

# The Practical Method OF THE PENNY-POST:

Being a Sheet very necessary for all Persons to have by them,

For their Information in the Regular Use of a Design so well Approved of, for quickening Correspondence, Promoting Trade and Publick Good.

*With an Explanation of the following Stamps, for the Marking of all Letters.*



Whereas *William Dockwra* of *London* Merchant, and the rest of the Undertakers, (who are all Natives and free Citizens of *London*) out of a sence of the great benefit which would accrew to the numerous Inhabitants of this Great City, and adjacent parts, (with hopes of some Reasonable Encouragement hereafter to Themselves) have lately set up a *New Invention* to convey Letters and Parcels, not exceeding One Pound Weight, and Ten Pounds in Value, to and from all Parts within the Contiguous Buildings of the Weekly Bills Mortality for a Penny a Letter or Parcel, whereby Correspondency, the Life of Trade and Business, is and will be much facilitated; and having for above a year past, with great pains, and at some Thousands of Pounds Charge, reduced the same into Practice, which does manifestly appear to be for the Publick Good; yet as all new Designs at first usually meet with Opposition and great Discouragements, rarely (if at all) proving beneficial to the First Adventurers, so hath this also incurr'd the same Fate hitherto, especially from the Ignorant and Envious; but the Undertakers do hope that all People will be Convinced, by time and experience, which removes Prejudice and Errors, and renders all New Undertaking Compleat; for the Attainment of which good Ends, they have with great Industry, much expence of time, and at a Chargeable Rate, made such Alterations in their former Methods, as (they hope) will now give Universal satisfaction. And whereas there has been much Noise about the pretended Delays and Miscarriage of Letters going by the *Penny-Post*, which has risen through the great Mistake and Neglect of other People, as the Undertakers can sufficiently Evidence, by many Authentick Certificats which they have ready to produce, for the Justification of their due Performance in General, yet has there been so many Causless and Unjust Reflections cast on so Useful an Undertaking, that they hold it highly Necessary to undeceive the World, by shewing some of the grounds from whence they spring, *viz.* Some Men suppose, and confidently Alledge their Letters are Miscarried, (or at least Delayed,) because they have not always an immediate Answer, when perhaps the Party is not then at Leisure to write, or for private Reasons unwilling, or in the Country, or removed to some other part of the Town, where the Messengers cannot upon the strictest enquiry Learn or find him out; besides some Men will not in many Cases own the Receipt of Letters duly Delivered into their hands, or in their absence left for them at their Respective Houses or Lodgings, especially where they are Dun'd for Money, which they either will not or cannot Pay.

Some Complain of Delays of Letters, though in their Absence they were duly left for them, and through the careless Neglects of Servants, and others (to whom they were Delivered, have been mislaid and detain'd many

Hours (sometimes Days) and to excuse their own fault, do Charge the Delay upon the *Penny-Post*, pretending the said Letters were but then brought; which the Stamps of the Hour will now detect.

It very often falls out that many Persons that have written, do not always put in or send their Letters to the *Penny-Post* at the same instant, but sometimes long after, an Hour, Two or Three, nay the Day after the Letters have been Dated, which upon the Delivery is Charged as a delay proceeding from the Office; which mischief People might easily Prevent, if they would please to be punctual and just, in setting the Day of the Week, and exact Hour of the Day under the Subscription, agreeable to the time the same was really put in, at the Receiving House.

As for Example,	<i>Mond.</i>	<i>Wedn.</i>
	<i>Mor. 9. 10.</i>	<i>Aft. 3, 4, 5.</i>

Also Letters that Men sometimes send by Porters to several Parts of the Town, after they have Idely (perhaps in an *Ale-House*) kept them some Hours in their Hands, and have R-ceiv'd 4d. 6d. or 12d. for Carriage of them, have been put in by them to be Conveyed by the *Penny-Post*, (their Stamps of Delivery appearing upon them,) which has Caused much Re-flection upon the Office, as if the delay proceeded from Neglects therein.

Others intrusting Boys and other Servants to Deliver their Letters at the Receiving Houses, are often deceived by their Destroying such Letters to keep the Money, though so trivial, and by their Loytering and long Delay before the same be left by them, time is lost, all which is unjustly Charged on the *Penny-Post*.

There are many other Causes of Delays of Letters, which yet ought not to be Charged on the Office, as when Directions are not so plainly Written (as they ought to be,) and when they are very ill Directed, Persons that write do frequently omit to mention the Trade and Sign, or near what Place, Lane, Church, Remarkable Publick House, or Tavern, &c. which is altogether Necessary every where; but especially in long Streets and large Places, such as are in this great City and Suburbs, as the *Strand*, *Covent-Garden*, *Thames-street*, *Wapping*, *Southwark*, &c. all which occasions not only Delays, but Expence of the Messengers time to seek out, and enquire for the Parties, but often times such Letters lie Undelivered, it being sometimes impossible by the most Acute Interpreter to Read, much less find out how, or where to Deliver them, and such short, imperfect and blind Directions, (as are, more or less, daily sent to go by the *Penny-Post*) beget them great Trouble, much Vexation, and unjust Disparagement.

