

IMPERIAL MAIL MARKING MACHINE COMPANY
"BOSTON" MACHINE CANCELS USED IN GREAT BRITAIN
1898 - 1907

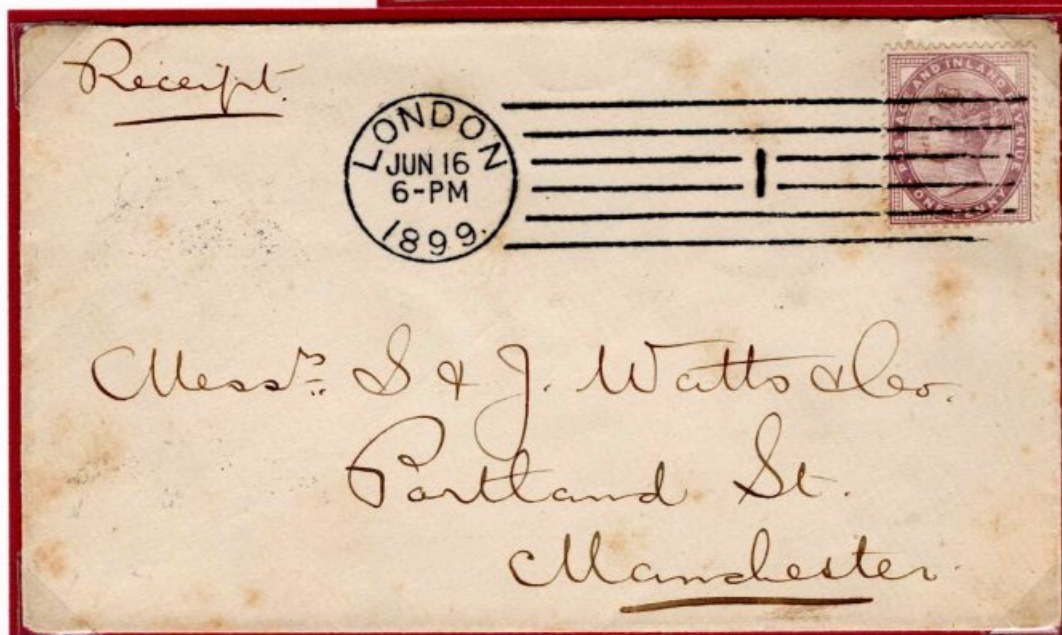
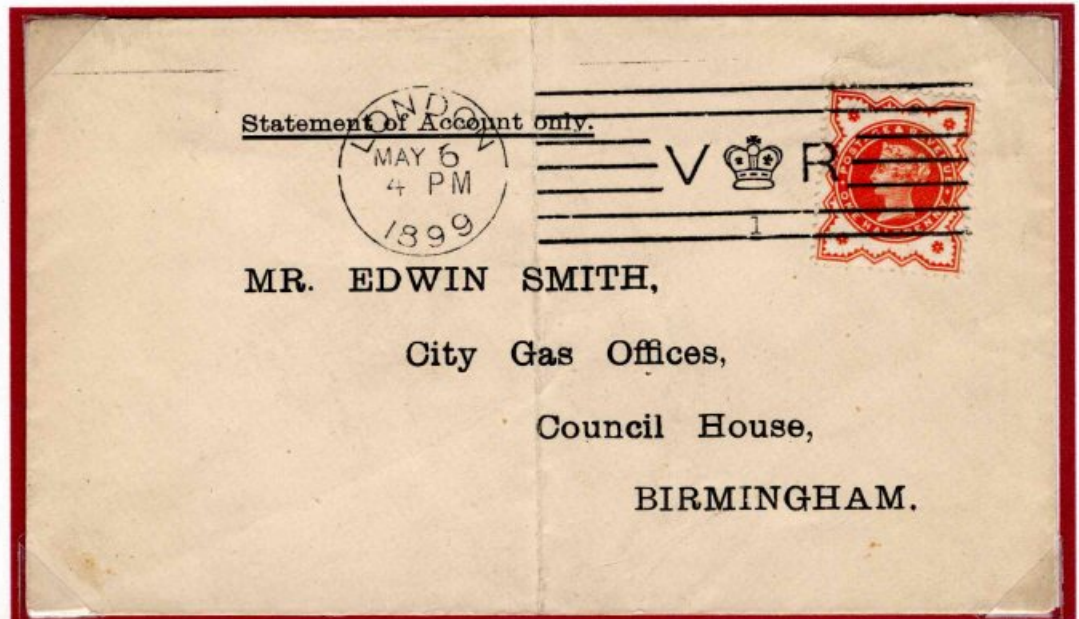
The purpose of this exhibit is to trace the use and development of the Boston Machine in London and Liverpool.

Just after the first trial of the Canadian Postal Supply Company machine the "Bickerdike", the British Post Office (GPO) could not reach an agreement on purchase terms for their machines. This opened an opportunity for the American Postal Machines Company of Boston, which had previously submitted their "Boston" machine. This test was conducted between August 27 and September 30, 1898. The Imperial Mail Marking Company was the Canadian office of the American Postal Supply Company. The "Boston" machine was very similar to the "Ethridge" the main difference being the "Boston" was powered by electricity instead of steam.

The American Postal Machine Company offered the GPO twelve of their machines at a great price and with good terms. When the Canadian Postal Supply Company heard of this they proceeded to match the offer which resulted in the GPO accepting both offers. The end result was the leasing of six machines from each company and tested between 1899 and 1900. In 1900 the GPO purchased all twelve machines in addition to two more from each company to conduct further tests in Liverpool.

The exhibit is laid out in numerical machine order with dial/canceller/known use table on the first page of each machine.

The competition, "Bickerdike" cancel from May 6, 1899 Machine 1, London to Birmingham. 1/2d Commercial Letter rate *Very early use*



Example of the Boston" cancel from Jun 16, 1899 Machine 1 London to Manchester 1d Letter rate

Significant items included in the exhibit are highlighted with blue borders and *red bold italics.*

BOSTON CANCEL - London First Trial - August 27 -September 30 1898

When the first trial of the Bickerdike Machine was completed in 1897 a disagreement on the purchase terms for these machines between the Canadian Postal Supply Company and the British Post Office arose. This disagreement enabled the American Postal Machines Company to submit their machine. This machine was submitted by the American Postal Machines Company of Boston for trial by the Post Office from August 27 to September 30, 1898. Much like the Ethridge machine which was produced by the same company and which was powered by steam, the Boston was powered by electricity.

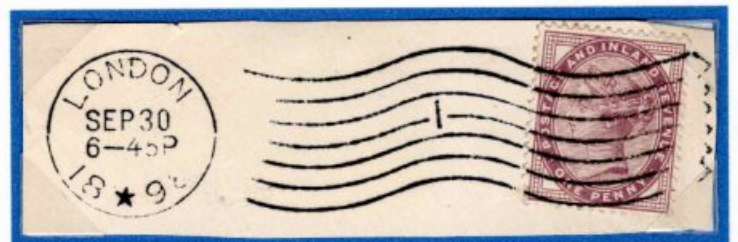
When the machine was sent to London, two Dials and one 7 wave line Die were sent along. These dials are easy to recognize, Die 1 has the Star in the date pointing down ★ while the Die 2 has the Star pointing up ★

Postmark - 22mm Diameter Dater Dial with a seven wavy line obliterator with the number 1 in the center. Die 1 with year in full with a star pointing down in the center. Zig-Zag at the end of the lines. Known use 1898 0831 - 1898 0905
Cover issued September 5 1898
London to Stone
1d Letter rate
This is the latest recorded copy of Die 1 known
Only 12 known copies recorded



This machine was put on trial by the British Post Office in 1898 alongside a Bickerdike and, as a result, six of each were rented at £36 per annum per machine. These 12 machines were purchased in the following year, along with two more of each, and the 16 machines remained in service until 1907.

