



## POSTAL ODDITIES

Featuring some of the unusual items that pass through the British Postal System and are delivered through our letter boxes, such as :-

- 1 – Postage Stamp Oddities.
  - 1.1 – Late use of Stamps.
  - 1.2 – Illegal use of stamps.
  - 1.3 – Postage Underpaid.
  - 1.4 – The total Lack of Stamps.
  - 1.5 – Readers Digest Stamps.
- 2 – Post Office Instructional Markings.
- 3 – Taxograph Errors.
- 4 – Incorrect Use of Envelopes.
- 5 – Mail returned to sender.
- 6 – Abortive attempts to use the Diplomatic Bag.
- 7 – Recorded Delivery Items
- 8 – Machine Sorting Markings.
- 9 – Odd Postal Rates

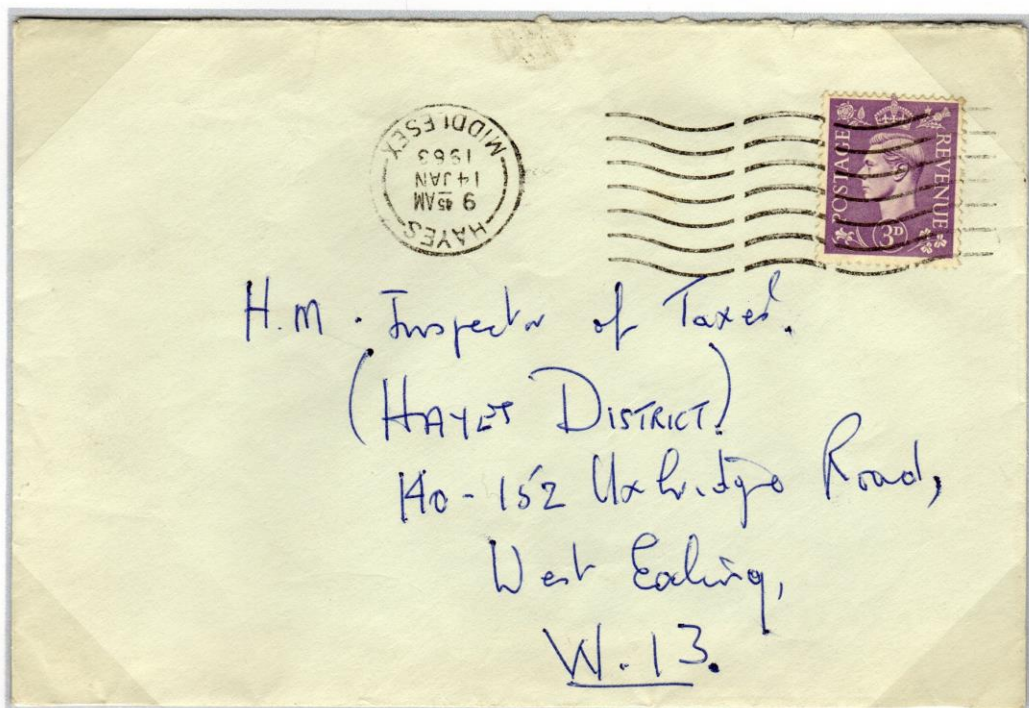
### 1 – POSTAGE STAMP ODDITIES.

Few items are as bizarre as the item shown above claiming that our Queen is not Elizabeth II but Elizabeth I (based upon the claim that Elizabeth I was not Queen of Scotland)

#### 1.1 – Late use of Stamps.

The stamp on the cover below has been used in 1963 some 12 years after the present Queen was crowned. It has been accepted and passed through the postal system.

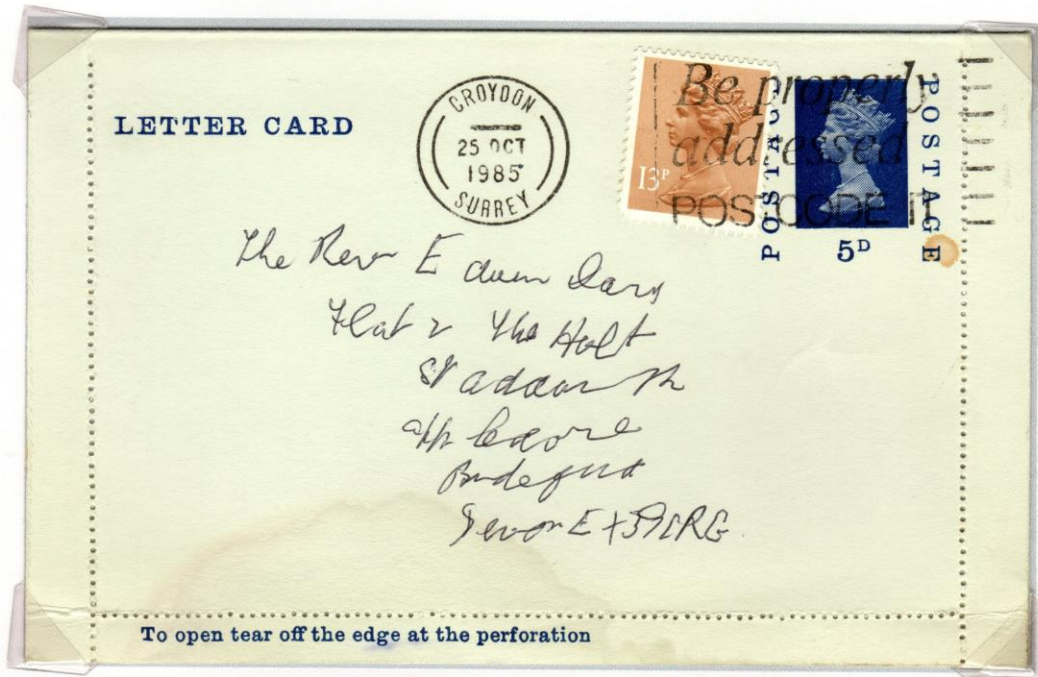
*Note - The Circular Die Stamp is Inverted*





## 1.2 – Illegal use of Stamps.

Pre-Decimal Letter Card has had a stamp added in an attempt to pass through the postal system as 1<sup>st</sup> Class, the added stamp was the current 2<sup>nd</sup> class rate and it would have been passed through as 2<sup>nd</sup> class.



