

Great Britain Postage Due Mail 1839 to the Present Day



A single ½d stamp posted at Sydenham in 1900, addressed on the reverse to Beckenham.
Endorsed “Contrary to Regulations” with a “1d/D13” charge mark of Beckenham.



1842 2d Mulready lettersheet, sent as a wrapper from London to Chard.
Endorsed “above 1oz” and charged 4d, with London “MORE/TO/PAY” handstamp.

**A Display given to
The Royal Philatelic Society London**

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Introduction

Until 4th December 1839 postage rates within the British Isles were based on the distance letters were carried. These distance based rates were multiplied by the number of sheets of paper used, with letters above one ounce in weight being charged one rate for each quarter ounce. All postage rates were identical whether prepaid or paid upon delivery and as a result the vast majority of mail was posted unpaid with the postage being collected from the recipient. Such “postage due” mail is therefore the norm from this period and is outside the scope of this collection and display. This display shows how postage due charges were calculated and collected and the charge and explanatory marks used on such mail, from the introduction of additional postage due charges in 1839; it includes all such mail sent to or within Great Britain as well as mail from or via G.B where the British Post Office applied postage due handstamps or collected the charge.

Uniform 4d Post - Frame 1, Pages 2-5

On 5th December 1839 internal British postage rates based on weight rather than distance were introduced. Rates were set at 4d up to ½oz weight or 8d if between ½ and 1oz irrespective of distance sent. These rates continued to be identical whether prepaid or collected upon delivery, and most letters therefore continued to be sent unpaid. Rates for letters above 1oz weight were set at 8d per oz if prepaid, but were charged twice the deficiency if unpaid or underpaid. This was the first time an extra charge was added to unpaid mail, as an inducement to prepay postage; this collection and display of postage due mail therefore commences from this date. Three letters over 1oz are shown, one prepaid 1/4, the others posted unpaid and charged 2/8 upon delivery. During the 4d Post period rates less than 4d for letters carried up to 8 miles or delivered by local posts continued to operate. The London local post continued to charge unpaid letters 2d if sent within the central town district or 3d if posted or delivered in the outer country district, but decreased the prepaid rate for all letters to 1d. Examples of London local post 2d and 3d charges are shown, one increased to 7d with the addition of the uniform 4d charge upon redirection. The 4d Post period lasted for 36 days, until 9th January 1840.

Uniform Penny Postage - Frame 1, Page 6 - Frame 2, Page 3



Fig. 1. Unpaid cover posted at Catterick on January 10th 1840, the first day of Uniform Penny Postage, showing first day use of the “2” charge mark.

On 10th January 1840 rates were lowered to as little as 1d, this period therefore being known as Uniform Penny Postage. New prepaid rates, based solely on weight, were set at 1d up to ½oz, 2d if between ½oz and 1oz, and 2d per oz if over 1oz weight. For the first time a general rule was introduced stating all unpaid or underpaid mail was to be charged with twice the deficiency. As a result most

letters were now sent prepaid rather than unpaid. Three items which were posted on 10th January 1840, the first day of Uniform 1d Postage, are shown. These comprise a letter from Catterick showing the first day of use of the locally made “2” charge, drawn up as a free frank but posted the day after the franking privilege for MPs ceased (Fig. 1); a letter prepaid 2d but over 1oz so charged twice the 2d deficiency and a local London letter showing the pre-1840 local post 2d charge mark. Incoming ship letter rates reduced to a uniform rate of 8d per ½oz on 10th January, but other incoming rates remained unchanged, as shown by a letter from Paris received on 10th January and charged 2/1, whilst a ship letter from Demerara received the following day is only charged 8d. 1840 Underpaid letters only charged the single deficiency in error are also shown; this was a surprisingly common mistake in the early days of Penny Postage, amongst Postmasters used to the pre-1840 rules on rates.

“Not Paid” Handstamps - Frame 2, Pages 4-7

“Not Paid” and “Postage Not Paid” marks were used at a few offices on totally unpaid mail, occasionally on inland mail but more usually on letters addressed abroad to destinations where only fully prepaid mail could be sent. These were therefore used to explain why such letters were returned to the sender. Examples shown include an 1843 letter to a Missionary in Tana, New Hebrides. Liverpool had a boxed “Postage Not Paid” handstamp in use by 1838, and was still using this same mark in 1921, a full 83 years later.

“More to Pay” Handstamps - Frame 2, Page 8 - Frame 4, Page 1

These were used on prepaid mail found to be underpaid due to weight. Circular double ring handstamps had been in use in London since 1812 and continued in use after 1840 (see illustration on front cover). Various types were issued from London, Edinburgh and Dublin whilst a few provincial Postmasters had handstamps locally made. Although black ink was unusually used for unpaid charges, “More To Pay” handstamps may also be found in blue, green or even red ink.

“2” Charge Marks - Frame 4, Page 2 - Frame 6, Page 1



Fig. 2. 1844 Unpaid letter from Leith to France with “2” charge mark applied in error and deleted.
A Maltese Cross handstamp unusually also applied.

With the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage in 1840 most postage due mail was charged 2d, either unpaid letters under ½oz or letters paid 1d but found to weigh over ½oz; there was therefore an instant

demand for “2” charge marks. London continued to use charge marks from the pre-1840 local post. Edinburgh and Dublin issued standard type charge marks to many offices in Scotland and Ireland. However most “2” charge marks were locally manufactured for individual Postmasters and therefore exist in many types, applied in black, blue or green ink. Between January and May 1840 Edinburgh used a “2” charge incorporating the date. “2” Charges are shown applied in error on prepaid mail and on letters addressed abroad, most but not all of these being cancelled out (Fig. 2).

“4” Charge Marks - Frame 6, Pages 2-6

London continued to use pre-1840 local post “4” charge marks after 1840 whilst charge marks manufactured during the 36 day Uniform 4d Post period continued in use as postage due charge marks at some offices. Examples are shown from Belfast, Dundee and Edinburgh, the latter used in 1898, 59 years after the handstamp was first used. A few Postmasters had “4” charge marks locally made, though their use is uncommon as comparatively few letters were underpaid by 2d.

Explanatory Handstamps used on Overseas Mail - Frame 6, Page 7 - Frame 8, Page 5

Various “Insufficiently Prepaid”, “Insufficiently Paid” and “Insufficiently Stamped” marks were issued to Packet ports for use on mail to or from abroad, but may also occasionally be found on inland letters. They were also issued to British Post Offices abroad, two examples being shown from Constantinople. Various handstamps used prior to the U.P.U show the division of postage due charges between Great Britain and the overseas country of origin or destination. These include “British/Foreign”, “Value of Stamps/Sum to be collected” and “Value of Stamps/Deficiency”. “Deficient Postage/Fine” handstamps were used where there was a fixed rate fine levied on underpaid mail to or from a certain country, in addition to the deficiency. Some of these handstamps were later used on ordinary inland postage due mail, an example from Weymouth shown used as late as 1948. A similar “Short Paid/Fine” handstamp was issued to the Allan Line steamers sailing from Halifax to Liverpool. Where fixed fines were set these were normally shared between the countries of origin and receipt, the country of origin also receiving the deficient postage. “Deficient Postage/Half Fine” and “Deficient Postage/British Share of Fine” handstamps show the portion of the postage due charge payable to Great Britain whilst the similar “Deficient Postage/Indian Share of Fine” indicates the portion of the charge payable by Great Britain to India.



Fig. 3. 1870 Cover from New South Wales paid via Marseille but diverted to the more expensive Brindisi route due to the Franco-Prussian War, charged 3d. Charge increased to 4d on redirection.

Letters from India and New South Wales are shown with the interesting charge mark “Insufficiently Paid for Brindisi Route, Deficient Postage 3d” used on letters paid via Marseille but transferred to the more expensive Brindisi route due to the closure of the Marseille route during the Franco-Prussian War. One has the 3d charge increased to 4d upon redirection (Fig. 3). The handstamp “Paid Only to England” is self explanatory, and is shown on covers from the U.S.A to Europe.

“T” Handstamps and U.P.U Charges - Frame 8, Page 6 - Frame 9, Page 3

The General Postal Union was formed on 1st July 1875, the 21 initial members including Great Britain and the U.S.A, with France joining on 1st January 1876. The Union agreed standard postage rates and methods of indicating and collecting postage due charges on underpaid mail sent between G.P.U member countries. Prepaid postage was to be kept by the country of origin whilst postage due charges were to be kept by the country of destination, thereby stopping the complicated accountancy procedures previously necessary on all underpaid (and many prepaid) letters. Underpaid letters were to be marked “T” whilst the value of postage paid was marked in francs and centimes; overweight letters were to be marked with the number of rates in the upper left corner. Unpaid and underpaid mail was then charged with twice the unpaid rate less the postage paid. On 1st April 1879 the Union changed its name to the Universal Postal Union, and regulations were altered so unpaid and underpaid mail was charged twice the deficiency, the same practice already used within G.B on internal mail. The U.P.U rules also stated the deficiency was now to be shown (rather than the prepayment), in francs and centimes; from October 1st 1907 double the deficiency was to be shown. Charges were sometimes indicated as fractions, with the number of rates shown over the deficiency (or double deficiency from 1907).

On January 1st 1966 U.P.U rules again changed with charges now shown as a fraction with twice the deficiency shown above the single foreign letter rate, in the currency of the country of origin; the country of receipt simply had to multiply this fraction by its own foreign letter rate to get the postage due charge in its own currency. Finally on January 1st 1976 the rules again altered so fractional charges were shown with the single deficiency in the upper fraction; the receiving country multiplied this as before to get the deficiency in their own currency but now added this deficiency to a set fee, thus ending the practice of charging double the deficiency.

