

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP

of the

British North America Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 28

Jack Arnell, Chairman

May 1992

MORE ON POST PAID WITHDRAWN SHIP LETTERS

Malcolm Montgomery has written to call my attention to carelessness on my part in the way in which I described the fee paid on PPWSL letters. While my statement that 'a fee equal to one-third the packet postage, plus inland postage to Falmouth' was to be charged is literally correct, it is misleading.

On 15 July 1812, the General Post Office issued a notice to postmasters amending a 9 July one, giving details of the increases in postage rates approved by the Act of Parliament passed on 9 July. With respect to Foreign and Packet letters, this stated that

For every single letter from and to any Place within Great Britain, to and from Parts beyond the Seas, within or not within His majesty's Dominions *Two Pence*, and so on in proportion for Double, Treble, and Ounce Letters.

It concluded with:

The Surveyor of your District will prepare a correct List of Rates for your Information, as soon as may be. but in the mean time I assure myself you cannot possibly mistake the object and meaning of the Act of Parliament as thus explained, and more fully as to Foreign Letters in No. 1, reprinted and sent herewith.

While this appears perfectly straightforward, many of us years ago, before much of the detailed information on British postal regulations became available, had difficulty trying to rationalize the postage found on Falmouth packet letters with the sum of the sea postage and inland postage. The problem lay in a sentence buried in the examples of the packet postage to be charged on letters from inland towns in the above-mentioned Instructions No. 1 (General Post Office, July, 1812) 'On Packet and Ship Letter Rates'. It began:

The following Statement of the Packet and Ship Letter Rates of Postage, it is hoped will be sufficiently intelligible to prevent all Mistakes, and therefore, in any Case of Doubt, you are particularly enjoined to refer to it. If any Letters for Foreign Places should be sent from your Office with less Postage marked on them than ought to have been taken, the Deficiency will be placed to the Debit of your Account.

The Postmasters who have Instructions to send Letters to Falmouth by the *Cross Posts* are to be particularly careful, so to send the Letters to those Foreign Places which are conveyed by the Packet Boats on the Falmouth Station, and on no Occasion to put them into the London Bag. And further, it is to be particularly observed, *that no Letters are to be taken in a Ship Letters, which can be sent by Packets, unless at the particular Desire of the Writers.*

This was followed by the packet rates on the various services out of Falmouth, with America being shown as 1s. 3d. Then followed the paragraph with the sentence explaining the apparent disparity referred to above:

But, on the Letters sent to Falmouth, the Postmasters are to add to the Packet Rates as above stated, a Sun *One Penny less* than the new Inland Charge from their Offices to

Falmouth, viz. from York to Falmouth, the Inland Postage is now, 1s. 2d. therefore a Letter from York to Malta, is 1s. 1d. and 2s. 3d. in all 3s. 4d.

In other words, the postage on Falmouth packet letters only increased by 1d, not 2d, other than those from Falmouth itself.

With respect to a packet letter from London, the packet postage under the 1805 Act was 1s. 1d. and the inland postage from London to Falmouth was 11d, or 2s. Stg. The 1812 Act raised the first rate to 1s. 3d. and the second to 1s., but with the 1d. reduction in the latter rate, the total postage was 2s. 2d. or an increase of 2d., not the apparent 3d.

In the face of this, I should have written, with respect to the Instructions No. 17 (General Post Office, September 17, 1814) 'On Ship Letters': 'the fee for Post Paid Withdrawn Ship Letters was the packet postage, plus the regular inland postage *less One Penny.*' As I recall some of the agony I experienced trying to ascertain how and when this unusual means of rating letters for postage came into effect, I hope that the above clarifies the matter.

* * * * *

While reproducing the texts of pertinent regulations, it seems worthwhile to include the relevant paragraph from the 1814 Instructions on PPWSL postage.

