

London

Postal History Group

NOTEBOOK

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EDITORIAL

Due to pressure of work at "our" printers, this is the September edition delayed somewhat. This is an example of a penalty arising from getting the "Notebook" at material cost only and one we hope members will be willing to accept.

Two short points. Readers will now be able to see the contents of each issue by means of a straight forward list of contents on the inside cover. Second, and stemming from this, comes the good news that Alf Kirk has very generously offered to compile the "Notebook" index. This will now be published at regular intervals, rather than appear in each issue and bury within itself the contents of the current items.

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RALPH BLACKHALL, COLLECTOR OF THE LONDON PENNY POST OFFICE

Hertfordshire County Record Office has a selection from the postal history collection of Samuel Graveson, one of the band of early students who today would be pleased with the development in research, though shocked by the cost of material. Detached from these items and to be located in Hertford Museum is the map reproduced on the following page. The ' original 'is somewhat larger and the illustration is provided by a photograph in the Editor's odds and ends. ' Original ' is used since close examination suggests the museum has a copy and not the genuine map mentioned by Samuel Graveson in an article which appeared in the February 1943 edition of ' The Philatelist '.

An unexpected bonus from the war time salvage hunt was a one hundred and fifty page folio manuscript entitled " Proceedings against ye Generall & penny post Offices ". This proved to be a genuine record of the letters and petitions of one Ralph Blackhall, a Collector of the London Penny Post Office, between 1692 and 1704.

Readers will recall that William Dockwra committed the sin of showing it was possible to run an efficient postal service in London, without the benefit of Government interference and contrary to their beliefs. Since the post office gave the distinct impression of being operated as a fund raiser with public convenience a poor second, Authority, with a capital A, took over. Dockwra managed to obtain a pension of £500, renewed in 1697 for a further three years. Not content with this, in March of 1697 Dockwra took over as Comptroller of the Penny Post office from one Nat Castleton. In June of 1700 he was ordered out by the Lords of the Treasury and Castleton was reinstated. Clearly this was a time of turmoil and intrigue. During this period Blackhall, after many petitions to the King, secured the post of Collector. Whether to make himself more secure or otherwise, Blackhall made several charges of corruption against officials in the Penny Post, amongst them Castleton. This activity is recorded in some detail in his journal.

Despite the benefits derived from the post of Collector, Blackhall was forever complaining about either conditions or other employees of the Penny Post, his petitions of grievances including the cost of collecting revenue, to himself not the office! He complained of the number of " Publique houses " which were receiving houses and that he had to allow the Receivers " some odd pence for casting up their respective cards ". It appears this was required eight times a year at every Receiver's establishment, of which there were " neare 400 in City and Country ". To make matters worse, he had to call back up to five times at some to effect collection in full.

The Treasury were not the least interested in his problems, he had after all been petitioning frequently for the post over a number of years and should have been aware of the difficulties. Payment was demanded and Blackhall put into his book a record of receipts and payments, which proves a useful source of information as to the throughput of the Post Office. From March 25th., 1697 to August 22nd. of the same year some 441,135 items were recorded, yielding a revenue of £2016.10s.3d.

Contained in the book are copies of two letters from Dockwra. One concerns the extra penny claimed by letter carriers for delivery of penny post mail beyond the " Bills of Mortality " of London, Westminster and Southwark. Payments of tenths of a penny to receivers are also mentioned, which suggests a ten per cent commission to those who allowed their premises to be used for receiving letters. Like some sub offices today it was not the postal income which was significant but the goods post office users purchased whilst in the shop.

Source: The Philatelist, February 1943 pp 88,89.

RALPH BLACKHALL, COLLECTOR OF THE PENNY POST 1697.

Copy of the map used by Blackhall in his "Proceedings" showing the delivery areas of each office and the **places served by** the London Penny Post system.



A GLIMPSE OF PATRIMONY, by M.V.D. Champness

Browsing amongst the bric-a-brac of Camden Market in Islington is seldom considered the source for a touch of the 1840's.

However, one dealer produced a 1d. black on cover, correctly identified as Plate 7, and the princely sum of £4 changed hands. That this was June 1873 may surprise you, but let me hasten to mention that the base of the adhesive was cut into. On the front a straight line lower case receiving house mark in red of Sth Audley St. SO, and a black Maltese Cross cancelling the 1d. black. So what, you may well ask. Turning to the back the shield time London datestamp in red of SNT/8/OC3/1840 provides the clue, for this was the era of experimental use of the **Maltese Cross cancellation in black**, solely confined to London. Similar cancellations in black were not used until February 1841, with the introduction of the 1d. red adhesive labels. Experimental black Maltese Crosses are recorded 31st. August to the end of November 1840.

I already had one other cover showing the experimental London black Maltese Cross dated 15th. October. So this widened my range.

But more was to come, for the letter addressed to J.T. Leader Esq^r M.P., Eaton Square, Chelsea, had somewhat unusual contents, apart from being dated September 21st., some 12 days before it was posted. It reads as follows:

" As an elector of Westminster I trust you will excuse the liberty I am taking in thus addressing you. I beg to say I have a Brother about 23 years of age who is desirous of being employed in Her Majesty's General Post Office as Letter Carrier or Mail Guard. He enjoys good health, has received a good education, writes a good hand and is in every respect qualified for such employment. I can produce most respectable references (sic) to character for Industry, Honesty and Sobriety, and an earnest desire to do his duty in any capacity in which he might be employed. Our family is well known to Mr. J. Bremner, Baker, of Piccadilly who has taken a very active part in your elections, and who can vouch for our respectability. I have always, together with another of my Brothers (likewise an Elector) and our friends, supported your interest in Westminster, and knowing that only through the favour and support of a Member of Parliament, a situation in the Post Office can be obtained, I hope I may be excused this intrusion. Could you forward my views by accomplishing the object I am seeking. It will confer a lasting obligation on

Sir,

Your Obed^t Serv^t

46 South Street
Grosvenor Square
Westminster

Wm Harris

It only remains to delve, at some length I suspect, in P.O. Records to see if a young man named Harris did obtain a position with the Post Office in London in the last quarter of 1840.