Until 1921 charges were calculated at the rate of 10 centimes equalling 1d. From 13th June 1921 until 30th September 1925 gold centimes were used, at 20 centimes to one penny, and a minimum charge of 30c, equivalent to 1½d, was introduced on unpaid and underpaid mail to or from abroad. This minimum charge was reduced to 1d in October 1925, ½d from 1935, increased to 3d in October 1966 and became 2p upon decimalisation. From October 1925 rates were again theoretically calculated at 10 centimes equalling 1d, but actual charges on incoming mail were usually calculated using tables of foreign countries overseas letter rates and their sterling equivalent.

A whole display could be made of the various “T” handstamps and charges introduced by the U.P.U as well as the methods of calculating charges on international mail. These seven pages show a few examples including use of a “T” handstamp in the first month of the G.P.U, a “T” mark unusually struck in red ink, deficiencies in centimes shown both within the “T” markings and applied separately, and an unusual “2/25” fractional handstamp of Dublin indicating a double rate letter and a 25 centime deficiency. Also handstamps used on mail from non U.P.U countries to France showing the sea postage due to Great Britain in francs and centimes.

Packet and Ship Letters - Frame 9, Page 4 - Frame 10, Page 6

Prior to the U.P.U foreign letter rates were agreed with individual countries. Some agreements allowed unpaid mail at no extra charge, others charged a fine if unpaid or only allowed prepaid mail to be sent. Underpaid mail was often treated as fully unpaid. Various packet letter charges are shown including the 1/- charge mark applied on the Allan Line steamer “Nova Scotia”, the 1/- charge incorporating the “American Mail” datestamp used at Dublin, and the 1/2½ charges used on letters sent via the U.S.A in

closed bags, the extra 2½d payable to the U.S.A for the U.S transit charge. A black “3½d” charge mark used on an outgoing letter to Sweden is effectively an accountancy mark, showing half the postage due charge, payable by Sweden to Great Britain. Ship letters (which were carried by private ships) were charged a uniform rate of 8d per ½oz from January 10th 1840, irrespective of origin, reduced to 6d by January 1858. Covers shown include a ship letter incorrectly charged 2d as an unpaid inland letter. An 1870 letter sent by private ship from Hull to Sweden was charged at the unpaid packet rate and has the unusual “Unpaid Rate/8d” charge mark applied at Hull.

**“Above Weight”/“Over oz” Handstamps - Frame 10, Page 7 -
Frame 12, Page 1**



Fig. 4. 1879 Printed pictorial envelope from Bridgwater handstamped “above 1oz” and charged 1d.



Fig. 5. 1851 Letter from Liverpool to the U.S.A handstamped “ABOVE 10Z”, underpaid by 2/-, charged the single deficiency in error.

Many types of handstamps were used on letters prepaid but found to be underpaid due to their weight (Figs. 4, 5). In 1840 Edinburgh used the unusual handstamp “above authorised weight”, and later had a scarce series of handstamps simply stating the weight in ounces. London and Liverpool used “Insufficiently Prepaid” handstamps incorporating “over ½oz” in an arc above, mainly used on transatlantic mail. Some offices had charge marks incorporating “over oz” or “Above ½oz”, including the unusual fancy “2” handstamp of Plymouth.

Postal Stationery Postcards - Frame 12, Page 2 - Frame 13, Page 4

½d Postal Stationery postcards were issued on October 1st 1870. Cards had to be of the issued size, nothing could be applied to them and they could not bear any writing or cachets on the front other than the address. If cards contravened these regulations they were deemed to be letters and charged. Regulations were strictly enforced. Cards with messages on the front were charged, but so too were cards simply with the word “important” or “immediate” or the date, whilst the Prime Minister, William Gladstone, signed his name in the lower left corner of a card in 1874, resulting in a 1d postage due charge (Fig. 6). In 1871 a postcard was used to send a valentine written in verse, the last four lines being written on the front of the card; it was deemed to be a letter but incorrectly charged 2d, the ½d stamp being ignored in error. A card from New South Wales addressed in verse was charged as a letter, as was a 1d card with ‘wattles’ printed on the front. The recipient complained to the G.P.O Dublin who explained that this New South Wales postcard was contrary to British postcard regulations despite being officially issued in New South Wales with this design printed upon it. An 1871 card with the edges trimmed was marked “cut card” and charged 1d whilst an 1890 card with the lower left corner cut off (evidently having been burnt before use) was marked “mutilated card” and charged 1d. Other cards were charged due to paper applied to the front or reverse. Private cards bearing adhesive stamps could not be sent as postcards until September 1894, although they could go as ½d printed matter if they bore no personal message; an 1875 stamped card with both the message and address on the front was correctly charged as a letter.



Fig. 6. 1874 ½d Postcard from the Prime Minister William Gladstone, signed by him in the corner. As a result it is endorsed “Contrary to regulations” and charged 1d.

Disallowed Printed Matter - Frame 13, Page 5 - Frame 14, Page 5

Book Post rates were first introduced in 1848, the rate for printed matter being reduced to ½d on October 1st 1870. Contents had to be purely printed matter and could contain virtually nothing handwritten nor deemed to be of the nature of a letter, and had to be unsealed to allow the Post Office to inspect the contents. Items contravening these regulations were charged as underpaid letters, typical

explanatory handstamps being “of the nature of a letter” and “closed against inspection”. An 1862 circular to France bears the unusual handstamp “Sealed-as/a-Letter” and was transferred to letter post (Fig. 7). Belfast used the unusual handstamp “Not According to the Act”. When undelivered printed matter was opened in the Returned Letter Office contents were often found to be letters and were charged double deficiency, various cachets being shown from London and Edinburgh Returned Letter Offices. Circulars printed in imitation typewriting had to be posted in quantities of at least 20, accompanied by a special form, otherwise they were deemed to be letters. Unpaid printed matter had to be posted by a certain time in the afternoon to qualify for the printed matter rate; if posted too late it was charged twice the letter rate. Unpaid and underpaid printed matter is shown in frame 43.



Fig. 7. 1862 Circular to France franked 1d, handstamped “SEALED-AS/A-LETTER” charged 7 decimes, equivalent to the 3d deficiency plus 4d fine.

Explanatory Handstamps - Frame 14, Page 6 - Frame 15, Page 9

Many handstamps exist to explain postage due charges. Standard types are shown such as the boxed “T” shaped marks incorporating various explanations and the office number, as well as a selection of individual types. Many types of wording are found including the strange “Charge” of Alexandria, whilst Bristol used a circular framed “CH” and Hull a boxed “P.C”. Incorrect handstamps were sometimes used in error, examples including “Posted Out of Course” and “Prohibited Enclosure” used on picture postcards. Altered handstamps are shown as are deleted marks on items deemed to be fully paid. Manuscript endorsements are shown. Finally examples of explanatory handstamps or charge marks incorrectly used to cancel postage stamps.

Redirection - Frame 15, Page 10 - Frame 18, Page 3

From 10th January 1840 redirected letters were charged with twice the deficiency, reduced to the single rate only on February 18th, the double rate redirection charge therefore lasting for just 39 days. A letter is shown posted on 9th January 1840 (the last day of Uniform 4d Post) and redirected on January 10th, the first day of Penny Postage, showing this 2d redirection charge. Every time an item was redirected it was charged, the total due thus increasing with each redirection. Items are shown with multiple redirections and charges, also ½d charges on printed matter and postcards, and higher charges on letters franked 1½d, 2d or 4d. Errors include items charged despite not being redirected or charged double rate. Also shown are letters from overseas redirected within G.B, redirected registered mail, and unpaid

mail charged 2d increased to 3d upon redirection (the only use of the 3d charge mark on inland mail prior to 1870). Mail could be redirected within the same postal district or town free of charge, an "R" handstamp being used to indicate this within London; errors did occur and some charge marks were applied and erased. Explanatory handstamps shown include "Charged For Redirection" or "For Redirection" (Fig. 8), "Postage to London Not Paid" (and similar for Edinburgh and Dublin), and "First Postage Not Paid", an unusual example appearing on a letter from Chile to Boston, U.S.A missent to Boston in Lincolnshire. Redirection charges were abolished for inland letters at the end of May 1892 and for printed matter and postcards at the end of 1894. However mail still had to be redirected within 24 hours or it was charged at the single rate; examples shown have the handstamps "Reposted more than one clear day after delivery" or "Out-of-Date Redirection". Items shown redirected to another person or with a message added upon redirection were charged, usually with double the deficiency. Mail posted within one country then redirected to another country was charged with the single deficiency between the inland and overseas postal rates. When postage due stamps were used a fresh stamp was needed each time an item was redirected. Examples are shown of underpaid mail with two or three G.B postage due stamps, applied at each address to collect the same charge; also underpaid letters redirected from one European country to another before being returned to G.B with postage due stamps applied in all three countries.



Fig. 8. 1875 Cover from Germany charged 1d for redirection within London.

Charge Marks - Frame 18, Page 4 - Frame 19, Page 10

Postage due charge marks exist in many types and values. Unusual values exist during the 1875-79 G.P.U period when underpaid mail from abroad was charged with twice the postage rate less the postage paid, as well as from countries such as India where exchange rates often led to odd value deficiencies in sterling. Some charge marks continued in use for a considerable time, an 8d charge mark shown used at Littlehampton in 1965 being recorded in use in Brighton in 1881. Standard type charge marks were issued to most G.B offices with proof impressions shown of the charge marks issued to the London Inland Section and Foreign Branch in 1887. These Foreign Branch charge marks were sometimes used as accountancy marks on outgoing mail to non U.P.U countries, as well as being used on mail to British forces or naval ships or British Post Offices abroad. Most offices were issued with charge marks having the post office number below, examples shown from the British Post Office in Constantinople with number "K66". Finally a few examples are shown of some locally made charge marks, of which many types exist.