Postmark - 22mm Diameter Dater Dial with a seven wavy line obliterator with the number 1 in the center. Die 2 with year in full with a star pointing up in the center Zig-Zag at the end of the lines
Known use 1898 0912 - 1898 0930
Piece issued September 30 1898
on the final day of testing.
This is the latest recorded copy of Die 2 known.



BOSTON CANCEL - London Second Trial / Field use - 1899 - 1907

The six Boston machines were manufactured by Pratt & Whitney in Hartford, Connecticut. The earliest use of these machines was May 10, 1899. The second trial ran for twelve months at which time the GPO decided to purchase the machines and continue to use them in the field.

Postmark - 22mm Diameter Dater Dial with two four line machines numbers 2 and 3 and four six line machines numbers 1, 4, 5 and 6.

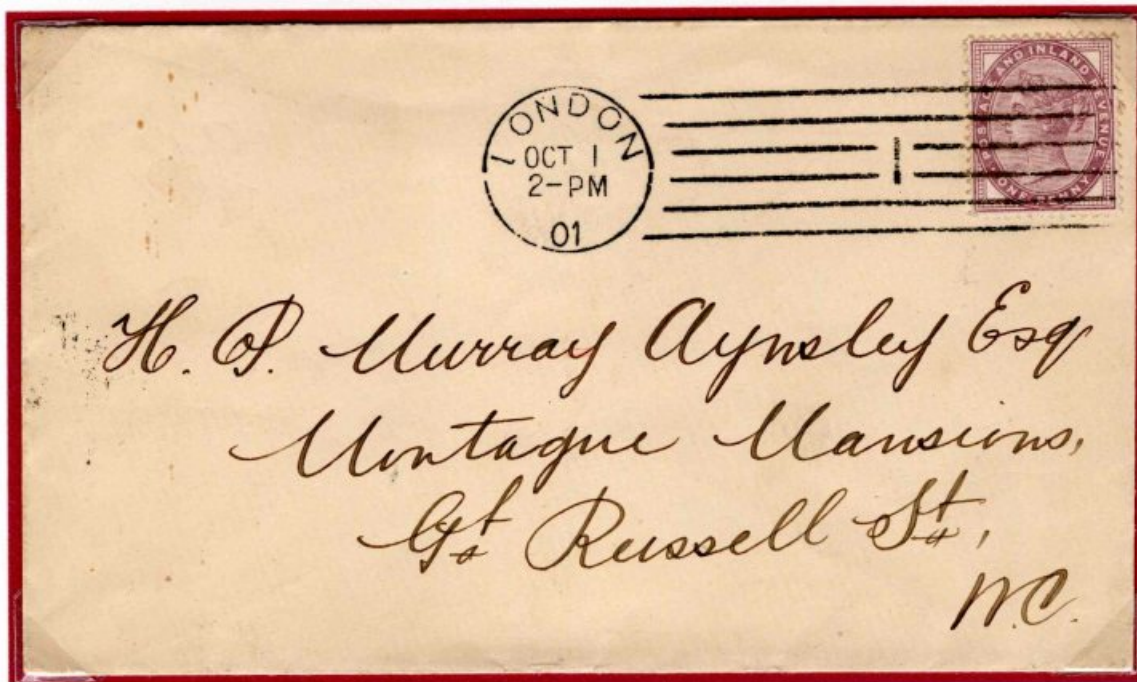
The code for this exhibit is one introduced by Reg Morris and Bob Payne and updated by Mike Mather.

CITY	MACHINE	DIAL	CANCELLER	KNOWN USE
London	1	D-1 (4 digit year)	K2 (concave 6 bar)	1899 0510 - 1900 0208
	1	D-2 (2 digit curved)	K2 (concave 6 bar)	1900 0226 - 1901 1025
	1	D-3 (2 digit horizontal)	K2 (concave 6 bar)	1902 0327 - 1904 0822
	1	D-1 (4 digit year)	K3 (6 bar)	1905 01-- - 1907 0803



July 20, 1899
London to Flemington USA
6d Letter rate underpaid
Showing 8d due.
Machine 1 D1K2

With the arrival of the Twentieth century, the dater dials were changed to indicate a two digit year.

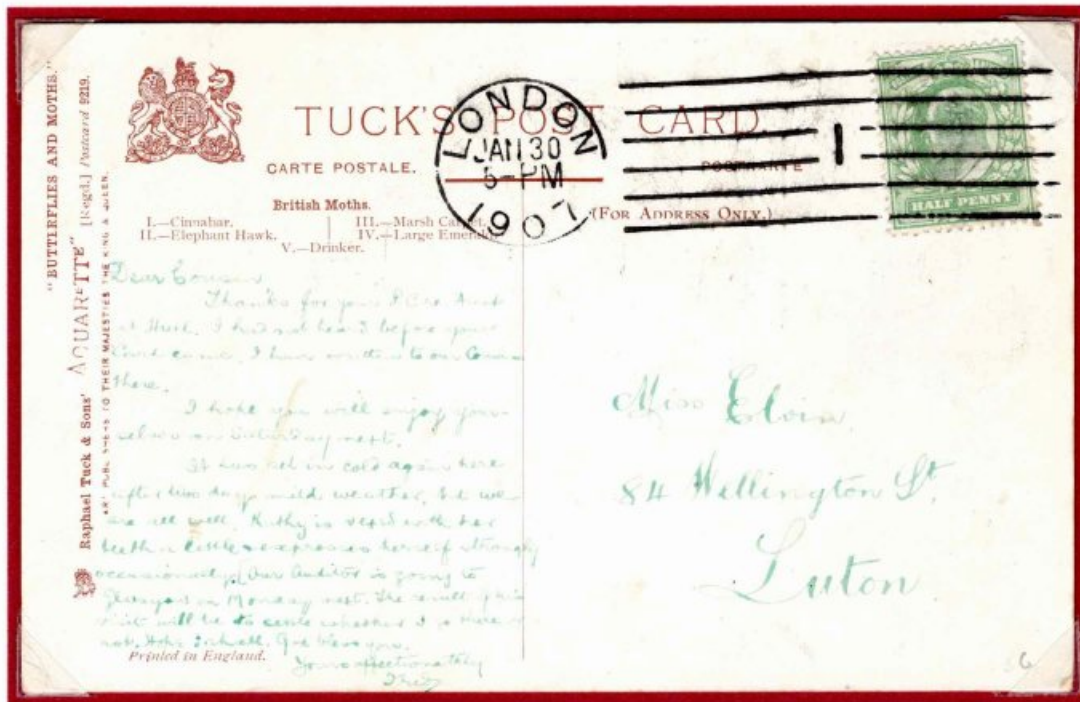


October 1, 1900
London Local Mail
1d Letter rate
Machine 1 D2K2

July 29, 1904
 London to Bandon, Ireland
 1d Single-weight letter rate.
 Machine 1 D3K2



In 1905, the GPO decided to use a standard obliterator for the Boston machines, this was used for the six London machines.
 Postmark: 22 mm Dater Dial with a four digit year and six horizontal bars with the machine number in the center.

