

# Victoria Stamps and Postmarks of Bristol

by R.A. Rostron

(A talk cum display given to the Malta Philatelic Society members on 7<sup>th</sup>  
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Prepared for printing by John A. Cardona

## Introduction

Using Bristol as a 'vehicle' I will attempt to demonstrate the growing Postal Phenomenon that took place soon after the introduction of the adhesive postage stamp in 1840. Why Bristol? Well I lived there as a schoolboy. Its location as a port in the west of England meant much mail was generated there and passed through it. Bristol's coat of arms is shown in Fig 1.

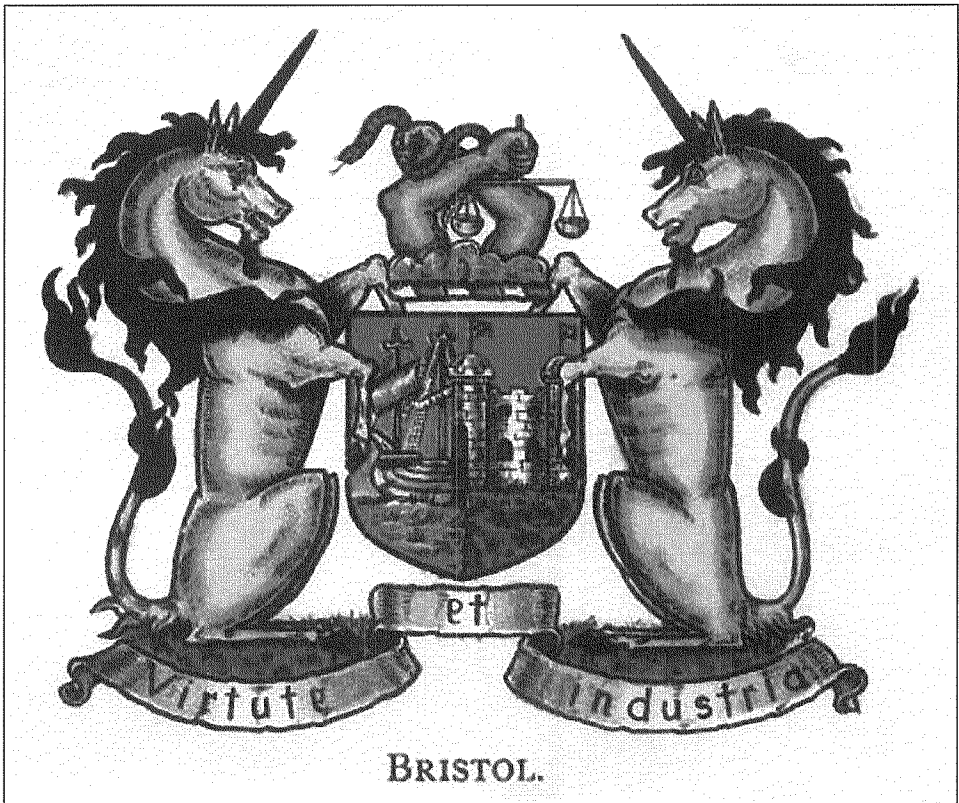


Figure 1

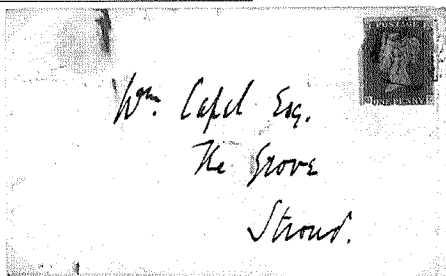
Having spent a lifetime collecting stamps, I concluded that I had enough material to form a collection. Based on information derived from eminent authors such as Brummel, Cohen, Parmenter, Trail and Holland, Wilcocks and Sedgwick and Dr. Whitney.

The material is arranged in approximate date order, identifying the main different types of postmarks. Examples of the designs are shown alongside the item, for clarity.

## Victorian stamps and their associated Bristol postmarks

The first cancellation to be used became known as the *Maltese Cross*, due to its shape. An 1842 example is shown on cover Fig. 2. The condition leaves something to be desired but my priority has been to show examples of the relevant types. During the 1840's most towns in Britain were issued with town postal identification numbers. For Bristol this was '134' and was incorporated into the '1844 - Type' barred cancel. It was used as an obliterator, one per stamp. Dates of postage were added separately.

The Maltese Cross postmark of Bristol



An 1842 cover sent from Bristol with a Maltese Cross cancel.

On reverse is a "BRISTOL PY. POST" mark and a Stroud receiver, as shown below.

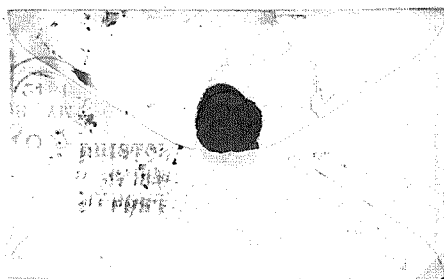


Figure 2

The first design issued in 1844, known as '1844 Type A' had 4 bars top and bottom and the '3' in 134 was round topped – Fig. 3. The strange thing about my example on 2d blue is that only 3 bars can be seen. The cover is dated 1845 whereas this type is only known from 1851.

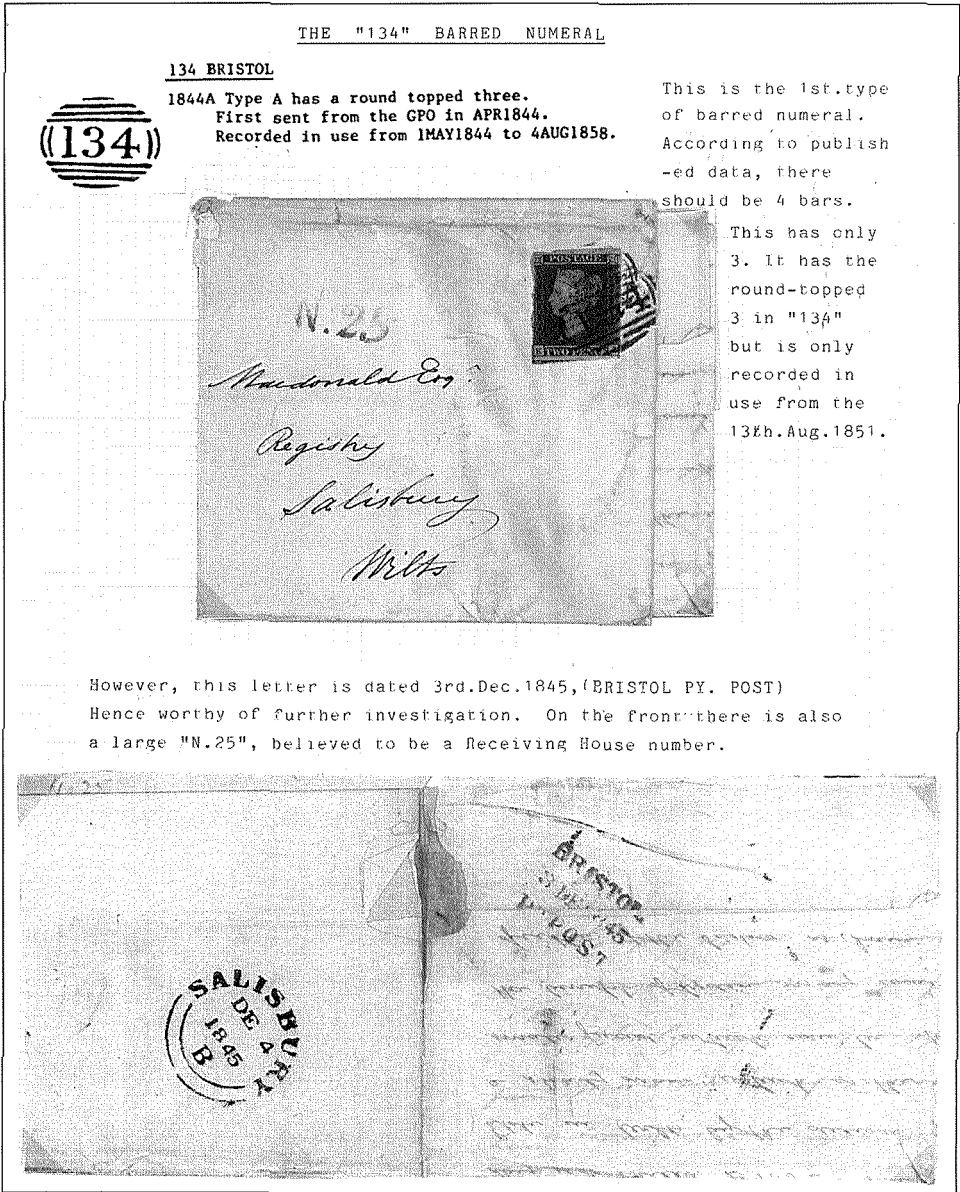
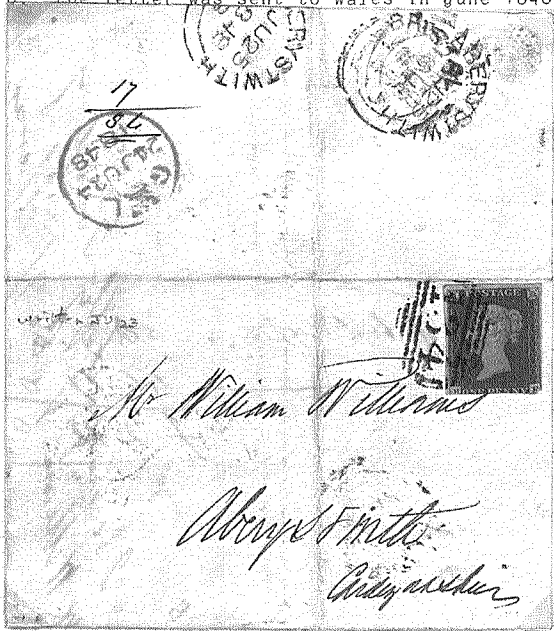