Altered and Cancelled Charges - Frame 19, Page 11 - Frame 20, Page 2

Incorrect value charges were sometimes applied and then altered, an extraordinary cover from Holland showing four attempts to get the correct charge. Charge marks were often applied in error and obliterated, the "A01" numeral of the London Foreign Branch often being used for this purpose. A 1904 card was shown posted from St. Lucia during a shortage of stamps, a rather poor strike of the "Paid at St. Lucia" crowned circle being applied; a 2d charge mark was applied then obliterated when the Paid handstamp was noticed.

Errors in Charges - Frame 20, Pages 3-12

Postage due charges were sometimes incorrectly calculated, three pairs of identically franked cards being shown where different charges were raised. Other items show cards from abroad incorrectly charged as inland mail, cards charged the single deficiency only and foreign currency charge marks mistaken for British charges. Finally examples are shown of mail with correct charge marks but where postage due stamps have been applied for an incorrect amount, with examples of both too much and too little being collected from the addressee. Incorrect charges are surprisingly common; some are so obvious it is hard to see how the Post Office could have made such errors.

Travelling Post Offices - Frame 21, Pages 1-12



Fig. 9. 1894 ½d Postcard posted on the South Wales Sorting Carriage Night Up, handstamped "Posted without late fee" with unusual "1d/Late Fee" charge mark.

From October 1882 all letters and cards posted into T.P.O post boxes required an extra late fee payment of ½d, increased to 1d on 1st July 1969, ½p upon decimalisation in February 1971 and 1p from 24th June 1976; this fee was abolished on 27th September 1976. Mail without this late fee was initially delayed until the arrival of the normal mails, but from August 1891 such items were charged with twice the late fee. Various "Posted without Late Fee" handstamps and endorsements are shown. An 1894 card shows an unusual "1d/Late Fee" charge mark used on the South Wales T.P.O; this is not recorded in use again until 1931 (Fig. 9). Several T.P.Os were issued with their own Post Office numbers, and used charge marks with these numbers below. The Plymouth and Bristol T.P.O used charge marks with the number "B16"; these are often found on foreign mails landed at Plymouth, mainly from the West Indies, Southern or West Africa. An unusual campaign cover from Northern Nigeria received the 2d B16 charge mark, and was later officially sealed on the Greenock & Ardrishaig Packet Steamer "Grenadier". "T" handstamps were used on some T.P.Os, on mail to or from abroad. The London & Holyhead T.P.O, which was not issued with a Post Office number, used two differing handstamps with

“T” above “L&H”. The Bridlington Sorting Carriage was staffed from Bridlington and used postage due stamps on mail addressed to the town, the only British T.P.O to use due stamps.

Maritime Mail - Frame 22, Pages 1 - 11

Exempt ship letters or consignees’ letters accompanied goods on a ship; they were exempt from sea postage but were charged inland postage. They were initially charged twice the deficiency, but this was later reduced to the single rate postage only. Packet letters are shown including the Jersey 8d charge mark for the special reduced packet rate direct from St. Malo to Jersey. Paquebot mail was supposed to be paid by stamps of the country of registration of the vessel, at the overseas rate. Examples are shown of incorrect charges, and also of single rate charges where no stamps were available at sea.

The Holyhead and Kingstown Packet was treated as a T.P.O, mail posted on board requiring an extra ½d late fee. “Posted Without Late Fee” handstamps and endorsements are shown. Mobile Boxes operated between France and ports in England and the Channel Islands, mail posted in the boxes requiring payment at the overseas rate in G.B or French stamps. Unpaid and underpaid cards are shown, one unpaid card incorrectly charged at the inland rate. Sea Post Offices to England were operated by various foreign postal authorities including the U.S.A, Cape Colony, Belgium, Netherlands and Norway; British stamps were invalid on these services although they can occasionally be found accepted as valid in error. From 1905-14 a Sea Post Office to the U.S.A was operated by the British on certain ships and the Americans on others, the Americans however issuing all ships with postage due handstamps. These read “U.S Sea P.O” or simply “S P O” and contain a “T”. In 1913-14 the U.K and South Africa Sea Post Office, jointly operated by the British and South Africans, used an unusual octagonal framed “T” handstamp on postage due mail with “U.K-S.A/Sea Post” below (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10. 1914 Postcard posted on the R.M.S “Balmoral Castle” with G.B ½d cancelled by “United Kingdom and S. Africa Sea P.O” c.d.s with “T/U.K-S.A/Sea Post” postage due handstamp.

Unusual Reasons for Postage Due Charges - Frame 22, Page 12 - Frame 25, Page 10

Mail was often deemed to be underpaid and surcharged because it broke Post Office regulations. This often involved items posted at the reduced rates for postcards or printed matter being deemed to be letters. Many of the reasons for items being disallowed at these cheaper rates were quite unusual, and

often show how petty minded the Post Office could be. Postcards could not be sent abroad prior to the formation of the G.P.U; a U.S 1c card incorrectly sent to England in 1874 was treated as an underpaid letter. U.P.U regulations stated that postcards had to be headed as such; Southampton used the cachet "Word Postcard Omitted" to explain why incoming cards were charged as letters. Extraordinary items were sometimes posted, such as an individual ½d stamp, posted in 1900 at Sydenham, addressed on the reverse to Beckenham; it was endorsed "contrary to regulations" and a 1d charge mark applied (see illustration on front cover). A cut-out Post box was sent in 1899 franked ½d, but was endorsed "Too large" and charged 1d, whilst a third class railway ticket which was posted two days after its use, from Sheffield to Huddersfield franked ½d, was endorsed "Below the Regulation Size" and charged 1d (see illustrations on back cover). All these items were probably sent by the eccentric Mr Reginald Bray, and were below or above the sizes permitted for the ½d postcard rate. These size regulations were strictly enforced with cards just 1mm too large being charged; examples of handstamps used on oversize cards are shown. Odd size and shape cards could be sent at the ½d Book Post or Packet Post rate if headed as such and provided they bore no message, cards with messages being treated as letters. Examples shown include novelty mailing cards shaped as fish or a bathing machine, some of which have address tags attached. In 1890 the Post Office issued a postal stationery cover with an insert card for the Penny Postage Jubilee. If these insert cards were posted they had to be franked 1d; unpaid and underpaid examples are shown. Postcards without any message could be sent to or from abroad as printed matter, but only if headed as such.

Picture postcards and private postcards bearing adhesive ½d stamps were not permitted until September 1894. The message could only be on the picture side until 1902; however the U.P.U did not adopt this practice until 1906 with cards to or from certain countries being treated as letters until then if they bore a message on the address side. Cards were charged as letters if the address and message were written on the wrong halves of the card, if any part of the message went onto the address half or if the address was written on the picture side. Picture postcards could not exceed a specified thickness, be made of anything other than standard card, or have anything inserted in or attached to the card. Any contravention of these rules, even the addition of 'glitter' to the card, was enough to make them liable to letter rate. Leather and wooden cards were charged, as was a card franked ½d but also bearing a charity label sold in aid of the Stockport Sunday School at their 1905 Centenary bazaar. A letter written on the reverse of a magazine cutting and a parcel tag with printed Christmas greetings on the reverse were rather optimistically sent as printed matter. Three postcards reposted to the original addressees between 30 and 41 years later were charged as unpaid, one having the original ½d stamp used 31 years earlier incorrectly accepted as part payment. The rules on whether stamps were valid if applied to the reverse of cards altered several times, examples being shown of charges applied but then obliterated when the stamps were noticed, others with the stamps noticed but still charged as they contravened regulations.

If stamps fell off in the post, even after cancellation, this was deemed to be the senders fault and mail was charged as unpaid, although such mail was sometimes delivered without charge or had the charge cancelled. Two such covers were charged 2d but the missing 1d red stamps were then found in the Post Office and reapplied, the charges being cancelled. An unusual card apparently posted in Scotland franked ½d was deemed liable to the overseas rate and charged 1d, explained by the endorsement "Posted at Toronto under cover to the Postmaster of Edinburgh", whilst a hand carried cover from U.S.A to Ireland was seized by the Liverpool Customs and charged as an overseas letter. A 1940 cover from New Zealand was found to contain a letter intended for onward despatch, which was charged twice the overseas rate. An 1897 cover from Madagascar endorsed as having the postage paid in cash due to a shortage of stamps was misunderstood in London and charged as unpaid. Postage due stamps were used in 1921 to collect a 1d late fee.

Air Mails - Frame 25, Page 11 - Frame 26, Page 3

Prior to 1928 there were no U.P.U rules governing air mail rates, which were established by individual treaties between countries. Rates consisted of postage plus an air surcharge; underpaid mail was

usually diverted to surface mail. In 1928 new U.P.U rules stated air mail correspondence paid at least the air surcharge was to be sent by air mail and taxed at air mail rates, with mail paid less than the air surcharge diverted to surface routes. However, the British Post Office agreed to forward underpaid air mail by air routes to certain countries as early as 1931 as long as the prepayment exceeded the surface rate, a practice authorised by the U.P.U in 1935 when they gave countries the option of forwarding mail by air when as little as one quarter of the air surcharge was paid.