6. It is lawful for Persons to send Letters, at their own Discretion, by Ships, if they first take them to a Post Office and pay *one-third Part* of the rates that would be payable if such Letters were sent by Packets. This, however, *can be done only in London or at the Out Ports*, for if such Letters were paid, stamped, and delivered back to the Bringers at your Office, it may be feared they would be sent to the Port by some illegal Conveyance, and if the Parties mean to put them under Cover to a Correspondent to forward them, then they can, without any inconvenience, instruct that Correspondent to get them paid and stamped at the Post Office of the Port where the proper Form of Account and Stamps are provided. This you must explain when Applications are made to you. If Persons prefer the sealed Bags you can take their Letters and the Half Rates of Postage as already explained [i.e. regular Ship Letters handled by the Post Office], if they decline this, they must send their Letters, under Cover, to Friends in London, or at the Out Ports.

* * * * *

Malcolm Montgomery also raised the matter of multiple rates and reminded me that he showed examples of double and treble charges of 1s. 6d. and 2s. 3d. on PPWSL letters from Liverpool. I did not have room in the last issue to illustrate a quadruple rate letter, so add it here for completeness. It is from London dated 3 April 1815 and was marked 1¹/₂ oz., as it contained an invoice for goods carried by the *Eweretta*. This should probably have been classed as a 'Consignees Letter', but was entered as a PPWSL, charged the quadruple rate of 2s. 2d. x 4 = 8s. 8d. + 3 = 3s. 0¹/₂d., and backstamped with the same handstamp as that shown on page 27-7 of the last newsletter. The front is shown on the next page as *Figure 1*.

I have included another letter from London, even though it was sent to Washington, which is a recent acquisition. It was written on 17 November 1817—two months to the day after the new system came into effect. It has an extremely fine handstamp, which is an early example of its use and is superior to my other two 1815 fine strikes. Both the front and back of the letter is shown as *Figure 2* on the next page.

The letter itself is of interest. The War of 1812 was still on—the Treaty of Ghent was not signed until 24 December 1814—and the letter was between U.S. Government officials, and enclosed a list (missing) of 157 American parolees, who were allowed to return to the United States, and were now declared free to serve. There is a postscript, unfortunately very faded, commenting on the new PPWSL fee: 'There is so much ceremony to go through [so that] my

official letters can go free of postage that I prefer writing in this way & paying it - By a late act in Parliament must pay postage. I of course am obliged . . .' In spite of an apparent enclosure, it was only charged as a single letter at 8¹/2d.

