



The corner of Priory Street and Biggin Street in (left) 1909, (centre) 1911 and (right) a fairly recent picture of the Post Office which was built and opened in 1912

The black canopy at bottom left of the right-hand picture protected the corner entrance of Woolworth's (where now is W.H. Smith's shop)

Pictures from Budge Adams's slide collection

Letter to the Editor

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Dear Editor

General Post Office Obituary

As an expatriate Doverian who has spent much time and effort in recording various aspects of the history of Dover and its people, I feel it is my duty not to allow the closure of Dover's General Post Office in Biggin Street to pass without notice.

There can be surely no clearer illustration of the ultimate decline in the fortunes of Dover than for its Post Office to be relegated from a purpose-built edifice in the main street to backshop insignificance in a side street. In this, after generations, centuries in fact, of prime importance, the Post Office in this ancient, historic town has achieved its apostasy.

It should not be forgotten that until the modern, technologically dominated jet-age that we are all now living through Dover was the focus for all postal communication with the Continent. The importance of this rôle cannot be overstated. The mail packets which connected the town with Calais and later on, Ostend, were an integral part of the nation's diplomatic relations with our European neighbours. It was at the Dover Post Office that the mailbags were co-ordinated in this remarkable

position that geography had created for the town and port.

An early reference to the Post Office at Dover was to its location in the Quay (presumably Commercial Quay) where it would have been suitably positioned for the departure point of the mail packets. By 1839 the Post Office was to be found at 120 Snargate Street (on the same side of the street and not far from what is now the Masonic Hall), once again a situation relative to the commercial centre of the town at the time.

In 1892 the new Dover Post Office was opened in King Street, just off the Market Square. The building later became the Employment Exchange, although the original purpose may still be divined by the Crown insignia over the entrance door. It was in 1912 that the late Post Office building on the corner of Biggin Street and Priory Street was opened. A reflection of how with the passing of the years the commercial centre of Dover had moved further and further uptown.

And so, after all these centuries of history and importance, we have arrived at the present day situation. Let us only hope that posterity will judge us kindly in finally casting aside our wonderful historic heritage to a condition that will eventually leave for those who come after us no hint but the written record of what came before.

Yours sincerely,

MARTYN C. WEBSTER