In 1931 the British Post Office introduced inclusive air rates and abolished separate air surcharges. From 1936 all mail to certain destinations was sent by air; the all-up empire service introduced between 1937 and 1938 extended the use of air for all letters to empire countries on the air routes to South Africa, India and Australia, at just 1½d per ½oz. This scheme ended with the outbreak of World War Two. A whole display could be made of underpaid air mail, and several air mail covers are shown within this display. These few pages show underpaid mail transferred to surface mail, one cover to the U.S.A intended for internal U.S.A air mail only but misunderstood by the British Post Office, whilst other covers were underpaid for specific air services including the catapult service from the S.S “Isle de France”.

At Christmas 1937 several countries agreed to waive charges on underpaid letters sent by the empire air scheme; the explanatory label used by the British Post Office is shown. Reduced fees existed for aerogrammes, which had to be approved by the Postmaster General and could not contain any enclosure, items contravening these regulations being charged as underpaid letters.

Diplomatic Mail - Frame 26, Pages 4-7



Fig. 11. 1937 Unpaid cover from the Scottish Ambulance Unit in Spain, carried by diplomatic bag from Madrid and posted in London charged the single deficiency of 1½d.

Mail from British consulates and embassies abroad was often sent by diplomatic bag to London where it was put into the post. Some mail was franked by British stamps, sometimes at the internal G.B rate, other times at the empire or foreign rate, whilst some mail was posted unpaid. The British Post Office had no fixed rules on the treatment of such mail and sometimes deemed it liable to internal rates, at other times to the empire or foreign rate, whilst surcharging some items with twice the deficiency and others with the single rate deficiency only. A 1917 cover from the consulate at Odessa was paid 1d; deemed to be underpaid by 1½d it was only charged the single rate deficiency. An unpaid 1919 cover from Danzig was treated as an inland letter and charged 3d. In 1937 citizens of the City of Glasgow raised funds for a volunteer ambulance unit to be sent to Madrid to help the wounded on the Republican side during the Spanish Civil War. Mail from this Scottish Ambulance Unit was sent through the diplomatic bag from Madrid and posted unpaid in London; two covers shown were both assessed at the 1½d inland rate, one being charged twice the deficiency, the other only charged the single rate deficiency of 1½d (Fig. 11).

Official Mail - Frame 26, Page 8 - Frame 27, Page 4



Fig. 12. 1962 Cover from the Duke of Edinburgh incorrectly posted at Taunton, treated as unpaid and charged 5d.

Certain Government departments and individuals were entitled to post mail without stamps within Great Britain and to most empire countries, such items receiving an Official Paid marking. Official mail had to bear a recognised authorising handstamp and/or signature (copies of which were kept by the Post Office) and had to be posted at designated Post Offices accompanied by a form certifying it to be official mail and detailing the weight and number of letters and department of origin. Designated offices had to be located in one of the metropolitan centres of London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Cardiff (from 1912) or Belfast (from 1922), although Post Offices anywhere in the country could send unstamped mail on Post Office business. Charged mail is shown, either incorrectly posted or posted without an authorisation handstamp. A 1962 cover from the Duke of Edinburgh is shown incorrectly posted at Taunton (Fig. 12), whilst other incorrectly posted items were handstamped "Posted out of Course". Two covers posted without authorisation handstamps have the London S.W handstamp "Not

Certified as Official”, whilst a 1924 cover from the Prime Minister was charged as unpaid. Post Offices could also send unstamped mail abroad, to other Post Offices or postal administrations, but not to individuals; a cover from the British Post Office in Tangier is shown charged as unpaid. Records of the weight of the letters sent by each department were kept and postage was charged annually, although this was simply a case of Government accounting since the Post Office itself was a Government department. Similar records and accounts were kept for postage due mail addressed to Government departments, based on the overall weight of charged mail, individual postage due charges being cancelled. The “Postage/Accounted-For” handstamp was used on such letters. Charges obliterated and replaced by Official Paid datestamps are shown on an 1868 unpaid cover to the Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli at 10 Downing Street (Fig. 13), and on an 1899 postcard from India to Queen Victoria. Since 1980 individual Government departments have had to pay postage on both outgoing mail and incoming postage due mail, which is often refused as a result.



Fig. 13. 1868 Unpaid cover from Doncaster to the Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli at 10 Downing Street, the “2” charge mark crossed out and a red “Official Paid” c.d.s applied.

“Charged for Error” Notices - Frame 27, Page 5 - Frame 28, Page 2

Postmasters or postal employees were supposed to check that postage was correct on certain types of mail handed over the Post Office counter, including registered post, parcels and mail paid in cash. If they incorrectly accepted such items underpaid they would be liable for the deficiency. Various “Charged for Error” notices are shown sent to Postmasters or letter carriers between 1840 and 1855 to recover deficient postage, mostly on letters addressed abroad paid in cash but underpaid in error. Three of these were sent to the infamous Postmaster at Bonaw, who was later dismissed; another is to the Postmaster at East Yell in the Shetland Islands who had only charged 1/- instead of 1/6 on a registered letter to Victoria (Fig 14). A 1936 form was used to collect 3d from the Postmaster at Bulford who had accepted a registered Business Reply envelope without the registration fee being paid in stamps, whilst a 1949 form collects the 2/9 underpayment on a parcel from Hendon to Israel. Underpaid registered letters simply had the deficiency noted upon them, the deficiency being collected from the office that incorrectly accepted them.

Business Reply Envelopes/Freepost - Frame 28, Pages 3-6

The Business Reply service was established on 18th April 1932. It allows businesses to receive replies in specially printed envelopes or cards, whilst the more recent Freepost system allows any mail to be sent unstamped to ‘Freepost’ addresses. Both systems require the purchase of an annual licence whilst licence holders were charged postage on all letters plus a fee per letter (initially set at ½d per item). This fee was not collected using the postage due system, postage due stamps only being affixed to individual items where they contravened the regulations and were charged as unpaid letters. Examples include envelopes re-addressed to other destinations, items where a holder’s licence has expired, and an

unusual envelope posted on a T.P.O with the late fee unpaid. Business Reply and Freepost mail cannot be posted abroad; four examples of cards to the Institute of Oceanography put into bottles placed in the North Sea to test ocean currents and possible oil pollution were all washed up in and posted from Norway, and all show different charges. Some are charged single or double postcard rate, another is charged the single printed matter rate of 1½d, whilst one card is strangely charged 4½d. A Business Reply envelope produced by Plaid Cymru, printed in English and Welsh, contravened regulations on how these envelopes were to be printed, and was treated as an unpaid letter.



Fig. 14. 1855 "Charge for Error" notice sent from Liverpool to the Postmaster at East Yell to collect 6d deficient postage for a registered letter to Victoria accepted underpaid.

Post Office Letters - Frame 28, Pages 7-11

Recipients of postage due mail sometimes sent letters of complaint or enquiry regarding the items to the Post Office. These pages show a few response letters from the Post Office. A 1970 recipient of a letter from the Guernsey Philatelic Bureau was charged 8d despite the letter having a printed "Postage Paid" device; his 8d was correctly refunded. A 1919 recipient of an unpaid letter from a French soldier in Germany charged 5d was lucky to have this charge refunded since the original sender was never on active service with the British forces.

Unusual Postage Due Items - Frame 28, Page 12 - Frame 29, Page 7

Interesting postage due items do not always fit into any other obvious section of the collection. Items shown include a cover sent as a railway letter in 1891, the first year of the railway letter service, also franked 1d postage but over 1oz so charged 1d; letters sent as parcels on the Cardiff City Tramways then redirected unpaid by post (Fig. 15); covers charged due to the non payment of War Tax in Canada or the Gold Coast; mail posted unpaid due to flooding or earthquakes; dockets used to collect charges

and a receipt given for a postage due charge; charge marks used to revalue reply coupons; and a Post Office letter refunding a postage due charge.



Fig. 15. 1914 Cover posted as a parcel on the Cardiff City Tramways, redirected by post, charged 2d.

“Refused” Handstamps - Frame 29, Page 8

Recipients may refuse to accept mail for any reason; however the most usual reason was a postage due charge. “Refused” handstamps are therefore usually found on unpaid or underpaid mail. Two examples are shown, including the crowned dated type of 1848. Refused items were sent to the Dead Letter Office and then, if possible, returned to the original writer who would have to pay any postage due charges for having originally posted them unpaid or underpaid.

Returned Printed Matter - Frame 29, Pages 9-12

From 1895 undelivered printed matter (under 2oz), newspapers and postcards were returned to the sender if they bore a return address, for which they were charged postage at the single rate only; this was ½d per item until the end of April 1940. This rule applied irrespective of the reason for non delivery. Wartime items are shown where the service was suspended or the recipient had died on active service. Often many circulars were returned to companies on the same occasion, the total charge being shown on the top letter in the bundle. A 1962 cover bears postage due stamps to the value of £2-9-7, representing 238 returned covers each charged 2½d. A 1904 picture postcard was returned as it was posted without an address, whilst a 1911 London to Windsor Aerial Post card with an advert for “The Financial Outlook” was returned unknown. This fee ended on 15th September 1968 when printed paper rates ceased owing to the introduction of separate first and second class letter rates the following day.