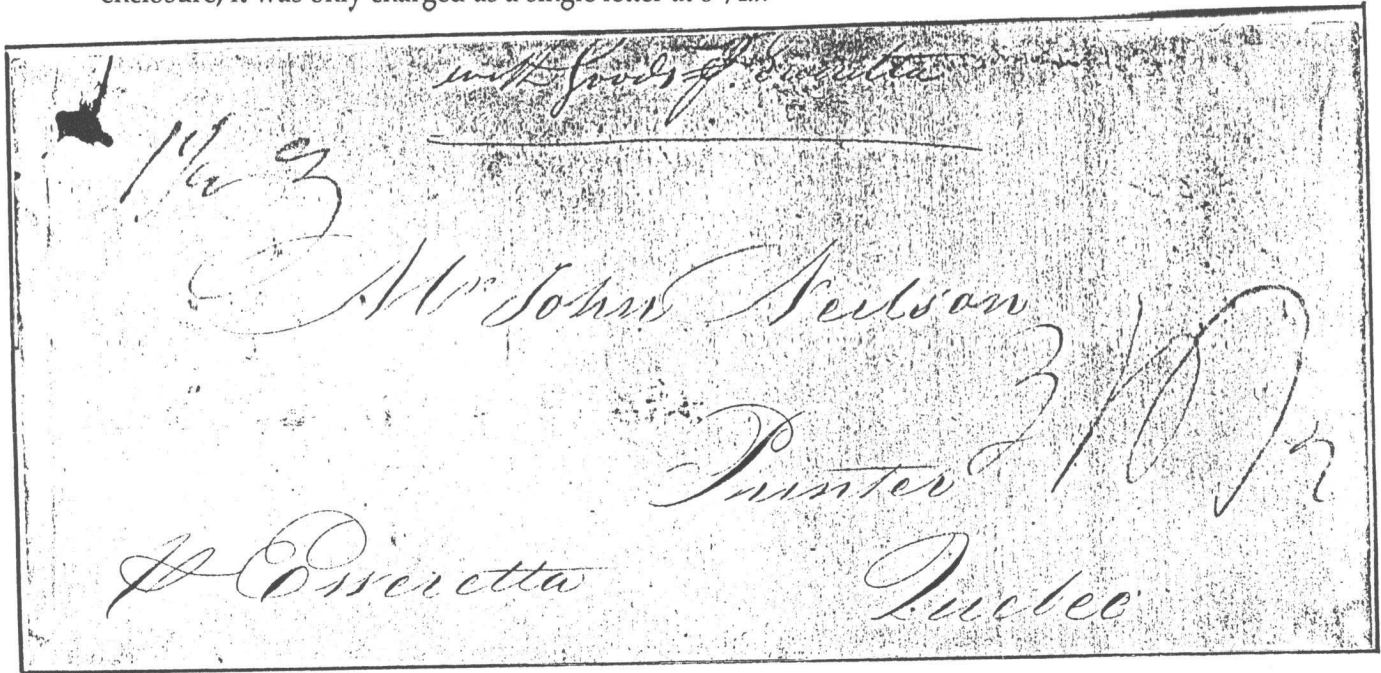


Figure 1.



Figure 2.

This letter was charged 8¹/2d Stg., i.e. one-third of the packet rate from London, which was shown in red manuscript. It was carried to Norfolk, Va., where it was datestamped on 27 [December?] and marked 'free', as it was addressed to a U.S. government official.

There are a number of recent publications covering postage rates and related information, which can be very helpful in understanding the ratings found on many transatlantic letters, in addition to Malcolm Montgomery's recent book, reviewed in Newsletter No. 26. I had thought of providing a list of some of them earlier, and now, after using one of them for the G.P.O. regulations quoted above, seems as good a time as any.

The most comprehensive series is that of M.M. Raguin, *British Post Office Notices 1666 - 1899*, which is being published by him and available from him at 280 Boston Avenue, Medford, MA 02155, U.S.A. So far, five volumes have been published, viz. Vol. 1 (1666-1799); Vol. 2 (1800-1829); Vol. 3 (1830-1839); Vol. 4 (1840-1849); and Vol. 5 (1850-1859). Vol. 6 (1860-1869) is due out next summer (1992). These are well indexed and the first five amount to 1475 pages and cost US\$234.00 or £143.00 (including shipping). Vol. 6 will add another 450 pages. It is an interesting compilation for casual reading.

The British Postal History Society has published two other useful books, viz.:

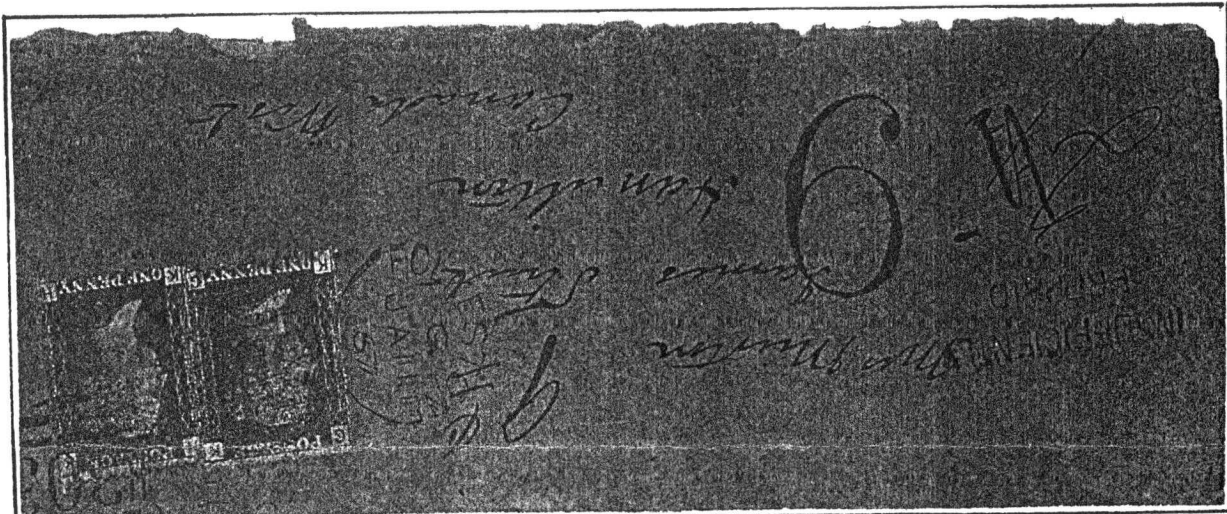
British Postal Rates, 1635 to 1839 by O.R. Sanford and Denis Salt
The Domestic Packets between Great Britain and Ireland, 1635 to 1840 by Denis Salt

These are available from George Henderson, Honorary Publications Manager PHS, c/o CBD Research Ltd, 15 Wickham Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 2JS, England. I do not have the prices at hand.

These all give much more information than that contained in our Study Group Handbook No. 1.

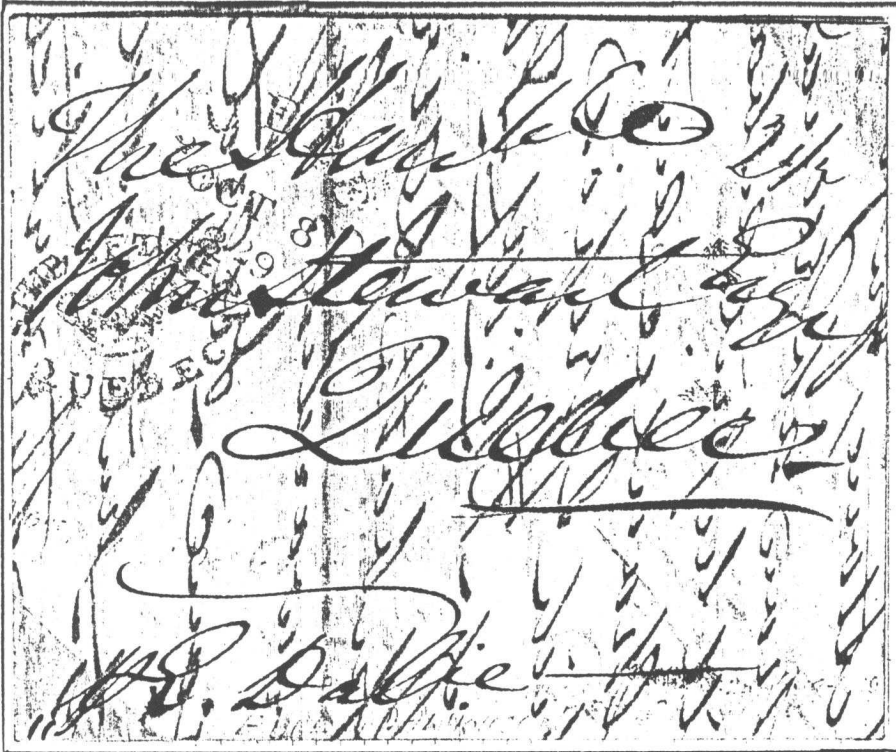
INSUFFICIENTLY PAID BOOK WRAPPER WITH FINE

Malcolm Montgomery sent along the copy, shown below, of a book wrapper on which the two *One Penny* adhesives were insufficient and it was stamped 'INSUFFICIENTLY PREPAID' and marked with a manuscript '2 1/2', representing the 1d. deficiency, plus 1 1/2d. half-fine. At Hamilton, another 1 1/2d., the remainder of the fine was added to make 4d., which was converted to 9 cents postage due and shown with an inverted E.8 handstamp, previously used in the late 1850s to show the 6d. packet postage by Canadian contract steamers.