Furthermore, Most Letters that are sent to Carriers and Stage-Coaches, are rejected at the *Inns* for want of two pence, which they require for Carriage, and often times abuse the Messengers that offer them; therefore all Persons are Desired to take Notice thereof, and either to settle the Receipt with Carriers, Coachmen or others, to take them without Money, (by agreement) or to send Two Pence for the future, and Endorse upon such Letters, Carriage Paid 2d.

As for such as Object the Miscarriage of their Letters, because not come to hand, they are under the greatest mistake of all; for if they please to send or come to the Chief Office in *Lyme-street*, they shall find them there, remaining under their proper Alphabetical Letter, Endorsed with the True Reason why they could not be Delivered, though the Messenger has spent thrice the due time to find them out, which at last has not been possible to do, by Reason of such bad Directions, and for want of Money at Inns, as before mentioned; but these Letters lie ready for any that shall please to call or send for them by the *Penny-Post*, though every such Letter has caused Scandalous and unjust Reflections on the Undertaking, among thousands of Persons first and last, yet the *Penny-Post* has been altogether innocent.

Now for Remedy of divers of the forementioned Mischiefs, and to prevent the further spreading of mistaken Reports of the Delays and Miscarriage of Letters, which has not only tended greatly to the Prejudice of the *Penny-Post*; but to the hinderance of the Inhabitants from Embracing the great Benefit that they might have received, by the Use of this Conveyance.

The Undertakers have provided the Stamps aforesaid to Mark the Hour of the Day on all Letters when sent out from their Office to be Delivered, and all Persons are to expect their Letters within one Hour (little more or less from the time Marked thereon,) (excepting such Letters as are to the four Out-Towns, and the Remotest Parts,) which necessarily require a longer time of Conveyance, by these they may be able from time to time to discern, whether the delays that hereafter may happen, be really in the Office, or in their own Servants (or others,) with whom their Letters were left in due time.

*This Mark signifies Eight of the Clock in the Morning.*



*The Second Mark is the Letter of the Chief Office in Lyme-street.*



*The Third Mark signifies Four a Clock in the Afternoon.*



Each Office having its proper Letter, with an acknowledgment that the *Penny-Post* is paid, to prevent the giving of any thing at the Delivery, and for the more Regular Dispatch and Conveyance, the said Undertakers have Directed the Hourly Collecting and Delivery of all Letters, from Seven in the Morning, till Nine at Night on Post Nights, allowing all Persons an Hour to send in their said Letters or Parcels, and the Office an Hour to Collect, bring in, Sort and Distribute the same; That is to say, all Letters and Parcels given or left at any *Penny-Post*-House after Seven at Night, and before Eight in the Morning, are by the Office Collected, brought in, Sorted, and sent out soon after Nine, all Letters left betwixt the Hours of Eight and Nine, are brought in, sorted, and sent out by the Office soon after Ten, and so suc-cessively every Hour in the Day, till Eight of the Clock at Night.

All Letters left as before, betwixt Seven and Eight in the Evening, are Collected, brought in, sent out, and Distributed soon after Nine, (to the nearest, but not to the Remotest Parts, as *Blackwall, Redriff, &c.*) that Night, but no Letters left after Eight can be ascertained to be Delivered at all that Night, (except Post-Letters to *Lombard-street*;) and indeed very late Delivery of Letters is a great disturbance to the Inhabitants, besides the great Toyle and Slavery that it procures to the poor Messengers.

Yet Letters coming too late at Night, shall be by Seven next Morning sent out, and Deliver'd by Eight, and sometimes sooner; where Note he that leaves his Letter immediately after Seven, is Dispatcht no sooner than that Letter which is put in just before Eight, and if any Man slips the time, and defers the putting in his Letter, but a very little while after Eight, his Letter by these Rules must lie an Hour extraordinary, till Nine, before it can be Collected; so that for want of due consideration how Letters proceed, the unthinking People do misreckon, and expect their Letters should be run away with as soon as left, whereas by the very mis-timing it, two Hours, nay three, in some Cases, may be lost through their own default, and those that be orderly left by these Methods, must have allowed some two, some three, some four hours and more before they can be Delivered. All Persons are therefore desired to contrive their Business so beforehand, as to allow reasonable time for Conveyance as aforesaid, and they are desired not to leave any Town Letters after Six a Clock at furthest in Winter, and Seven in Summer (on Saturday Nights especially) except Post-Letters, to the end that the many Poor Men who are Employed in this Service, may have a little time to provide for their Families against the Lords-Day, having no leisure all the week besides.

But all Letters to the four Towns of *Hackney, Islington, South-Newington* and *Lambeth*, and to the Remote Parts, must be left much earlier, or they will not be Delivered till next Morning, and if any Person in the four Towns do desire their Letters to be brought to their Houses, they may for another Penny be Accommodated; otherwise they will be left at the Receiving-Houses, to be sent for by their own Servants. And all People are

hereby given to understand, that no Letters will be carried to any parts of the Weekly Bills of Mortality, further then the adjoining or contiguous Buildings, nor to any other Town then the Four above-mentioned.