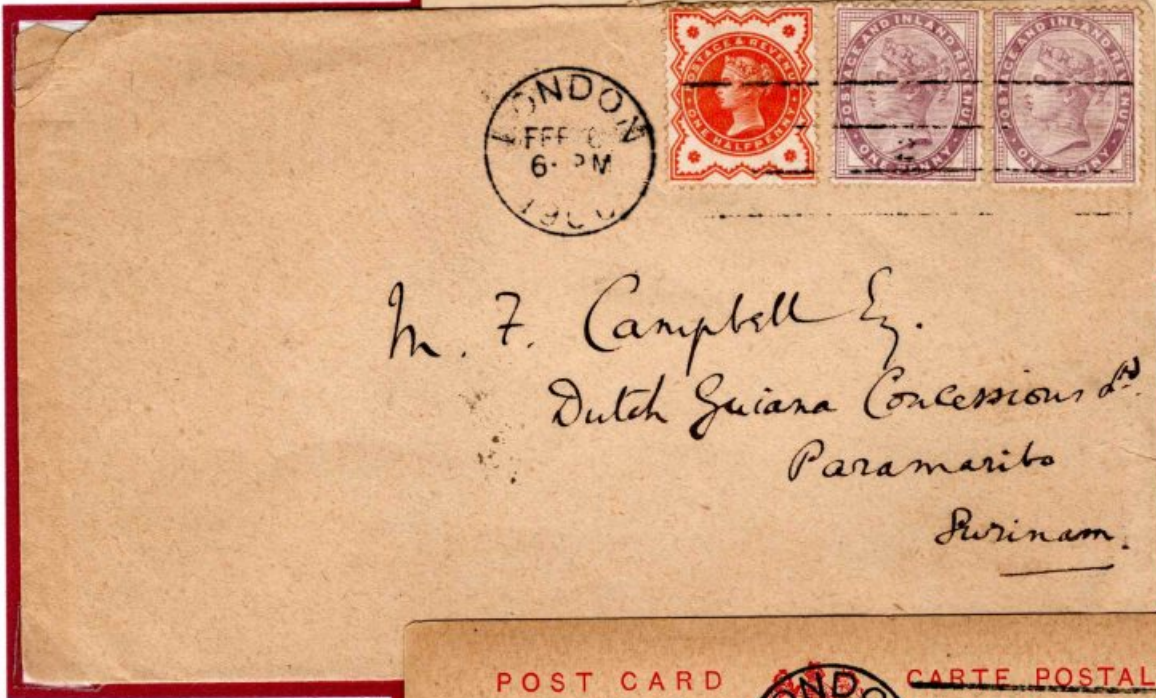


January 30, 1907
 London to Luton
 1/2d Post Card rate.
 Machine 1 D1K3

BOSTON CANCEL - London Second Trial / Field use - 1899 - 1907

CITY	MACHINE	DIAL	CANCELLER	KNOWN USE
London	2	D-1 (4 digit year)	K1 (concave 4 bar)	1899 0517 - 1900 0206
	2	D-2 (2 digit curved)	K1 (concave 4 bar)	1900 0403 - 1901 1030
	2	D-3 (2 digit horizontal)	K1 (concave 4 bar)	1902 0109 - 1904 1013
	2	D-1 (4 digit year)	K3 (6 bar)	1905 0105 - 1905 1220
	2	D-4 (Bickerdike Large)	K3 (6 bar)	1906 0105 - 19??
	2	D-1 (4 digit year)	K3 (6 bar)	1906 0705 - 1907 0612

July 7, 1899
 London to Los Angeles USA
 1d Post Card rate
 Machine 2 D1K1



February 6, 1900.
 London to Surinam
 2½d letter rate
 Machine 2 D1K1
 Last known date for
 4 digit year before
 converting to 2 digit
 year

May 23, 1900
 London to Gothenburg
 Sweden
 1d Post Card rate
 Machine 2 D2K1

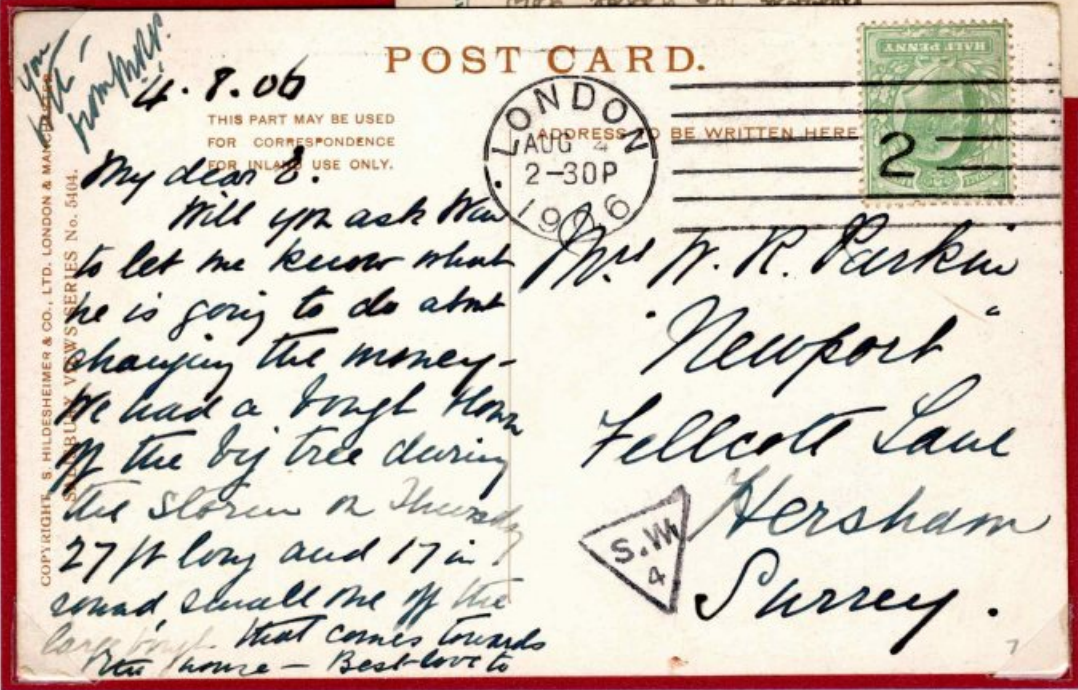




July 9, 1902
London to
Canterbury
1d Letter rate
Machine 2 D3K1



December 20, 1905
London to Aberdeen,
Scotland
1/2d Post Card rate
Machine 2 D1K3
Last known date before
Bickerdike Dater Dial
used in error

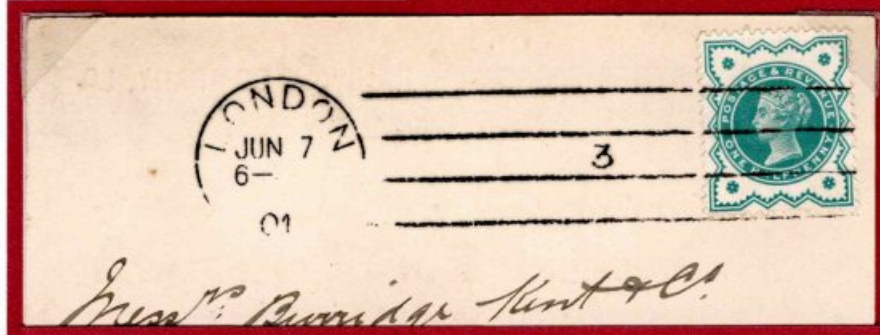
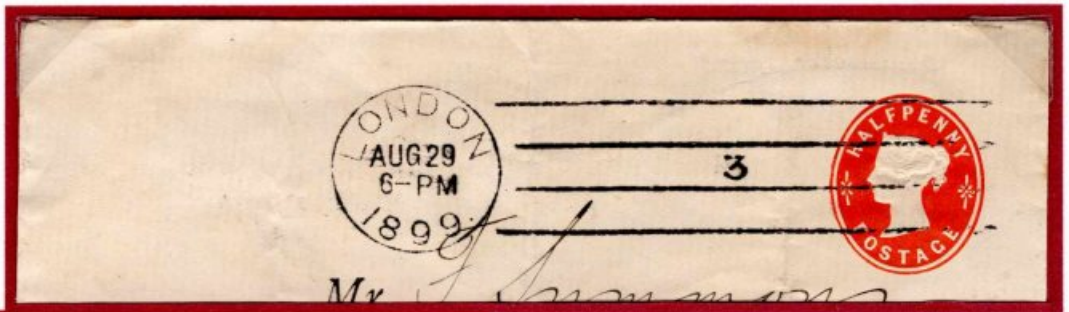