QUEBEC SHIP LETTER WITH SUPPORTING SHIPPING NOTICE

I recently acquired the letter illustrated here for the superb 'SHIP LETTER QUEBEC' in red and the accompanying Shipping Notice. It was from Glasgow, dated 24 August 1829, reporting the shipment of two millstones, weighing 2 1/4 tons, for grinding Oats and costing £10.10.0. They were intended to go by the *Earl of Dalhousie*, as did the letter, from Greenock to Quebec, where the latter was stamped on 8 October and rated 2 1/2 d. as a ship letter for the port of arrival. As the shipping notice shows, the stones went by the *Huronic*. There was also a copy of a 17 August letter reporting that a pair of 'Millstones, Shelling' had gone on the *Favorite*.



On studying the pair, I was delighted to realize that this was an example of the Allan family, of Allan Line fame, earlier shipping activities.

Captain Alexander Allan had begun sailing between Greenock and Montreal soon after the War of 1812, and was soon managing a fleet of three vessels, sailing himself as commodore. In 1825, he was commanding the *Favorite*, mentioned above, and shortly thereafter took his second son Hugh to live and work in Montreal.

I cannot establish which Alexander, father or son, was the Greenock office manager and which, the master of the *Huronic*, as both names are on the Shipping Notice.

Shipped, in good order and condition, by ALAN WELLS & CO., Agents for
John Farber Esq. Glasgow
in the good Ship or Vessel called the Huronic
whereof Alexander Allan is Master for this present Voyage,
now riding at anchor in the River Clyde, and bound for
to say, Quebec

JE 2 Millstones
Wt 2 1/4 Tons

Two Millstones

on account and risk, as if Invoice; being marked and numbered as of the margin, and are to be delivered in the like good order and condition, at the Port of Quebec
(the Act of God, the King's Enemies, Fire, and all and every other Dangers and Accidents of the Seas, Rivers, and Navigations of whatever Nature and Kind, excepted) unto
or to his Assigns. Freight for the said Goods to be paid by the Shipper
at the rate of twelve Shillings per ton

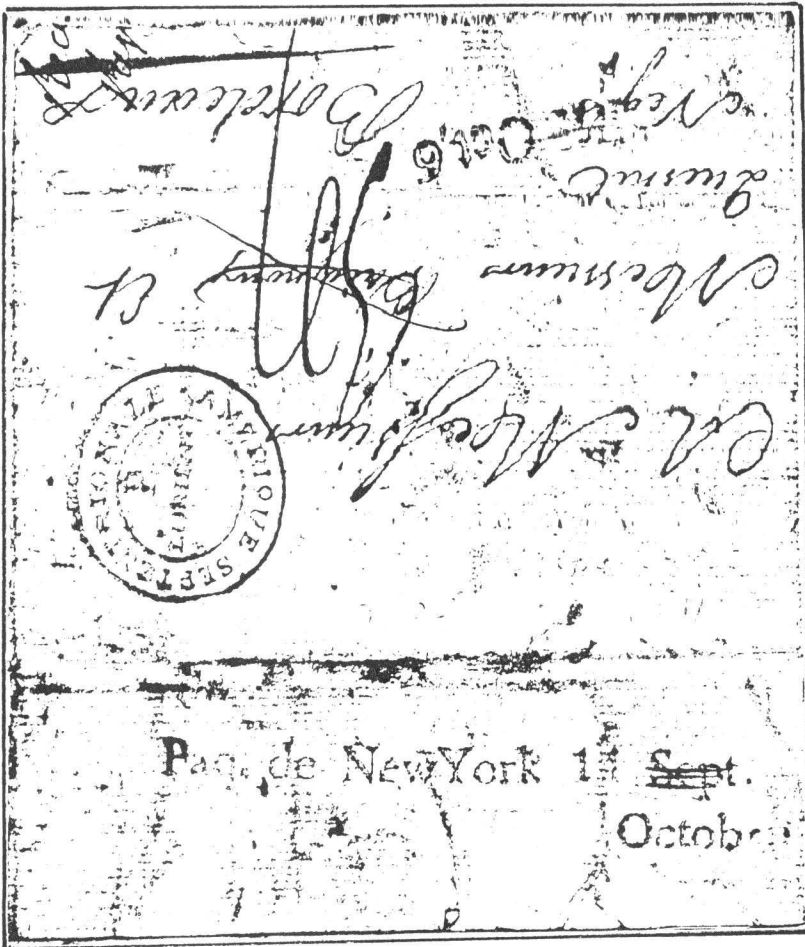
with Average accustomed: In witness whereof, the Master or Mate of the said Ship hath affirmed to four Bills of Lading, all of this tenor and date; the one of which Bills being accomplished, the others to stand void. Dated in GREENOCK, 18 Aug 1829
Alexr Allan