It would also be of interest to hear whether any extension to the recorded range of dates can be established for the use of London's experimental black Maltese Cross cancellation.

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POSTAL DISPUTE WITH FRANCE

By way of indicating disapproval of the French Government's activities in connection with A bomb tests, postal workers delayed mails to and from France earlier this year. Have readers any postal markings to show this?

WHAT THE PAPERS SAID.....

A useful source of postal history was, and is, the local press. London had a plentiful supply of newspapers and journals from whose pages one may cull interesting tit bits. Here are two such, together with a Post Office circular.

THE PATRIOT, Monday, June 19, 1837

POST OFFICE....Captain POLHILL said that it was remembered that a petition had been presented in reference to the distress of the twopenny-post carriers, on the 14th of April. The hardships endured, and the small remuneration received, by this deserving class were well known, and he hoped that his motion would have the support of every member of the House. During the last severe winter they had performed the duty of general post-carriers, and did not receive any additional remuneration. The wages of each was twenty shillings a week, and by extra work on three evenings a week they could make three shillings more, and in cases of pension only nine shillings a week was given; he would therefore move that the petition be referred to a select committee.

Colonel SIBTHORP*seconded the motion.

Mr.F. BARING said that the application should have been made to the Postmaster-General in the first instance, and he would ask, was it well to encourage applications from parties in the public service to this House without first coming to the Treasury. The salaries of the carriers had been fixed in 1812, when prices were high, and therefore they were better off now.

The House divided, when there appeared:

For the motion.....	19
Against it.....	<u>35</u>
Majority	16

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JOHN BULL, November 17, 1833

The Postmaster-General (as we last week stated) has taken measures for extending the threepenny post to a circle twelve miles from the General Post Office, including the following towns:- Stanmore, Edgware, Barnet, Hounslow, Southall, Walthamcross, Romford, Bromley, Footscray, Croydon and Kingston, at which places there will be a 3d. post delivery twice a day (except at Footscray and Walthamcross, which will have only one delivery), in addition to the general post delivery. Letters will be allowed, in addition, to be forwarded by the General Post as heretofore, with the advantage of a reduced charge; but it will be necessary to observe, that letters put into the General Post receiving houses will be forwarded by the General Post exclusively, and that letters put into the Two-penny post houses will be forwarded by the Twopenny-post only. The plan was partially brought into operation on Saturday, in the district of Kent, embracing the following places:- Bromley, Bexley, Brandon, Chislehurst, Crayford, Erith, Footscray, Hayes, Hayway-street, Lock's Bottom, Northcray, Plaistow, St. Paul's cary, St.Mary's cray, Sidcup, Southborough, Welling, East Wickham, West Wickham, and Widmore. It is to extend to the other districts as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made. By this convenient alteration the privilege of franking within the extended circle is abolished altogether, and franks arriving from general post distances to any of the hitherto general post towns, will be chargeable with twopenny postage.

(Post Office Circular dated 4th. November 1833 dealing with this change is reproduced on the next page)

(CIRCULAR.)

TWO PENNY POST OFFICE,

4th November, 1833.

SIR,

I AM directed by the Postmaster-General to apprise you, that His Grace has ordered an extension of the Deliveries of this Office to all places within a circle of Twelve Miles from the General Post Office.

This extension will take place, in the first instance, in the County of Kent, and will include the following places:—

Bromley—Bexley—Blendon—Chisselhurst—Crayford—Erith—Foots-Cray
—Hayes—Halfway Street—Lock's Bottom—North-Cray—Plaistow—
St. Paul's-Cray—St. Mary-Cray—Sidcup—South-Borough—Welling—
Wickham (East)—Wickham (West)—and Widmore.

The Deliveries under this arrangement will commence on and from the 9th instant.

I am, at the same time, to inform you, that it is not intended to discontinue at these, and all other places similarly situated, the delivery of Letters by the General Post, and that, consequently, all Letters posted at the General Post Offices, will be forwarded as at present:—

But Letters to be forwarded by the Twopenny Post for these places, are to be deposited in the Twopenny Post Receiving Houses only.

This extension will be carried into effect in the other Districts as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made, of which notice will be given to you accordingly.

I am,

SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

T. M. MUSGRAVE,

Comptroller.

AN INTERESTING LETTER, by A.J. Kirk

At the end of January, 1770 the Duke of Grafton suddenly resigned as Prime Minister. Whilst he had threatened to do this on a number of occasions, the suddenness of his decision caused a certain amount of consternation amongst his friends. The following letter is a first hand account of this matter. The K-- refers to King George III, and Lord North, 2nd Earl of Guildford, eventually became Prime Minister, and was in power until 1782. During this period there was, of course, the American War of Independence.

The letter was sent to the Earl of Lauderdale, written by his brother John Maitland, (Maitland was the family name of the Lauderdale family). From the date it is obvious that it was written within a day or two of the resignation of the Duke, and as such gives the most up to date information that could be found on the subject.