Pitcairn Island and Tristan da Cunha - Frame 30, Pages 1-6

For many years prepayment of mail from Pitcairn Island and Tristan da Cunha was theoretically impossible, the islands having no stamps or money. The British Post Office therefore agreed to surcharge mail from these two small empire countries at the single inland rate only provided they bore a cachet of origin, applied by the islands’ clergyman. Cachets were used at Tristan da Cunha from 1908 until 1951 and from Pitcairn Island from 1921 until 1927 (Fig. 16). Covers are shown charged 1d in 1919 and 1½d from 1922 to 1938, with two items showing 1½d charges but bearing postage due stamps

to the value of 1d or 3d. A cover weighing over 1oz was charged 2½d. Errors did occur and covers are shown charged the double rate of 3d or a rather inexplicable charge of 4½d. A 1922 cover bears the datestamp of the Shackleton-Rowett Antarctic Expedition, which stopped at Tristan da Cunha shortly after the death of Ernest Shackleton.



Fig. 16. 1924 Unpaid cover handstamped “Posted at PITCAIRN ISLAND/No Stamps Available”, charged the single 1½d rate.

Invalid Stamps - Frame 30, Page 7 - Frame 33, Page 4

Stamps were disallowed for various reasons, leading to mail being surcharged. Stamps of one country applied in another country were obviously invalid. In 1875 the G.P.U decreed such stamps were to be marked with an “O” alongside them; this was occasionally shown with a handstamp, but was also often ignored. From 1879 the U.P.U allowed countries to deduct the value of their own stamps from the final charge on incoming mail from abroad, though this was not always done, often leading to incorrect charges. One consequence of this was that mail posted abroad with G.B stamps would not be charged upon delivery as long as the stamps totalled twice the postage rate.



Fig. 17. 1883 Visiting card sent within London at the ½d printed matter rate franked by a bisected 1d lilac, the stamp disallowed and charged 2d as an unpaid letter.

Foreign stamps are shown used in G.B or in other countries abroad. Sometimes stamps were incorrectly accepted in the office of posting; two pairs of cards are shown with the same stamps posted at the same time from the same office, with one accepted as valid and the other deemed invalid.

Previously used stamps are known reused and disallowed from just a few days after the issue of the 1d black in May 1840. Three 1842-59 examples bearing 1d reds are shown. Partial stamps were disallowed as is a KEVII ½d stamp with the King's head outlined in ink, which was endorsed "stamp defaced, unpaid" and charged 1d. Bisects were disallowed, two examples from 1938 and 1941 both with the explanatory endorsement "½d machine empty". As a result the first was only charged the single ½d deficiency whilst the other was charged 1d. A visiting card was posted in 1883 with a bisected 1d lilac (Fig. 17). Queen Victoria line engraved stamps and all pre-1881 issues were demonetised in 1901; other QV issues (including the 1887 issue and 1d lilac) were valid until the end of June 1915. Edward VII issues were valid until the end of March 1930 and other pre-decimal issues until February 29th 1972. Various cachets were used to explain why pre-decimal stamps were invalid after this date.

Rhodesia unilaterally declared its independence in 1965 but the British Government refused to recognise this and deemed all stamps inscribed "Rhodesia" to be invalid until 1970. Great Britain and the Channel Islands issued labels to explain these charges.

Stamps issued for private postal services were invalid as were stamps from non-U.P.U member countries unless the British Post Office had an agreement with the issuing country accepting their stamps. Indian native stamps were never valid outside the state of issue, and Hyderabad stamps were correctly disallowed on a 1910 cover to London.

Stamps were sometimes disallowed in error, simply because postal officials did not recognise them. Examples shown include the 1925 British Empire Exhibition issue disallowed at Fulham in 1926, and the 1929 U.P.U Congress issue disallowed at Sunderland in 1933. More recently 'Frama' stamps have been seen disallowed, whilst decimal stamps issued in the 'Wilding' design have been mistaken for predecimal issues. Revenue stamps were disallowed for postage, with the sole exception of stamps inscribed "Inland Revenue" or "Draft" which were valid for postage from June 1881. Telegraph stamps were accepted for postage, an example shown charged as unpaid with the charge then cancelled.

Special purpose stamps were disallowed if used for other purposes. Examples include Egypt Army Post stamps used from civilian offices, Official stamps used on private correspondence and Air Post stamps used on surface mail. Commemorative stamps and stationery and charity stamps were disallowed by the U.P.U on international mail until 1921. Swiss charity stamps were only valid in the year of issue.

Postal Stationery cut-outs were disallowed from 1841 until June 1845 and again from October 1870 until 1904. A cover posted on December 31st 1904 had cut-outs correctly disallowed, but the charge was cancelled two days later, by which time they were now valid. A Mulready envelope used in 1886, forty six years after its issue date, was disallowed in error. The charge was cancelled and refunded after the addressee, the stamp dealer J.W. Palmer, complained to the London W.C Postmaster. Postal stationery envelopes with albino stamps were charged in error.

Reply cards were authorised by the U.P.U from 1879 and issued by G.B from 1883, and could be uprated by stamps of the country of issue of the card. The system was sometimes misunderstood and reply cards disallowed in error. Imitation cards and envelopes may be found, examples shown comprising an 1871 advertising card imitating the 1870 ½d postcard but showing R. Tichbourne in the 'stamp' (Fig. 18), and a used example of the Elliot Uniform Penny Postage Jubilee caricature envelope of 1890. Labels with no postal validity are sometimes used on mail; examples shown include charity labels and a St. Andrews Cross label from a stamp booklet. Meter marks were deemed to be unpaid if incorrectly applied so the postage rate was not shown. Postal forgeries of Machin definitives have appeared in recent years, and are disallowed if detected, the label or cachet "Fraudulent Stamps" occasionally being used.



Fig. 18. 1871 Advertising card, imitating the ½d Post Office issue postcard but showing R. Tichbourne in the 'stamp', posted within London, charged 1d.

Postage Due Stamps - Frame 33, Page 5 - Frame 35, Page 11



Fig. 19. 1914 Unpaid cover from Belgium with 5d postage due stamp applied at London on 20th April, the first day of issue.

Great Britain was relatively late in issuing postage due stamps, ½d, 1d, 2d and 5d stamps being issued on 20th April 1914. From this date no postage due charge could be collected unless postage due stamps were affixed. Additional values were issued at later dates, the 1/- in 1915, 3d in 1918, 4d in 1920, 1½d in 1922 and 2/6 in 1924. The 1½d value was issued because of the U.P.U rule imposing a minimum charge of 1½d on underpaid mail from abroad; when this rule ceased in 1925 Post Offices used up their stocks of 1½d postage dues which are then found in combination with various other value due stamps to collect higher charges. The colours of postage due stamps were changed in 1951 (the 1½d being reissued in green, due to the increase in the printed matter rate to 1½d) and additional 5/-, 10/- and £1 values issued in 1955-63, but otherwise the stamps remained identical in design until replaced by decimal dues in 1970-71. Further sets in new designs were issued in 1982 and 1994.

A Post Office notice is shown announcing the issue of the first postage due stamps, together with colour trials and specimens of the stamps, and first day usages of the four values on 20th April 1914. These include the 5d value, rarely found as it was a difficult value for philatelists to get used on the first day as virtually the only use of this stamp was on unpaid letters from abroad (Fig. 19). First day uses of the 1971 and 1982 issues are also shown. The 1971 decimal dues were issued during the Post Office strike; proper first day uses therefore only occur from offices that continued to work during the strike. Combinations of differing postage due issues include pre-decimal and decimal dues used together, the 10p, 20p, 50p and £1 values being issued in June 1970, over eight months before the other decimal values. A cover of 28th January 2000 shows the final day of use of postage due stamps by the British Post Office.



Fig. 20. 1977 Cover posted within Exeter charged 6p, collected by a bisected 2p and 5p postage dues.

Post Offices sometimes ran out of postage due stamps and resorted to bisecting dues, one trisect also being recorded. The earliest and latest recorded bisects are shown, the latter being one of the very few recorded decimal issue postage due bisects (Fig. 20). Postage stamps were also sometimes used in lieu of postage dues, occasionally being endorsed "Postage Due" or "Surcharge". Definitive stamps were usually used but a few commemoratives are known, including the 1940 Stamp Centenary 1d used in Guernsey in July (after the German Occupation) to collect the charge on returned printed matter. An unusual card shows a 1d postage due stamp with the value altered to 2d in manuscript. Various unusual cancellations occur on postage due stamps including mailbag seals. Southern Ireland issued its own postage stamps in 1922 but did not issue postage dues until February 1925, continuing to use British postage due stamps in the intervening three years. British dues then continued in use until stocks were exhausted, a few covers known with British and Irish dues used in combination. Two such combination covers were shown, one showing the single rate 1½d charge from Tristan da Cunha (Fig. 21). Finally examples of cancelled postage due stamps and dues used in the Post Office training schools are shown.

Postage Stamps Applied in Transit - Frame 35, Page 12

Occasionally Post Office employees added stamps in transit to cover a deficiency in postage. This occurred when the sender was known, the Post Office presumably having an arrangement whereby they would recover their postage from the sender. Four examples are shown.



Fig. 21. 1925 Unpaid cover from Tristan da Cunha to Ireland sent via Melbourne, charged the single 1½d rate, collected by Irish 1d and British ½d postage due stamps.