Figure 3

Fig. 4 shows normal Type A 4 barred cancels but it is noted that one has the 7mm high 134, the other is 5½mm high.

1844-Type A Barred Numeral

This is clearly the 4 barred cancel with a round-topped 3.  
 It is applied to a 3 margined 1d. red imperforate, believed to  
 be Plate 76. The letter was sent to Wales in June 1848.



The "134" is  
 7mm high.

This mourning cover bears a similar cancel on a 4 margined 1d. red  
 but it is to be noted that the "134" is only 5½mm. high.

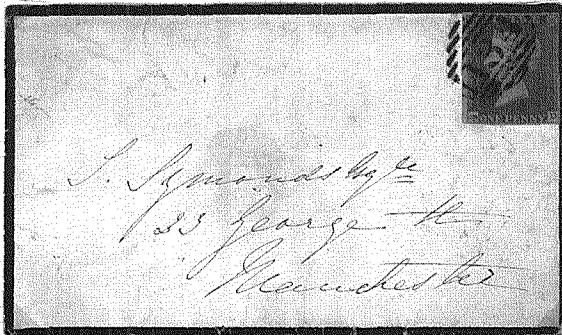


Figure 4

Fig. 5 shows the flat topped '3' in 134 and is known as 'Type B'.

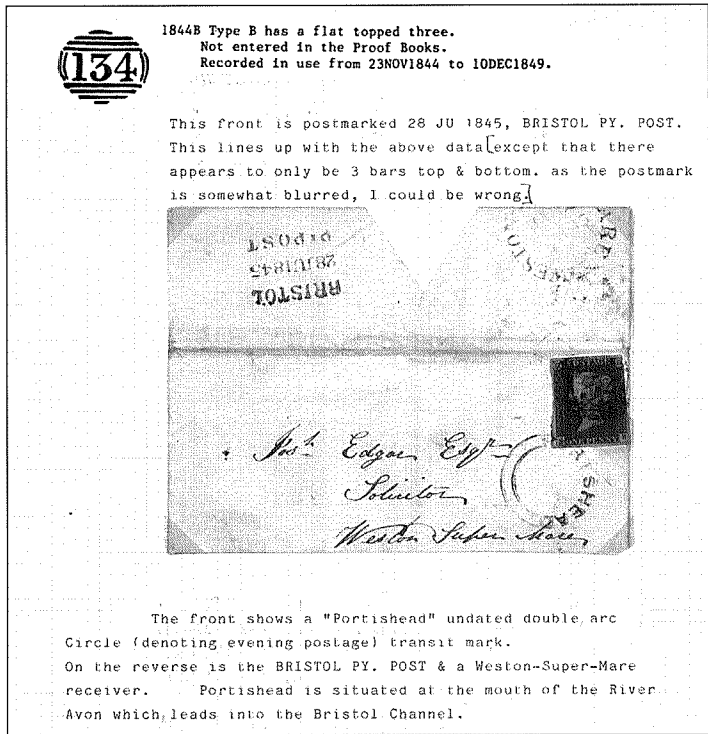


Figure 5

Fig. 6 shows the first 3 bar cancel, known as "3 HOS". It is first recorded in use from 13 Aug 1851, but my first example is dated 6 Aug 1851.

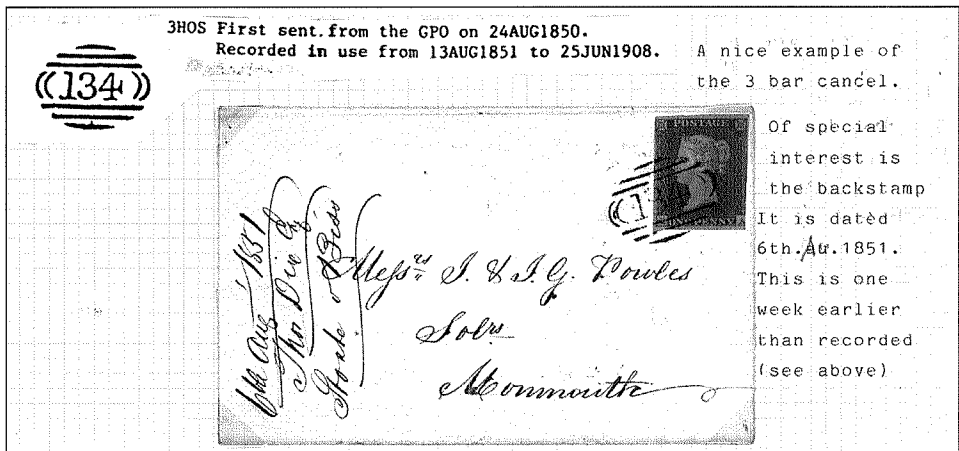


Figure 6

In 1853/4 various designs of experimental Duplex cancels were tried, incorporating the date of postage with the town number, thus speeding up the process, needing one application instead of two. By this time the sheets of stamps were perforated.

Fig. 7 shows the 'Spoon' cancel, so named due to its shape. The two different examples differ in the shape of '1' and the size of '134'.