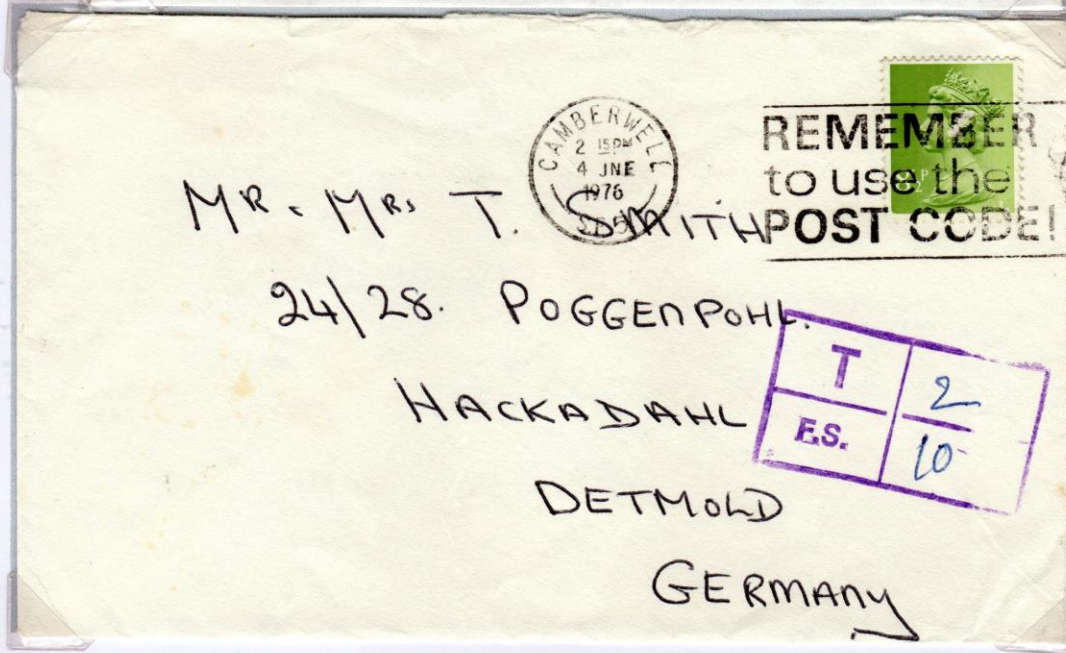
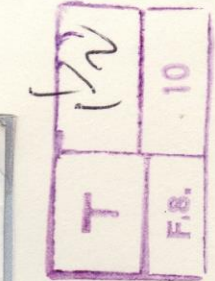
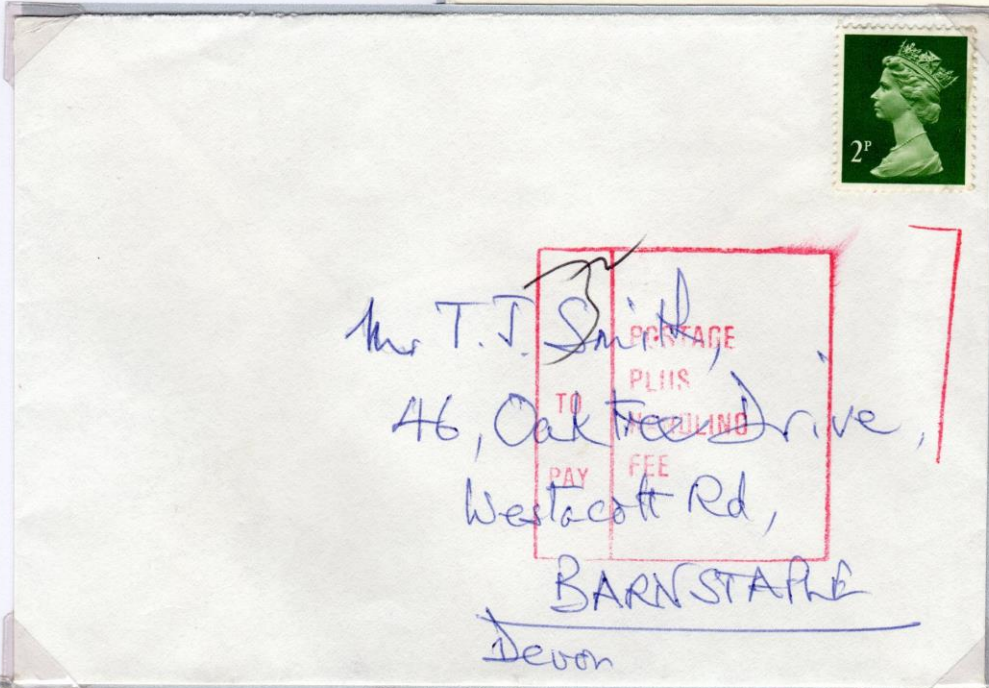
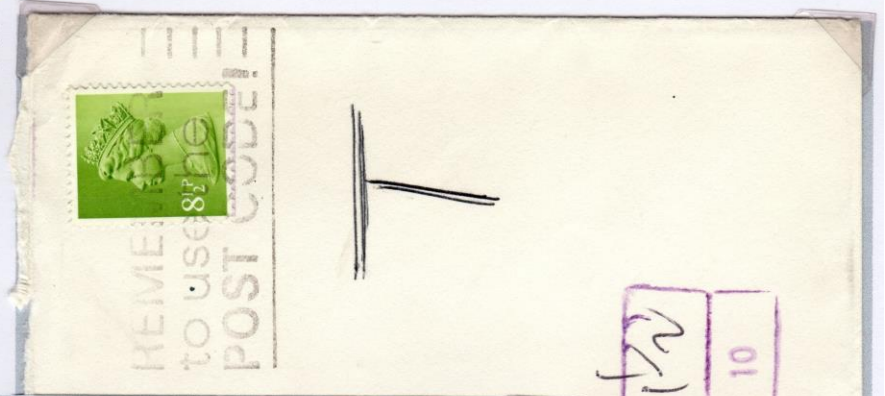
**STAMP DISALLOWED** – The cover below has been posted in a German Post Office instead of a BFPO where the use of the stamp would have been legal. The cover has been marked accordingly and Postage Due markings applied at a rate of 11.5p – Was it ever collected?