Dead/Returned Letter Office - Frame 36, Page 1 - Frame 37, Page 8

Undelivered mail was dealt with by the Dead Letter Office (renamed the Returned Letter Office in 1867). Until 1872 there were Dead Letter Offices in London, Edinburgh and Dublin; others were then opened until there were some 64 offices throughout Britain. In 1992 these closed and were replaced by a single office in Belfast. Various lettersheets and envelopes were used to return undelivered mail, some of which were specifically for postage due mail. In 1847 an Act was passed making it compulsory for senders of refused charged letters to pay the charge upon their return; envelopes and lettersheets were then used with the printed warning that the addressee was liable to the postage shown, with a reference to this specific Act. Edinburgh used such a lettersheet in 1849-50 with a printed 2d charge shown. Later envelopes specified the type of returned matter, some referring specifically to returned unpaid, underpaid or charged letters or packets. In 1876 Edinburgh used a returned unpaid letter envelope with a 1d charge printed upon it. Most Returned Letter Offices used special envelopes with a printed 2d charge for compulsory registered letters, or a ½d charge for printed matter which was charged at the single rate for returning to the sender. These envelopes either had a printed explanation of the charge on the reverse, or had an explanatory label applied.

Undelivered items found to contain valuables were compulsory registered back to the sender. If the special printed envelopes were not used for this purpose a charge mark would be applied, either "Fee/4d" (Fig. 22), or "Regn. Fee/2d" used after the registration fee was decreased on 1st January 1878. These charges later rose as the registration fees increased. Undelivered printed matter was often found to contain letters when opened, and charged accordingly, with various explanatory handstamps used in the Returned Letter Offices (see frame 13, page 11). Various charge marks were used by the Returned Letter Offices, London being issued with a series of differing charges with "RLO" below in 1903; in 1914 these were replaced by charges with "RLS" below. Some Dead Letter Office lettersheets were specifically used for returning underpaid mail addressed to countries to which prepayment was compulsory. Special docketts were used for returned or redirected parcels, stamps being collected from the sender to pay for the new delivery and affixed to the docket.



Fig. 22. 1872 Returned Letter Office envelope used to return a compulsory registered letter charged 4d, with "Fee 4d" charge mark

Detained and Returned Letters - Frame 37, Page 9 - Frame 39, Page 2



Fig. 23. 1876 Cover from Ashford to Madagascar franked 1d, returned for 11½d deficient postage. Reposted in London franked 1/-, backstamped at Mauritius.

Prior to the formation of the G.P.U only fully prepaid letters could be sent to most foreign countries, exceptions being France and most British Colonies in the West Indies and North America. Unpaid and underpaid letters to such countries were returned to the sender where possible; otherwise they were detained in London and a printed notice sent to the addressee asking him to arrange for payment of the deficient postage. Underpaid mail in transit through Britain was detained in the same way. Various printed notices were used in London by the Foreign Post Office, Inland Post Office or the Returned Letter Office; they ceased to be used as countries joined the U.P.U. An 1860 notice is shown together

with the unpaid letter addressed to Malta to which it refers, one of the few known matched pairs of detained letters and Post Office notices.

Returned letters are shown to forces in the Crimea or the Black Sea Fleet, also to Nepal, Madagascar (Fig 23), the Philippines, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay. Some were reposted with stamps added, others were not. An 1842 letter redirected to a soldier in India franked 1d has the cachet "Rank/Not Stated" to explain why it did not qualify for the soldier's concession rate. An 1867 wrapper sent by registered Book Post from London to Brighton franked 11d became unpaid by an extraordinary £3-4-8 when redirected to France, and was returned to the sender as the registration fee on mail to abroad had to be prepaid. Marked "over 24oz" it became liable to letter postage of 4d per ¼oz, doubled for registration (8d x 97). Unpaid printed matter could not be sent abroad, and was returned to the sender. So too was printed matter addressed abroad paid by meter marks or in cash with a Paid handstamp applied, or by postal stationery stamps; U.P.U regulations stated postage had to be paid in adhesive stamps.

Registration - Frame 39, Page 3 - Frame 40, Page 6

Registration was introduced for inland mail on 6th January 1841. Mail had to be handed over the counter so the postage could be checked; from November 1856 mail paid for registration but incorrectly 'posted out of course' was fined. Also from 1856 the Post Office began to compulsory register letters marked with the words "Registered", extending this policy to letters containing coins in 1862, watches and jewellery in 1873 and postal orders without a payees name, uncrossed cheques and dividend warrants, banknotes or mint stamps exceeding 1/- in value in 1897. Compulsory registered letters were fined 1/-, reduced to 8d in 1863, the double registration fee in 1897 (the single registration fee if containing stamps, notes, cheques or postal orders only), reducing to the single registration fee in 1948. Prior to 1948 posted out of course letters had the prepaid registration fee deducted from these fines, resulting in half a dozen changes to the fine on such letters between 1856 and 1921.

Various types of explanatory 'caution' label have been used on compulsory registered letters since 1862. London also used special boxed datestamps reading "Registered.C" whilst Edinburgh and Glasgow had datestamps inscribed with the word "Coin". Posted out of course mail is shown with the postage underpaid, so charged twice the deficiency plus the fine. A 1915 cover posted out of course in Ireland was incorrectly charged 4d; the registration fee should have been deducted from this amount to give a fine of 2d. An unusual 1856 registered letter was accepted underpaid due to its weight and charged twice the 1d deficiency. An 1857 incoming letter from Victoria had registration prepaid in stamps to Britain, the addressee being charged a further 6d for registration within England.

Recorded Delivery - Frame 40, Page 7

The Recorded Delivery service was introduced on 1st February 1961. Only the single deficiency was charged if the recorded delivery fee was underpaid. If the postage was also underpaid twice the deficient postage was charged.

Express Delivery - Frame 40, Page 8 - Frame 41, Page 6

Express delivery was introduced in London on 25th March 1891 and extended to all of Britain in August that year. Registration and express services both ceased in June 1993 when the 'Guaranteed Delivery' service was introduced. Letters were charged postage plus an express fee; until July 1936 this fee was for delivery per mile. Express fees were often placed on separate forms, as were postage due charges. Mail paid less than half the express fee was often diverted to ordinary postage. Underpaid postage was charged with twice the deficiency, but only the single deficiency was charged on any underpayment of the actual express fee. Confusion and errors did occur when calculating charges on mail with both the express fee and postage underpaid. Items are shown charged for deficient postage or express fees or with mileage fees when delivered by express messenger over one mile in distance. Several express letters are shown also carried over part of their journey as railway letters and bearing 2d

railway letter stamps. One was charged 2d because the express messenger had to wait more than ten minutes at Waterloo Station.

Telegrams - Frame 41, Pages 7-10

The Post Office ran internal telegram services from July 1869 until they ceased on 1st October 1982. Prior to 1869 they were operated by private companies, a Magnetic Telegraph Co. message delivered by post being charged 2d. Telegrams are shown charged for underpayment, redirection or portage beyond the free delivery area. This was initially set at one mile, telegrams being charged 6d per mile, up to three miles, beyond this area, and 1/- per mile for further distances. In 1910 the free delivery area was extended to three miles, telegrams charged 3d per mile beyond this area, increased in 1922 to 6d per mile. Dublin unusually applied charge marks for this service to both the telegram form and envelope. An unusual telegram to the House of Commons was charged single rate postage when redirected by post, and bears the scarce "H.C.S.W" charge mark (Fig. 24). A French telegram delivered by post is also strangely charged with single rate postage only.



Fig. 24. 1897 Telegram envelope redirected by post from the House of Commons charged the single 1d rate, with "H.C.S.W./1d" charge mark applied at the House of Commons Post Office.

Sample Post - Frame 41, Page 11 - Frame 42, Page 3

Reduced inland rates for samples existed from November 1915 until June 1918 and again from 1932 to 1968, a special rate for samples to and from abroad existing until 1971. A 1918 address tag was charged as a letter because the attached packet was closed against inspection, whilst a 1932 packet from Greece contained 12 handkerchiefs of saleable value, deemed not to be a bona-fide sample. Sample rate items addressed abroad but deemed not to be samples were detained and a letter requesting the deficient postage sent to the addressee. An example is shown, the packet in question containing old postage stamps. Two examples are shown of sample rates addressed abroad which contravened the regulations by being closed against inspection. One was detained whilst the 4d deficiency was obtained from the addressee; the other was forwarded without surcharge as a special concession by the Post Office. Since the Post Office had received 7/- postage on this item and any further surcharge would have been kept by the recipient country, Argentina, perhaps this was not such a generous concession.

Commercial Papers - Frame 42, Pages 4-5

Special rates for commercial papers sent to or from abroad existed until 1966. Underpaid commercial paper rate covers sent to Ethiopia and Northern Rhodesia are shown with cachets explaining the rate. A 1928 registered packet from Germany contained foreign stamps and so was deemed inadmissible at the commercial papers rate and charged as an underpaid letter.

Notices of Objection - Frame 42, Page 6

From 1843 eligible voters had to register their names annually, whilst one could also object to people being named on the electoral roll. When objecting to an individual voter three forms were obtained from the Post Office, one being sent by post to the individual being objected to, franked 3d, of which 2d was for special registration. An example is shown only paid 1d, charged the 2d deficiency; another example paid 2½d was charged twice the deficiency. Notice rates were later reduced, before this system of objecting to voting rights was finally abolished in 1918.

Jury Summons - Frame 42, Page 7

Since 1862 Jurors have been summoned by post with forms marked "Jury Summons". One copy was retained by the Sheriff whilst a second was posted to the juror, franked at the special registration rate of 2d plus postage at the letter rate. An attempt to send a Jury Summons in 1876 franked at the ½d printed matter rate resulted in a charge of 5d, twice the deficiency.

