

Forerunner

1839: Uniform Fourpenny Post Penny Local Post

A drive for postal reform resulted in the introduction of Uniform Fourpenny Post on December 5, 1839 as an interim measure before the adoption of the Uniform Penny Post. Before Uniform Fourpenny Post mail rates were calculated by number of sheets and distance. With Uniform Fourpenny post, charges were by ½ oz and irrespective of distance. This new rate structure was only in effect for less than five weeks.

Large Rate Markings

Black Ink = Unpaid

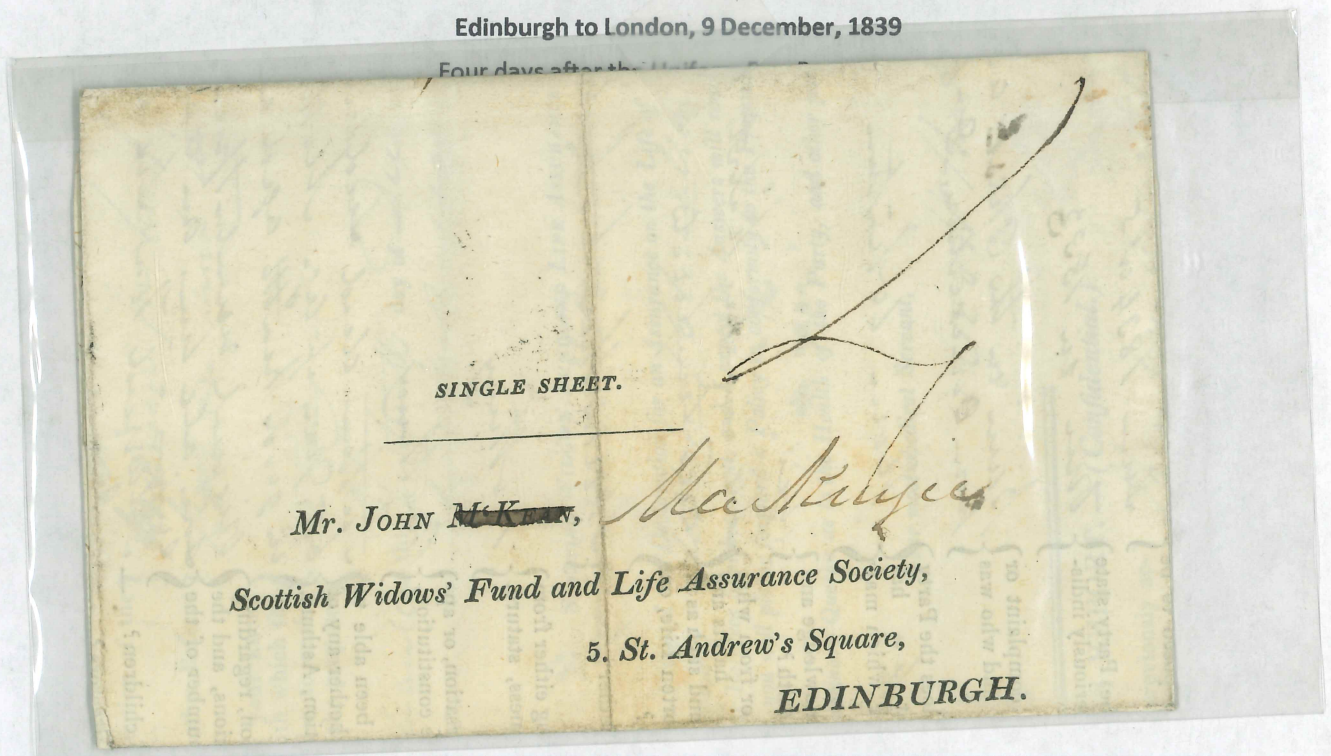
Short lived: less than 5 weeks

Letters under ½ oz charged 4d
irrespective of distance



Edinburgh to London, 9 December, 1839

Four days after the...



Rates by distance, prior to Uniform Fourpenny Post, were particularly high in Scotland as a matter of geography. Letters going to England from towns in Scotland often cost more than one shilling to mail. Regular use of mail was out of reach for much of the population. For reference, one penny was the rate for one typical hour of labor.

Mr Brown to
Messrs Mathews

Messrs

Walker, Richardson, & Melville

W.S.
Edinburgh

Paid.

GLASGOW
PAID
9 DE
1839
PAID
10 DEC
1839

DEC 11
1839
DEC 11
1839

John Hamilton Esquire
W.S.