As a modest student of history the acquisition of such a letter gave me quite a deal of pleasure, and as suggested by our Editor, I thought that perhaps other members might be interested in its contents.

In transcribing the letter I have kept to the original spelling.

For the interest of Postal Historians only, the Bishop Mark on this letter, which was just addressed Adinburgh, is the third type, dia 17mm, dated 1st. Feb., with the FE in serified characters.

feb; ye, 1ft 1770

Mr Lord,

As to the Duke of Grafton's Reignation it is not as yet perfectly understtod, thofe who were his frinds in adminiftration abufe him sadly for deserting them so abruptly. I find that about three weeks ago he had (on pretence of ill health which made it impossible for him to attend as he could wish) hinted to the Bedford party that he intended to Resign in a little time, but as he had done so before they say they did not believe him in ernest and made no arrangement for his going out, and that the firft notice they had of it was by an office letter to Lord North on Monday Night telling him he had Resign'd, so that they complain that he left them with responsible offices in their hands without proper notice given so that they had taken no mearsur's againft such an avent. on Tuessay morning the K appointed Ld North to the Treasury so he hold both that and the Excecquer, yesterday the Houfe met in a good deal of confusion, and the following Resolution was put by Mr. Dowdsnell & seconded by Young Hambden That it is the opinion of this Commitee that by the Laws of the Land and by the known & Eftablished Laws & Cuftom of Parliament, no Person Eligible of Common Right to serve in Parliament can be incapacitated by any vote or Resolution of this Houfe, but by act of Parliament only. No's 226
Put off till the 9th febry. 186
40

the language of adminiftration this day is that the K-- is firm and Ld N Minifter & that they grow stronger & stronger every day. The other side say that he is only there pro tempore & that they will have a total rout. You are know more of the matter than three fourths of the Town of London do's moderatly speaking. Sir George Sufty & Mr. Gardener joind the Minority laft Night which were the only two they gaind. For the other four (I believe) belong'd to people who had gone off before the laft question but thefe four Gentlemen had kept absent, Our frind Adam Drummond is one of them, if the K--- is fixd I don't know how

this may end but if not out they
 muft all go and Make room
 for better people I hope a
 few days will decide it I should think,
 out frind Sir Lawrence is left in a hole, I could never see a good reason for
 his going with thfe people. Peter has not got to town yet his ship was to go
 into Dok yefterday but I suppohe he has wrote to you. I am

Your Moft obliged Brother etc

Jogn Maitland

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NUMBERS IN CROSS, SOME DATES

The article in Notebook 13, Bernard Gledhill has submitted a list of early and late dates from copies in his possession and these are noted below, even though they do not all extend the information already given.

Of particular interest are those which apparently overlap the issue of the Diamonds.

Number	Earliest	Latest
1	27. 4.43	9. 5.44
2	30. 3.43	27. 4.44
3	15. 8.43	16. 4.44
4	14.12.43	20. 2.44
5	17. 5.43	19. 9.43
6	6. 7.43	8. 3.44
7	15. 6.43	7.12.43
8	27. 6.43	13.12.43
9	13. 5.43	14. 5.44
10	17. 6.43	9. 4.44
11	15. 6.43	6. 3.44
12	17. 4.43	7. 5.44

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SPECIAL EVENT POSTMARKS

Members will find a notice giving details of the second edition included with this issue of Notebook. Having received his copy at the time of going to press, the Editor has quickly skipped through the mass of detail therein and already discovered that a lightly regarded item in his London oddments is valued at £20, which has quite made his day. It is suggested that the £1.95 (UK Post Paid) it costs is well worth while, though not all purchasers are assured of such finds.

ENCIRCLED W

Although the pleasure of reading the advertisements in stamp magazines is tempered by being unable to acquire all the delights appearing therein, one may at least learn some pointers on postal history. An intriguing reference by David Brandon of Twickenham to a W in a circle, which was described as the mark of the Worcester Coffee House, encouraged the Editor to write for further information.

Very generously, the advertised entire - with a second copy - was forwarded for inspection, some background information being supplied. In his covering letter, Mr. Kevin Geary wrote:

"..First let me tell you that we have the encircled W in black attributed to Worcester Coffee House. It is on an entire from France to London dated 1798 and has a ms endorsement " forwarded by Worcester Coffee House ". As you will probably know the W is recognisable by the missing up stroke of the W appearing thus . I bought this item on the 15th. November 1792. Now, the example in red was offered to me by Eric Quinn... assuring me that it was the Worcester Coffee House cachet. I was a little dubious. However, after comparison to the one in black that we have in stock, it measured the same and also had the missing stroke to the W. I showed the item to Angus Parker of Argyll Stamp Co., whose wife has a fine collection of Coffee House items and he agreed it must be the same mark, but in red....."



The entire, with the mark in red, is dated 29th. January, 1801 addressed to Bloomsbury Sq. and although the writer, of a positive tirade of abuse against the Prince of Wales, only uses initials (just as well !!) and gives no address, it may be assumed to be from London and routed through or from the coffee house.

By one of those curious coincidences, the Postal History Society in the March - April issue of their Bulletin contained an article by G.F. Oxley which asked for information, although with his usual thoroughness, Mr. Oxley had quite a number of points:-

"..It appears on some letters delivered by the penny post in London between 1788 and 1800 and can be found struck in black or red ink. Strikes of London general post datestamps on successive days often appear on letters bearing the " W " markings and this had led to the theory that the reason may be receipt too late in the day at the London general post Chief Office for transfer to the penny post office for delivery. One consistent part of the story is the handling of these letters by the general post at some stage in their journey. Additionally a number of letters with this marking are addressed or received from an area east and just north of the Thames which has led to a further theory that the river or the sea had some bearing on its use. Suggestions have ranged from Westminster to Wapping, water or the initial of a postal official's name in the meaning of the letter " W " itself."