**1.3 - POSTAGE UNDERPAID**

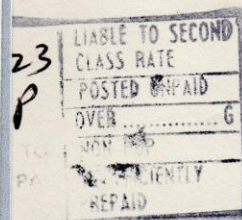
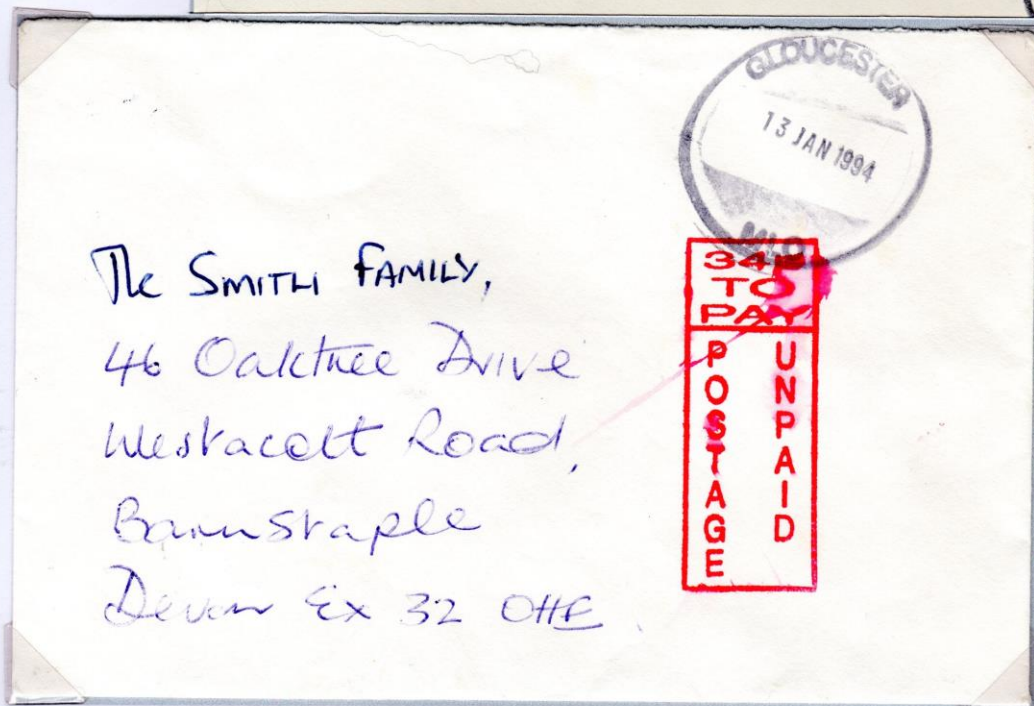
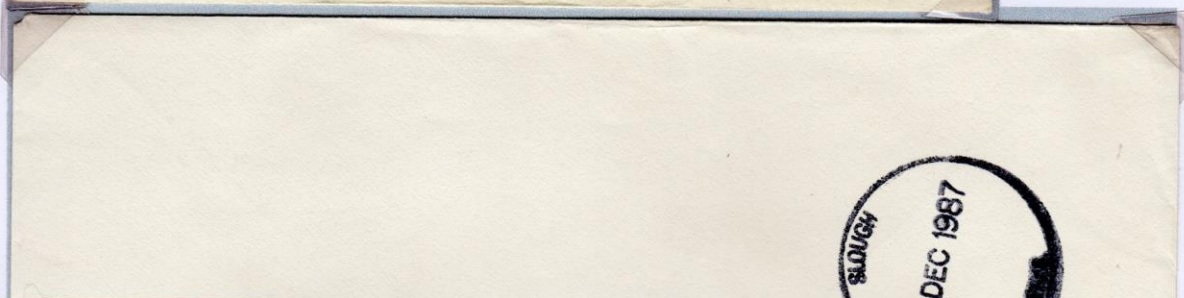
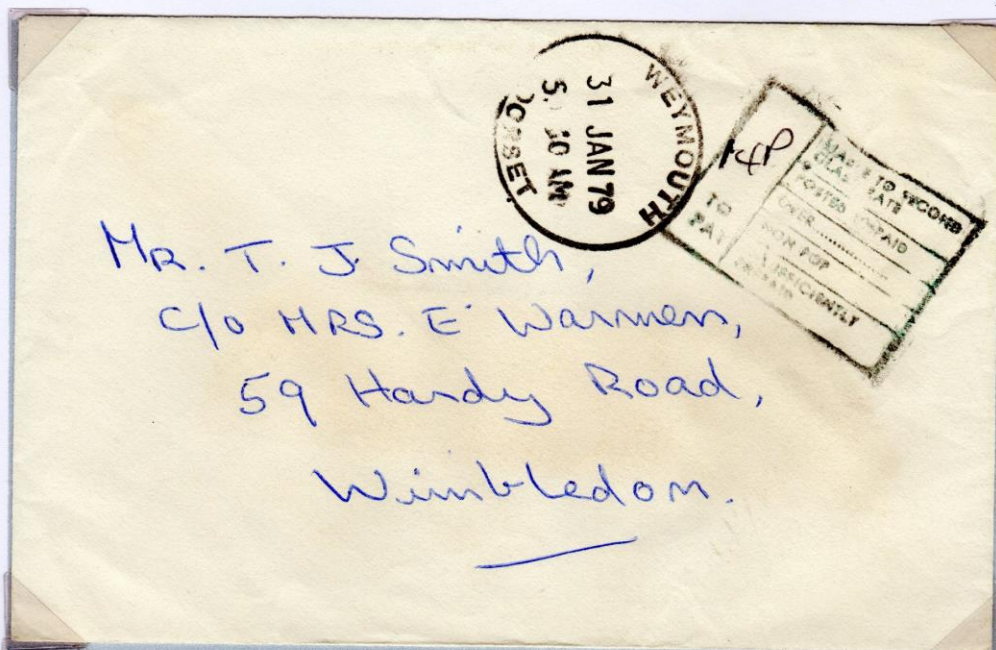
Mail that was sent without the correct pre-payment was marked for Postage Due, the collection of which was the responsibility of the postman delivering the mail.