☞ *Note that upon the Three Days at Christmas, the Two Days at Easter and Whitsuntide, and the Thirtieth of January, the Penny-Post does not go.*

On all Post Nights, due Care is taken to call for, and Convey to the General Post-House in *Lombard-street*, all Post-Letters, whether Foreign or Inland, left at any of the *Penny-Post* Receiving-Houses, at or before Nine of the Clock at Night. And since the Carriage of Town Letters doth not near Answer the necessary Charge required to support this Undertaking, the Undertakers do hope, that all Persons will so far Contribute to the Continuance of this Useful Design, as to send all their Post-Letters by this Conveyance, to the Post-House in *Lombard-street*, which they do not Convey thither by Themselves or Servants, but if any Post-Letters be left without Money, that should pay before-hand, they must of necessity be Returned to the Office, and such as do send Money, are desired to Endorse the Postage Money upon their Letters.

And forasmuch, as there has been sundry Attempts to Cheat the Undertakers of many pounds, by false Endorsements of Money, and pretences of Loss of other things sent in small Parcels, which really never were sent at all, (an ungrateful return for the Undertakers kindness, such Persons having been shamefully Detected, and thereby the *Penny-Post* as throughly justified.

The Undertakers therefore, for some Expedient to prevent such Evil Designs against them, do Declare, that for the Future, They will not be Answerable for any Goods or Money, sent by them, but what is fast made up, and Sealed under such an Impression, as is plain to be seen, and that the Contents or the Value thereof be Endorst fairly to be Read on the out-side. To the end they may know with what they are Charg'd, (excepting such Parcels, as the Contents are open and visible) nor will they make good any Breaking, or Damage of Choice and Curious Things; nor Glasses or Liquid Matter sent by them, it being altogether unreasonable, that such things as are brittle or subject to damage should be carried 2, 3, or 4 mile at the Adventure of the Undertakers for one Penny, to be liable to Pay Five shillings or Five Pounds damage, but all Persons shall be sure to have the honest Endeavours of the Messengers, to preserve them, as much as in them lies from breaking, or any other hurt, and of safe Delivery thereof, breaking and damage only excepted. It is also hereby signified, that the Undertakers, by Packets or Parcels under a Pound Weight, do not intend to accept Things of extraordinary Bulk, as some have been so unreasonable often times to offer to send by this Conveyance.

These being some of the Practical Methods of the *Penny-Post*, all Persons are Desired to Consider how far they may be Applied, or made Useful to themselves in their Respective Occasions, that they may not through their own mistakes meet with Disappointment, especially in expecting to go in lesser time than it is Practical by these Methods, and thereby Causelesly Reflect on the *Penny-Post*; and it is hoped, that all Ingenious and Worthy Persons for the Future will be so kind to the Undertakers, (and good Friends to the Publick) as to Encourage them in their Honest and Useful Design, by all Lawful ways and means; and to Discountenance all those that are so Envious and Brutish, as by Word or Deed to Oppose the good Progress thereof, and Discourage all that shall Attempt to intrude the like Practice, to the hinderance of the present Undertakers, who have first Erected this Publick Conveniency at their own great Hazard, Pains and Charge.

*There shall be now hinted some of the Conveniencies of this Useful Undertaking of the Penny-Post.*

- All Gentlemen, Countrey-Chapmen, &c. can give notice of their Arrival to Town.
- Shopkeepers and Tradesmen send for what they want to their Workmen.
- Much time saved in Sollicitation for Money.
- Appointments of Meetings among men of Business.
- Bills dispersed for Publication of any Concern.
- Summons or Tickets convey'd to all parts.
- Brewers Entries safely sent to the Excise-Office.
- Lawyers and Clients mutually correspond.
- Patients send to Doctors, Apothecaries, &c. for what they want.

All the Town upon the River of *Thames* may send by their Watermen Letters to be delivered to the Receiving-Houses of the *Penny-Post*, near to most Plying-Places, from whence they will be dispersed according to their Directions, and Letters from *London* to be delivered to the Watermen, to send to the said Towns.

And the Poor Prisoners can now address to their Creditors or Benefactors for one Penny, and save 5*d.* to buy them a Dinner.

Many other Benefits are to be had by this Conveyance, which (though for brevity omitted) the Ingenious will find out.

The Intention of the Undertakers in this Sheet, being chiefly to present to the Publick the Nature of this thing in its Practice; but hereafter they do intend to publish a larger Satisfaction to all the Impartial; not doubting to demonstrate undeniably the Universal Utility of this Invention, and the Unreasonableness and Invalidity of all the Objections hitherto alledged against it.

*Lastly*, If any Person desire further Information, or would communicate any thing to the Office, if they please to write to the Chief House in *Lyme-street*, they shall be Answered to all reasonable and just Content, and their Letters shall be taken in free by the Receivers, provided they be thus Directed,

*To Mr. Dockwra, and the rest of the Undertakers, at the Penny-Post House in Lyme-street.*