens of this type the impression of the containing circle or rim of the stamp is very



Fig. 247.

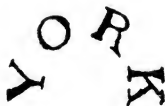


Fig. 248.

faint and broken. Another large type of mark (Fig. 260) was also in use at Liverpool.

Instructions were issued to all postmasters, or "deputies" as they were still called, in April, 1798,



Fig. 249.



Fig. 250.

to the effect that all letters posted at their offices were to be stamped in front.

The Act of 1801 created new rates of postage for country letters. Previous to the passing of this Act, the highest charge for a single letter passing anywhere within the British Isles was 8d., no

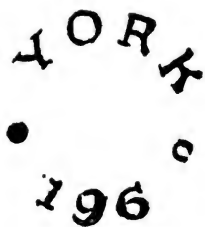


Fig. 251.



Fig. 252.



Fig. 253.



Fig. 254.



Fig. 255.



Fig. 256.

H

greater charge being made for a distance of 500 miles than for 150. This was now altered, and between 150 and 700 miles no less than seven distinct scales of postage were introduced. To make this complication of scales workable, a new class of stamp was introduced, showing the distance of the post town from London (Figs. 261 to 273). As regards Fig. 270, North and South Cave are two places in Yorkshire distant about 3 miles by



Fig. 257.



Fig. 258.

road from each other. Until the year 1837 the post office which served both places was located at South Cave; but at that date North Cave was granted a separate office.

Instructions were given that distances were not to be added to sub post towns (*e.g.*, Fig. 274); but it appears that the stamp maker before he received the notice had completed a number of such stamps; whether they got into use or were altered is not stated.

A regular weekly mail to the Scilly Isles was first established in the year 1804. The connection was maintained by a small vessel trading between

Penzance and St. Mary's. It was not a regular packet boat, and therefore a regular packet postage could not be enforced without an Act of



Fig. 259.



Fig. 260.

Parliament. To get over the difficulty it was decided that the distance (30 miles) between Penzance and the Islands should be added (as

CHELMSFORD

29

Fig. 261.

GUILDFORD

30

Fig. 262.

MAIDSTONE

38

Fig. 263.

ASHFORD

58

Fig. 264.

FAREHAM

73

Fig. 265.

STOCKBRIDGE

79

Fig. 266.

if conveyed by land) to all letters reaching Penzance to and from other parts of the British Isles, which increased the postage in nearly every

MORTON IN MARSH

88

Fig. 267.

BOLTON

205

Fig. 268.

ST-ASAPH

218

Fig. 269.

CAVE·N & S

22.4

Fig. 270.

BEVERLEY

225

Fig. 271.

TRURO

260

Fig. 272.

instance by 1d. The rate in this instance was illegal, it being neither a packet nor a ship letter rate.

Between Penzance and the Islands a considerable correspondence was carried on, and to charge

NEWCASTLE-T
277

Fig. 273.

this correspondence on a similar rating to that for letters from other parts of the country meant a

CORFE-CASTLE

Fig. 274.

postage rate of 4d. or 5d. on a single letter. This it was admitted would be an injustice; but

SCILLY

Fig. 275.

eventually the inhabitants of both places agreed to a voluntary payment of 2d. on each letter.

Fig. 275 is taken from a letter dated 1807.

+ F O R D
O 26 F E 26 D
1805
57
Fig. 276.

An improved type of date stamp was introduced in the early part of 1805 for use in the provincial post offices. The earliest date on a mark of this type that I have met with is that of Fig. 276, and from this date a great improvement

COVENTRY
JAN 12
1806
© 91 ©

Fig. 277.

CHESTER
FEB 12
1808
© 190 ©

Fig. 278.

WARRINGTON
FEB 13
1808
© 188 ©

Fig. 279.

NEWCASTLE-UPTON
MAY 29
1810
* 140 *

Fig. 280.

CHELTENHAM
AUG 24
1810
101

Fig. 281.

PLYMOUTH
DE 11
1810
220 DK

Fig. 282.

ORTH SHIELDS
22 DE 22
1810
283

Fig. 283.

SALISBURY
APR 11
1811
84

Fig. 284.

HATH
OC 15
1811
709

Fig. 285.

SOUTH SHIELDS
14 JY 14
1814
282

Fig. 286

RYD
MY 19
1815

Fig. 287.

HOLYHEAD
21 MY 21
1815
273

Fig. 288.

is noticeable both in type and in clearness of impression (*e.g.*, Figs. 277 to 288). In the great majority of cases the mileage is given at the bottom, but there were exceptions (*e.g.*, Figs. 287 and 289).

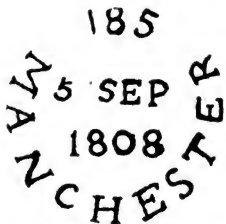


Fig. 289.



Fig. 290.

Fig. 290 is a peculiar type of date stamp taken from a letter bearing date 1814. It is the only mark that I have seen with the year absent; it is impressed in a dirty brick-red coloured ink.

Fig. 291 is also peculiar, "Newcastle-U-Te" apparently signifying Newcastle-under-Tyne. This nomenclature has the sanction of antiquity, for in Finden's "Ports and Harbours of Great Britain," the following passage occurs in a footnote on page 32: "In the reign of Edward I. there is an instance of Newcastle, in Northumberland, being called 'Newcastle - under - Tyne' — *subtus Tynam.*" In 1826



Fig. 291.

a similar type was in use inscribed "Newcastle-T."

Mr. R. Scott, the engraver to the Post Office, invented, in the year 1815, a new method of cutting the stamps, which not only reduced the price from



Fig. 292.



Fig. 293.

46s. to 36s. each, but enabled clearer impressions to be taken; no alteration, however, appears to have been made in the type of mark (*e.g.*, Figs. 292 to 295). A pretty design of mark which I have not seen in use in any other town is Fig. 296.



Fig. 294.



Fig. 295.

In the year 1822 new types of stamps were brought into use in the provincial post offices (Figs. 297 to 302). It was claimed by the maker of these

stamps that a bad impression would be impossible, as they were made by an expensive "mathematical engine," which reduced to a certainty the cutting of the pieces all the same length. In November, 1823, the number of post towns using date stamps was eighty-six.

Early in the year 1826, Mr. Alfred Payne, an engraver of Birmingham, introduced a circular stamp made of steel, which gave a clear impression.

An oil composition was used for stamping. These stamps were brought into general use, more particularly in the West of England (Figs. 303 and 304). The price of the undated stamps was 7s. 6d. each, whilst the date-stamps, with a double set of figures,



Fig. 296.



Fig. 297.



Fig. 298.

cost two guineas each. The rule then existing was that date-stamps were only to be supplied to post offices earning a gross revenue of over £1000 per year. The number of date-stamps was about half the number of those without dates.

Instructions were issued in 1829 to all postmasters to examine carefully the distances on their stamps, and in the case of any being found incorrect,



Fig. 299.



Fig. 300.



Fig. 301.



Fig. 302.

through change of route, the distances were to be filed off. From this date the marking of distances gradually ceased (*e.g.*, Fig. 305).



Fig. 303.



Fig. 304.

Shortly afterwards an entirely new type of stamp (Figs. 306 to 317), with two semi-circular lines, also made by Mr. Payne of Birmingham, were brought into general use in the country post towns, both for dated and for undated stamps. Here and there we come across exceptional types, such as Peterborough and Tunbridge Wells (Figs. 318 and 319).

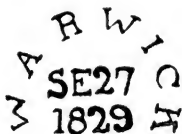


Fig. 305.



Fig. 306.



Fig. 307.



Fig. 308.



Fig. 309.

In 1835 and following years, a considerable amount of pressure was brought to bear on the Post Office authorities to compel them to use date-stamps at all post towns. The agitation arose in



Fig. 310.



Fig. 311.



Fig. 312.



Fig. 313.



Fig. 314.



Fig. 315.

the West of England, evidently out of some case at law, for the main argument of the parties pursuing the subject was that such postmarks could be used as evidence in cases of legal dispute. The

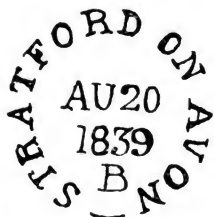


Fig. 316.



Fig. 317.

Post Office authorities refused at first to alter their regulations, whereby small offices of under £1000 per annum gross revenue were forbidden to use date-stamps, contending that it was the duty of



Fig. 318.