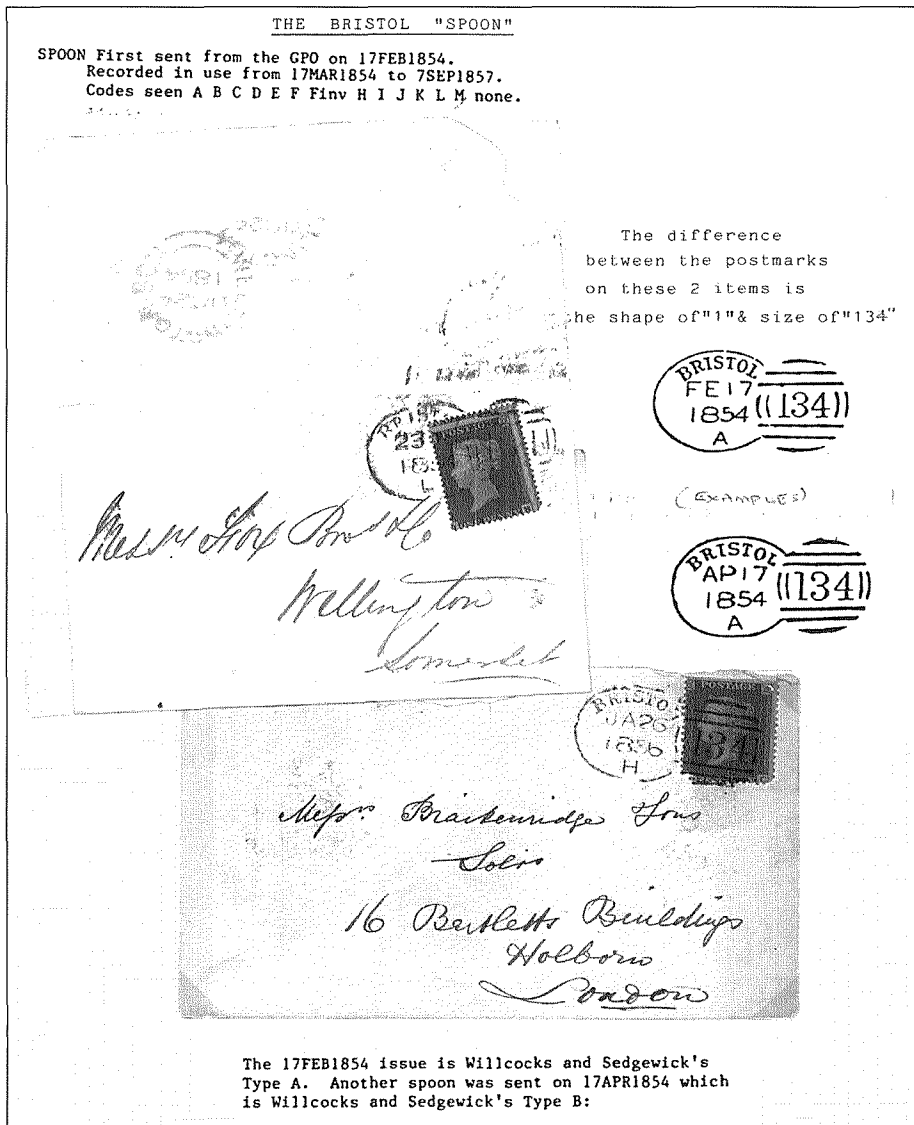


Figure 7

Fig. 8 shows the Sideways Duplex first tried in 1855. The examples differ in the size of 'Bristol' and '134'. Two of the items bear 1d 'reds' on transitional paper.



Figure 8

Fig. 9 shows smaller design versions of the sideways 'Duplex'.

SDWYS Traill and Holland type Va.

First entered in the Proof Books on 10JUL1857.

Recorded in use from 31MAY1857 to 10NOV1864.

Codes seen A B C D E F G H I J K L M N T C1 4.

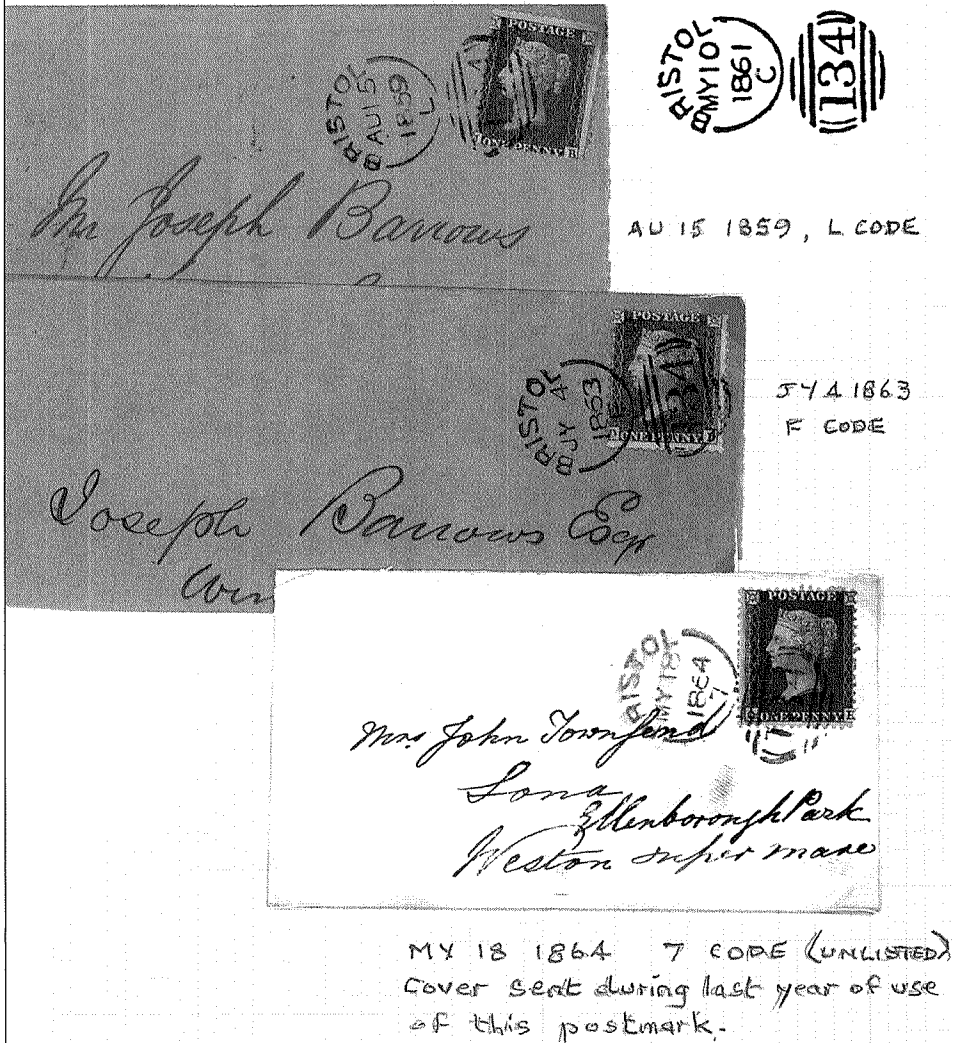


Figure 9



Fig. 10 shows examples of the sideways 'Bristol' with '134' normal way round.

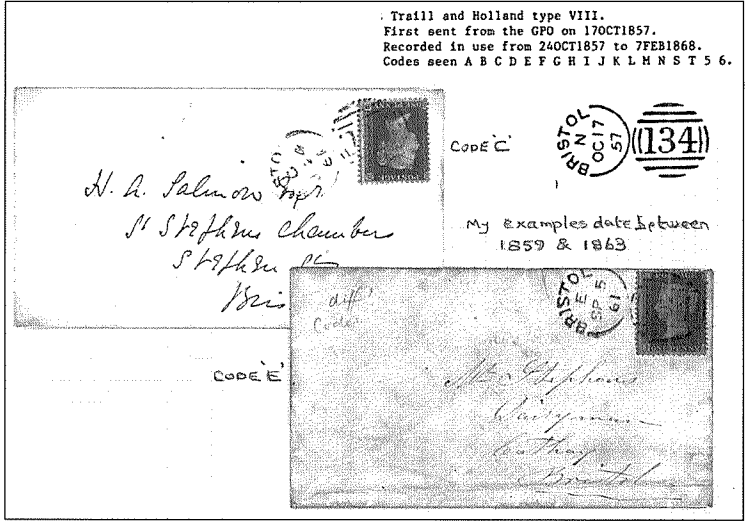


Figure 10

Fig. 11 shows examples of the standard 3 bar Duplex.



Figure 11

Fig. 12 shows an example of the standard 4 bar Duplex.

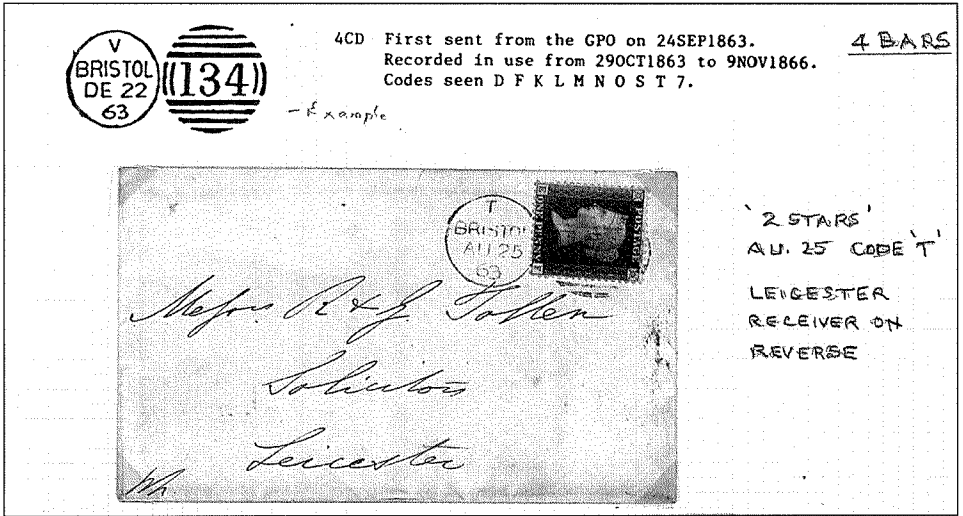


Figure 12

Fig. 13 shows the large oval shaped 4 bar design with horizontal 'Bristol'.