It should be mentioned that the second illustration above is similar to the PHS article; the difference is quite clear and raises the question of whether there were in fact two " W "s, one being private and the other official.

In response to the request for information, Bryant Lillywhite, whose major work on London Coffee Houses is a lasting tribute to his most valuable

contribution to recording London's history, reported two covers, one from Hatchett's Hotel to Lincolns Inn and the second directed to Portland Place. He does not suggest the Worcester Coffee House. The items are dated 1800 and 1803. Dr. Siggers wrote of one " exactly as in your illustration " dated 1793 addressed to Thames Street London. From Canada, S.W. Shelton offers one on entire dated on board the Lapwing, Long Reach, 20.1.1794, addressed to the Strand. He suggests W for Woolwich, there being a reference to that place in the letter.

Would readers please advise of any encircled W they have, or know of. Are there really two strikes; one postal and complete; one broken and a coffee house ? At all events, it seems are rare mark and well worth the effort in establishing the facts of its origin and function.

Ref: David Brandon Advert. of April 1973
Postal History Bulletin, issues March to October 1973.

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PAID STAMPS OF LONDON

Despite the value of Martin Willcocks catalogue, the section dealing with London is just that and it will be some considerable time before we have the pleasure of securing a full book dealing with ' our town '.

In an effort to bridge the gap a little, it is hoped to draw on the first class section A(13)a of the Alcock & Holland 1940 opus on British postmarks.

During the course of the next month, an illustrated schedule of the marks will be prepared, quoting A & H and, where appropriate Willcocks numbers. Dates of use as recorded in these reference books will be given alongside with colour and notes on varieties. As with the priced single ovals issued, a draft working copy will be issued and within three months, subject to your cooperation, a corrected version issued.

It is hoped to progress through other stamps according to A & H.

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TWOPENNY POST OR THREEPENNY POST?????

A recently acquired cover bears the following marks.

TP/Hackney NO (in blue) struck over by the round topped 3 (in black), struck over by the seven lined snake cancellation mark (in black). G P in red then (?) applied, 10 in black ms entered . 8NT8/MY14/1839 in red of the indented type struck on the reverse and the black circle F/MY-14/1839 also on reverse.

Questions: Since Hackney was transferred to the Town area in 1831, why the three on a letter addressed to ROTHERHAM (correct postage 10 pence); reading suggests the red GP was only applied to mail into London which was not to be further charged, why therefore, on outwards mail?

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RESULTS OF AUCTION 11th August, 1973

There were some 68 lots in the circulated catalogue, 29 further lots being produced at the auction. Only 8 of the original 68 were unsold and only 4 of the extra 29. Some 19 lots went to postal bidders.

Lot No.	Amount	Lot No.	Amount	Lot No.	Amount
1	0.65	24	2.40	47	2.00
2	0.25	25	3.10	48	0.25
3	1.40	26	0.80	49	1.70
4	0.35	27	0.55	50	2.30
5	0.25	28	0.50	51	2.60
6	9.10	29	1.60	52	4.00
7	9.10	30.	0.50	53	4.00
8	9.10	31	1.30	54	1.00
9	-	32	1.80	55	0.65
10	-	33	1.10	56	-
11	1.40	34	1.40	57	0.50
12	1.30	35	0.25	58	0.70
13	1.30	36	1.30	59	0.30
14	-	37	-	60	0.55
15	4.00	38	0.55	61	0.75
16	0.50	39	1.50	62	0.45
17	3.10	40	0.55	63	0.50
18	4.10	41	0.80	64	1.50
19	2.00	42	0.40	65	-
20	-	43	0.40	66	1.20
21	-	44	0.65	67	1.10
22	2.10	45	0.25	68	1.60
23	1.80	46	0.55		

Subject to material being made available it is hoped to run another auction early in 1974. Readers who have items for disposal are invited to consider disposal by auction through the Group, thus assisting yourself, your fellow members and the Group. No lotting fees, just 10% commission on sales with recorded delivery postage charged on unsold lots returned through the post to would be vendors - not much as you can see from the above.

The alternative method of the circulating packet is highly commended, since it requires no descriptions, unless you wish to extol the virtues of a particular item. Members are reminded that should they wish to RECEIVE the packet they should advise the Packet Secretary. It will NOT be sent unless requested. As there are now THREE packets ready do not delay.

THE FREE WITH THE E CODE

A letter from Jim Lovegrove

Frank Bottomley has a fine strike of this very rare FREE stamp (Brumell fig. 29; A&H fig 848; see Notebook No.5, page 12), dated 21st August 1837. Another member of the Group - and I would be obliged if he could be identified for I have mislaid note of his name - has a slightly blurred specimen of the 11th. July 1837.

In the course of my study over some years I was fortunate enough to purchase three examples, all - like the others - on front. These are of the 8th and 10th July and 23rd September 1837.



A note in my files reads that on the 12th. May 1971, a good strike " of this very rare handstamp was seen by me in the stocks of John Van Praagh, the ' Small Box ' antique shop, No.10 High Street, Ryde, I.O.W. It was dated 6th. March 1838, addressed to Mrs Allen at Clifton etc. etc..". It was contained in a volume of a collection of autographs belonging to the Queensbury family which had been brought in for valuation, and was not for sale.