Fig. 319.

the writer properly to date his own letter, and that implicit reliance could not be placed on the postmasters putting the correct figures in their stamps, which might lead to embarrassment or injury,

more especially if such postmarks were to be adduced as evidence in a court of justice. Applications were received from several towns, and two cases are given in explanation of this agitation. The first is that of Chard (Fig. 320). The gross revenue of this office was approximately £950 a



Fig. 320.



Fig. 321.

year, and accordingly it was refused the use of a date-stamp. The other case is that of Neath (Fig. 321), in which instance the gross revenue was found to be £1064 a year, and accordingly it was entitled by official regulations to a date-stamp (Fig. 322), which was granted in July, 1836.



Fig. 322.

The agitation for the general use of date-stamps continued, with the result that on 3rd March, 1837, the Post Office authorities admitted that there would be an advantage in having a sure reference to the date on which a letter was

actually put in the post. It was therefore decided gradually to substitute dated stamps for undated ones as new ones were required.

Another type of mark in use at the smaller offices is that shown in Fig. 323. But exceptions were still to be found in different offices (*e.g.*, Fig. 324).

At all the larger offices the receiving boxes were closed for clearance just previous to the despatch of the mail, and reopened immediately afterwards with the words "Too late" upon them. Such letters as were posted in these boxes were in many cases post-marked as in Fig. 325.



Fig. 323.

SOUTHAMPTON
AP 14 1837

Fig. 324.



Fig. 325.

Upon the introduction of the adhesive postage stamp and Mulready cover, in May, 1840, and subsequently the embossed envelopes, an obliteration stamp came into general use at all offices (Fig. 326). These stamps were made of wood, and from want of a distinguishing mark it was found impossible to indicate the office where letters



Fig. 326.

defaced by them were posted, so that in February, 1841, instructions were issued to all postmasters to date-stamp their letters with the office where posted in front, and with the office of delivery on the back.

PAID LETTERS.

Country postmasters experienced much difficulty and at times considerable loss by the senders pre-paying the postage upon their letters. The surcharges on paid letters were a source of excessive annoyance to the postmasters at forwarding offices,

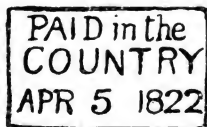


Fig. 327.

for they were frequently called upon to account for postage upon letters which in reality had been paid to another postmaster whose correspondence circulated through the forwarding office.

Previous to the year 1824, when letters were fully paid to their destination, they were in many instances impressed with a particular postmark (Fig. 327) to indicate that the letter was paid.

Frequently the postage was paid in part—as far as London—which created annoyance to the addressees, the “Paid in the Country” stamp giving rise to the impression that postage was fully paid to destination.

In 1824 distinctive “Paid” stamps came into more general use in the country post offices. Several

Paid at Truro.

Fig. 328.



Fig. 329.



Fig. 330.

offices had been using such post paid marks previous to their having received official sanction, and as these stamps were ordered by the postmasters themselves they varied considerably in design. Figs. 328 to 330 show three of these earlier marks.;



Fig. 331.



Fig. 332.



Fig. 333.



Fig. 334.



Fig. 335.



Fig. 336.



Fig. 337.

From this date particular stamps for paid letters were brought into use at all the larger towns in the country. The rule was that in all cases the "Paid" stamps were to be impressed in red ink upon the front of the letter. The types of marks varied considerably, as indicated in Figs. 331 to 337.

PENNY POSTS.

Previous to the establishment of Uniform Penny Postage in 1840 there were four ways by which rural districts obtained their letters: (i.) At their own

West Haddon

Fig. 338.

expense; (ii.) By their own agreement, aided by an allowance from the revenue; (iii.) By "Convention" or "Fifth-clause" Posts; (iv.) By Penny Posts.

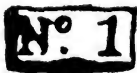


Fig. 339.

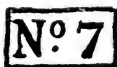


Fig. 340.

The difference between Penny and "Fifth-clause" Posts was that in the latter there was 2d. to pay on delivery, whereas under the Penny Post 1d. was charged both on collection and on delivery.

I will first treat of Penny Posts. An Act of Parliament passed in 1765 first authorised Penny Posts to be established in towns and cities outside London; but no extensions whatever took place in England and Wales until the year 1793, when Penny Posts were brought into existence in Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, and Liverpool. Some

Romford
Penny Post

Fig. 341.

TAUNTON
Penny Post

Fig. 342.

HERTFORD
Penny Post

Fig. 343.

years later they were gradually extended throughout the country, and shortly before Uniform Penny Postage was introduced they exceeded 2000 in number.

The practice of stamping letters put into the Country Penny Post varied in many instances. In some cases the name of the village was put upon

the letters at the post town (*e.g.*, Fig. 338 was placed on the letter at Rugby and not by the receiver at West Haddon). In other instances the Penny Post receiving houses were denoted by a figure (Figs. 339 and 340). This latter mode applied particularly to towns where the Penny Posts

SOUTHAMPTON
21MR1839
PY POST

Fig. 344.

BRISTOL
9 0C1839
PY POST

Fig. 345.

Peter.
borough.
Penny Post

Fig. 346.

in the neighbourhood were numerous, as, for instance, Bristol, which had no less than sixty-three Penny Posts, and accordingly sixty-three numbered stamps. The number was impressed at the head post town, and not by the receivers. In other cases the name of the post town, with the words "Penny Post"

(Figs. 341 to 346), was stamped on the letters. Dated marks such as Figs. 344 and 345 are somewhat rare.

Cross (Fig. 347) was, until 1840, an important post town in Somersetshire, having within its delivery, among other places, Weston-super-Mare. As a post office it ceased to exist some time in the forties.

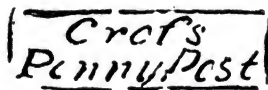


Fig. 347.

These complicated systems were found to cause considerable trouble, and very often failed to accomplish the object of proving the particular receiving house in which the letter was deposited, and in such a case the numbers were useless. It was

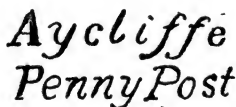


Fig. 348.

therefore decided in March, 1838, to adopt a uniform system by furnishing, as new stamps were required, all the Penny Post receivers with stamps bearing the names of their offices (*e.g.*, Fig. 348).

No further change took place until two years later (6th May, 1840), when, by the adoption of Uniform Penny Postage, all the other distinctive posts ceased. Yet at some offices the Penny Postmarks appear to have remained in use for a few years afterwards.

CONVENTION OR "FIFTH-CLAUSE" POSTS.

An Act of Parliament passed in 1801 authorised the institution, under guarantee, of village posts, or, as they were more commonly called, "Fifth-clause Posts," from the clause of the Act under which they were established, namely 41 Geo. III., c. 7, clause 5. These posts were established with a view to bringing correspondence of villages in the vicinity of post towns under the control of the Postmasters-General. Until 1807, franks and news-



Fig. 349.



Fig. 350.

papers passing by these posts were charged with the local rate of 2d. on delivery. It was then, however, decided that they should pass free. This decision stifled the growth of the Fifth-clause Posts, and greatly tended to increase the Penny Posts in rural districts. In fact, a rule was laid down officially to the effect "that Fifth-clause Posts should only be granted in the case of small towns when it was considered advisable to connect with post towns."

The number of Fifth-clause Posts in existence in 1839 was only 52. For instance, Bristol had

63 Penny Posts, but only one Fifth-clause Post, which joined Bristol and Thornbury. This was a distance of 12 miles, and the mail rider passing through Felton, Almondsbury, and Ridgeway, on his journey to and fro, delivered bags at the Penny Post receiving houses established at those places.

The letters passing between Bristol and Thornbury bore the postmarks shown in Figs. 349 and 350.

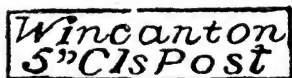


Fig. 351.



Fig. 352.



Fig. 353.

On the other hand, the whole of the Potteries, comprising Burslem, Lane End, Shelton, Stoke, Longport, Cobridge, Tunstall, and Lane Delph, were Fifth-clause Posts, subordinate to Newcastle-under-Lyme. The other Fifth-clause postmarks that I have seen are those of Wincanton (Fig. 351), "Llaugharne" (Fig. 352), and Shaftesbury (Fig. 353).

SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' CHEAP POSTAGE PRIVILEGE.

SOLDIERS and sailors stationed in any part of the British Dominions from or to which there were regular mails, could send or receive single letters, on their own private concern only, for 1d. each, providing the penny was prepaid when the letter was handed in at the office, and that the cover bore the name and description of the writer, and was countersigned by his commanding officer. This privilege was granted by the Legislature in 1795, under the Act 35 Geo. III., c. 53, with a benevolent intention of benefiting poor soldiers and sailors serving their country abroad, who could not possibly afford to pay the heavy postage charges then in existence. The privilege when granted was intended to extend only to non-commissioned army officers, soldiers, and petty officers and seamen of the navy. The Act, however, was so loosely worded that every officer not strictly acting under a commission availed himself of the privilege, which he could do with impunity, to the detriment of the revenue, as there was no penalty attached to the offence.

These letters were treated separately, and when they reached the Chief Office were very carefully

examined, to see that they were single, and signed in conformity with the Act of Parliament. Officially such letters were looked upon with grave suspicion, and not without just cause, for so greatly was the



Fig. 354.

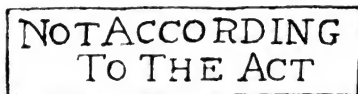
privilege abused, that in 1806 it was found necessary to pass an Act of restriction (46 Geo. III., c. 92), the reason for which is explained in the preamble: "Abuses have been committed in the exercise of the permission granted by the said recited Act, 35 Geo. III., c. 53, whereby the revenue has been injured." Under the new Act, penalties



Fig. 355.

were to be enforced against every person who made use of the privilege with a view to evading the payment of postage, the penalty for each offence being £5. Some people, and among them Lord Palmerston, contended that the compulsory prepayment of the penny was a hardship, as the soldier or sailor was frequently compelled to entrust the posting of a letter to another person, who neglected to pay for it, with the result that the letter became chargeable with full ordinary postage to destination.

When the letter was from some distant part of the Empire, the postage charge was a heavy one, and the relations and friends of these men were not



NOT ACCORDING
TO THE ACT

Fig. 356.

among the class who could afford to pay such charges. The postmarks shown in Figs. 354 to 356 are those most commonly found on these privilege letters.

SCOTLAND.

THE Post Office in Scotland was united with that of England in the year 1710. An Act of Parliament (9 Anne, c. 10) of the same year ordained "that a Chief Letter Office be kept at Edinburgh." At this period there was not a single horse-post in the whole of Scotland, foot-runners being the only means of conveyance for the mails.

In an "Historical Summary of the Post Office in Scotland," published in 1856, it is stated that the journey between London and Edinburgh took six



Fig. 357.

days. "This," says the author, "can easily be seen by examining the postmarks on letters of that time." The postmarks here referred to are without doubt those of London and Edinburgh, for no other towns in Scotland bore date.

There were not in the year 1715 more than sixty post towns in the whole of Scotland. The Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, which retarded postal progress, were indirectly the means of considerable extension

of posts by the improvement of roads which followed those events, more particularly through the Highlands.

BANFF

Fig. 358.—1794.

The posts between Edinburgh and the chief towns of Scotland were in 1765 extended in frequency from three to six days a week, when the number of post towns increased to about 130.



Fig. 359.—1795.

The earliest Scotch postmark which has come under my notice is that shown in Fig. 357, taken from a letter of 1774. The types of Scotch marks varied considerably, as in Figs. 358 to 362.

The first Penny Post in Scotland was established in Edinburgh in 1768, by one Peter Williamson, who kept a coffee-shop in the hall of the Parliament House. Gentlemen attending the Courts made use of Williamson's shop to forward letters by porters

DOUGLAS MILL

Fig. 360.—1797.

(or, as they were called, "caddies") to different parts of the city and suburbs. In time this business

increased so much that Williamson established a regular Penny Post. He had hourly deliveries throughout the city, and agents, or receivers, in different parts of the town for the purpose of collecting letters. His messengers wore uniform, and as they proceeded on their rounds rang bells to give notice of their approach.

Whether the letters conveyed by Williamson's post bore any stamp or mark, we are not told; but as the undertaking had some official recognition, and was permitted to remain in Williamson's hands for a period of twenty-five years,



Fig. 361.—1798.

LAUDER

Fig. 362.—1800.

there is reason to suppose that a stamp or mark of some kind was made use of to distinguish letters passing through the Government and Williamson's

A handwritten signature, likely "J. H. M.", written in a cursive style. The signature is contained within a circular postmark, which is partially obscured by the ink of the signature.

Fig. 363.

posts. A facsimile of Williamson's signature is given in Fig. 363. The peculiar abbreviated form rather suggests itself to one's mind as a probable postmark; it is not, however, given as such.



PORTO BELLO
PENNY P. UNPAID

Fig. 364.

LIBBERTON
PENNY POST

Fig. 365.

PENNYCUICK
P. P. O. UNPAID

Fig. 366.



TRANENT
P. P. O
UNPAID

Fig. 367.

It was decided in the year 1793 to establish an official Penny Post in Edinburgh. Instead, however, of confiscating Williamson's post, as had happened in England in 1682, in Dockwra's case,

it was attached to the General Post establishment, and Williamson received a pension of £25 a year, practically for the goodwill of his business.

When first established in Edinburgh, the full extent of the Penny Post delivery comprised the outlying towns of Leith, Dalkeith, Musselburgh, and Preston Pans. These posts were afterwards extended to Tranent, Ford, Pennycuick, Ratho,



Fig. 368.

WILLIAM
STREET

Fig. 369.

Kirknewton, Wenchbro', and Cramond, with receiving houses at the towns or villages *en route*, which in 1830 numbered twenty-three. Figs. 364 to 367 are types of postmarks in use at these receiving houses.

Until the establishment of the Penny Post, Edinburgh had no receiving houses; but in 1793 it was decided to establish two in Leith and four in Edinburgh. The receivers were to take in letters, not only for the Penny Post, but also for the General Post; and whether the letters were for the General or for the Penny Post, the receivers were permitted

to make a charge of 1d. on each. In 1833 Edinburgh had nineteen receivers, located as follows: Hanover Street, Holyrood, Duke Street, William

NICHOLSON STREET

Fig. 370.

LEOPOLD-PLACE

Fig. 371.

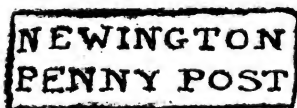


Fig. 372.

Street, Port Hopetoun, Pitt Street, Cannongate, Lauriston Place, Nicholson Street, Leopold Place,



Fig. 373.

India Street, Grassmarket, Leith Walk, Parkside Street, Newington, Newhaven, Stockbridge, War-riston, Castle Street.

The types of stamps in use at these offices are shown in Figs. 368 to 372, all in black ink. The "Paid" mark, in a peculiar red ink, used upon Penny Post paid letters is a combined stamp, the 1d. being outside the circle (Fig. 373).



Fig. 374



Fig. 375.



Fig. 376.



Fig. 377.



Fig. 378.

Leith, although only made a head post town in 1833, appears to have been in possession of a regular date-stamp from an early period (Figs. 374 to 378). Fig. 374 should be read as "Sep. 16, 1811."



Fig. 379.



Fig. 380.



Fig. 381.



Fig. 382.



Fig. 383.



Fig. 384.



Fig. 385.



Fig. 386.

Fig. 378 is rather a neat form of the "Paid at" type. All Leith marks were impressed in a bluish ink.

The stamps in use at the Chief Office, Edinburgh, varied. Fig. 379 is impressed on a letter-sheet of 1790. Other types are shown in Figs. 380 to 386, all in red ink.



Fig. 387.

Fig. 387 is a type of mark peculiar to Glasgow, Liverpool, and a few other offices. In most specimens of this type, the impression of the containing circle or rim of the stamp is very faint and broken; this was the first type of combined date and town mark, and was introduced at Liverpool and Glasgow in 1799.

Instructions were issued to Scotch postmasters on 28th December, 1807, which ran: "Stamp all letters that are to be forwarded from your office with the wooden stamp, using common writing ink for the purpose of making the impression. On no account

whatever apply the smoke of candle for the purpose, as should you do so the whole letters will be completely destroyed." This should account for the many wretched specimens of the earlier Scotch marks.



Fig. 388.



Fig. 389.