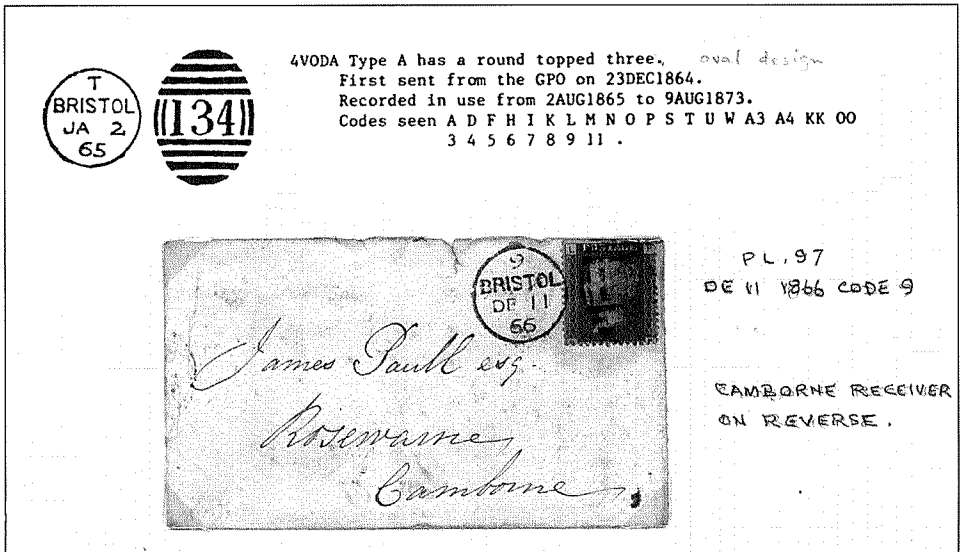


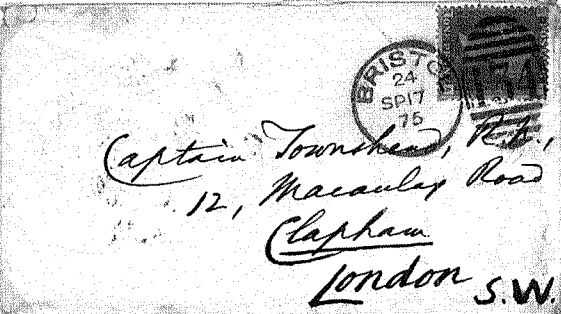


Figure 13

Fig. 14 is the long running large oval 4 bar design with flat-topped '3' in '134' and semi-circular 'Bristol'. The long list of codes is by Parmenter and my Mourning cover of 1876 has 'A 25' unlisted code. Figure 14a.

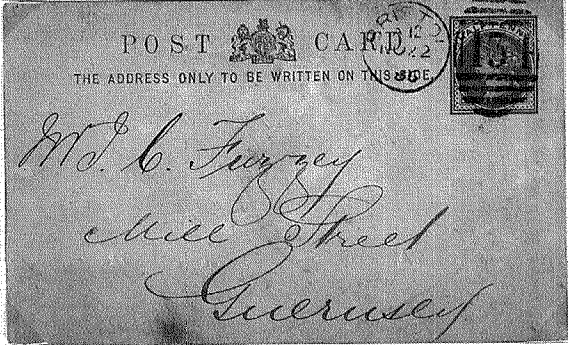
4VOVB Type B has a flat topped three.  
 First sent from the GPO on 14MAR1872.  
 Recorded in use from 30MAY1873 to 23DEC1905.  
 Initially a single code letter or number was used, later a two part code number and handstamp letter were used.  
 At any one time the handstamp letter identifies a particular handstamp (these change with time).  
 Codes seen F L none(xmas) 3 4 15 16 17 18 19 20 25 26  
 A then number: 5 13 14 15 17 18 20 21 24 29.  
 B then number: 3 5 9 12 17 19 20 21 27 29.  
 C then number: 5 6 9 11 12 13 28 29.  
 D then number: 10 11 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 23.  
 E then number: 6 8 11 12 14 16 19 24 27.  
 F then number: 1 12 13 16 18 20 21 22 24.  
 Number then A: 14 17 18 20 29.  
 Number then B: 7 8 10 15 16 18 19 20 21 22 25 29 none.  
 Number then D: 10 18 20.  
 Number then E: 5 9 10 17 18 19 20 21.  
 Number then F: 14 18 20 21 27.  
 Number then G: 17 18 21 26 27.  
 Number then R: 18 19 20 21.



*Captain Townshend, Retd.  
 12, Macaulay Road  
 Clapham  
 London S.W.*

PL. 165  
 SP17 1875  
NUMBER ONLY, CODE 24  
 (UNLISTED)

HEWISH TRANSIT &  
 LONDON S.W. RECEIVER  
 ON REVERSE



POST CARD  
 THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE

*Mrs. C. Fuzzy  
 Mill Street  
 Quersey*

ALPHA BEFORE NUMBER  
 1/2d. POSTAL STY. CARD  
 NO 22 1886  
 CODE A 12

P.T.O. FOR A 25

Figure 14

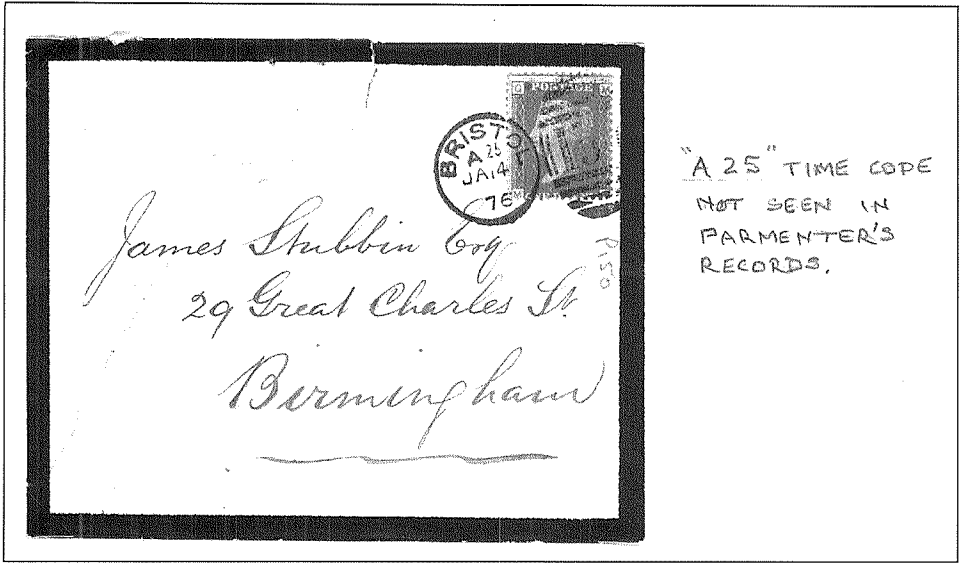


Figure 14a

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**for**

**MALTEX 2013**

Fig. 15 shows a 1/2d lilac postal stationery card with a version of the 3 bar Duplex having a significant gap between the datestamp, slightly tilted, and the barred '134'. Parmenter says "this has not been seen in use, hence it could be the only one known!"

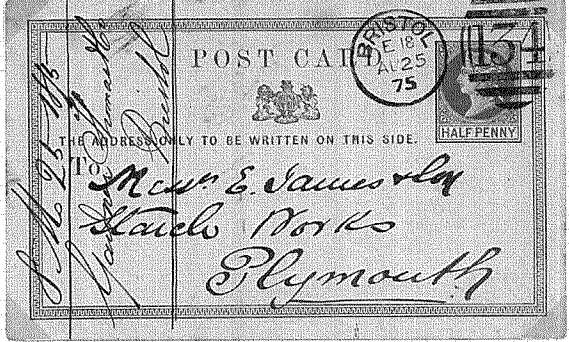





First type.