That added up to SIX examples known to me and this after advertising for news of any others known. It was this degree of rarity that prompted Martin Willcocks to exclude the item from his Catalogue, which does not seek to probe too deeply into varieties and rarities.

On the 13th. June 1973 I was flipping through some scaps in a Bournemouth establishment of some note - scaps I was assured had been " gone over many times already " by several entrepreneurs of equal note - when: I came across a SEVENTH strike of this stamp.

It is not a good specimen - top of the crown and the right side cut off to trim the front for mounting - but unmistakeable because of the position of the word FREE in the ovoid large ring, nearly a quarter of the way down instead of hard up under the top rim; the crown ACROSS the rim instead of on top of it; the letter "E" 4 instead of 3mm high and nearer the bottom of the rim than the later version of the E code stamp.

Dated the 9th. March 1838 it confirms the item seen at Ryde as evidence that the stamp's use extended well into 1838. Indeed it now begins to point to Rivett-Carnac's original theory that these codes related to TIMES OF DAY of the new supplementary mails, that the ' star ' code referred to quite another time and that Brumell's fig. 29 - the large E thus demonstrated in these SEVEN known specimens was the forerunner of the more commonly known 3mm E stamp of June 1838 to January 1840.

In fact the latter was not a separate stamp, but a standardised skeleton, in which the code of star, the letter E, N and even the impressed but never used C, could be inserted at will, or left out altogether to produce the so-called " no code stamp " effect.

Only the O remains as mysterious as ever, set up too in its own frame. It may be said however that the latest discoveries about its use tend to increase rather than dispel the intense aura of drama which surrounds this stamp. At the present rate of research and result it may be possible to describe the evidence in proper sequence so as to illustrate how strange its mystery and begin to see a pattern of use - there are now 31 specimens recorded. But we are still far away from a solution unless one crops up by sheer accident.

EXPERIMENTAL MACHINES - THE REX

Much is made of the Wilkinson's Patent, and rather more than one might wish of the value of specimens of the Postage Paid mark impressed by the device. In "Early Stamp Machines" by Stitt Dibden a section dealing with Stamp Vending Machines makes mention of the Rex machine. In the "Philatelic Record" for December 1910 came the following report:

"A company is being floated to manufacture and sell a postage stamping machine known as the "Rex", which appears to have met with considerable success during an extended trial at the Throgmorton Street Post Office, where one of these machines has been installed, and since the end of September has affixed no less than 101,839 penny stamps to postal matter for the public. The special feature of the machine is that the stamps need not be in rolls, which has certain disadvantages, but sheets containing six or more stamps in width may be used. The machine will cut off stamps and affix them to postal matter at the rate of 3,000 an hour, and automatically register the number of stamps used. It is stated that the record rate by hand is only 750 an hour, so that the machine offers obvious advantages to firms dealing with a large correspondence. The near future will doubtless see the evolution of various types of these machines, and possibly the Board of Inland Revenue will be called on to provide stamps in sheets or rolls of special sizes and shaped to fit them so that the specialist in British stamps will find the different settings somewhat of a burden. At all events we may expect that, as now in the United States, certain values of British stamps will be obtainable imperforate."

The Daily Express on the 24th. September, 1910 announced at the end of a glowing report on the device..."Arrangements are being made to have these machines placed in every underground railway station and at every pillar box".

The Post Office were not, however, impressed and apparently the device passed into that limbo reserved for the "bright idea - said with a sad smile" group of might have been.

Since the postal matter treated was also impressed with the cachet "Stamped by the REX AUTOMATIC / MACHINE at Throgmorton Avenue / Post Office" one might fairly expect to find examples in collectors hands with over 100,000 items being processed.

Reports of these would be welcome.

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BINDING OF MAGAZINES

Many of us acquire magazines, catalogues, collections of paper which we would have bound, if we knew where. Michael English has located a first class service at most reasonable rates. The name and address is:

R. J. Fowler Esq.,
112 Victoria Road,
ALDERSHOT,
Hants.

Please mention your connection with the Group to secure 'best' price.

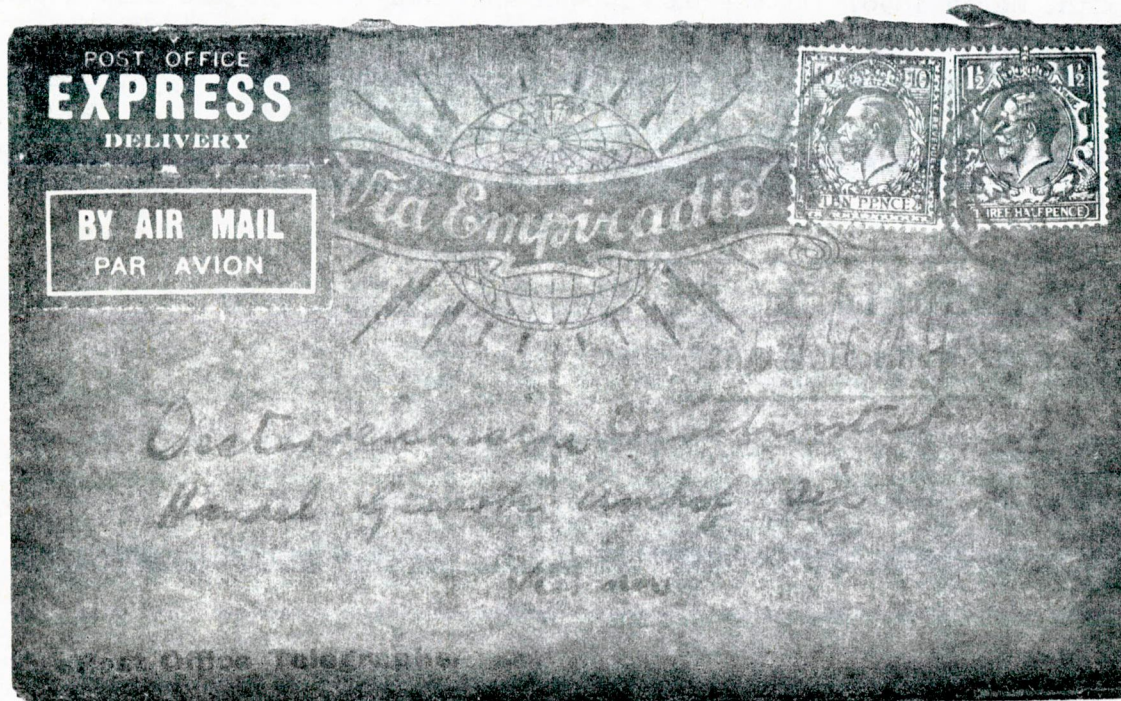
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MEETING ON AUGUST 11th.