Parliamentary Proceedings - Frame 42, Pages 8-10

Special rates for Parliamentary Proceedings existed until the 1920s, set at 1d per 4oz in 1840, reduced to ½d per 2oz in 1870. Parliamentary Proceedings were exempt from restrictions on maximum weight or size whilst only the single deficiency was charged if unpaid or underpaid. They were supposed to be marked "Par. Pro.", although this did not always occur, and had to be sent with unsealed ends or without wrappers to allow inspection of the contents. Three examples are shown, one with the Edinburgh "4" charge mark originally issued during the 1839-40 fourpenny post period, used in 1885. A fourth wrapper was disallowed at the Parliamentary Proceedings rate because it contained a handwritten letter.

Newspapers - Frame 42, Page 11 - Frame 43, Page 8

Until June 1855 newspapers bore a tax stamp, which also allowed them to pass through the post. From July 1855 until September 1870 newspapers could still bear a printed stamp which allowed transmission by post, or could be franked by stamps, rates being dependent on the number of sheets of paper used, the minimum rate being 1d. If a newspaper bore a printed stamp but was folded so it was not visible on the outside it was treated as unpaid and charged the single rate deficiency; two different "Stamp Not Visible" handstamps are shown, one containing the 1d charge. The handstamp "Unstamped Publication" was intended for use on newspapers without an imprinted tax stamp; an example used in 1866 was applied to an unpaid item of Book Post. Newspapers from certain foreign countries were charged upon delivery. Newspaper wrappers are shown charged because the contents were not registered as newspapers with the Post Office, handstamped "Prohibited enclosure". Other papers or wrappers were simply underpaid due to weight, whilst two newspaper wrappers were charged as letters because they contained a handwritten letter or a note was added on the reverse by the sender. The Newspaper Branch used explanatory handstamps and charge marks with the letters "N.P.B". These are sometimes found on ordinary letters and postcards which were incorrectly sent to the Newspaper Branch. From October 1st 1870 newspapers were charged ½d each, altered to ½d per 6oz in 1915, increasing to 3d per 6oz by 1961; newspaper rates ceased in May 1965.

Book Post/Printed Matter - Frame 43, Pages 9-12

Book Post was introduced in 1848, renamed the Halfpenny Packet Post in 1904 and the Printed Papers Post in November 1915; printed paper rates ceased on 15th September 1968 owing to the introduction of separate first and second class letter rates the following day. Initially for printed books, magazines and pamphlets regulations were eased over the years until virtually anything printed on paper was allowed including postcards, Christmas and birthday cards. Writing was permitted as long as it was not of the nature of a letter, a greeting of conventional form allowed on cards provided it did not exceed five words. Rates were initially 6d per lb, reduced to 1d up to 4oz in 1855 and ½d up to 2oz on 1st October 1870. Minimum rates remained at ½d until June 1921, and again from May 1922 until 1940. Underpaid Book Post was initially transferred to letter post, but from March 1855 was charged the deficiency plus an additional rate (initially 6d, reduced to 4d in June 1855 and 1d in November 1857), leading to the unusual handstamp “Deficient Postage/Additional Rate”. Totally unpaid Book Post was initially transferred to letter post, but from 1863 it was charged twice the deficiency at the Book Post rate; from October 1870 all charged printed matter was simply rated with twice the deficiency. 1d Charge marks occur on unpaid printed matter from this date. A Book Post cover to Holland closed against inspection was forwarded without surcharge as a special concession. Other items sent at the printed matter rate but deemed to be letters, either because they were sealed or contained writing of the nature of a letter, are shown in Frames 13 and 14.

Parcel Post - Frame 44, Pages 1-8

The Inland Parcel Post service commenced on 1st August 1883. Parcels were supposed to be handed over the Post Office counter, and were fined if incorrectly ‘posted out of course’. This fine was initially 3d, decreased to 1d in May 1886, rising to 3d again by 1969 and becoming 1p upon decimalisation. Unpaid and underpaid parcels were charged with the single deficiency only, with single rate postage also being charged for redirection or return to the sender. Letters could be transferred to Parcel Post if they exceeded the maximum size or weight permitted for the letter post, at which point they would become liable to the fine for posting out of course. Examples of all these reasons for charging parcels are shown with several charge marks and explanatory handstamps applied to Parcel Post labels. Labels are shown explaining that items had been transferred to Parcel Post due to weight or width, or were charged for demurrage - a storage charge of 1d per day on parcels addressed to Post Offices ‘to be called for’. Tie-on tags and adhesive labels were used on parcels detailing the type of charges. These were headed “Charge” from the 1920s, and later included charges for customs duty and clearance, C.O.D charges and purchase tax. Underpaid parcels addressed abroad were detained, a letter requesting the deficient postage being sent to the sender or addressee.

Letters found within Book Post Parcels - Frame 44, Page 9

Letters could not be included in Book Post parcels and if found were removed and sent separately, charged twice the unpaid letter rate plus a fine. Initially 6d this fine was reduced to 4d in 1855 and 1d in 1857. From October 1870 such letters caused the Book Post packet to be treated as a letter, and charged twice the deficiency at the letter rate. Two letters are shown removed from Book Post parcels, one correctly charged 3d, the other showing an incorrect charge.

Customs Duty - Frame 44, Pages 10-12

The Post Office was responsible for collecting Customs Duty, and later purchase tax and V.A.T, on incoming mail. Postage due stamps were used to collect these charges, as well as the handling fee which was retained by the Post Office. Customs Duty charge marks are shown used on samples of tea. Special customs charge labels were used on parcels, differing types being used for charges above or below 10/-. In 1922 the Irish Free State introduced a 6d customs clearance fee on parcels, green 6d To Pay labels being applied. By 1924 the side inscriptions were cut away from these before use. The actual 6d charge was collected using British, and later Irish, postage due stamps.

1840-1906 Forces Mail - Frame 45, Page 1 - Frame 46, Page 12

A concessionary rate of 1d for letters from or to non-commissioned officers or men in the army or navy was introduced in 1795; from 10th January 1840 such letters could not exceed ½oz, and were charged 2d if posted unpaid. If carried by private ship, upon which a 2d gratuity was paid to the ship's Captain, this was added to the postage due charge to give a total charge of 4d; London used a 4d charge mark with the explanation "Soldiers & Seamans Letter By Ship". If sent via a foreign country, for which the British Post Office had to pay a transit charge, this was charged upon delivery. Sailors letters were shown sent via Panama charged 6d, or sent via Marseille charged 2d in 1853, increased to 3d by 1867. Transit fees were also charged on soldiers and sailors letters sent via Brindisi or the U.S.A. Soldiers and sailors letters were disallowed at the 1d rate if they weighed over ½oz, or were incorrectly addressed or endorsed by the sender, the full name and rank, ship or regiment being required, letters from soldiers and sailors also requiring a countersignature of the Commanding Officer. Two covers over ½oz were both charged 8d on the Plymouth & Bristol T.P.O. Concession rate letters had to be posted on British ships or into British or colonial Post Offices; a sailors letter posted at the Spanish Post Office at Vigo was disallowed at the 1d rate and charged 4d. Errors sometimes occur in charging soldiers letters, covers from officers in the Sudan in 1884 and 1898 both incorrectly charged at the 1d soldiers rate, whilst an 1878 cover from a soldier in the Cape Colony was incorrectly charged 6d, as though from an officer (Fig. 25). During the Crimean War most forces mail was carried by French Packet via Marseille, a special rate of 3d per ¼oz being charged, sometimes shown by a handstruck "3" charge mark. Mail sent by troops on active service, when stamps were unobtainable, was usually charged with the single deficiency. Soldiers letters are shown charged the single 1d rate, with officers letters charged 6d, the U.P.U rate of 2½d, or the Imperial Penny Postage rate. Most colonies introduced Imperial Penny Postage on Christmas Day 1898, after which soldiers and sailors ceased having a lower concessionary rate.



Fig. 25. 1878 Soldiers cover from Idutywa, Cape Colony, posted during the 9th Frontier War, incorrectly charged 6d, as though sent by an officer.

British forces fought in many wars between 1840 and 1902 and 'On Active Service' covers are shown from Egypt in 1882, Sudan in 1884-85 and 1896-97, South Africa during the 1878 Frontier War and Boer Wars of 1881 and 1899-1902, the Gold Coast during the Ashanti Wars of 1895 and 1900, the Niger Coast in 1898 and Southern Nigeria in 1902, the 1896 Matabele Rebellion in Rhodesia and Crete in 1898. Many soldiers letters were delivered free of charge during the 1899-1902 Boer War although some were charged at the 1d rate early in the campaign, including a cover from a British officer held Prisoner of War by the Boers. No British troops were involved during the 1906 native rebellion in

Natal and soldiers mail was therefore charged twice the deficiency upon arrival in Britain. From 1857 until 1869 officers were entitled to a concessionary rate of 6d per ½oz, plus any foreign transit charges. Concession rate covers from India and Cape Colony are shown charged due to their weight.

1914-19 World War One Soldiers Mail - Frame 47, Page 1 - Frame 49, Page 6

In August 1914 mail from the B.E.F in France was supposed to be paid 1d, unpaid and underpaid mail being charged with the single deficiency only. Postcards were sometimes only charged ½d in error. This 1d rate ceased on August 31st when all troops on active service abroad were granted free postage, this free concession lasting until August 1920. Despite this mail from British forces on active service is occasionally found charged as unpaid in error. Mail from British forces posted into civilian offices from areas not deemed to be on active service was usually charged, often at the single rate only. The free postage concession did not extend to theatres of war where no British troops were involved such as South West Africa although such forces mail was still often delivered free of charge, with postage due handstamps sometimes deleted; however some mail was charged, sometimes with the single deficiency, occasionally with double the deficiency. "On Active Service" mail from empire forces was allowed free of charge when posted from theatres of war where British forces were also present. Mail from civilians serving alongside British forces in the medical services, as well as from French, Belgian and other allied (non-empire) troops was supposed to be paid and to be charged if unpaid. In practice many such letters were allowed free of charge whilst most charged items only had the single deficiency collected, although the occasional foreign soldiers letter is seen charged twice the deficiency. Soldiers letters containing coins or valuables may be found compulsory registered and charged.