3VOD The first Proof Book entry on 9MAY1873 was of a special type with the cds some distance from the obliterator and at an angle to it. This has not been seen in use.

3 BARS

↓  
N.B. THIS COULD BE THE ONLY ONE KNOWN!



First normal type.

The first normal type was sent on 30APR1878.  
Recorded in use from 23JAN1879 to 19OCT1912.  
Codes seen for each handstamp letter:

- A then number: 20 21.
- B then number: 6 none.
- C then number: 11 14 19 30.
- D then number: 1 7 24 26.
- E then number: 10 13 14 16 22 24 26 27.
- F then number: 22 25.
- Number then G: 15 18 21 23 26 27.
- Number then H: 1 11 12 14 15 18 20 21 27.
- I then number: 19.
- J then number: 6 19 21 37.
- K then number: 15 17 19 22 24 30 none.
- L then number: 18 20 22 24 25 30.
- M then number: 24 26 none.
- N then number: 5 15 16.
- Number then O: 19.
- P then number: 28 30.
- S then number: 23 24 none.
- Rarity A.

Price pre 1900 £2 post 1900 £1.

NB.  
OUT OF DATE  
PRICES!

THERE FOLLOWS SOME EXAMPLES.

Figure 15

Fig. 15a shows the more normal type with some examples.

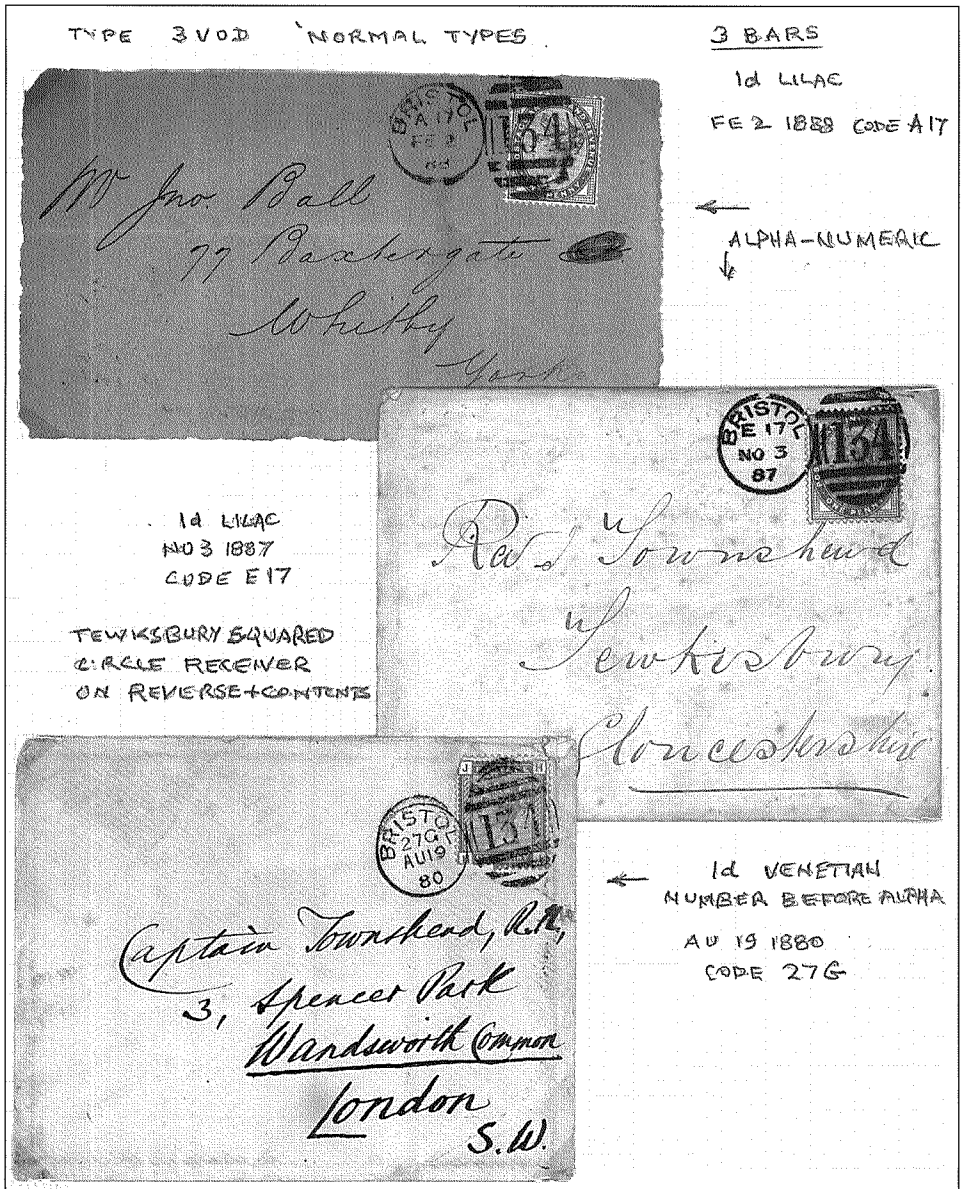
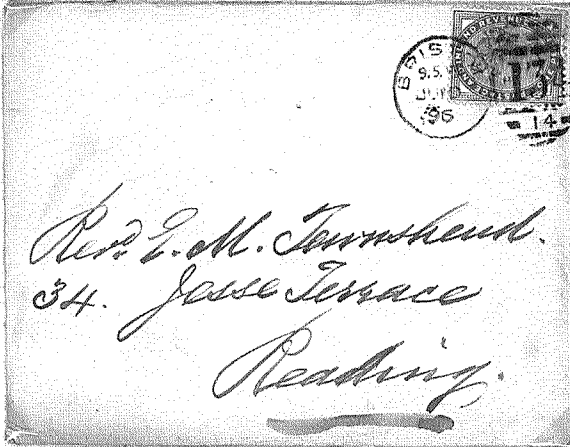


Figure 15a

Bristol, being of considerable size, in due course it was thought desirable to include a 'District' number in the design and this was incorporated in the Basal Bars of the Duplex. Fig. 16 shows examples.

3VOD14S 2.5mm high figure 14 cut in basal bars.  
 Recorded in use from 23NOV1896 to 18SEP1903.  
 Times seen 120AM 6PM 615PM 95PM 10PM.



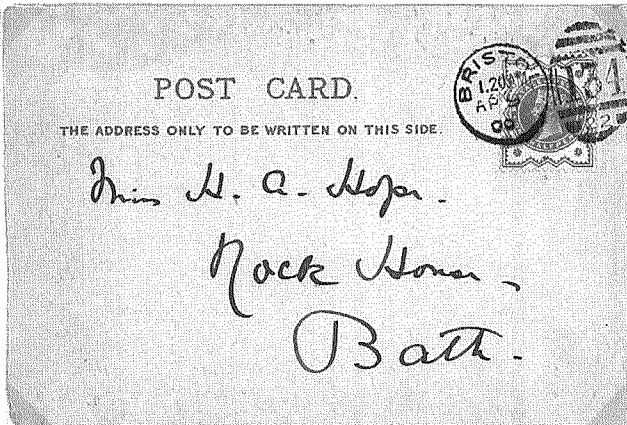
4 BARS

9.55 PM

JUL 10 1895

'14' CUT INTO  
 BASAL BARS

3VOD22 Figure 22 cut in basal bars.  
 Recorded in use from 22JUL1895 to 18FEB1902.  
 Times seen 120AM 1230PM 5PM 530PM 545PM 655PM.



3 BARS

1.20 A.M.  
 (NIGHT MAIL)  
 APR 5 1900

'22' CUT INTO  
 BASAL BARS

Figure 16

## Districts

Two main districts had their own postmarks – Clifton and North Street.