The auction was the main event and provided an entertaining afternoon. Derek Muggleton's expertese in these matters encouraged the considerable interest with its resultant brisk bidding which with late entries, relieved successful bidders of some £139. The results are given elsewhere.

Following the auction, several members showed some of their recent acquisitions, though if the truth be known, were not always recent as of interest.

Amongst the items shown was a telegram through the post from London to Vienna.



A deep buff official Post Office telegraph envelope, routed through Berlin. The adhesives, elevenpence halfpenny in value, are cancelled by the London FS c.d.s. A framed Berlin cachet, in red, reads "Mit Luftpost befördert Luftpostamt Berlin A.2". There are three Austrian cds on the reverse, including "Wien Telegraf Central Station".

The 11½d rate covered Express and Airmail rate. The telegram was delivered in Vienna the same day as posted in London 5th. November 1928.

Printed on the reverse is "SEND YOUR REPLY / VIA EMPIRADIO / In case of enquiry about this telegram apply at the Post Office of delivery, / or in LONDON ring up Central 3261"

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EXPERIMENTAL MACHINE CANCELLATIONS AT AUCTION

In the Robson Lowe Great Britain Sale of March 13th. there appeared a number of lots dealing with experimental cancellations. The catalogue had on both front and back covers superb colour prints of two of the lots, which cannot be shown in their full glory, but are illustrated overleaf as well as can be achieved. One outcome of this inability to provide members with a good copy

was that the Editor wrote to Messers Robson Lowe to suggest extra covers be printed when such gems appear, thus allowing collectors who can only admire from afar, the opportunity of having at least something. It is pleasing to report that this notion is to receive serious consideration.

In Notebook No.9, page 3, dates were given for what might fairly be described as a rare Creswell. An example of this, lot 224, superb in all respects, was dated 10th. March 1858; this extends the period of use by four days. The valuation was £40 - it realised £200.

Lot 226 was also a magnificent strike, this time of the ' Opera Glass ', dated 30th. March 1858. It was ex McGowan and thought to be the only known example on a 2d. blue. Clearly its value was appreciated and it fetched £ 525.

A second Pearson Hill, code A of 9th. December 1857, complete with a fine offset on the back of the cover achieved £90. A Rideout dated 29th. October 1866, the second trial period, obtained £42.

The rare Bedford St. B.O. Hoster dated 10th. November 1885 was valued at £25. This went another £80 to £105. The diamond shaped dots type as a complete stike on a cut out from a 1d. embossed envelope dated 11th. February 1887, with a part strike on a 1d. lilac took £35 to secure.



THE LONDON L

Readers were invited to forward information of these L marks in the April issue in the hope of extending the dates of use and confirming the correct function. A number of replies have come to hand.

Jeremy Greenwood forwarded an article from "The Philatelist" entitled "Great Britain Some Impressions of 1876", written by George Brumell. In this the Dubus fig 4 is shown as..." a stamp used on Foreign letters posted 6 to 6.45 p.m. and a similar one with L2 was used between 6.45 and 7.30 p.m. Such letters were no doubt subject to Late Fees, but the book* does not say whether these stamps showed the fees were paid or due "...

* The "Book" is one shown to Brumell by Mr. Robson Lowe. It showed the stamps used in certain London offices on a day early in 1876. There was no hint as to the purpose of the book; it was not in the nature of the daily sheets.

Brigadier Viner records three items:

Dubus fig 2: London to Zurich 30. 1.1869; 6d. + 1d. adhesives
 fig 1: London to Madrid 18.11.1872; 4d. + 3d. adhesives
 fig 4: London to Dirschau (Germany)
 29.12.1875; 2½d. + 1d. adhesives

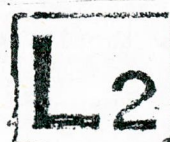
Alf Kirk produced four items:

Dubus fig 1: London to Venice 9. 2.1870
 London to Naples 10.11.1869
 fig 2: London to Paris 2. 9.1872 and the fourth (see below).



As can be seen there is some considerable difference between this mark struck on the cover to Bordeaux and that previously illustrated. Even allowing for some spread due to wear, the frame is much thinner than the increase in size of the L1 and it might well be a recut or second stamp.