August 4, 1906
London to Hersham
1/2d Post Card rate
Machine 2 D1K3

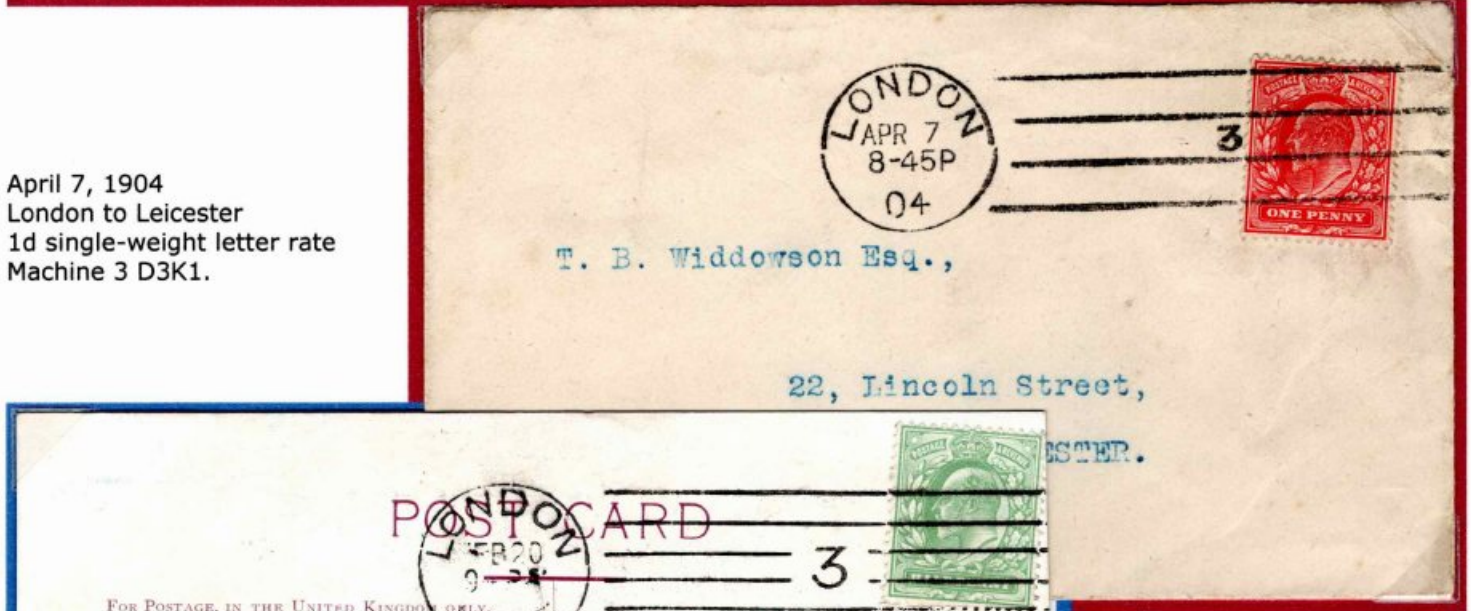
Bickerdike Dater Dial replaced with Boston Dater Dial

CITY	MACHINE	DIAL	CANCELLER	KNOWN USE
London	3	D-1 (4 digit year)	K1 (concave 4 bar)	1899 0519 - 1900 0110
	3	D-2 (2 digit curved)	K1 (concave 4 bar)	1900 0309 - 1901 1007
	3	D-3 (2 digit horizontal)	K1 (concave 4 bar)	1902 0116 - 1904 1129
	3	D-1 (4 digit year)	K3 (6 bar)	1905 0220 - 1907 0709

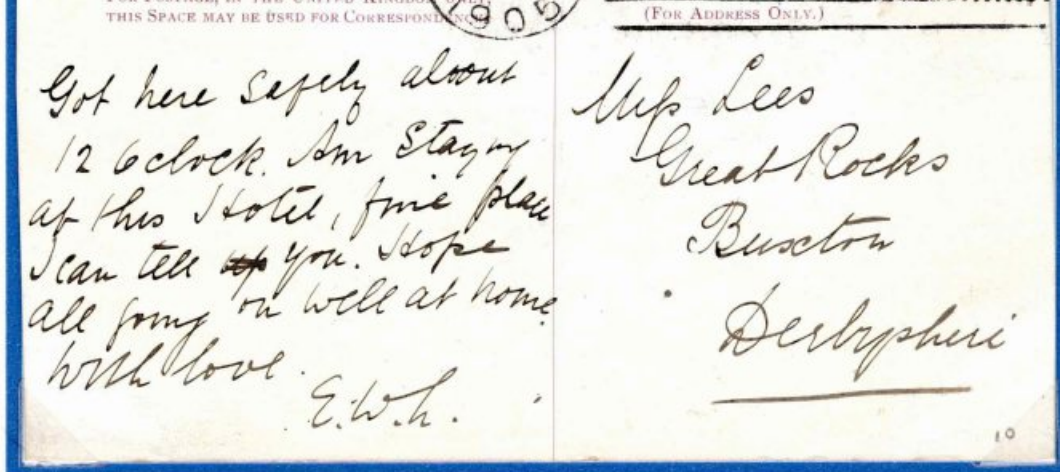
August 29, 1899.
 London to Boscombe
 1/2d Postal Stationery
 Envelope for single-weight
 printed paper rate.
 Machine 3 D1K1.



June 7, 1901
 London to Shaftsbury
 1/2d Post Card rate
 Machine 3 D2K1



April 7, 1904
 London to Leicester
 1d single-weight letter rate
 Machine 3 D3K1.



February 20, 1905
 London to Buxton
 1/2d Post Card rate
 Machine 3 D1K3
 Earliest known date for this
 Die

BOSTON CANCEL - London Second Trial / Field use - 1899 - 1907

CITY	MACHINE	DIAL	CANCELLER	KNOWN USE
London	4	D-1 (4 digit year)	K2 (concave 6 bar)	1899 0518 - 1900 0212
	4	D-2 (2 digit curved)	K2 (concave 6 bar)	1900 0220 - 1901 1231
	4	D-3 (2 digit horizontal)	K2 (concave 6 bar)	1902 0130 - 1904 1129
	4	D-1 (4 digit year)	K3 (6 bar)	1905 0209 - 1905 0828
	4	D-4 (Bickerdike Large)	K3 (6 bar)	1906 0105 - 1906 0124
	4	D-1 (4 digit year)	K3 (6 bar)	1906 0705 - 1907 0612

December 11 1899.
London to Copenhagen
1d Post Card rate
Machine 4 D1K2



October 12, 1901
London to Bishop Stortford
1/2d Pre-Paid Letter rate
Machine 4 D2K2

September 8, 1904.
London to Isleworth
1/2d Post Card rate
Machine 4 D3K2
Card was improperly faced
when fed into machine
re-entered and cancelled
right side up