**Clifton** was the largest and an example (Fig. 17) is shown of its sideways Duplex postmark.

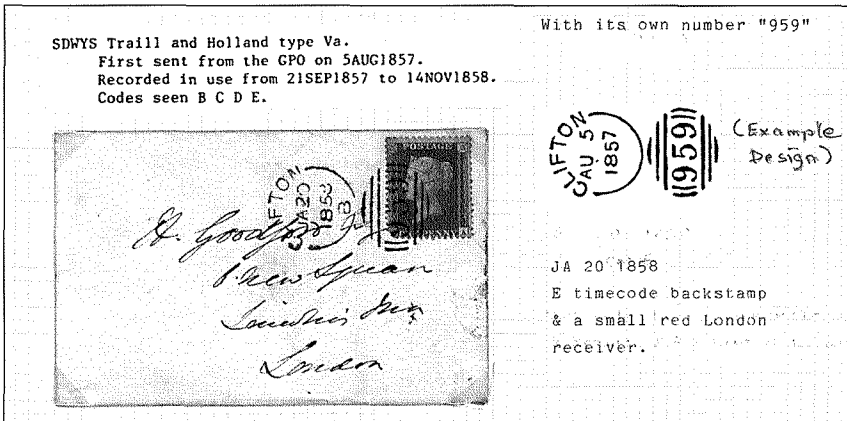


Figure 17

Fig. 18 shows examples of the normal Duplex with 'Clifton' horizontal.



Figure 18



Fig. 19 shows the 3 bar design with circular 'Clifton / Bristol'.

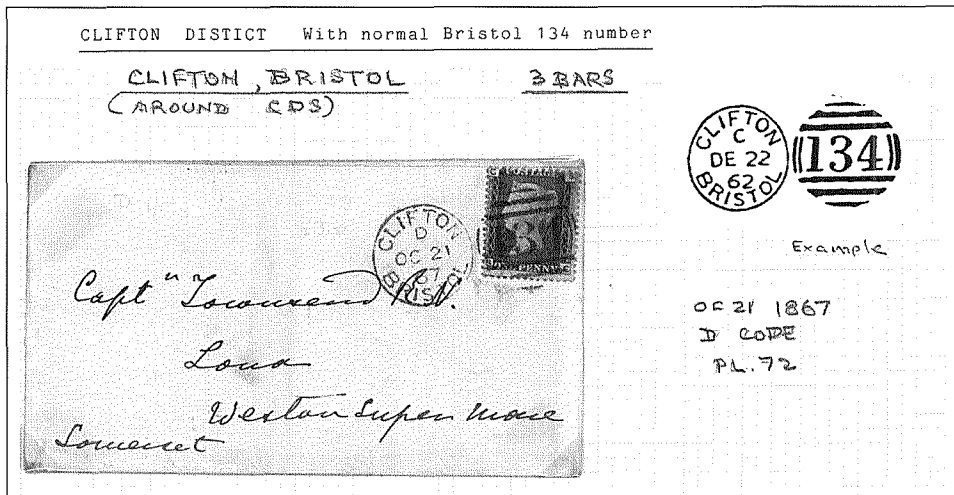


Figure 19

Our Society is a full member of Federation Internationale de Philatelie (FIP). and our members whose Malta collections are of FIP standards should make use of this facility and participate.

Future FIP and other exhibitions are scheduled as follows:

**2013**

10-15 May, Australia

2-13 August, Bangkok. Thailand

11-17 November, Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro Brazil

**2015**

3 -16 May, London 2015. International Exhibition,  
at BDC, Islington

**2016**

25 May-4 June, World stamp show N.Y. USA

Fig. 20 shows the 4 bar of similar design with 2 examples used later than previously recorded.

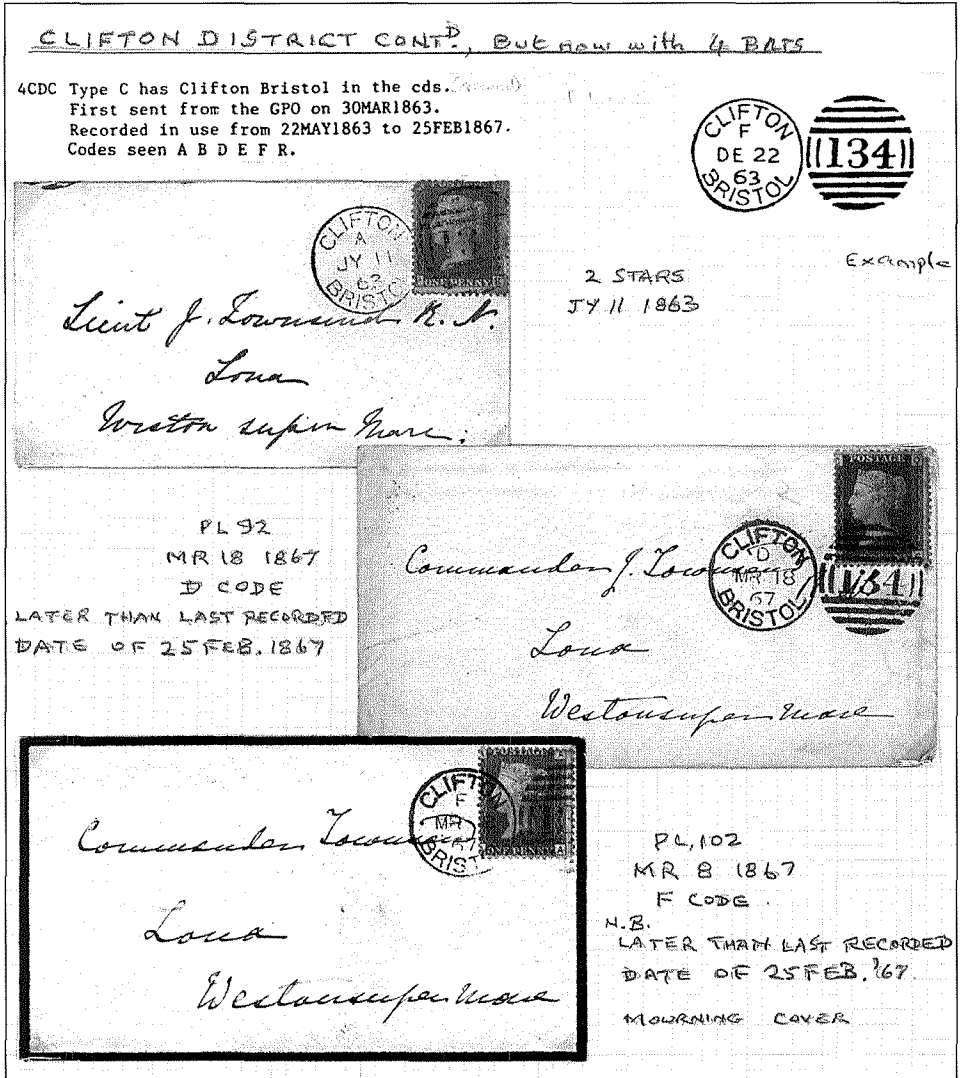


Figure 20

Fig. 21 shows examples of the large oval 4 barred design with flat topped '3' in '134'.