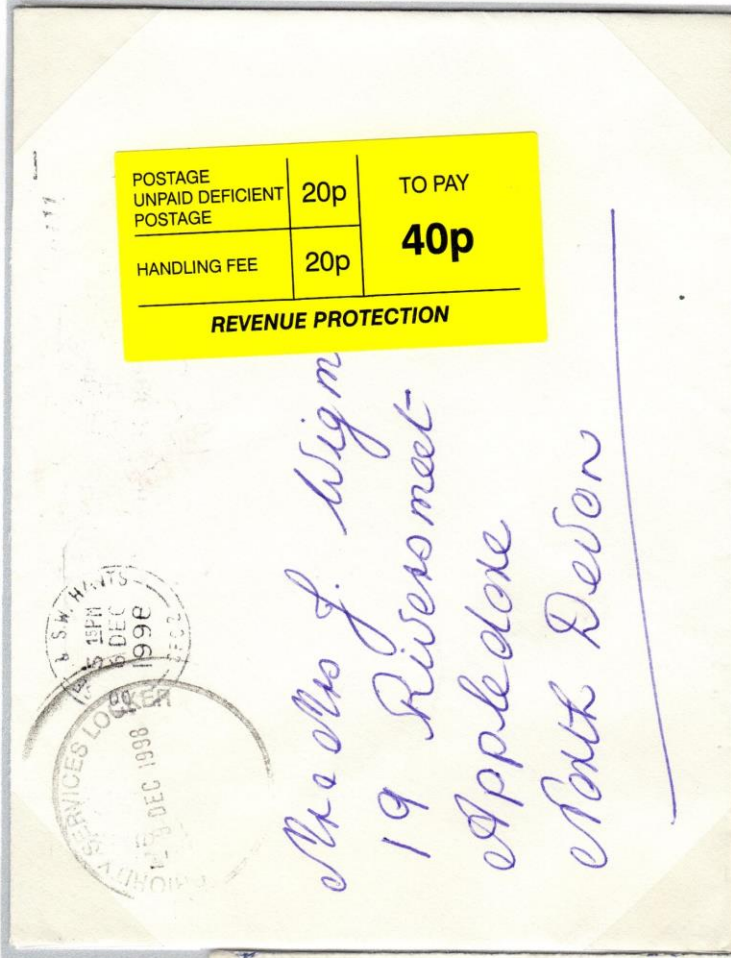
**1.4 – The total Lack of Stamps.**

These covers have been posted without stamps and been marked as Postage Due at this time the postmen were in dispute with the post office and refused to accept responsibility for collecting monies due.