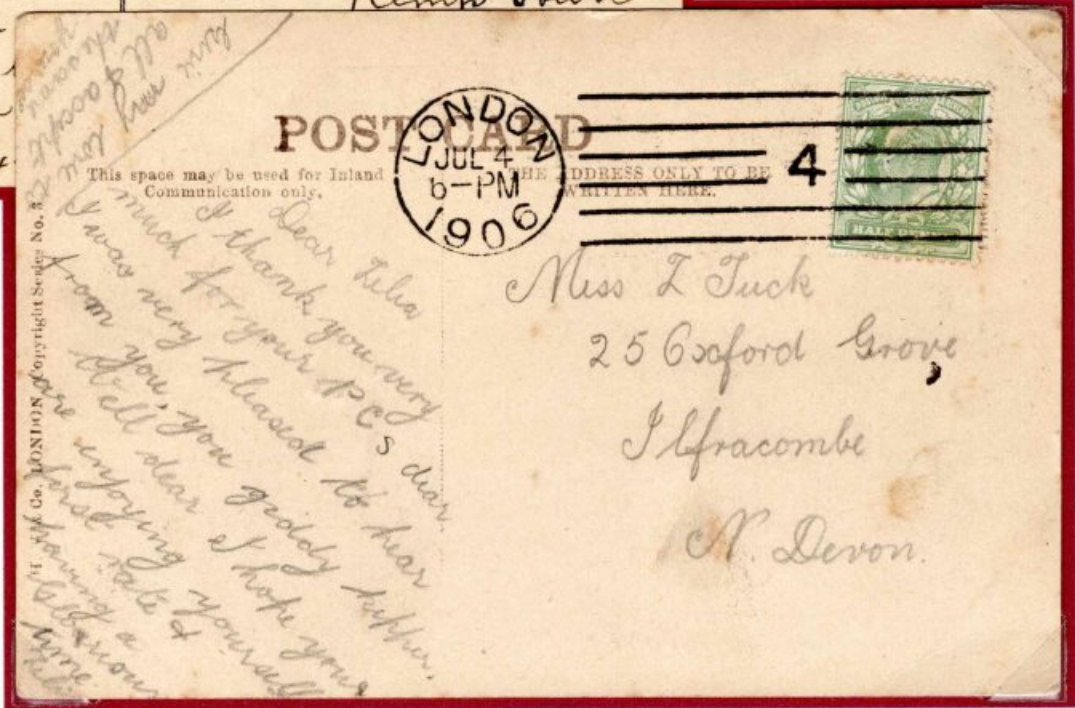
BOSTON CANCEL - London Second Trial / Field use - 1899 - 1907

August 28, 1905.
London to Derby
1/2d Post Card rate
Machine 4 D1K3
Last known date before
Bickerdike Dater Dial
used in error



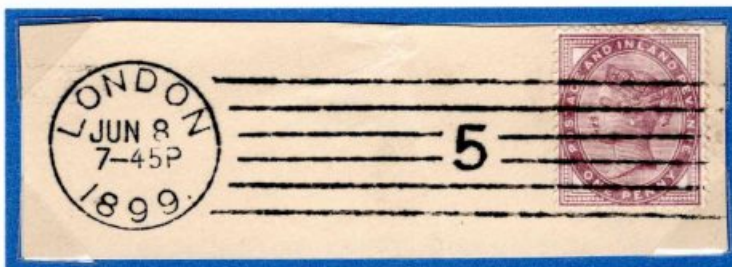
January 24, 1906
London to Brighton
1/2d Post Card rate
Machine 4 D4K3
Bickerdike Dater Dial
used in error
Last known date before
Bickerdike Dater
was replaced

July 4, 1906
London to Ilfracombe
1/2d Post Card rate
Machine 4 D1K3



BOSTON CANCEL - London Second Trial / Field use - 1899 - 1907

CITY	MACHINE	DIAL	CANCELLER	KNOWN USE
London	5	D-1 (4 digit year)	K2 (concave 6 bar)	1899 0515 - 1899 0824
	5	D-1 (4 digit year)	K4 (7 wavy lines)	1899 0828 - 1900 0202
	5	D-2 (2 digit curved)	K4 (7 wavy lines)	1901 02.. - 1901 1211
	5	D-3 (2 digit horizontal)	K4 (7 wavy lines)	1902 0110 - 1904 1211
	5	D-1 (4 digit year)	K3 (6 bar)	1905 0109 - 1905 1130
	5	D-4 (Bickerdike Large)	K3 (6 bar)	1906 0201 - 1906 0330
	5	D-1 (4 digit year)	K3 (6 bar)	1906 0510 - 1907 0607



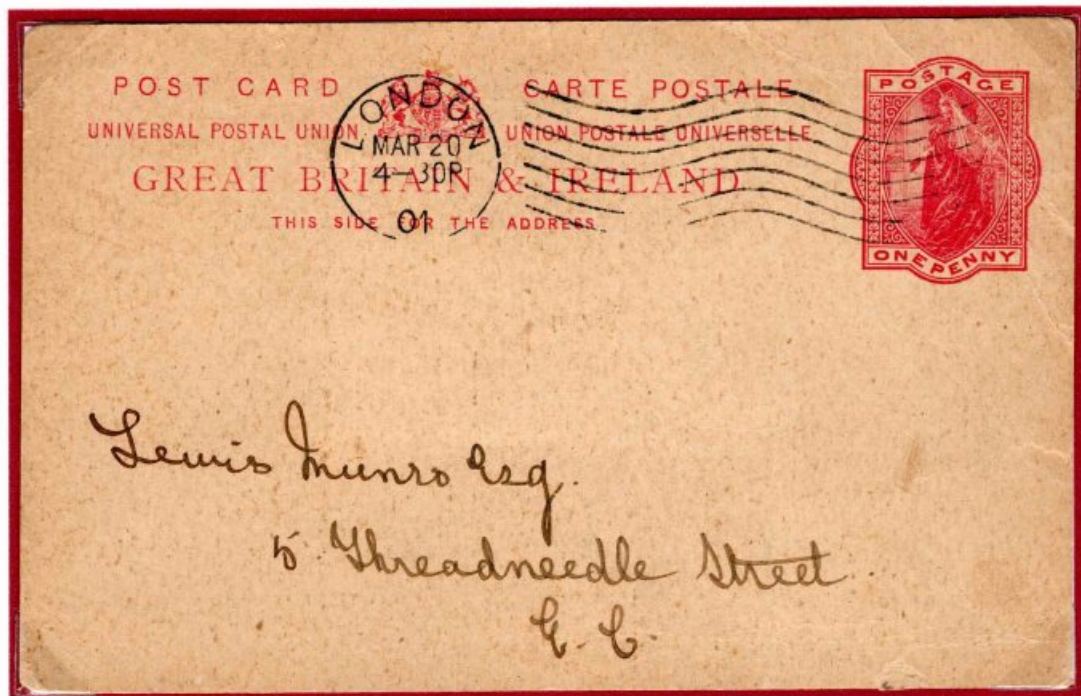
Piece June 8, 1899.
London
1d single-weight letter-rate
Machine 5 D1K2
Very hard to find, few survived

Machine 5 was fitted with a seven wavy line similar to the First Test obliterator in September 1899 for trials, this is assumed as there are no examples of the machine 5 cancels with six horizontal lines during this period.

Piece December 2 1899
½d Domestic printed-paper rate.
Machine 5 D1K4

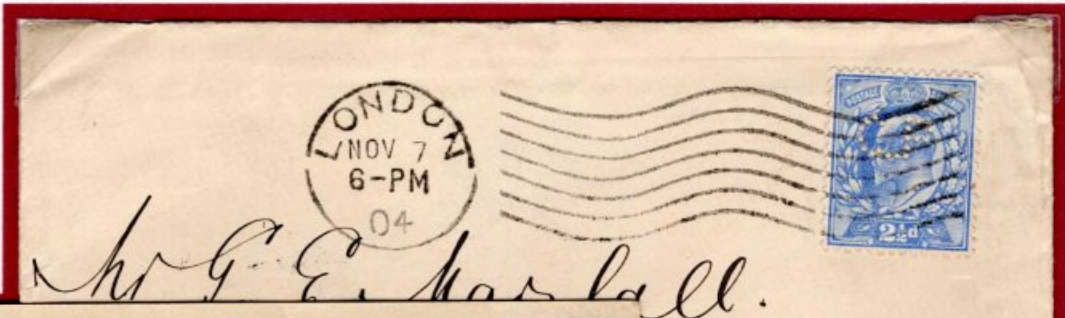


December 22 1899
London local mail posted from Chelsea using an India prepaid 2 Anna 6 Pies India envelope and a 1d Lilac Machine 5 used as a receiving back stamp.