**OLD
MELDRUM**

Fig. 390.

The marking of mileage on the Scotch stamps would appear to have been authorised in the year 1808; but the rule, it is certain, was not applied



Fig. 391.

generally, as will be seen from Figs. 388 (in red ink, taken from a letter dated 1808), 389 (taken from a letter of 1810), and 390 (from a letter of 1811).

ELCIN
608 — B

Fig. 392.

MOFFAT
351 — C

Fig. 393.

DUMFRIES
341 — D

Fig. 394.

TONGUE
796 — E

Fig. 395.

BALLAN
TRAE
442 — G

Fig. 396.

In fact, the earliest Scotch postmark I have seen bearing mileage from London is taken from a letter of 1812 (Fig. 391).

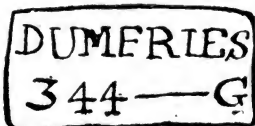


Fig. 397.

The Scotch stamps bearing mileage also bore the initial letters B, C, D, E, and G. These indicated



Fig. 398.



Fig. 399.



Fig. 400.



Fig. 401.

the route by which the letters circulated, *i.e.*, Berwick, Carlisle, Dumfries, Edinburgh, and Glasgow (Figs. 392 to 396, taken from letters dated 1814

to 1828). It appears, however, that there were exceptions; thus we find Dumfries bearing route-letter "G" and a different mileage (Fig. 397).

DUMBARTON
9 JUL 1815
423-G

Fig. 402.

PAISLEY
13 SEP 1824
A 413-G

Fig. 403.

ABERDEEN
17 DEC 1826
528-E

Fig. 404.



Fig. 405.



Fig. 406.

There were also circular stamps bearing mileage and route-letter (Figs. 398 to 401, taken from letters of 1814); other types without frame, bearing date, mileage, and route-letter (Figs. 402 to

404); and circular marks also bearing date, mileage, and route-letter (Figs. 405 and 406). Some post towns bore neither date, mileage, nor route (Figs. 407 to 409).

Sub post towns were numerous in Scotland, but I have seen only two with mileage mark (Figs. 400

**NEW
GALLOWAY**

Fig. 407



Fig. 408.



Fig. 409.

and 410). There is, however, another type of sub-office mark without mileage (Fig. 411); but the great majority of the sub-offices bore simply the

**LYNWILG.S.O
668 - E**

Fig. 410.

**TAMNAVOULES
S.O**

Fig. 411.

name of the place (Figs. 412 to 415, taken from letters dated 1827 to 1832).

There was another class of office quite common in Scotland, and known as receiving houses (Figs.

ABERCHERDER

Fig. 412.

POYNTSFIELD

Fig. 413.

WHITEHOUSE

Fig. 414.

WATTEN

Fig. 415.

416 and 417, taken from letters of 1829 and 1834). In many cases the office was a single house in the centre of a wide district.

KIRKMICHAEL

Fig. 416.

LOCHINVER

Fig. 417.

After 1830 the mileage and route marks gradually disappeared (Figs. 418 to 422, from letters dated 1830 to 1840). Fig. 423 is another type, showing

BLACKSHIELLS

Fig. 418.

BRIDGE OF EARN

Fig. 419.

PORTASKAIG

Fig. 420.

GOLSPIE

Fig. 421.

OLDRAIN

Fig. 422.

PAISLEY
26 JAN 1836

Fig. 423.

DALMELLINGTON
455 — G

Fig. 424.

BANFF
DEC 14
1838

Fig. 425.

KIRRIEMUIR
JY 27
1839

Fig. 426.

DUMFRIES
25 AU
1839

Fig. 427.

LARGS
SE 7
1839

Fig. 428.

CROMARTY
SE 21
1840

Fig. 429.

DUNDEE
DE 6 A
1839

Fig. 430.

ABERDEEN
MAR 20
1840A

Fig. 431.

ABERDEEN
APR 30
1842 M

Fig. 432.

more clearly the disappearance of mileage and route-letter. Still, there were rare exceptions (*e.g.*, Fig. 424, taken from a letter dated 1854).

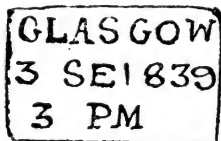


Fig. 433.

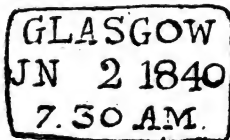


Fig. 434.

In the year 1838 a question arose as to the supply of a more uniform type of stamps for use in Scotch post-offices. Previous to this date post-masters in many instances supplied their own



Fig. 435.



Fig. 436.



Fig. 437.

stamps. It was now decided that these officials should be supplied from London with steel instead of brass stamps, and the types shown in Figs. 425 to 429 came into use. Some of the larger offices



Fig. 438.



Fig. 439.

bore index-letters (Figs. 430 to 432), and Glasgow bore the hour as well as the date (Figs. 433 and 434). A circular uniform type was also introduced



Fig. 440.



Fig. 441.

about the same period (Figs. 435 to 439), as well as a larger but similar type (Fig. 440); whilst a heptagonal-framed stamp came into use at Glasgow (Fig. 441).

A unique stamp is that of "Glencarradle" Guaranteed Post* (Fig. 442). It is the only mark I have seen with the date written in.



Fig. 442.



Fig. 443.

Perhaps the most peculiar mark I have seen is "Chance Inn" (Fig. 443, from a letter of

**BALLANTRAE
PENNY POST**

Fig. 444.

**BEAULY
PENNY POST**

Fig. 445.

**CORNHILL
PENNY POST**

Fig. 446.

1840). The impression is without doubt made from the brass seal in use for sealing mail bags.

* A number of the inhabitants gave a guarantee to make good any deficiency in the event of such post not paying.

It will be observed that the practice of post-marking letters put into the Penny Posts in Scotland varied considerably. The earliest types of these marks are shown in Figs. 444 to 446. The larger



Fig. 447.



Fig. 448.

towns, such as Glasgow, adopted the number system (Figs. 447 and 448); another type of mark is shown in Fig. 449, whilst Fig. 450 (taken from a letter dated 1833), although a Penny Post receiving-house mark, has nothing to indicate that it is such.

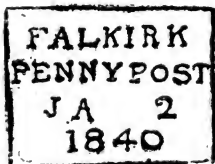


Fig. 449.

STRATH
PEFFER

Fig. 450.

The numbers as shown in Figs. 447 and 448 continued in use for some time after Uniform Penny Postage was established. I have two covers



Fig. 451.

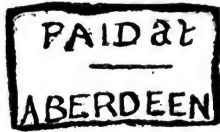


Fig. 452.



Fig. 453.



Fig. 454.

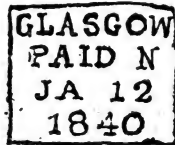


Fig. 455.



Fig. 456.



Fig. 457.

bearing No. 1 mark, posted 11th November, 1842, and 30th January, 1843, respectively, each being

POSTAGE
TO
EDINBURGH
NOT PAID

Fig. 458.

POSTAGE TO
EDINBURGH
NOT PAID.

Fig. 459.

prepaid, and stamped with the old brown-red penny adhesive stamp.

MISSENT TO
LEITH

Fig. 460.

MISSENT
TO
DUMBARTON

Fig. 461.

MISSENT TO
DUMFRIES

Fig. 462.

In Scotland charitable societies and institutions were not, as in England and Ireland, at any time

authorised to enjoy the privilege of sending their correspondence free of charge. Through a misunderstanding the Deputy Postmaster-General at Edinburgh did for a few years (between 1824 and 1830) permit some Scotch charitable societies to send their correspondence under his own frank, but



Fig. 463.



Fig. 464.

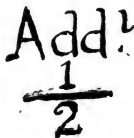


Fig. 465.



Fig. 466.

otherwise, beyond a few officials and Members of Parliament, the franking privilege did not exist in Scotland, and no "Free" mark was in use at Edinburgh.

The types of "Paid" stamps in use at various offices are shown in Figs. 451 to 457 (page 147). There were also types of stamps in use at Edinburgh

for unpaid letters coming from England and Ireland (Figs. 458 and 459).

Figs. 460 to 462 are specimens of marks in use in the various offices to denote that the letter was missent, and was therefore exempt from a second postage rate.

In the year 1813 an Act of Parliament was passed repealing, so far as Scotland was concerned, exemption from toll in the case of mail carriages with



Fig. 467.