**1.4 – Cont.**



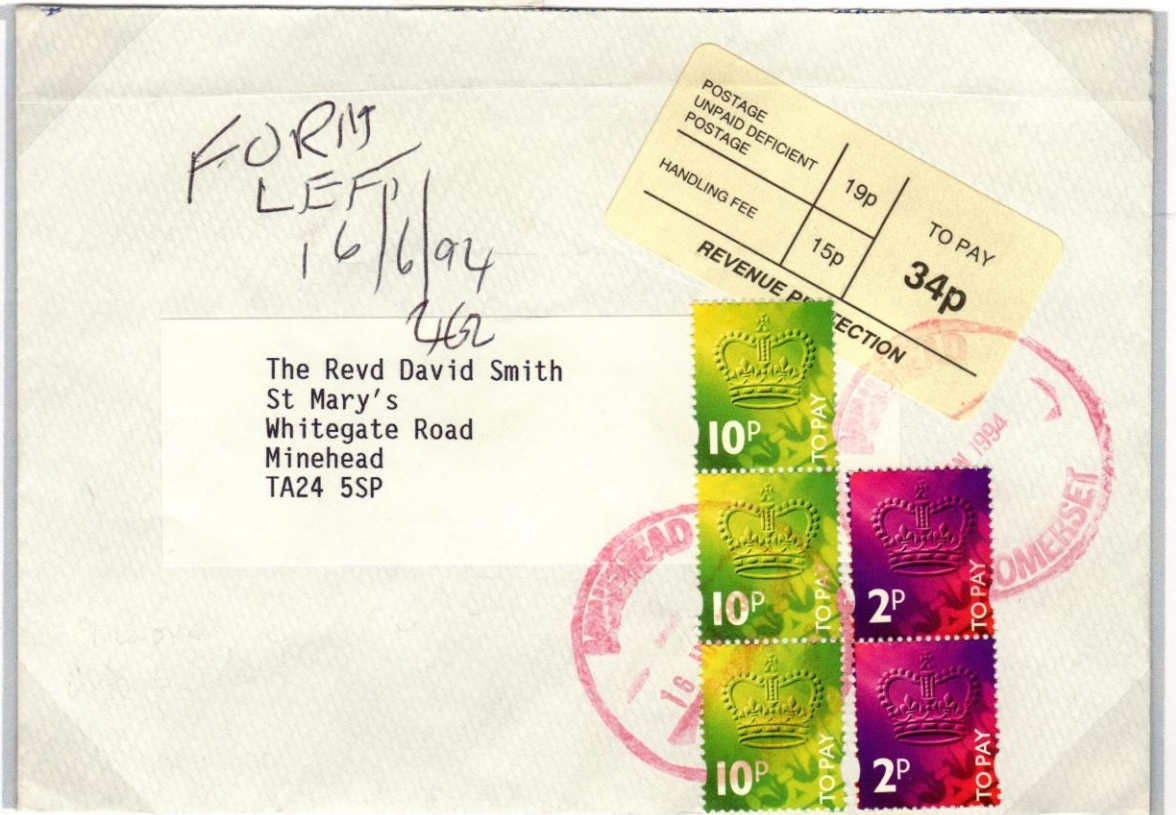
The resolution between the post office and its delivery staff led to customers being left a card advising that post needed to be collected at a specific location and paid for.

Mail was marked with yellow stickers that defined the fee due and its make up.

The lower cover is an early example where the postman has marked the cover that he has left a form the date of delivery and his cap number.

This practice seems to have been dropped with later examples.

*Note the lower cover also carries postage due stamps to the value of the label marking.*





## 1.5 – Readers Digest.

Readers Digest in conjunction with the Post Office had some special strips of stamps produced to enable their potential customers to return entries into their competitions. They were delivered to customers of Readers Digest attached to special cards as shown below.

The value of the strip of stamps was the current 2<sup>nd</sup> class rate, however they were not always used for the purpose intended, see the cover below.

READER'S DIGEST £150,000 'WIN A FORTUNE' PRIZE DRAW

# THE SOONER YOU ENTER, THE MORE YOU COULD WIN. THESE STAMPS WILL HELP TO SPEED YOUR REPLY!

Returning your Prize Draw 'Bankbook' *fast* could win you a Prompt-reply Bonus worth £15,000! To speed your numbers into the final stage of the Draw – and save you time and trouble – here are the postage stamps to pay for your reply. Entry to our Draw costs you *nothing* . . . not even the price of a stamp!



M-A-ADXP

Stick these stamps *now* on the envelope that brings us your reply to our offer and your Prize Draw entries.

A PROMPT REPLY COULD BE WORTH THOUSANDS OF POUNDS TO YOU – SO POST YOUR NUMBERS BACK TODAY!

And you could win  
**AN EXTRA £10,000**  
the letter in your  
'Bankbook'  
tells you how!



## 1.5 – Cont.

The Readers Digest Strips were the first example of collaboration between the Post Office and a Commercial Organisation producing stamps for a specific purpose.

The stamps were all printed on phosphor coated paper by Harrison & Sons and were always delivered by Readers Digest in the same horizontal configuration.

Issued June/July 1981



Issued September/October 1981



Issued December 1981/January 1982



*The Post Office subsequently produced the same combinations of stamps for use in their vending machines, the lowest value of stamp could be found in all positions depending upon how the roll of stamps was loaded in the machine. An example is show below.*





## 2 - POST OFFICE INSTRUCTION MARKINGS

A variety of instructional markings can be found mostly as the result of being unable to deliver mail.