March 20, 1901.
London Local Mail
1d Pre-paid Post Card rate
Machine 5 D2K4

November 7, 1904.
London to Middlebury USA
2½d Letter rate
Machine 5 D3K4



Mr G. E. Marshall.



POST CARD.

For Inland Postage only, this Space as well as the Back may now be used for Communication (Post Office Regulation).

ROTARY PHOTOGRAPHIC SERIES.

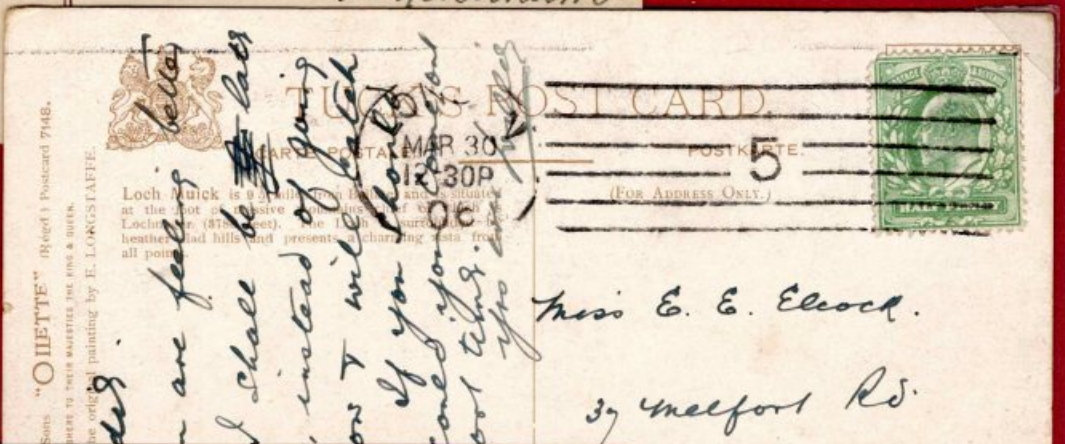
*Dear Ruby
Am sending
letter later.
Yours ever.
E.E.*

*Miss R. F. Jenkins
Trewsbury House
Trewsbury Rd
Sydenham*

*gent.
Middlebury
Vermont, USA*

May 23, 1905.
London to Sydenham
½d Post Card rate
Machine 5 D1K3

March 30, 1906
London to Thornton Heath
½d Post Card rate
Machine 5 D4K3
Bickerdike Dater Dial used in error. *Last known date before Bickerdike Dater was replaced*



Sons "Oilette" (Registered) Postcard 714B. Made in Great Britain. See back for full particulars. Original painting by E. LONGSTAFFE.

Loch Muick is a beautiful loch situated at the foot of massive mountains of the Loch Lomond (8150 feet). The loch is surrounded by heather clad hills and presents a charming vista from all points of view.

POST CARD.
POST RATE 5
(FOR ADDRESS ONLY.)

*Miss E. E. Elcock.
37 Melport Rd.*



POST CARD.

ROTARY PHOTOGRAPHIC SERIES.

*Dear Ruby
Am sending
letter later.
Yours ever.
E.E.*

*Miss R. F. Jenkins
Trewsbury House
Trewsbury Road
Sydenham
S.C.*

*Thornton Heath
Sussex*

May 10, 1906.
London to Sydenham
½d Post Card rate
Machine 5 D1K3
First known date after Bickerdike Dater was replaced

BOSTON CANCEL - London Second Trial / Field use - 1899 - 1907

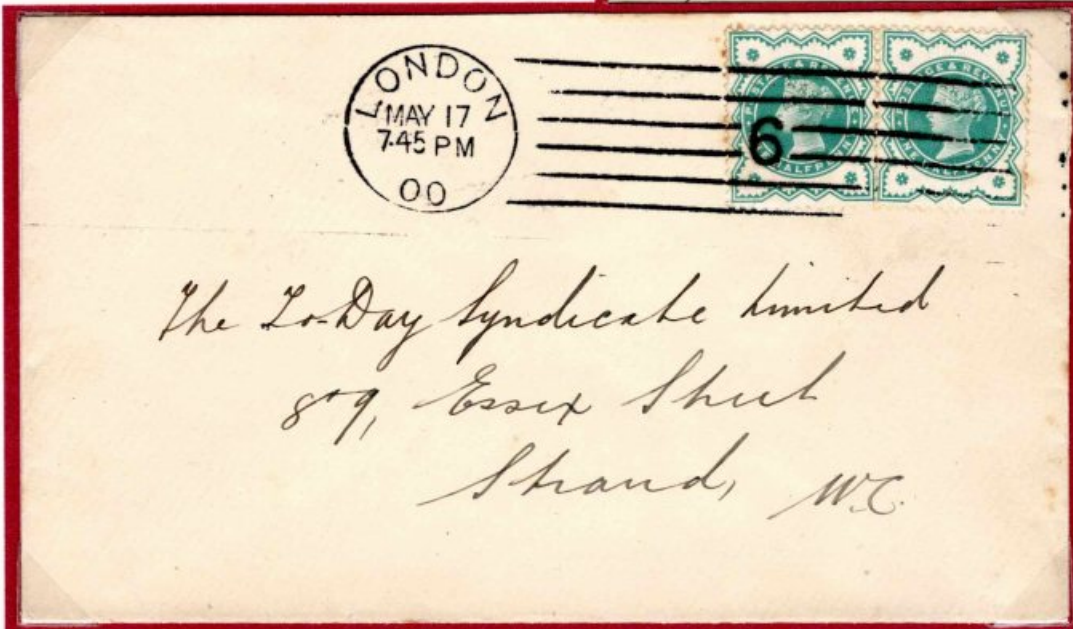
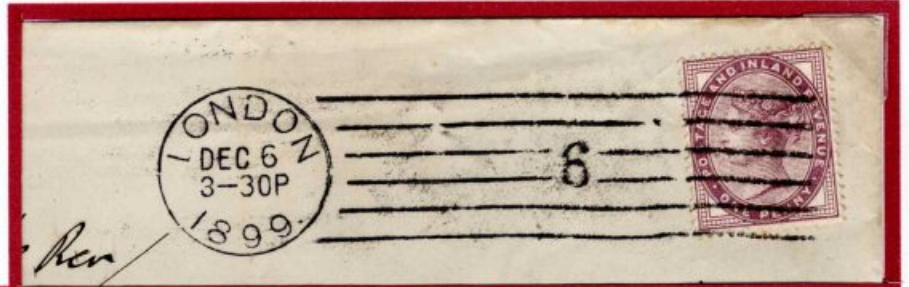
CITY	MACHINE	DIAL	CANCELLER	KNOWN USE
London	6	D-1 (4 digit year)	K2 (concave 6 bar)	1899 0519 - 1900 0202
	6	D-2 (2 digit curved)	K2 (concave 6 bar)	1900 0223 - 1901 1210
	6	D-3 (2 digit horizontal)	K2 (concave 6 bar)	1902 0107 - 1904 1229
	6	D-4 (Bickerdike Large)	K2 (concave 6 bar)	1904 1202 - 19??
	6	D-1 (4 digit year)	K3 (6 bar)	1905 0105 - 1905 0218
	6	D-4 (Bickerdike Large)	K3 (6 bar)	1906 0223 - 1906 0323
	6	D-1 (4 digit year)	K3 (6 bar)	1906 0611 - 1907 0803