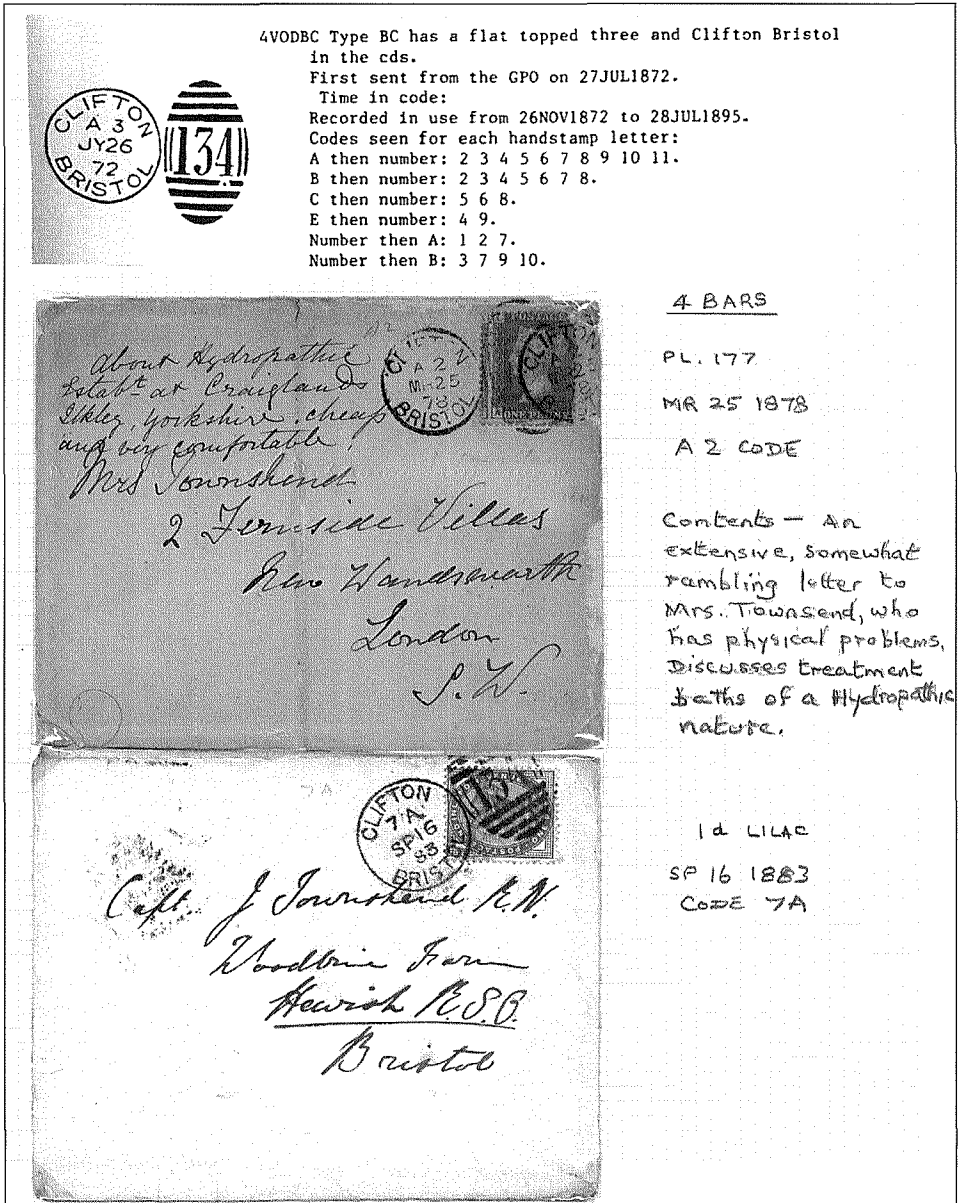


Figure 21

North Street Fig. 22 shows the 3 bar design and Fig. 23 shows the 4 bar design.

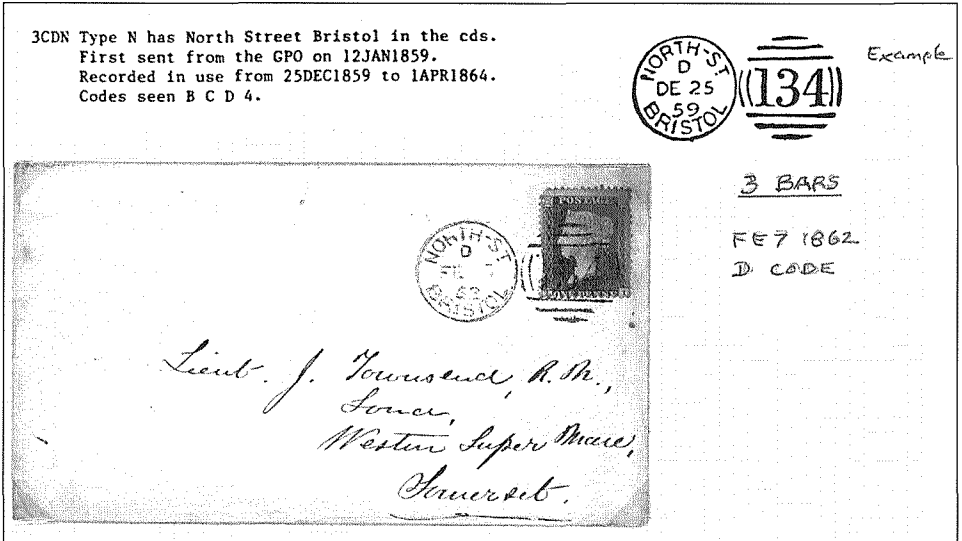


Figure 22

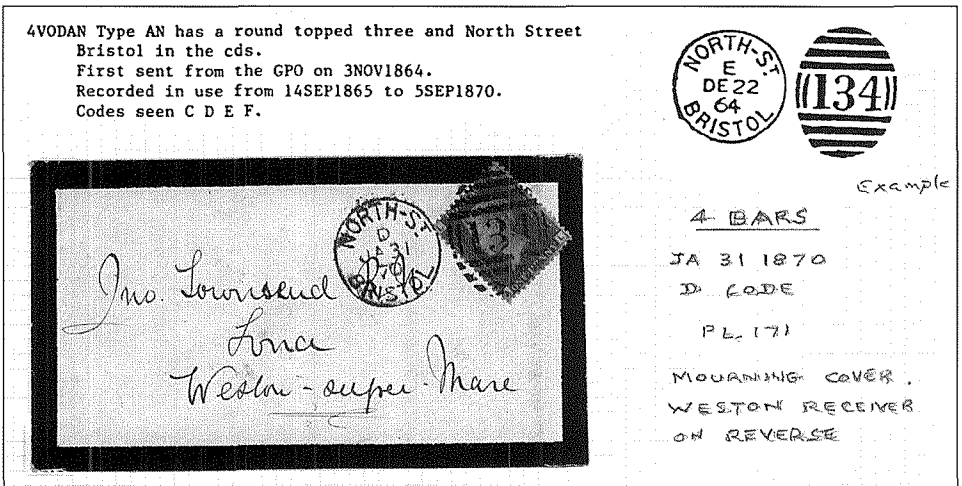


Figure 23

Other designs of postmarks were introduced in the 1880's, in particular the squared circle. This acted as an obliterator and datestamp. It varied in size, number of arcs in corners, etc. Fig. 24 examples are shown on and off cover.