Postage had to be paid on internal mail posted by British or allied soldiers, but unpaid and underpaid mail was only charged the single rate deficiency. This was introduced within days of the start of the war, as shown by a card initially charged 1d on 9th August 1914 but reduced to the single ½d rate the following day when it was realised it was from a soldier. Some offices had "½" charge marks locally made for use on cards from soldiers. Mail from soldiers can be found charged double deficiency in error, whilst the single rate deficiency was occasionally charged on cards which are clearly not from soldiers. Three cards are shown with correct ½d charge marks but where 1d has then been collected in error. The same rules applied to mail from wounded soldiers in hospital; however many hospitals applied cachets to soldiers mail, which was often delivered free of charge as a result. A card is shown written on an ambulance train at Snow Hill Station, Birmingham, but posted from a hospital at Manchester, charged ½d. The Post Office numbers "A.01" through to "A.06" were re-issued to army camps in 1916 and used in charge marks. Postage due stamps were used at permanent army camps. Although empire and other allied forces had to pay postage on mail sent within Britain they were granted free postage on mail posted from Britain back to their home country. Underpaid mail to British forces on active service abroad was sometimes handstamped "T" and delivered, though it seems unlikely postage due charges were actually collected at the front; because of this the British Post Office began to return such mail. Two such returned covers are shown, one of which was reposted after an additional 1d stamp was applied by the sender.

1918-35 Period Soldiers Mail - Frame 49, Pages 7-12

When the letter rate from Bermuda rose to 1½d in 1916 the 1d concessionary rate was reintroduced for soldiers letters; a 1918 cover is shown headed from a soldier but disallowed at the concession rate because it was not countersigned, so charged 1d. Stampless "On active service" covers from Bushire in 1920 and Turkey in 1922 did not qualify for free postage but were only charged with the single rate deficiency. Two unpaid covers were posted at the Indian F.P.O in Cairo in 1921, after the free postage concession had ended; one is charged single rate deficiency, the other double deficiency. A 1921 Official cover posted in a British Field Post Office in Dublin was treated as unpaid and charged 4d at Dover in error. British Army and Field Post Offices continued to operate in China until 1940, and were issued with distinctive hexagonal "T" handstamps, which also show the amount due.

1939-45 World War Two Soldiers Mail - Frame 50, Pages 1-6

At the start of World War Two British forces were granted free postage when on active service abroad, but forces mail was sometimes charged in error. 1940 Covers from B.E.F soldiers posted in England shortly after their return from France have charge marks incorrectly applied although nothing was collected from the addressee. Forces mail posted within Britain had to be prepaid and was charged twice the deficiency if unpaid or underpaid, although single deficiency charges sometimes occur. A censored cover from South African forces was probably flown by diplomatic bag to London where it was posted and so was charged as an unpaid inland letter. Allied forces in Britain were allowed free surface mail back to their home country if letters were posted into their own army postal system. U.S Army Post Offices required air mail postage to the U.S.A to be paid for in U.S stamps, but internal G.B postage or postage to other countries to be paid by G.B stamps. Mail incorrectly posted unpaid or with U.S stamps was returned to the sender, "Returned for British Postage" cachets being used. These rules (and cachets) continued in force at U.S A.P.Os in Britain until at least the 1970s.

1902-40 Naval Mail - Frame 50, Page 7 - Frame 51, Page 10

Mail from naval ships overseas had to be franked by British stamps at the empire postage rate. Unpaid and underpaid mail was usually charged twice the deficiency but single rate charges sometimes occur. Naval mail was carried back to Britain and postmarked upon arrival, usually in London, and therefore often appeared identical to internal mail, having British stamps cancelled by London datestamps. To avoid possible confusion and complaints some naval mail received explanatory endorsements such as "ship mail", whilst the explanatory handstamp "Posted on board ship abroad" was introduced in the London Inland Section in 1908. This was intended for use on naval mail but may occasionally be found on civilian paquebot mail. It is also found on mail from soldiers posted on troopships, which was treated as naval mail.

Mail to naval ships was allowed at internal rates if the ship was in British waters but had to be paid at the empire rate if the ship was overseas. Where the location of a ship was unknown mail could be addressed "c/o G.P.O" and franked at the inland rate, the single deficiency only being charged if the ship was abroad. A 1911 London to Windsor Aerial Post card to H.M.S Exmouth is shown franked ½d and charged the single ½d deficiency despite being addressed to the Mediterranean, the sender therefore clearly aware the ship was overseas.

In World War One the navy (unlike the army) was not automatically granted free postage until the war was almost over, in June 1918. Mail from ships on active service abroad where no stamps were obtainable, and accompanied by a certificate stating this, was supposed to be marked "Received From H.M Ship/No Charge to be Raised" and delivered free of charge. Other naval mail could be surcharged, but in practice was usually delivered free of charge. When deemed to be unpaid or underpaid naval mail was initially supposed to be charged with the single deficiency only, but this was increased to the double rate in October 1915 for mail from ships in home waters (except hospital ships).

In World War Two free postage was again immediately granted to soldiers on active service but not to the navy, unpaid and underpaid mail being charged with the single deficiency. Free postage was finally extended to all naval ships at sea in 1940.

Recent Postage Due Practices - Frame 51, Page 11 - Frame 52, Page 12

Since January 1st 1976 incoming mail from abroad has been charged with the deficiency plus a fine, initially set at 11p. From 5th May 1983 inland mail has been charged in the same way, the fine initially set at 10p, having now risen to £1. For many years fines on mail received from abroad were higher than those for internal mail; occasionally the lower inland rate fine was levied in error.

In 1993 the Post Office began experimenting with new methods of indicating and collecting postage due charges. Adhesive labels on yellow or orange paper were introduced to indicate an item was to be surcharged or to show the actual charge to be collected; these were deemed a success and have been adopted throughout the country, virtually replacing handstruck charge marks.

The system of detaining mail and sending a card to the recipient requesting the deficiency plus handling fee was trialled at York. Again deemed a success this was introduced throughout the country, and is now the standard method of collecting postage due charges. The cards are printed locally and many designs therefore exist. Once the payment is received offices apply "Paid" handstamps to the covers if the sender asks for them to be reposted, rather than collecting them in person.

Postage due stamps continued in use until 28th January 2000 in some areas, whilst other areas chose to adopt the card system and cease using postage due stamps some years earlier, the two methods therefore operating in tandem for several years. Areas that continued with postage due stamps until 2000 included central London and Avon.

The Post Office have increasingly concentrated on checking bulk postings, which are often paid by meter marks, as an entire posting may often be underpaid. Deficient postage plus a reduced handling fee (subject to a minimum charge per letter) is collected from the sender of such postings, which are then forwarded marked as Paid. In 2010 senders of underpaid bulk postings were charged the deficiency plus 20p with a minimum charge of 80p per letter.

Since August 2006 higher rates have existed for internal letters over a prescribed thickness or size, leading to many surcharged letters. For an initial period charges were waived on oversize letters paid at the smaller letter rate, with explanatory cachets or labels applied.

Underpaid mail addressed abroad is sometimes transferred to cheaper surface routes, although surface routes no longer exist for letters to most overseas destinations. Letters paid at internal rates but addressed abroad are now returned to the sender with an explanatory label attached, or enclosed in a transparent envelope, explaining that they may be reposted at a Post Office with the deficient postage applied.

Mail marked for first class, but only paid second class postage is of course simply transferred to second class post and delivered without charge. The Post Office also operates the Dutch Scheme for some underpaid mail to abroad, and has done so since before World War Two. This involves the Post Office applying stamps or Paid handstamps to letters to cover the deficient postage before forwarding them to the destination country; a card or letter is then sent to the sender requesting the deficient postage (plus handling fee). This relies on the trust of the sender, and the fee is often not paid; however those fees that are paid go to the British Post Office rather than the country of destination, which would otherwise collect and keep any charge. Examples of Dutch scheme letters with added stamps are shown from 1941-42 and 1957, with cards and letters sent to the senders of such items in 1957 and 1984. The Dutch Scheme was also operated by the British forces postal service, a 1962 cover shown to the R.A.F in Cyprus with a 3d stamp added at Mill Hill, together with the accompanying letter requesting the 3d deficiency. In this instance the letter was sent to the addressee of the letter and not the sender; the 3d was not paid.

In 1998-99 the Post Office trialled the use of meter marks showing charges to pay, applied in green ink directly onto charged letters or on adhesive labels which were applied to the cover. This trial was at three offices, Worthing, Brighton and Croydon, but was not a success; very few of these meter marks are found. Since at least 2000 Glasgow has used machine marks in red or black to show postage due charges, the instruction "Surcharge" also sometimes applied by machine to the lower left corner. Ink jet machines have been used in the Belfast Returned Letter Office to print postage due charges on envelopes used to return unpaid or underpaid mail.



1899 Cut-out Post box posted from London to Kent franked ½d.
Handstamped “Contrary to regulations” and endorsed “Too Large”, charged 1d.



1902 Holmes to Brightside 3rd class railway ticket, posted two days later from Sheffield to Huddersfield franked ½d. Endorsed “Below the Regulation Size 1d to pay”.