Fig. 468.

more than two wheels. The same Act, in order to indemnify the Post Office for the loss it would sustain, imposed an additional postage of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. upon every letter conveyed by mail coach in Scotland. This explains Figs. 463 to 466, so often found on Scotch letters. Coldstream, Earlston, Galashiels, Hawick, Jedburgh, Melrose, and St. Boswells were the only towns in Scotland where letters to and from England were exempt from the additional $\frac{1}{2}$ d. charge.

Fig. 467 is a Crown stamp (impressed in red ink), of an entirely different type from the Crown marks in use in England and Ireland, yet used for an identical purpose, viz., on letters bearing two charges.

Fig. 468 was placed on letters arriving at the post office too late for despatch. There were also "Ship Letter" marks (Fig. 469).



Fig. 469.

UIST to
DUNVEGAN

Fig. 470.

Fig. 470 is a stamp used upon correspondence conveyed by packet boats plying at regular intervals between the mainland of Scotland and the Islands of North and South Uist. This mail service was established in 1834, and the greater portion of the cost was borne by the landowners. For many years the vessel calling at Uist also called at the Islands of Lewis, Harris, &c. In later years another packet boat was established to convey the mails between Poolewe and Stornoway.

IRELAND.

WHEN the Post Office was first established in Ireland, in the seventeenth century, it was managed by a Deputy Postmaster, who was directly responsible to the postal authorities in London. The earliest reference that we find relating to the use of a stamp or postmark bears date 26th August, 1673. Col. Roger Whitley, who was then Deputy Postmaster-General to the Earl of Arlington, writing to Mr. Warburton, the Deputy for Ireland, on the subject of returned letters, remarks: "I therefore ppose a stampe y^t both of us might know them againe." No stamp, however, appears to have been used for postmarking letters



Fig. 471.

TALLOW

Fig. 472.

until about 1704, and then only in the Chief Office, Dublin. The use of stamps in the country post offices did not come into force until many years later.

There were in 1670 only two posts a week between London and Dublin, and the same number between Dublin and other parts of Ireland. About 1680

S
I R E L A N D



Fig. 473.

I R E L A N D



Fig. 474.

the frequency of the post was increased to three times weekly, and in 1768 to six posts a week. A local Penny Post (the first outside of London) was established in Dublin on 10th October, 1773.

On 2nd August, 1784, when the Post Office in Ireland was separated from the English establishment, the types of stamps in use for postmarking were very similar to those employed in England. The type shown in Fig. 471 (from a letter dated 27th November, 1780) was in use in the Chief Office, Dublin, and that of Fig. 472 (also 1780) in the provincial offices.

When the Union of the two countries took place in the year 1800, the Irish Post Office was not



Fig. 475.



Fig. 476.

merged into the Post Office in England; accordingly, each establishment was presided over by a different head until 1831, when the two were merged under the one Postmaster-General.

During the years that the Post Offices remained separated, differences of practice, as well as of law, came to exist between the two countries. In London there was no despatch of mails on Sundays: in Dublin, the mails were despatched on Sundays as on other days. The correspondence conveyed by these Sunday mails bore distinctive postmarks. The earliest types which I have seen are Figs. 473 and 474. The date-stamp in each instance

bears the letter "S," for Sunday. In the first type, "S" is also marked over "Ireland," but in each case the date-marks are separate from "Ireland." In later years, other types (Figs. 475 and 476) came into use. These distinctive Sunday marks remained in vogue for many years. The franked or free correspondence also bore a distinctive stamp for Sunday (Fig. 477). All these Sunday marks were impressed in red ink.



Fig. 477.

Another peculiar difference existing in the Irish postal service, considering the relative commercial importance of the two countries, was a day mail to Cork, whereas there were no day mails from London. The day mail from Dublin to Cork, known as the Cashel mail, was in existence many years before the two establishments were merged.



Fig. 478.



Fig. 479.

The general despatch of mails from Dublin was at 9 p.m. The day mail left Dublin at 12 noon, and was due to reach Cork *via* Cashel at 8 next morning. The return mail left Cork at 9 a.m.,

and was due to reach Dublin at 2 p.m. next day. Correspondence forwarded by this mail bore distinctive postmarks, in red ink (Figs. 478 and 479).

When postage was pre-paid a "Post Paid" stamp (Fig. 480) was impressed on the letter.

Shortly after the English and Irish Post Offices came under the one Postmaster-General, an agitation arose throughout Ireland for the extension of the day mails, with the result that in 1834 and the following years day mails were extended to Belfast, Kilkenny, Limerick, and Waterford. The coach to Belfast had for many years been conveying mails to Belfast only, without any payment for the service. Certain post towns along these lines of route made use of another postmark (Fig. 481), in red ink,



Fig. 480.

DUNGANNON
76
LATE MAIL

Fig. 481.

to distinguish the night mail from the day. In most instances, this mark was impressed separately from the post town, frequently having the letter

"A" or "B" above "Late Mail" (as in Figs. 482 and 483) also in red. A circular "Late" mark (Fig. 484) was also in use.

A
LATEMAIL

Fig. 482.

B
LATEMAIL

Fig. 483.

Turning our attention to the postal arrangements existing in Dublin, we find a General and a Penny Post in operation in and around the City. There were fifteen General Post and eighty-two Penny Post receiving houses. The letters posted at the former bore no other postmark than that of the Chief Office, whereas the Penny Post receivers were instructed to impress with their stamp all letters put into their boxes. These postmarks varied (as indicated in Figs. 485 to 491).

Fig. 492 (Enniskerry) is peculiar in so far as Dublin, between 1832 and 1840, had both Penny and Twopenny Posts. The first of the Twopenny Posts was established in June, 1832. It was a post-line

BELFAST
JA 13 H
1838
LATE

Fig. 484.

NEW ST
PENNY POST

Fig. 485.

BRITAIN S^c
PENNY POST

Fig. 486.

MARY STREET
PENNY POST

Fig. 487.

KING ST^c
PENNY POST

Fig. 488.



Fig. 489.



Fig. 490.



Fig. 491.

extending from Dublin to Dalkey, having offices *en route*, at Ringsend, Sandymount, Booterstown, Black-



ENNISKERRY
TWO PENNY POST

Fig. 492.

rock, and Kingstown. Some eight months later the post to Enniskerry was established, with offices at Roundtown, Rathfarnham, Dundrum, and Golden Ball. In all there were twenty-three Twopenny Post offices round Dublin.



Fig. 493.



Fig. 494.



Fig. 495.

Other types of stamps were impressed in black on the back of letters sent out for delivery by the Penny

Post (Figs. 493 to 495). In England, red ink was used in the Twopenny Post.



I R E L A N D

Fig. 496.

There were various types of postmarks in use in the Chief Office, Dublin, *e.g.*, Fig. 496, in red, with date



Fig. 497



Fig. 498.



Fig. 499.

stamp separate; Figs. 497 and 498, in black; and Fig. 499, in red. One type (Fig. 500) was used in the

morning and another (Fig. 501) in the evening, both being in red. Similar types of stamps bore "A.M." and "P.M." (Figs. 502 and 503).

The system of franking letters was especially mischievous in Ireland, and would appear to have



Fig. 500.



Fig. 501.

reached its wildest excesses in 1773. In that year the Postmasters-General spoke of "The dangerous consequences to both kingdoms from forgery be-



Fig. 502.



Fig. 503.

coming so habitual which is almost impossible to detect This species of forgery," they added, "would be totally put an end to if franking were discontinued.'

But hard as it was to detect forgery in England, it was, it seems, altogether impossible to punish it in Ireland, even when detected. The Secretary of the Irish Post Office, writing on the subject, says, "The contempt with which the Post Office laws are held in this country, every effort hitherto made to punish persons guilty of counterfeiting franks, though the most direct and positive proof hath been adduced of the fact, hath been rendered abortive. There is scarcely a magistrate to be found in Ireland who will take examination on the Post Office laws; and certainly in no instance has this office prevailed in getting the bills of indictment found by a grand jury. This," he adds, "being so universally known, counterfeiting franks is drawn into such general practice that I believe there are very few merchants or attorneys' clerks who do not counterfeit in the name of one Member or other. Nay, if I classed with them every little pretty miss capable of joining her letters, I should not exaggerate the abuse, for either a father, a brother, a friend, or a lover, is to be found to avow the act, however dissimilar the handwriting;" and the only hope the Secretary possessed "of stemming the torrent" was that the Post Office should be given the power to charge with double or treble postage such letters as evidently bore counterfeited franks.