September 21, 1899.
London to Swansea
1d Single-weight Letter rate
Machine 6 D1K2



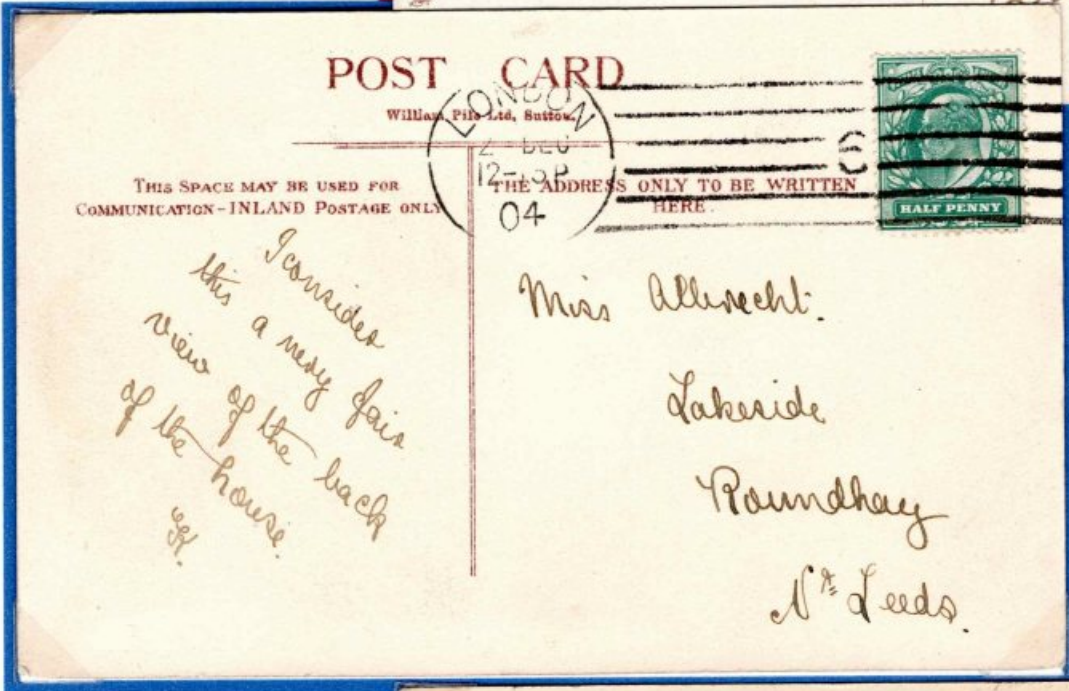
Piece May 19, 1899
1d Single-weight Letter rate
Machine 6 D1K2
Earliest known use of Machine 6

December 6, 1899
London to West Ayton
1d single-weight letter rate
Machine 6 D1K2
This cancel may have been used in the comparison trial conducted in London between December 6 and 7 with the "Bickerdike" machine.



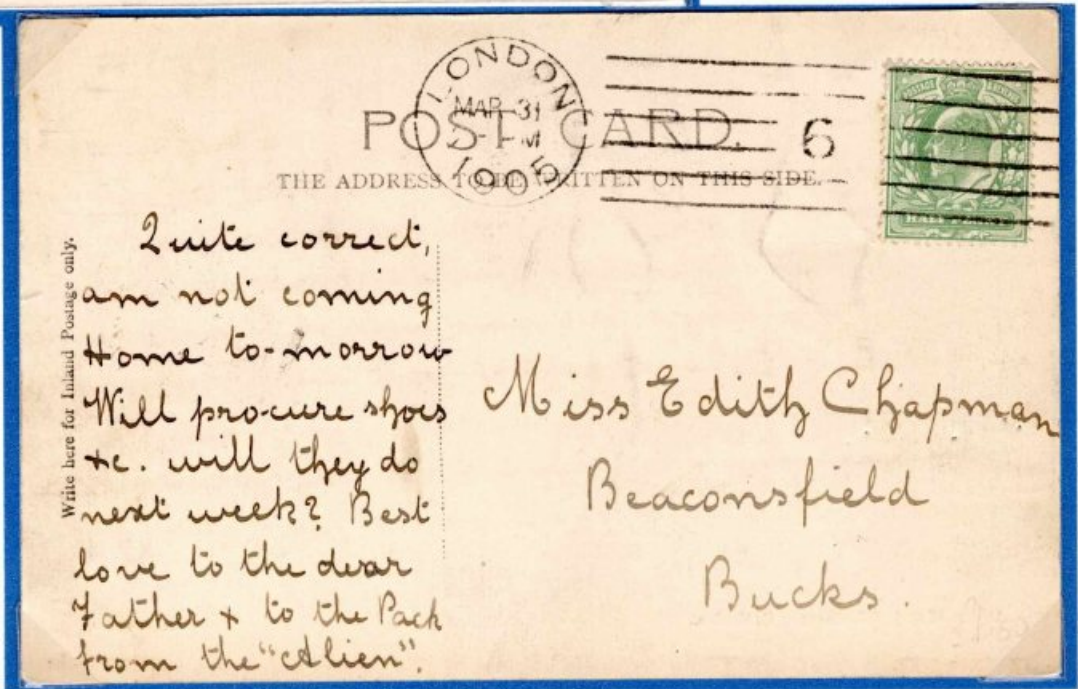
May 17, 1900
London Local Mail
1d single-weight letter rate
Machine 6 D2K2

July 27, 1904
 London to Douglas,
 Isle of Man
 1/2d Post Card rate
 Machine 6 D3K2

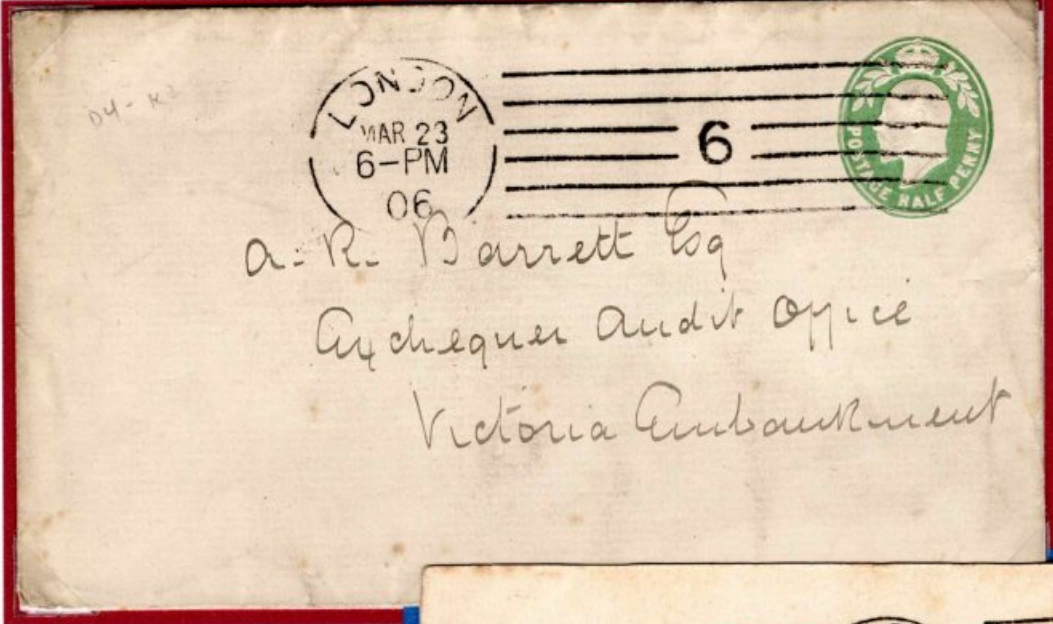
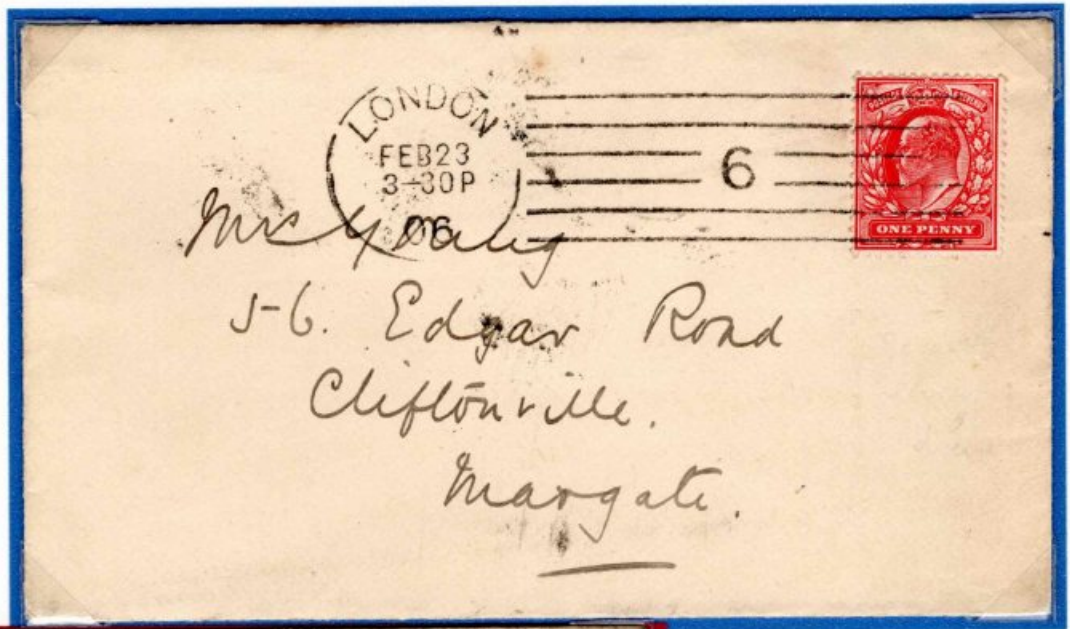