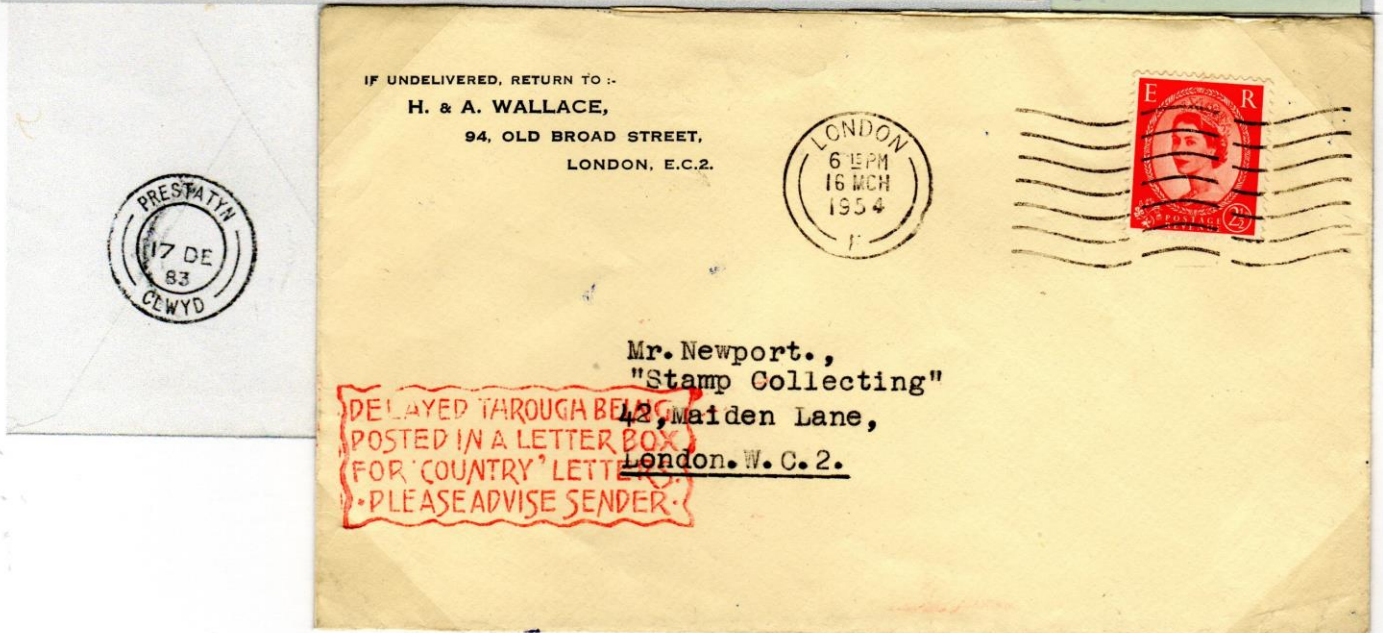
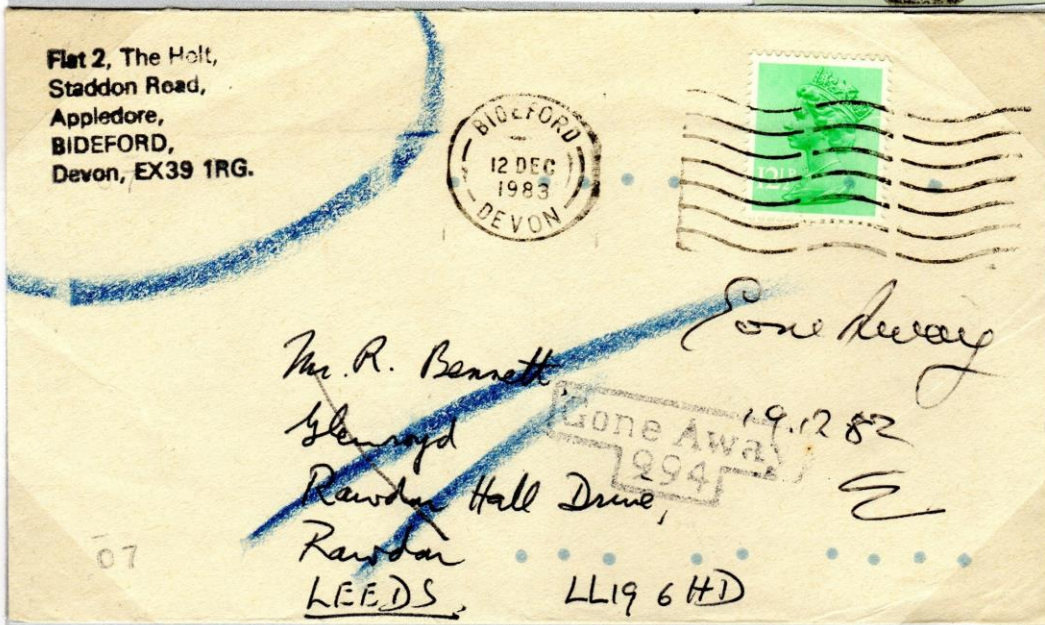


**2 - Cont**

The cover on the right carries the marking **INSUFFICIENT ADDRESS**.

The cover below is marked **GONE AWAY 994** (*Trealaw Glamorgan*) and despite being originally addressed to Leeds is back stamped Prestatyn.

It seems to have taken a rather long route between North Devon, Leeds and return.

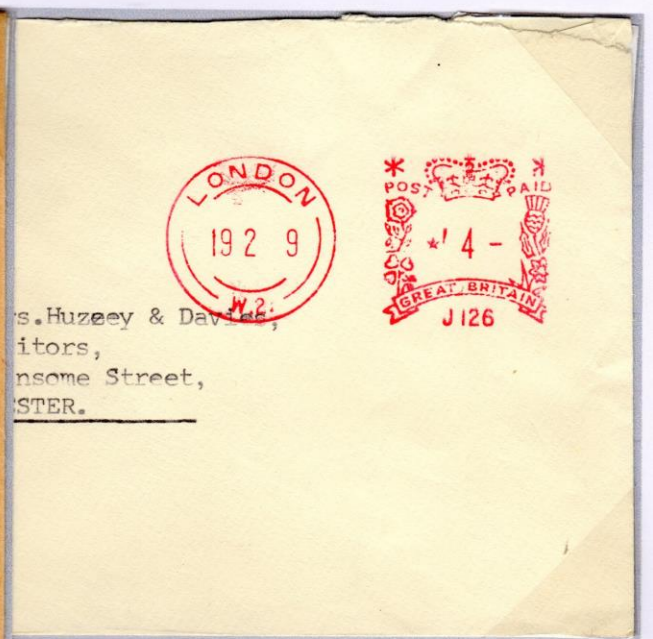


The cover above has been marked by the Post Office indicating a "Delay has occurred because the item was incorrectly posted".