That the Secretary's opinion was no exaggeration is shown by a return made in 1773, when he had nine towns specially "surveyed" for the purpose of examining franked letters. As a result of this examination it was found that the genuine franks passing through the post for one week at each town

numbered 1960, while the counterfeits amounted to 1755. The amount of postage lost by counterfeits alone was £35, whilst the whole of the taxed or post-paid letters amounted only to £26 ! At Wexford it was found that there were more than double as many counterfeits as genuine franks. At Clonmel, there were 526 of the former and 509 of the latter; at Waterford, out of 588 franked letters 354 were found to be genuine; and so with the remaining towns.

When in 1784 the Irish Post Office became a separate institution, there appears to have been but little improvement to record in the abuse of franking. In later years we do not hear so much about the counterfeiting of franks, but a great deal more came to light about the abuse of the privilege by Government officials. Sinecure offices were sought after for the privilege of franking, as were also the situations in the Post Office, where it appears that all the officials from the Postmaster-General to the most junior letter carrier sent and received not only their own letters, but also those of their friends free. The clerks of the roads were not satisfied with sending and receiving letters, magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, and other publications for their own profit free, but they had also assumed the privilege of sending and receiving parcels and packages of every kind. As Sir Edward Lees, the Secretary of the Irish Post Office, put it, "It was not the Members of Parliament who were the worst offenders: it was the officials employed in Government departments." He adds, "Of this I am sure, that on any single night one official

packet will be tantamount to all the Parliamentary franks that go through the Post Office in Dublin." He also suggested "That all persons connected with trades or professions, and, above all, solicitors, of which there are already several in the service, should be excluded from every branch of the postal service."

An Act (43 Geo. III., c. 28) passed shortly after the Union (1802) precluded officers of public departments from sending or receiving, free of postage, any letters but those on the business of their office, and Members of Parliament were only to receive letters free when addressed to their own homes; but these restrictions were never enforced, and any cover simply bearing a name in the corner was allowed to pass free. The Irish Post Office officials for some reason do not appear to have felt that the law imposed upon them any duty of examining and charging such letters as were not conformable to the Acts of Parliament. Even various Irish religious and charitable associations assumed the privilege without any authority, and no check appears to have been put upon their correspondence.

No further alteration of the law relating to the franking privilege in Ireland took place until after the Irish and English Post Offices were merged. In 1832 an Act (2 William IV., c. 15) was passed, the preamble of which states, "And whereas it is expedient that the privilege of franking by public officers in Ireland should be placed under further regulations, &c." The privilege was then restricted to the following: Lord Lieutenant and his

Secretaries, Lord Chancellor, Secretary and Surveyors of the Post Office; and letters henceforth were not to be exempt from postage unless the whole superscription was in the handwriting of



Fig. 504.—1799.



Fig. 505.



Fig. 506.

the officer or person sending the same, and had endorsed thereon the name of such person, together with the name of the post town, and the day, month, and year in which the same was put into the post office, the date to be written in words at



Fig. 507.



Fig. 508.



Fig. 509.



Fig. 510.



Fig. 511.



Fig. 512.

length. The privilege, so far as it related to Irish Members of Parliament, was now assimilated to that existing in England, and so remained until

Above the privileged number.

Fig. 513.

it was abolished with the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage.

The "Free" or frank stamps in use in Dublin were of excellent design, as will be observed from the types here given (Figs. 504 to 512). Fig. 506 is altogether a very fine design, although it has a somewhat uneven or one-sided appearance, and is comparatively rare. The upper right-hand side



Fig. 514.

terminates in a trefoil representing a shamrock, which in conjunction with the female figure on the left, is undoubtedly symbolical of the Emerald Isle. The type shown in Fig. 510 is unique, Dublin being the only place that I am aware of using the name in a "Free" mark. Members of the Irish Parliament were not permitted to send more than ten or receive more than fifteen letters a day; hence the mark shown in Fig. 513. Fig. 514 was impressed on franks when above 1oz. in weight, and therefore liable to a second charge.

The types of stamps used for postmarking in the Irish provincial post towns during the period when the Irish and English offices were separated continued closely to resemble the straight type of mark in use in the English post towns (Fig. 515 in red, and Figs. 516 and 517 in black). These marks bore no mileage.

The Irish postage rates differed widely from those in use in Great Britain. By the regulations made in 1784, the highest rate imposed for the conveyance of a letter was for a distance of 30

BELFAST

Fig. 515.—1797.

NEWRY GALWAY

Fig. 516.—1801.

Fig. 517.—1801.

Irish miles from Dublin (an Irish mile is equivalent to 1 mile, 2 furlongs, $7\frac{3}{4}$ perches, English measure; thus eighty-eight Irish miles covered the same distance as 112 English). This scale was extended in 1797 to 80 miles, and in 1813 to 101 miles; while in 1814 between 65 and 300 miles six distinct scales were introduced. The earliest postmark which I have met with bearing mileage figures is that taken from a letter bearing date 16th January, 1816 (Fig. 518). An emblematic type of stamp of the same office, also bearing mileage, is certainly unique (Fig. 519). Figs. 520 and 521

are other types of circular stamps bearing mileage from Dublin. Between the years 1820 and 1830 the types of stamps shown in Figs. 522 to 528 were in general use. It will be noticed

BELFAST
80

Fig. 518.



Fig. 519.



Fig. 520.



Fig. 521.

that the distance given is in each instance in Irish miles, from Dublin.

ATHY
47

Fig. 522.

The year 1827 brought another change in the Irish postage rates. Previous to this year the rates in

EYRECOURT

81

Fig. 523.

FETHARD

88

Fig. 524.

MULLINGAR

38

Fig. 525.

RAMELTON

123

Fig. 526.

TRAMORE

82

Fig. 527.

TULLA

111

Fig. 528.

Great Britain and Ireland differed so much that it was found necessary to charge upon all letters passing between the two countries one rate from London to Dublin, or *vice-versa*, and an entirely new rate from

ADARE
102

Fig. 529.

DUNDALK
40

Fig. 530.

LETTERKENNY
113

Fig. 531.

STRABANE
107

Fig. 532.

Dublin or London to destination. To instance a letter posted in London and addressed to Cork, the British postage on a single letter from London to Dublin was 1s. 3d., and the Irish postage from Dublin to

Cork 11d., making a total of 2s. 2d. ; whereas if postage were charged upon the combined distance, as between England and Scotland, the charge would only be 1s. 1d.

BALLINA

Fig. 533.

CLOUGHJORDAN

Fig. 534.

DUNSHAUGHLIN

Fig. 535.

KILKEEL

Fig. 536.

RAMELTON

Fig. 537.

To rectify what was admittedly a hardship upon both countries, an Act of Parliament (7-8 George IV., c. 21) was passed, and came into operation on 6th July, 1827, by which the postage rates of Great Britain and

B^NASLOE
71

Fig. 538.—Ballinasloe.

BALLYJ^SDUFF
44

Fig. 539.—Ballyjamesduff.

E^STIMON
127

Fig. 540.—Eanistimon.

KILMACTHOS
86

Fig. 541.—Kilmacthomas.

NMRT^TON FERGUS
107

Fig. 542.—Newmarket-on-Fergus.

Ireland were assimilated, and henceforth distances in Ireland were to be measured in English miles. The old postmarks, however, appear to have continued in use, as the types shown in Figs. 529 to 532 (page 171) are taken from letters bearing dates between that of the passing of the Act (1827) and 1832.



Fig. 543.



Fig. 544.



Fig. 545.



Fig. 546.

As a matter of fact, I do not think that the English mileage was ever affixed to the Irish postmarks. My reason for this opinion is that shortly after the Act was passed the postmarking with mileage appears gradually to have ceased, as will be seen from the marks taken from letters bearing dates between 1829 and 1832 (Figs. 533 to 537, page 172).



Fig. 547.



Fig. 548.



Fig. 549.



Fig. 550.



Fig. 551.



Fig. 552.

A system of abbreviation appears to have been somewhat general in Ireland, as shown by Figs. 538 to 542 (page 173), from letters bearing dates 1820 to 1831.