December 2, 1904
 Note date European
 style reading "2 DEC"
 London to Roundhay
 1/2d Post Card rate
 Machine 6 D4K2
 Bickerdike Dater Dial
 used in error
*Earliest known use
 of this Die*

March 31, 1905.
 London to Beaconsfield
 1/2d Postcard rate
 Machine 6 D1K3
Latest known use of this Die



February 23, 1906
London to Margate
1d single-weight letter rate
Machine 6 D4K3
Bickerdike Dater Dial used
in error
Earliest known use of this Die



March 23, 1906
London Local Mail
1/2d Pre-paid letter rate
Machine 6 D4K3
Bickerdike Dater Dial used
in error
*Last known date before
Bickerdike Dater was
replaced*

June 11, 1906
London to Southall
1/2d Post Card rate
Machine 64 D1K3
Earliest known use of this Die



BOSTON CANCEL - Liverpool / Field use 1900 - 1904

During the 1899 second trials in London, the GPO decided to expand trials to Liverpool. Accordingly two additional Boston machines were leased for trial there. These machines were assigned the numbers 3 and 4, since numbers 1 and 2 had already been assigned to the "Bickerdike" machines which were also being tested at Liverpool. The number 3 machine had its number inverted.

CITY	MACHINE	DIAL	CANCELLER	KNOWN USE
Liverpool	3	D-1 (4 digit year)	K4 (wavy lines w #3)	1900 0206 - 1900 0219
	3	D-2 (2 digit curved)	K4 (wavy lines w #3)	1901 0507 - 1901 0730
	3	D-3 (2 digit horizontal)	K4 (wavy lines w #3)	1902 0630 - 1904 1018

February 19, 1900
 Liverpool to Kristiansand
 Norway
 1d Post Card rate
 Machine 3 D1K4



November 6, 1901
 Liverpool to Huddersfield
 1d Single-weight letter rate
 Machine 3 D2K4



June 3, 1902
 London to Louisville, USA
 1/2d Pre-paid letter rate
 Machine 3 D3K4



BOSTON CANCEL - Liverpool / Field use 1900 - 1904

CITY	MACHINE	DIAL	CANCELLER	KNOWN USE
Liverpool	4	D-1 (4 digit year)	K4 (wavy lines w #4)	1900 0205 - 19??
	4	D-2 (2 digit curved)	K4 (wavy lines w #4)	1900 0611 - 1901 0621
	4	D-3 (2 digit horizontal)	K4 (wavy lines w #4)	1902 0904 - 1904 1010

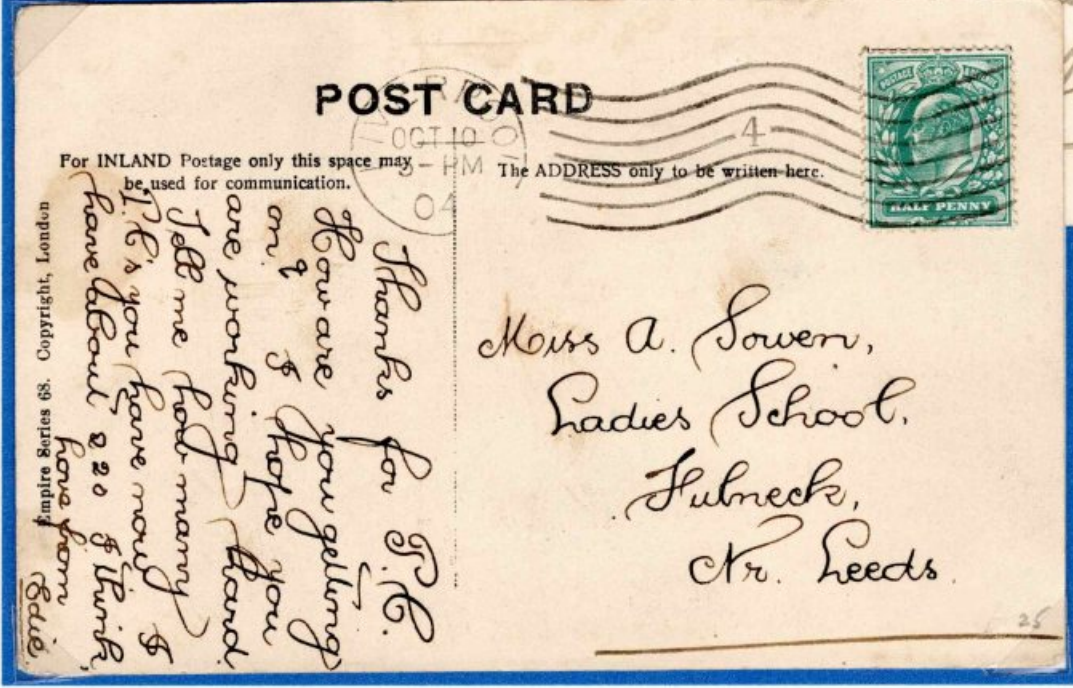


Liverpool to Hull
 1/2d Commercial Mail rate
 Machine 4 D2K4
Latest known use

September 4, 1902
 London to Rathgar, Ireland
 1/2d Post Card rate
 Machine 4 D3K4
Earliest known use



October 10, 1904
 London to Fulneck
 1/2d Post Card rate
 Machine 4 D3K4
Latest known use



Epilogue

In 1907 the Boston Machine Cancel and its competition, the Bickerdike, were withdrawn and replaced with the Columbia and Krag machines, these were considerably faster and more reliable. The Columbia, introduced in 1901 went on until 1921 while the Krag introduced in 1905, went on until 2012 in one form or another.