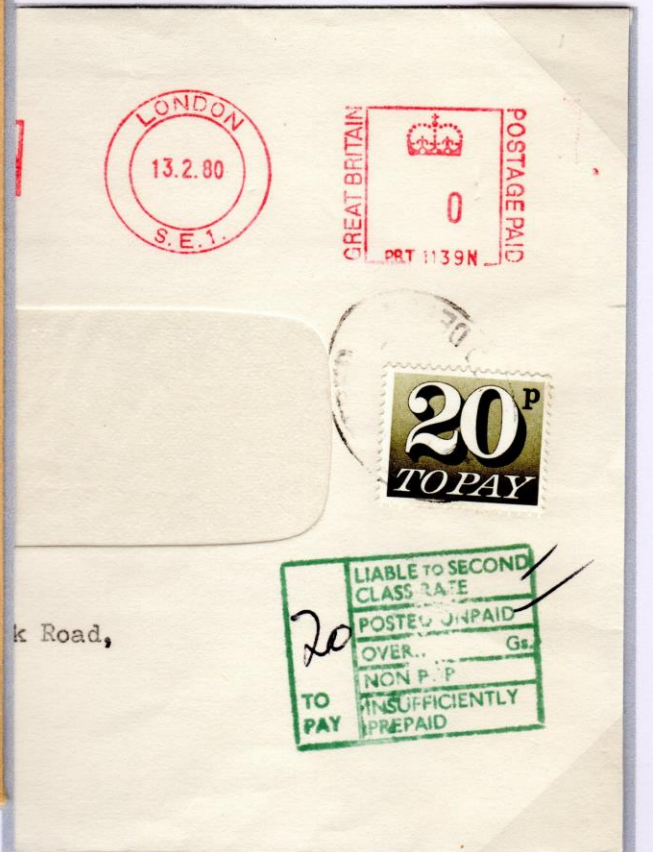


### 3 – TAXOGRAPH ERRORS

Operator error brings about many errors in the use of Taxograph Type Machines, these are just a few.



The examples left and above show incorrect date settings. The top example shows an inverted date slug. That on the left has an incorrect date, Picked by the Post Office on the Quality Control Marking.



Above right.

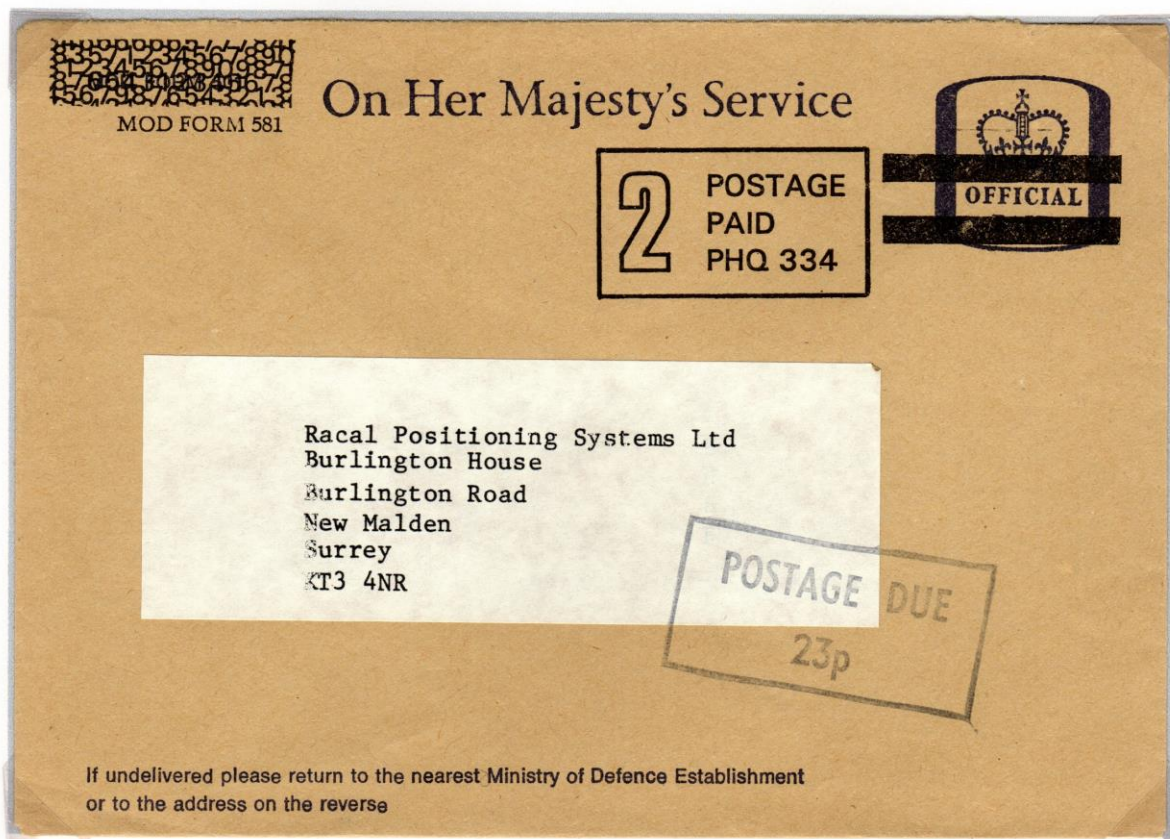
A Zero Rate setting has attracted postage due. Note - the use of both a handstamp & a Postage Due stamp.