Fig. 553.



Fig. 554.

Shortly before the transfer of the control of the Irish Post Office to the English establishment, a type of circular stamp came into use (Figs. 543 to 546). Immediately following the transfer a new type of stamp was introduced with two semi-circular lines, similar in type to those introduced at Birmingham



Fig. 555.



Fig. 556.

(Figs. 547 to 552), and also a somewhat similar type with the line broken in the centre for the insertion of the initial letter "E," as in Figs. 553 and 554.

As regards the smaller offices, with a gross revenue of less than £1000 per annum, the same rule seems to have been applied as in England, their stamps bearing no date (Figs. 555 and 556). I have also noticed the type shown in Fig. 557 in use.

Outside Dublin there was not a Penny Post in the whole of Ireland until June, 1831. The first country Penny Post introduced was at



Fig. 557.

Bannow, co. Wexford, and was purely an experimental post. The English Acts of Parliament controlling Penny and Convention posts had no power in Ireland, and accordingly it was found necessary to obtain a new Act (2 William IV., c. 15) legalising the establishment of country Penny Posts. No letter or packet exceeding 4oz. was accepted for conveyance by such posts. These local posts were so successful that in two years' time (June, 1833) they had been extended to 147 places, and in 1837 they numbered 211. The Act authorised the Postmaster-General to establish Penny Posts in any city, town, or village, where it was considered necessary and convenient.

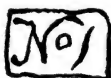


Fig. 558.

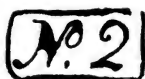


Fig. 559.

BALLYSHANNON
PENNY POST

Fig. 560.

KILLYBEGS
PENNY POST

Fig. 561.

COLERAINE
PENNY POST

Fig. 562.

N^o3
DONEGAL
PENNY POST

Fig. 563.

The practice of postmarking letters put into the country Penny Posts throughout Ireland did not vary as in England. In every instance which has come under my notice the receiving houses are denoted by numbers (such as those shown in Figs. 558 and 559) and the "Penny Post" stamp of the post town (Figs. 560 to 563).

BALLYHAISE RECEIVINGHOUSE

Fig. 564.

After the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage these numbers without the "Penny Post" stamp of the post town continued to be used in Ireland to denote certain offices.



Fig. 565.

Fig. 564 is a country receiver's stamp, not a Penny Post one. It is the only one I have seen.

The "Paid" stamps do not appear to have been very numerous in Ireland, with the exception of those used in Dublin (Fig. 565). I have only met

with a few (Figs. 566 to 568), but no doubt there are others.

The following marks are to be found impressed on Irish letters: Fig. 569, in red, on "refused"

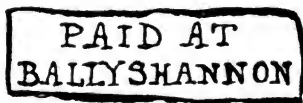


Fig. 566.



Fig. 567.

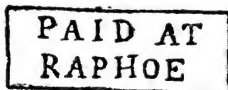


Fig. 568.

letters. (To prevent collusion between the postmen and the public was no easy matter. Sometimes letters were returned as "Refused" when they had been

NOT
ALLOWED

Fig. 569.

delivered and read. Others were marked "Dead" when the addressees were still alive, had read them, and then returned them.) Fig. 570, in black, on

letters arriving at the Post Office too late for despatch ; Fig. 571, a peculiar but neat mark, impressed



Fig. 570.

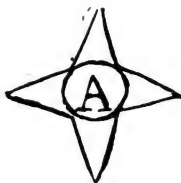


Fig. 571.

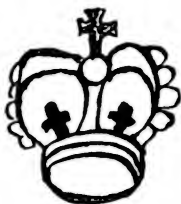


Fig. 572.



Fig. 573.

in red, on letters out of course, and Figs. 572 and 573 (also in red), Crown stamps on letters bearing two charges.

Fig. 574 is a peculiar type of the Crown postmark bearing the letter "D" in the centre of the Crown; it also was marked in red ink.



Fig. 574.

There are various "Ship Letter" marks to be found in Ireland, *e.g.*, Figs. 575 to 578.



Fig. 575.

DUBLIN
Ship Letter

Fig. 576.

KINSALE
SHIP-LETTER

Fig. 577.

Of the many innovations introduced into the Irish Postal service whilst it remained a separate institution, the most important was perhaps that of a

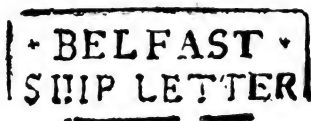


Fig. 578.

Registered Letter post (Fig. 579). This Post was first established in the year 1826. No Registration fee was charged, the practice being to register every letter not being a single letter, *i.e.*, letters



Fig. 579.

technically called "double letters." When the Irish Post Office was merged with the English office in 1831, the registration of letters was immediately discontinued, and the present system was not introduced until 1838.

POSTAGE RATES.

THE definitions of the terms "single," "double," and "treble," as applied to letters are as follow :

A *single* letter was a sheet of paper without any enclosure whatever.

A *double* letter was a letter containing an enclosure of any kind, such as accounts, bank notes, bills, cheques, invoices, writs, &c. ; or if the writer indited his letter to two different people, although on a single sheet of paper, it became liable to the double charge.

A *treble* letter was such as contained more than one enclosure, but yet did not weigh an ounce. Letters containing two orders for payment of money, although on the same sheet of paper, or to three or more persons on the one sheet, became liable to the treble charge ; but no letter could be charged higher than treble unless it weighed an ounce.

The following were the rates of postage at different early periods :

ENGLAND.

1660.			
DISTANCE.	Single.	Double.	Ounce.
80 miles and under	2d.	4d.	8d.
81 miles and above	3d.	6d.	1/-
London to Edinburgh	5d.	10d.	1/8
„ to Dublin	6d.	1/-	2/-

ENGLAND—continued.

1771.			
DISTANCE.	Single.	Double.	Ounce.
80 miles and under	3d.	6d.	1/-
81 miles and above	4d.	8d.	1/4
London to Edinburgh	6d.	1/-	2/-
„ to Dublin	6d.	1/-	2/-

1765.				
DISTANCE.	Single.	Double.	Treble.	Ounce.
Not exceeding one Post stage	1d.	2d.	3d.	4d.
Above one but not two Post stages	2d.	4d.	6d.	8d.
Above two stages but not exceeding 80 miles	3d.	6d.	9d.	1/-
Above 80 miles	4d.	8d.	1/-	1/4
To or from Edinburgh and London	6d.	1/-	1/6	2/-

1784.				
DISTANCE.	Single.	Double.	Treble.	Ounce.
Not exceeding one Post stage	2d.	4d.	6d.	8d.
Above one but not two Post stages	3d.	6d.	9d.	1/-
Above two stages but not exceeding 80 miles	4d.	8d.	1/-	1/4
Above 80 but not exceeding 150 miles	5d.	10d.	1/3	1/8
Above 150 miles	6d.	1/-	1/6	2/-
To or from Edinburgh and London	7d.	1/2	1/9	2/4

ENGLAND—continued.

1797.				
DISTANCE.	Single.	Double.	Treble.	Ounce.
Not exceeding 15 miles	3d.	6d.	9d.	1/-
Above 15 but not exceeding 30 miles	4d.	8d.	1/-	1/4
" 30 " " 60 "	5d.	10d.	1/3	1/8
" 60 " " 100 "	6d.	1/-	1/6	2/-
" 100 " " 150 "	7d.	1/2	1/9	2/4
Exceeding 150 miles	8d.	1/4	2/-	2/8

1801.				
DISTANCE.	Single.	Double.	Treble.	Ounce.
Not exceeding 15 miles	3d.	6d.	9d.	1/-
Above 15 but not exceeding 20 miles } " 20 " " 30 " } " 30 " " 50 " } " 50 " " 80 " } " 80 " " 120 " } " 120 " " 170 " } " 170 " " 230 " } " 230 " " 300 " } " 300 " " 400 " } " 400 " " 500 " } " 500 " " 600 " } " 600 " " 700 " }	4d.	8d.	1/-	1/4
	5d.	10d.	1/3	1/8
	6d.	1/-	1/6	2/-
	7d.	1/2	1/9	2/4
	8d.	1/4	2/-	2/8
	9d.	1/6	2/3	3/-
	10d.	1/8	2/6	3/4
	11d.	1/10	2/9	3/8
	1/-	2/-	3/-	4/-
	1/1	2/2	3/3	4/4
	1/2	2/4	3/6	4/8
Exceeding 700 miles	1/3	2/6	3/9	5/-

In 1805, sums of 1d. for a single letter, 2d. for a double, 3d. for a treble, and 4d. for a letter weighing an ounce, were added to the rates prescribed by the Act of 1801.