(Reduced to approximately half size)

Another interesting cover from Allan Steinhart, which has a most unusual instruction at upper right, nearly seven years after the Cunard steamers began operating between Liverpool and Boston, viz.: 'Via Boston & Liverpool By First Packet Ship from New York'. It was mailed at Quebec on 6 February 1847 with the postage prepaid to New York—2 1/2 d. Cy inland to the border and 10 cents U.S. inland, struck twice with a PAID crown circle and marked 'Post paid to NY' with initials. The 2 1/2 was subsequently struck out.

On arrival at Liverpool, it was backstamped with a framed 'LIVERPOOL SHIP' on 12 March—note the inverted '7' between '18' and '4' in the date. The letter should have been charged 8d. Stg. as an incoming ship letter, and the only explanation I can offer for the 1/8 Stg.

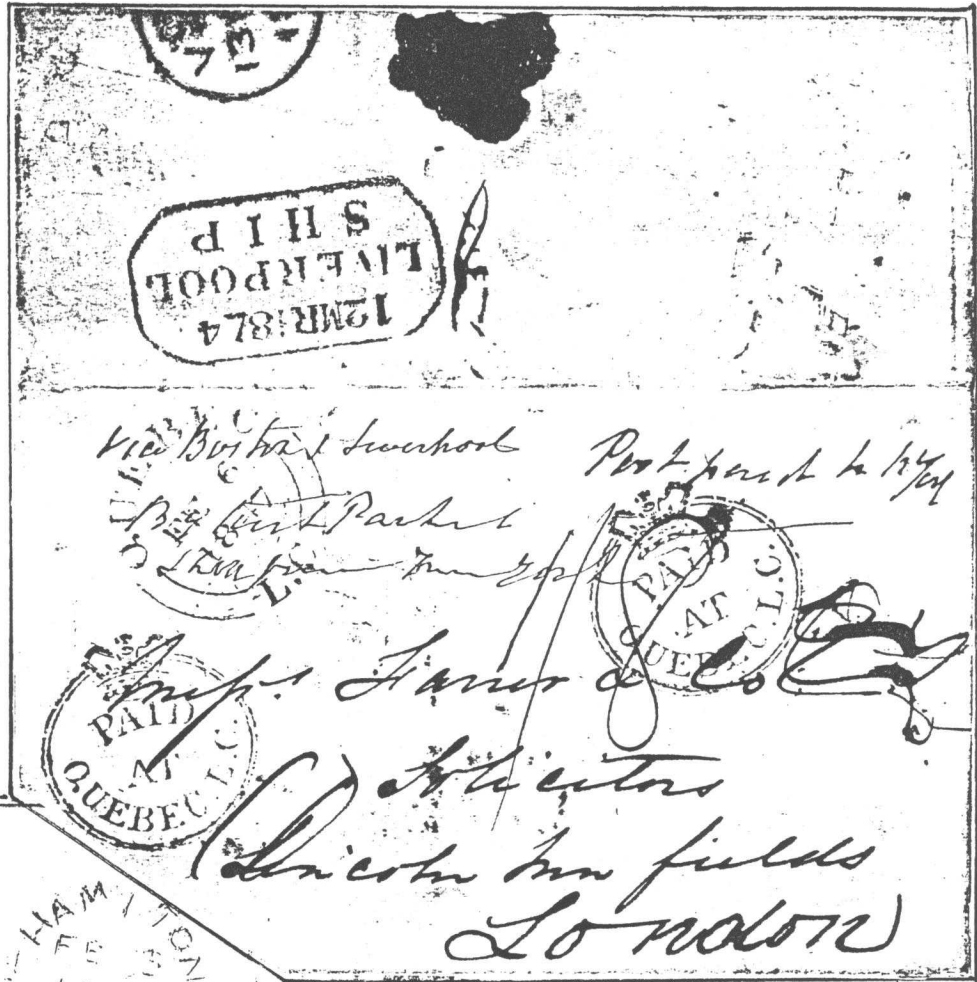
TWO LATE AMERICAN SAILING PACKET LETTERS