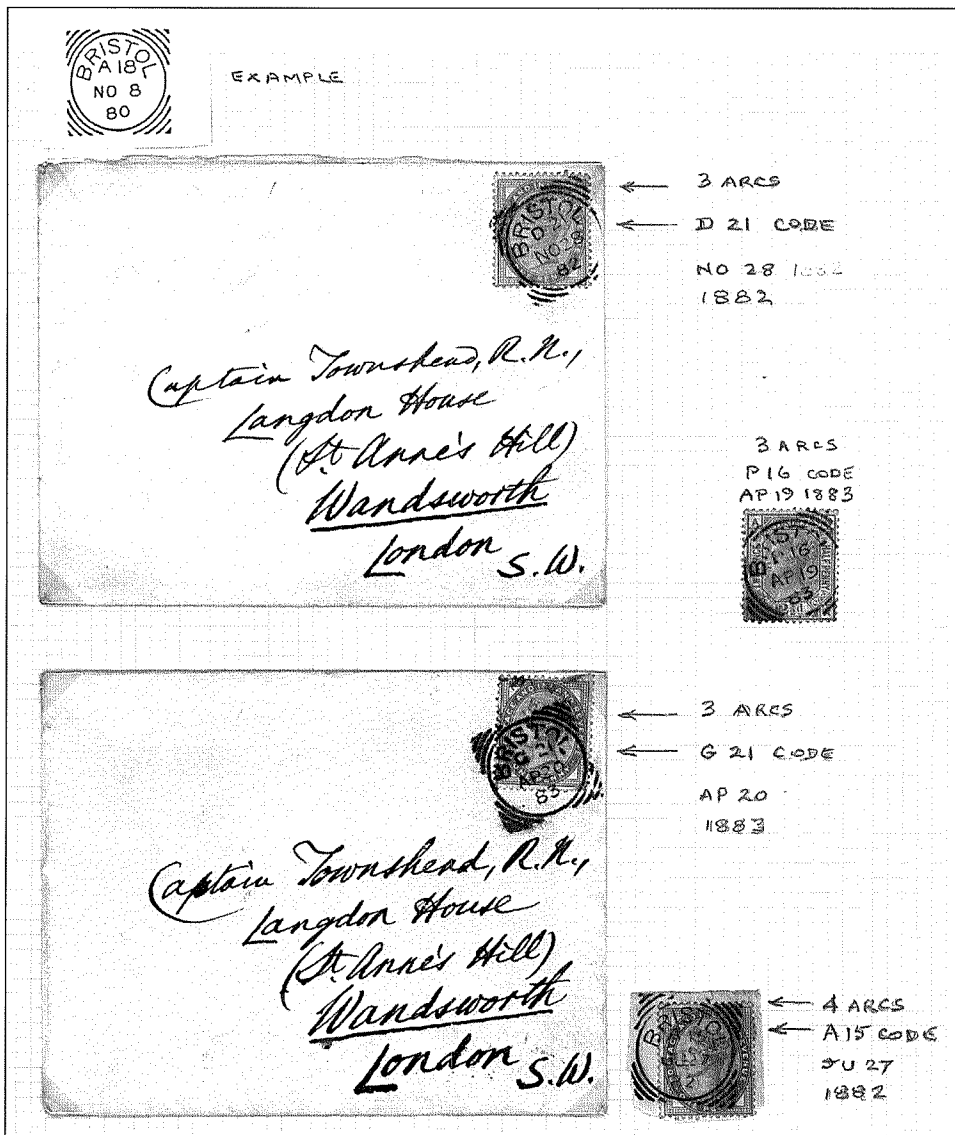


Figure 24

Fig. 25 shows circular datestamps including on vignette postcards. This design has proved long lasting and is still in use.

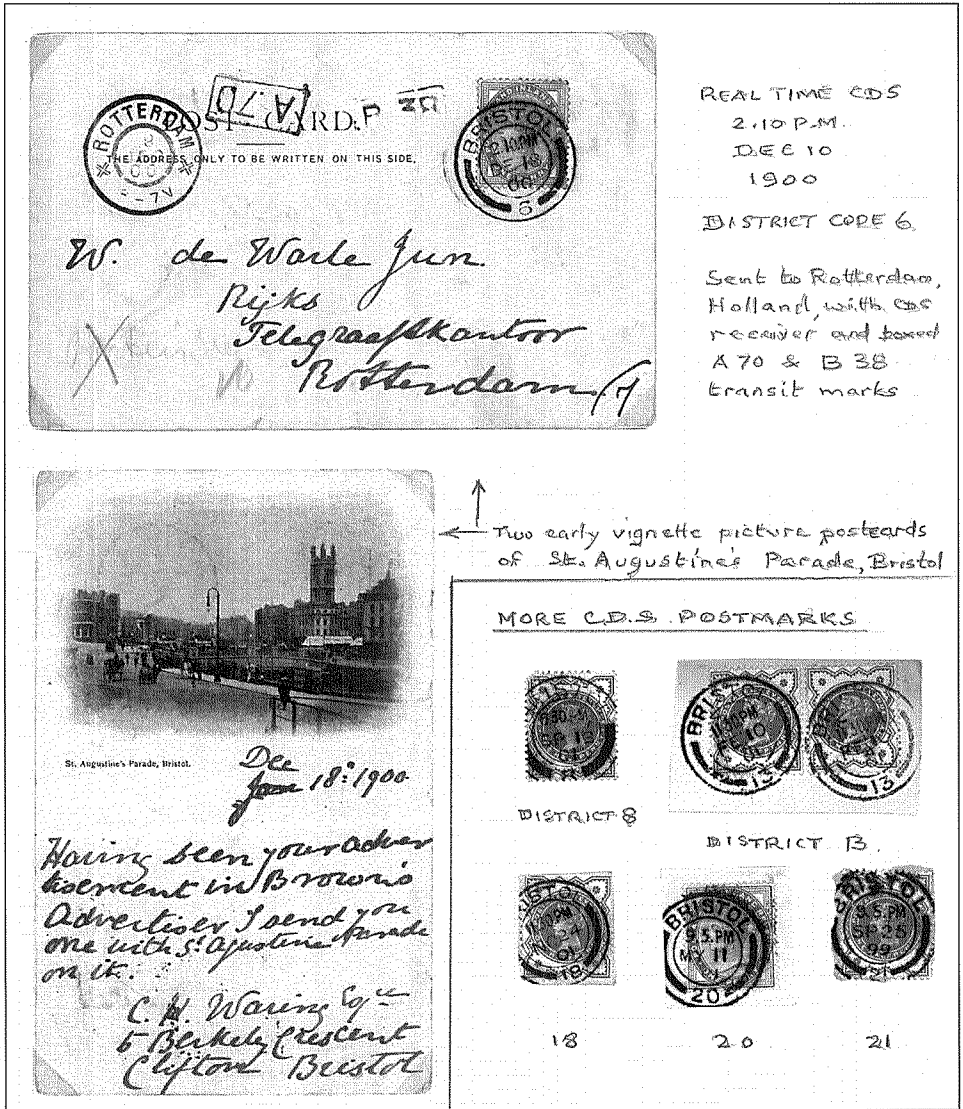


Figure 25

Fig. 26 – other postmarks / cancels include parcel and telegraph cancels. Security endorsements include ‘Perfins’ and a few are shown.

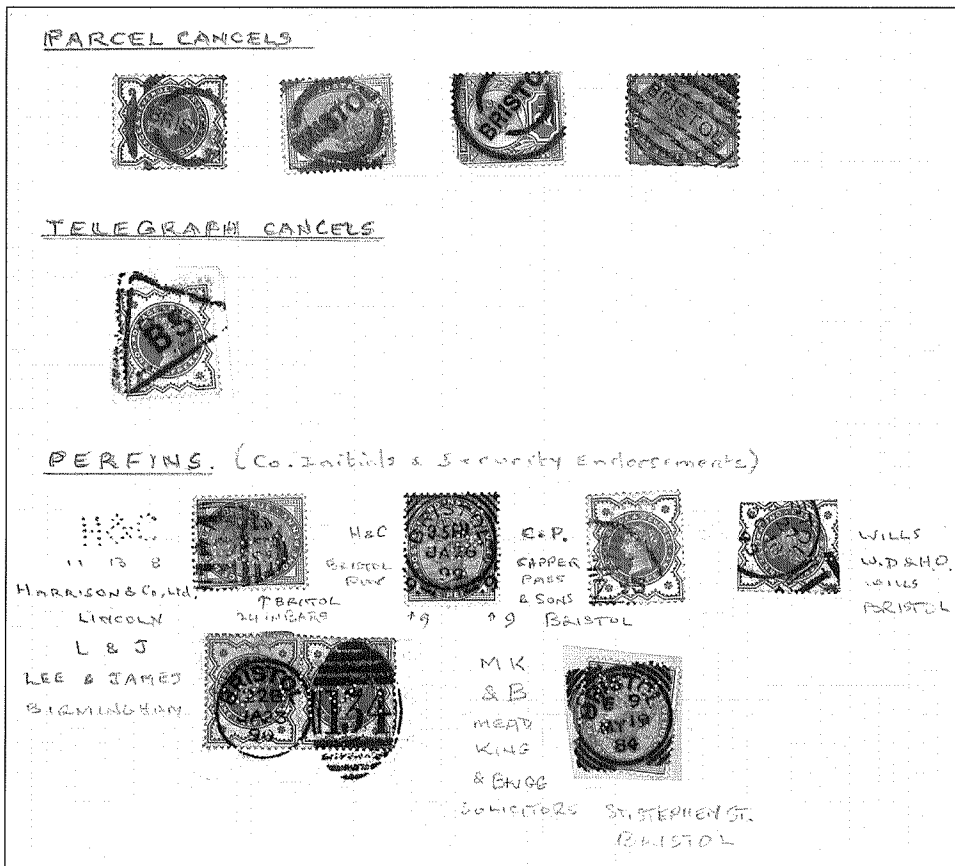


Figure 26

## Conclusion

I hope this has given some idea of the wide range of Victorian postmarks emanating from the Bristol area, which along with other major cities such as Manchester, Liverpool and London, were at the forefront in the development of the postal system in Britain.

As I enjoy variety, Bristol certainly appeals to me, enabling me to “flit like a butterfly” amongst it all.

Once again I have enjoyed showing you some of my collection, whilst appreciating the interest taken by the Malta Philatelic Society.