ENGLAND—continued.

1812.				
DISTANCE.	Single.	Double.	Treble.	Ounce.
Not exceeding 15 miles	4d.	8d.	1/-	1/4
Above 15 but not exceeding 20 miles	5d.	10d.	1 3	1/8
" 20 " " 30 "	6d.	1/-	1/6	2/-
" 30 " " 50 "	7d.	1/2	1/9	2/4
" 50 " " 80 "	8d.	1/4	2/-	2/8
" 80 " " 120 "	9d.	1/6	2/3	3/-
" 120 " " 170 "	10d.	1/8	2/6	3/4
" 170 " " 230 "	11d.	1/10	2/9	3/8
" 230 " " 300 "	1/-	2/-	3/-	4/-
" 300 " " 400 "	1/1	2/2	3/3	4/4
" 400 " " 500 "	1/2	2/4	3/6	4/8
" 500 " " 600 "	1/3	2/6	3/9	5/-
" 600 " " 700 "	1/4	2/8	4/-	5/4
Exceeding 700 miles	1/5	2/10	4/3	5/8

SCOTLAND.

1771.			
From EDINBURGH within Scotland.*	Single.	Double.	Ounce.
50 miles and under	2d.	4d.	8d.
Above 50 but not exceeding 80 miles	3d.	6d.	12d.
Above 80 miles	4d.	8d.	16d.

In 1797 the rates within Scotland were raised 1d. for a single letter, 2d. for a double letter, and so on.

* "Within Scotland," *i.e.*, to any town or district in Scotland.

IRELAND.

1660.			
DISTANCE.	Single.	Double.	Ounce.
40 miles and under	2d.	4d.	8d.
Above 40 miles	4d.	8d.	12d.

1711.			
DISTANCE.	Single.	Double.	Ounce.
40 miles and under	2d.	4d.	8d.
Above 40 miles	4d.	8d.	16d.

1784.			
DISTANCE.	Single.		
Under 15 Irish miles	2d.		
„ 30 „	3d.		
Above 30 „	4d.		

1797.			
DISTANCE.	Single.		
Under 15 Irish miles	2d.		
„ 20 „	3d.		
„ 50 „	4d.		
„ 80 „	5d.		
Above 80 „	6d.		

The sum of 1d. was added in 1805 to the rates prescribed by the Act 37 Geo. III. (1797), c. 11, and another 1d. was added to these rates in 1810.

IRELAND.—continued.

1813.		
DISTANCE.	Single.	All letters passing through Dublin were liable to two postages, <i>i.e.</i> , one postage from town where posted to Dublin, and another postage from the latter to place of destination.
Under 10 Irish miles	2d.	
" 20 "	3d.	
" 30 "	4d.	
" 40 "	5d.	
" 50 "	6d.	
" 60 "	7d.	
" 80 "	8d.	
" 100 "	9d.	
Above 100 "	10d.	

1814.		
DISTANCE.	Single.	For every additional 100 miles, 1d.
Under 7 Irish miles	2d.	
Not exceeding 15 Irish miles	3d.	
Per extra 10 miles to 65 miles	1d.	
Above 65 but not exceeding 95 Irish miles	9d.	
" 95 " " 120 "	10d.	
" 120 " " 150 "	11d.	
" 150 " " 200 "	12d.	
" 200 " " 250 "	13d.	
" 250 " " 300 "	14d.	

1827.		
DISTANCE.	Single.	For every additional 100 miles, 1d.
Under 15 British miles	4d.	
" 20 "	5d.	
" 30 "	6d.	
" 50 "	7d.	
" 80 "	8d.	
" 120 "	9d.	
" 170 "	10d.	
" 230 "	11d.	
" 300 "	12d.	

In connection with the rates of postage, it is interesting to note that in 1837 the average general postage was estimated at 9½d. per letter, and that in the reign of King Charles II., the postage of a letter between London and Dublin or between London and Edinburgh was less than half as much as the amount charged at the accession of her late Majesty Queen Victoria. The high rates of the later period, while they failed to increase the postal revenue to any appreciable extent, undoubtedly led to the evasion of postage-payment altogether, illicit modes of conveyance being got up and patronised by some of the principal merchants. Penal laws were set at defiance, and the number of contraband letters became enormous. On one occasion a seizure was made, in the warehouse of a firm of well-known London carriers, of a bag containing 1100 such letters, and by way of composition for the penalties of £5 each letter incurred, the firm proffered instant payment of £500. The offer was accepted, and the letters were all passed through the post. But for one case detected hundreds were never known. Evidence given before the Select Committee on Postage in 1838 was clear and convincing, as to the vast amount of contraband letters sent daily. It was stated that four-fifths of the letters from Manchester did not pass through the post; in Scotland it was estimated that there were sixty contraband letters for every five passing through the post; while the Secretary of the Irish Post Office stated that "Every species of contrivance that ingenuity can devise is resorted to for the purpose of evading payment of postage."

The number of letters conveyed illegally, however, evidently bore no proportion to the number which were not written at all on account of the high rates of postage, for on this point the Committee reported that "The multitude of transactions which, owing to the high rates of postage, are prevented from being done, or which, if done, are not announced, is quite astonishing. Bills for moderate amounts are not drawn; small orders for goods are not given or received; remittances of money are not acknowledged; the expediting of goods by sea and land, and the sailing and arrival of ships are not advised; printers do not send their proofs; the country attorney delays writing to his London agent, the commercial traveller to his principal, the town banker to his agent in the country. In all these, and many other cases, regularity and punctuality are neglected in attempts to save the expenses of exorbitant rates of postage."

The report of this Committee gave a wonderful impetus to the demand for a Uniform Penny Postage, upwards of 2000 petitions were in one session presented in its favour to the House of Commons, and within the short space of a couple of years Penny Postage became the law of the land. Its tendency was to revolutionise the postal service, making it necessary to introduce both new and improved stamping methods, the history of which may be told at some subsequent date.

NOTE.—Should the success of this Handbook offer sufficient justification, the Author is prepared to publish a companion volume continuing the History of British Postmarks from the point where the present work leaves it.

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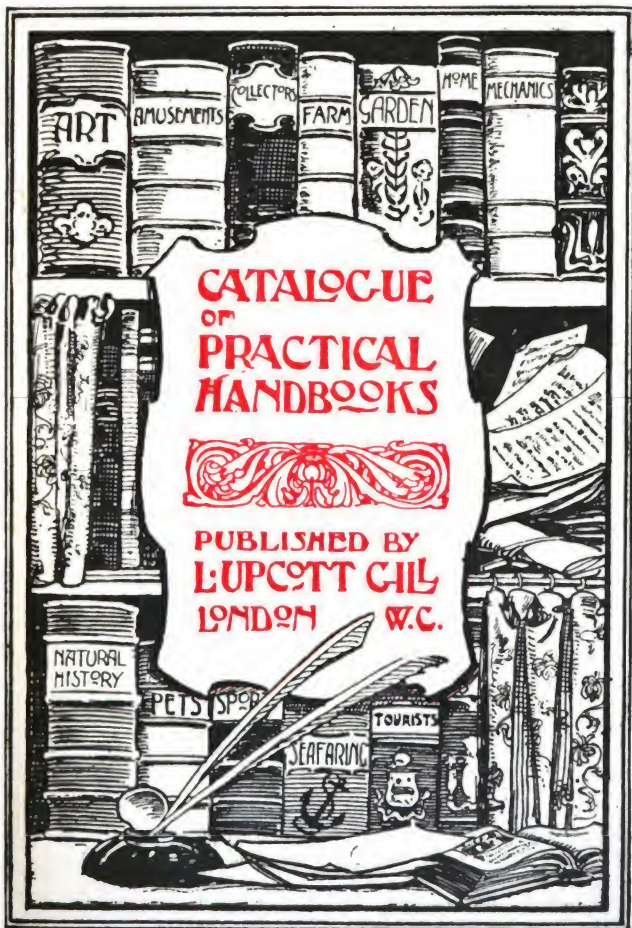
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