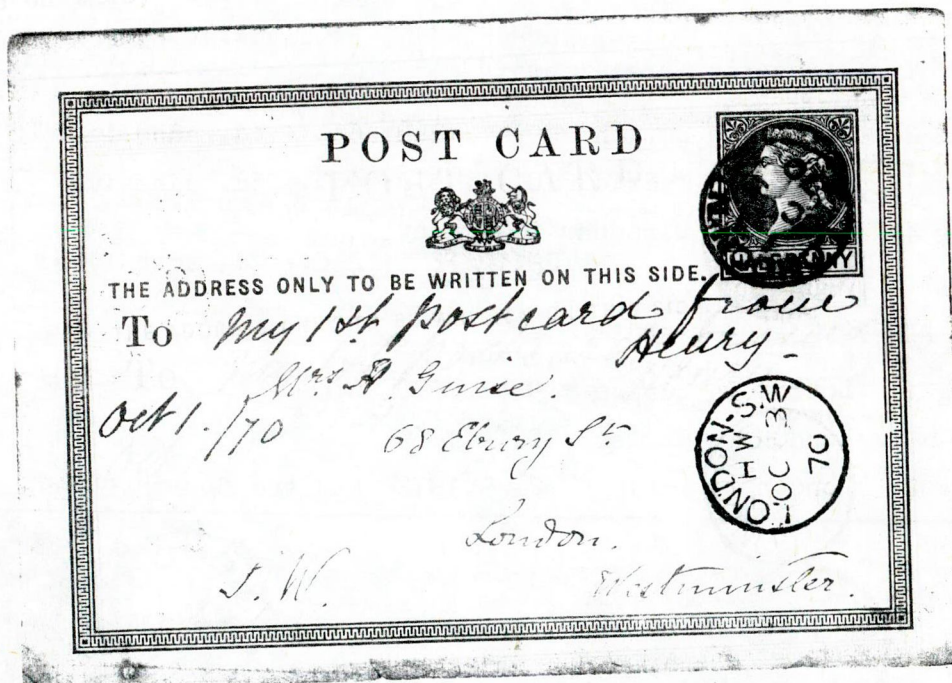
Fritz Muller send details of two L2 dated 5.10.1869 and 7.8.1872. The latter shows the effects of wear very clearly. Both are struck in red.



AN EARLY LONDON OFFICIAL POST CARD

One item of postal history which should appear in every London collection is an example of the first official post card. The introduction of this method of communication was not without its critics and the feeling that it was 'not quite nice' to use such an open method of correspondence did not fade for many years.

An example of public reaction to this innovation in Britain (not that it was the first post card - the Puckeridge Hunt, for instance, used preprinted cards in the early 1850's) is demonstrated by the item shown below. Though not a first day (currently being offered by one optimist at £60 each) it bears the note "my 1st postcard from Henry" and the manuscript date 'Oct 1/70' which clearly alludes to the date of issue and not the date of posting or receipt. The message on this 'first' card reads thus:



Arkleigh House
Hendon
Oct: 2^d.1870

My Dear Mama

I hope you are well? Is not this a funny way of writing? These cards came out on the 1st! I have written to Willy on one. I do not know what to say. I could not hear the text as everyone made such a noise sitting down. I received your message from Miss W.Wills out of the sick house. It seems such a long time since I saw you. I love you very much. Your own Hen xxxx

P.S. the best of this card is that you can put in P.S. without tearing the envelope very likely so just now as I was shutting up my desk after writing to you I found that piece about Phaeton which you copied out for me & I thought I had lost in too safe a place in my desk. I hope you will like this letter but I fear I have (and here the writer indulges in the trick of writing across that already written to finish off) written great rubbish to you but I know you will like it as I have tried my best to please & amuse(sic) you with my letter & not let you be without one & be lonely.

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FIFTH REPORT OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL 1858

Medical Officer's Report (part only)

Removal (of) Causes of Disease

The Returned Letter Office is now so well ventilated, and gas products so completely carried off by the system of gas sewers in operation there, that I see no room for further improvement.

The large Sorting Offices, however, are not in so satisfactory a state, though they are well supplied with fresh air, continually forced in by means of the fan of the steam-engine, now adapted for that purpose by Mr. Cowper, C.E. No alteration has yet been made in the system of lighting, nor are there any means in operation for carrying off the unconsumed gas. This is constantly escaping from the numerous burners, exposed as they are to frequent and strong draughts of air *.

This gas, mixed as it is with carbonic acid, carbonic oxide, and sulphurous acid (the latter, by absorption of atmospheric oxygen, quickly becoming oil of vitriol), cannot be otherwise than injurious to the delicate breathing organs of those exposed to its fumes.

It has been found that the thickest and toughest leathers, when subjected to the action of these gases in libraries, become in a short time destroyed.

* This matter has been long under consideration, and experiments have been tried, but there are peculiar difficulties regarding these rooms which it has not hitherto been practicable to surmount.

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APPENDIX I

Letter to the London Letter Carriers

General Post Office, 29th. September,
1858

I AM directed by the Postmaster-General to express his Lordships disapprobation of the proceedings, as reported in some of the newspapers, of a recent meeting held by a portion of your body in the South-Western District.

You are well aware that should any case of grievance exist, the Rules of the Department point out a proper mode of representing it; that any one not satisfied with the results of his application may, through his immediate official superior, send a written statement of his case to the Postmaster-General; and that no obstacle of any kind is ever offered to your meeting, in a proper manner, on any matter connected with your interests as a body.