Edinburgh

J

74-99
Mr. Dallachy
13¹⁰ Scotch letter
Aberdeen

5 January, 1840, Edinburgh to Aberdeen, 127 miles—an earlier 9d rate.
4d, Uniform Inland Rate. Note: Rate reduced to 1d five days later.

24
Lt. Major W. Wilson & Son
Barnackham

AP
27
S A
1840

Obave 1/20g

Hugh Bremner Esq
W.S.
Great King Street
Edinburgh

to answer
of the address of which

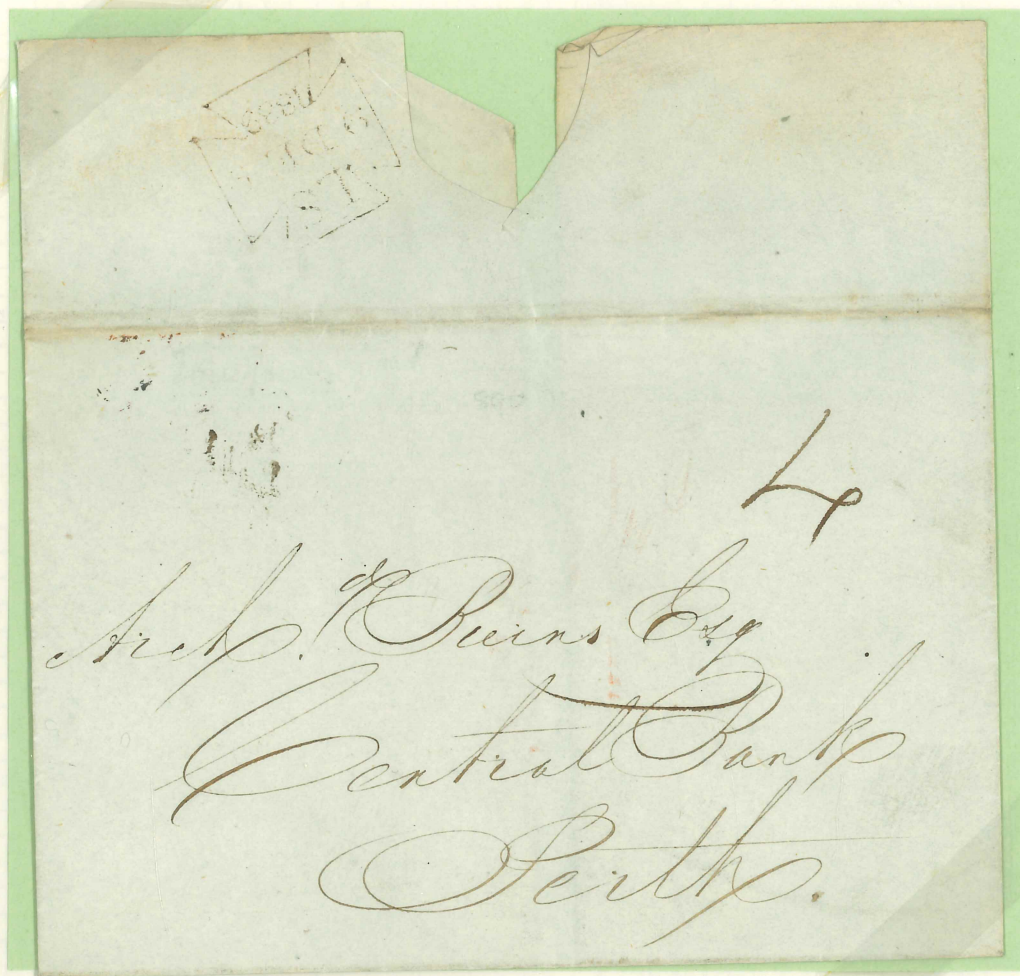
UNIFORM 4^d POST.
RARE PAID DOUBLE
RATE ENTIRE (1 02 RATE)
WITH N/S & IN RED
word from Glasgow
& Edinburgh - most
unusual items as
4^d post still mainly
sent unpaid

BCW

PRO-27

THE UNIFORM FOURPENNY POSTAGE

Prior to the introduction of the Uniform Penny Postage, an experiment of uniform postage commenced on December 5th, 1839 at the 4d. rate and lasted until January 9th, 1840. Since this was such a short period, only a few towns had time to prepare a 4d. hand stamp. Almost all the Post Towns used a manuscript "4" as indication of the rate charge.



This letter from England has a manuscript "4" for the fourpenny rate and is postmarked December 9, 1839.