## 4 – INCORRECT USE OF ENVELOPES

This OHMS Official Envelope has had its originator and Official Paid mark obliterated and been overprinted with a PHQ mark. This has not been recognised and accepted by the Post Office and the cover has been marked for POSTAGE DUE at the rate of 23p.

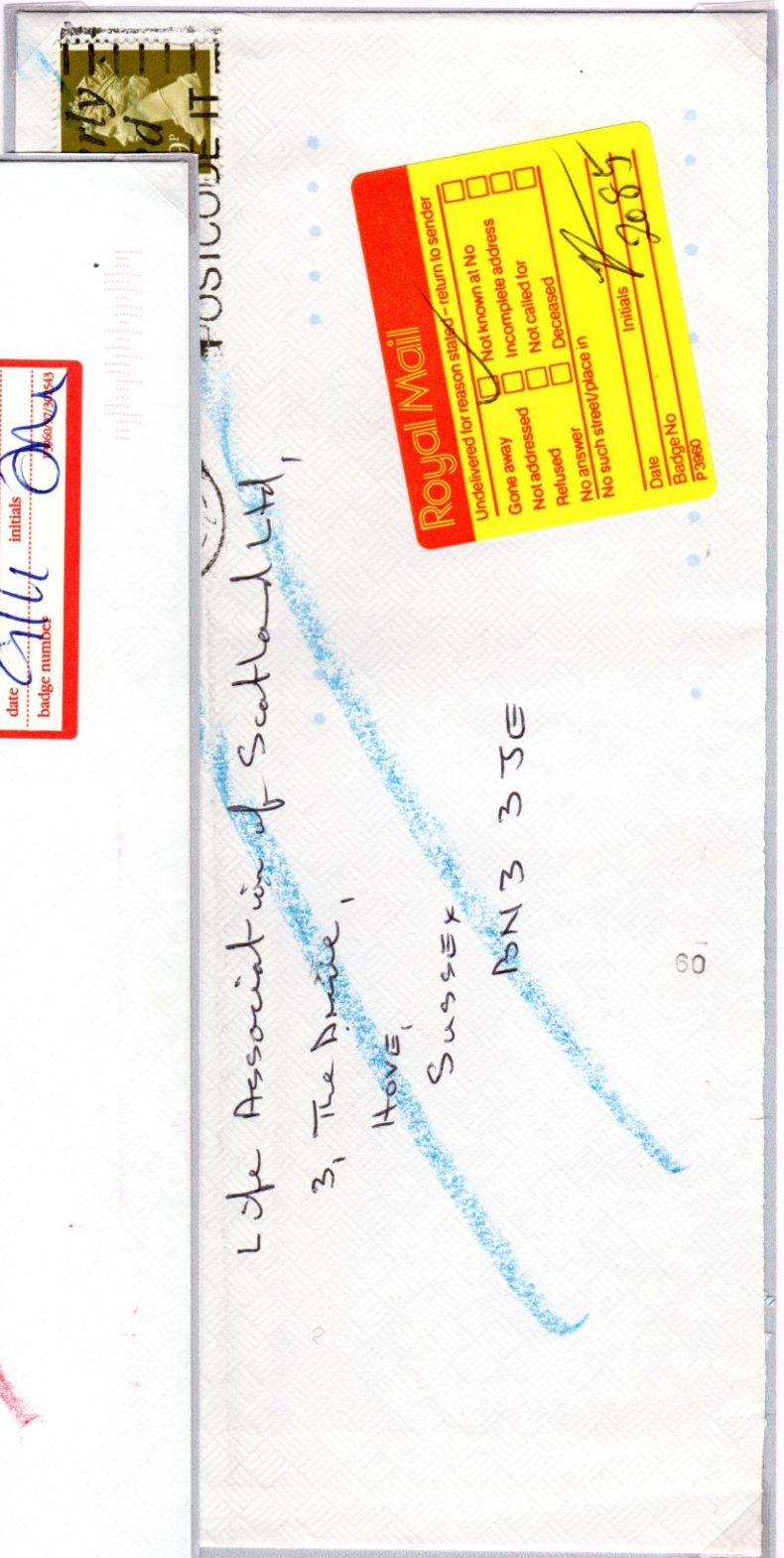
*The boxed POSTAGE DUE mark is unusual as is the re-use of an OHMS envelope.*





## 5 - MAIL RETURNED TO SENDER

These two covers show variations of the labels used by the Post Office today when returning mail to the original sender, note the labels have a number of other uses.





## 6 - ATTEMPTS TO USE THE DIPLOMATIC BAG

This was an attempt to get mail delivered via the Diplomatic Bag due to the Falklands War disrupting the normal mail service. The markings show it has been rejected by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office for onward transmission by this means.





**7 - RECORDED DELIVERY ITEMS**

Changes have taken place over recent years in the way these items are handled from changes of label type to no label and a hand stamp drawing attention to the postman that a signature is required.



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Großbritannien





## 8 - MACHINE SORTING MARKINGS

Apart from using the phosphor bands on stamps to sort between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class mail the various sorting machines used by Royal Mail have applied markings to mail to direct items to the correct bags for transportation. Initial trials used phosphor dots a machine identifier appeared on some items. The current practice uses bar codes.