You know also that complaints thus made, stated respectfully and without wilful or gross misrepresentation, whether emanating from a meeting or from individuals, never bring upon any one either loss of position, delay in promotion, or any other disadvantage.

Nevertheless, instead of the regular course being adopted, and the proceedings conducted in an open, manly, and respectful manner, the meeting referred to was held away from the ordinary place of employment, and speeches were made containing statements which the men who uttered them must have known to be false, but from the consequences of which they endeavoured to screen themselves by concealing their names.

The Postmaster-General holds every man who was present at that meeting, especially those who took an active part, responsible for its proceedings; and he warns all others not to follow an example tending to subvert discipline, to impede the public service, and to bring disgrace and dismissal to those concerned.

Lord Colchester has the satisfaction of believing that the great majority of letter carriers are well-disposed, industrious, and respectable men, who would take no part in such unjustifiable proceedings; and he believes that the actors in them are in many cases among the least meritorious officers, and who, therefore, are moved by a natural antipathy to the new arrangement which makes merit the ground for promotion.

His Lordship also warns the letter carriers against the machinations of discarded officers, who, reckless of the ruin they may bring upon others, strive to spread disaffection in the Department from which they themselves have been removed.

That the situation of letter carriers is far from being ineligible, is shown by the large number of respectable men constantly applying for appointment; a fact at which the Postmaster-General cannot be surprised, when he compares the amount of work and the rate of wages with those to be found in ordinary employments. Excepting auxiliaries, who are employed during part of their time only, the lowest wage of any London letter carrier (these being obtainable by a youth of seventeen - often the son of an elder letter carrier) are 19s a-week, advancing with every year's good service, to 23s; while those who are willing and able to become sorters, may rise into classes receiving from 25s. to 30s. a-week, from 32s. to 38s., and from 40s. to 50s.; though some of you appear unwilling to become regular sorters, since that office entails the loss of the Christmas boxes (averaging, it is believed, more than 8L a year, and in some walks exceeding even 20L.) which are given to letter carriers.

His Lordship reminds you that these wages are exclusive of your uniform, of a pension in old age, and of assistance in insuring your lives. A large number of you, also, are gratuitously supplied with medical attendance and medicine. Lastly, you have each a fortnight's holiday in the year, which most other working men must forego or purchase by the loss of a fortnight's wages. Neither should it be forgotten, that several of the foregoing advantages have been granted recently, and that without solicitation, having proceeded from a spontaneous desire for your welfare.

As regards work, you know that more than two years ago you were all informed that, if, after allowing for temporary circumstances caused by changes in the walks, any letter carrier thought his duties were more than a man of ordinary despatch might be expected to get through in an average of eight hours per day, he was at liberty to report his case for consideration. But few applications, nevertheless, have been received; and even in nearly all these few cases, including, with one exception, those recently submitted to the Postmaster-General by a deputation from some of your body, it was found, on careful examination, that the daily working time, instead of exceeding eight hours, was actually less.

On a late occasion, I was authorized by the Postmaster-General to state, that provided the body of letter carriers conducted themselves in all respects with propriety, his Lordship would be prepared to take a fitting opportunity to look at the question with a view of ascertaining whether it might not be possible to submit to the Treasury some scheme by which the position and prospects of the letter carriers could be improved, without their being required to qualify themselves for duties of regular sorters.

Progress has been made towards performing this conditional promise; and even

for ascertaining whether, with due regard to the public service, the situation of letter carrier might be improved in any other way; but I am now directed to state, that if any repetition shall take place of the improper acts mentioned above, the Postmaster-General, looking to the necessity for maintaining perfect discipline in so large a body of men, will be reluctantly obliged to suspend all progress of the kind, but for the conviction that the misconduct has been confined to comparatively few men, his Lordship would have felt it his duty at once to take more stringent measures.

WILLIAM BOKENHAM
Controller of the Circulation Department

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THE LONDON EXCHANGE

WANTED....Xmas Special Scheme Manchester Postmark 1907, 1908 or 1909 (types
6 - 10)

M.R. Hewlett, The Hermitage, Box, Nr. Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 9DT

WANTED....1844 Numeral type postmarks, Chief Office, District Offices; on adhesive, piece, entire. Offers to

R. Garner, 11a Balfour Road, Southport, PR8 6LE

INFORMATION PLEASE.....on the Columbia London Machine Cancellations - anything at all regarding dates, district initials, size of circles etc etc

R.A. Keneally, 1/2 Middlegate, Penrith, Cumberland

(p.s. - have several for exchange.)

WANTED. Penny red imperf on cover from Chippenham (Wilts) to anywhere. Must be cancelled with Maltese Cross. Good price paid.

M.R. Hewlett, The Hermitage, Box, Chippenham, Wilts SN14 9DT

WANTED....Inland Office postmarks as listed:

Westley Fig: 72 and 75: most numbers required
83, 84, 88 & 89: all numbers missing
73; No. 79
78; No. 50 (on cover)
82; No. 87, 97, 100, 102
90; No. 85
85; No. 39 to 41 (except 43)
86; No. 37, 38
87; No. 47, 49 - 52
91; Letter A, D (on stamps)

E. Wyttenbach, Dr. ing, 59 Baumackerstrasse, Zurich, X1, Switzerland.

Members may advertise their requirements in the London Exchange at no charge, except the price of the stamp. The ad. will be run several times until you ask for it to be cancelled.

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LONDON POSTAL HISTORY GROUP

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There are a number of Study Groups and readers are invited to contact the Hon. Secretary for details.

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