Last year Allan Steinhart acquired what could well be a unique letter from Canada, which was carried to France by the French packet *La Suffren*. This line of packets only operated for about ten years from 1784. It was written by Joseph Quesnel, a businessman, composer, militia officer, playwright, poet and fur trader, in Montreal on 22 September 1791 to his brother Pierre's firm in Bordeaux. It was carried to New York either by favour or in a package of letters, where it was mailed on 6 October, struck with a straight-line handstamp in red and backstamped with 'Paq. de New York 11 Sept.' - the 'Sept.' being struck out and 'October' struck beneath.

It was carried by *La Suffren* from New York on or about 14 October on her 7th voyage to L'Orient as a contract packet and arrived on 30 November, where struck with a double circle 'AMERIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE/P. L'ORIENT' and rated 34 décimes postage due (20 décimes packet postage + 14 décimes inland postage to Bordeaux—80 leagues). *La Suffren* was owned by Benjamin Dubois of St. Malo and named for Pierre-Anore Suffren de Saint-Tropez, a French vice admiral, who was active at Louisbourg in 1755 during the Seven Years' War.

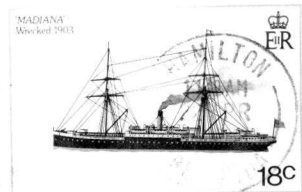
is that the Liverpool post office forgot to rate the letter and when it got to London the next day, there was an unpaid packet letter for the same firm of solicitors and the two letters were combined and the charge written on this one.



The above prompted me to look at any similar letters I have and I am including one in the opposite direction, which illustrates an interesting comparison of transit times. It was from Ayr, Scotland dated 17 December 1846 and marked 'Per Packet Ship to New York'. When mailed on the same day, 8d. Stg. was prepaid as an Outgoing Ship Letter. On arrival at Liverpool, it was backstamped with a packet office oval and the circular 'SHIP LETTER - LIVERPOOL' on 21 December. It was probably carried by the Blue Swallowtail sailing packet schedule to leave on 24 December for New York. It was datestamped with a 'NEW YORK - SHIP' on 21 February and rated 12 cents postage due to the Niagara border. At Queenston, it was datestamped on 27 February, the U.S. postage converted to 7¹/₂d. Cy. and 4¹/₂d. Cy. inland postage to Dundas added to a total due of 1/- Cy. Backstamped at Hamilton on the next day.

It must be presumed that the sender knew there was only one Cunard steamer a month in winter and the next was the *Hibernia* on 4 January, assumed that an American packet would get the letter to Dundas earlier. In fact, the *Hibernia* reached Boston on 25 January, nearly a month before the other vessel, and the letter would have been delivered for 1/4 Cy. instead of for 8d. Stg. + 1/- Cy. or 1/10 Cy.—a saving of sixpence.

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