



TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP
OF THE
British North American Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 63

June 1998

ODDS AND ENDS

With this Newsletter I hope to include material that you have sent me, and responses to some of the queries that have been raised. I would like to thank those who have sent me photocopies and information, much of which has not yet been used, but will be included in more detailed examination of specific areas. In particular this will include Prince Edward Island (next issue) and New Brunswick shortly afterwards. So please do not delay in sending me material on these subjects, if you have not already done so.

The front cover illustration this month does not belong to any particular theme, but will serve to underline the significance of the United States aspects in trans-Atlantic mails, including those to British North America. It came to me from Allan Steinhart - he parted with it because it was underpaid (supposedly my speciality), it was disfigured by a postage stamp (and he much preferred stampless letters), but principally I had found a stampless Canadian Packet letter which he felt belonged in his collection!

UNDERPAID BY AMERICAN PACKET



Figure 1: Ballymoney, Ireland to Ottawa River, Canada West, via Queenstown and New York, 23rd July 1861.

A letter from Ballymoney, Ireland, paid sixpence for the Canadian Packet out of Londonderry, but not so directed and sent to Queenstown for the next ship to sail. And that's where it went astray. It should have been placed in the mail for the Cunard Line 'Europa', due to call on 28th July 1861 (again my thanks to Walter Hubbard and Richard Winter 'North Atlantic Mail Sailings,

1840-1875'), and charged 2d deficiency for US transit. But instead of having it wait for a few days, somebody decided to place it on the Inman Line 'Kangaroo', sailing on the 24th. Seen as prepaid the United States was credited with 21 cents, even though only sixpence (rather than a shilling for US mail) had been prepaid. It arrived in Prescott on 12th August 1861.

CONVEYED BY UNITED STATES PACKET

I have had two responses to my query about the handstamp 'CONVEYED BY UNITED STATES PACKET' (Robertson, Liverpool M5): the first from Reg Gleave who has sent a photocopy of the relevant page from the Post Office Proof Books showing that there were in fact *two* such handstamps, and a table from Colin Tabcart listing the examples that he has recorded. I have added some other examples to Colin's table, and it is reproduced opposite. More such tables would be helpful to understanding other marks.

The handstamps were sent to Liverpool on 17th May 1855. Reg Gleave has observed that there are differences between the two handstamps issued (my apologies for the illustration, not an original photocopy); he quite correctly comments that this is 'fly-speck philately' but, for the record, the most obvious difference is the position of the 'P' of 'PACKET' in relation to the 'N' of 'CONVEYED'. In the upper example it is to the left, in the lower, to the right. Where I can record which is which, I have designated them Type 1 and Type 2, respectively. For the few examples checked, Type 2 may have replaced Type 1 ... but this is speculation as yet.

The measurements should be treated with caution, but my impression is that Type 1, at 41mm, is about 2mm narrower than Type 2.

In respect of colour, the Liverpool green ink sometimes appears grey/black (at least, it does if you have poor red/green colour perception, as I do).

Colin comments that the marks were used only on mail for destinations served by Liverpool as the Exchange Office, rather than London - in his opinion that was the way that they were intended to be used, London caring not to advise its clients why the excessive rate was applied. Of the examples I have seen of underpaid or unpaid letters carried eastward by United States Packets in 1855, four are addressed to London, none bear the mark. It does not appear on prepaid letters. I have seen letters to the 'country' without the mark, but they could have been included in a London bag, or pre-date the mark.

Colin (and I) would be interested to see further examples, particularly if from Canada to the UK in the relevant period handled by Liverpool (*ie*, not in closed bags to London) which do *not* have the marking. Please mention the colour on your copies, and I will add them to the table. Colin also comments that he does not believe that the marks are as scarce as the table below suggests - you can help to clarify that - seventeen examples to date (assuming no duplication in the record) seems few enough!

THE PROOF BOOK IMPRESSIONS

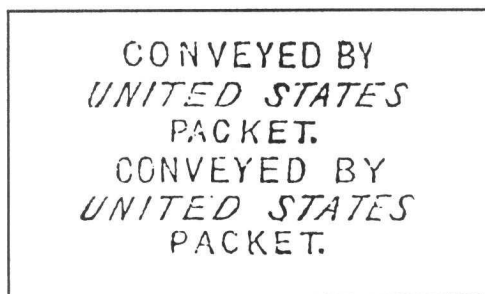


Figure 2: Sent to Liverpool on 17th May 1855.

Figure 2 shows the handstamps used by the office at Liverpool (Robertson M5) to explain the charge of one shilling and twopence Sterling per half ounce rate levied on letters carried by United States Packets, rather than the more common British Packet charge of eightpence (*via* the United States) or sixpence (direct). There were no Canadian Packet sailings in 1855.

Although the rate by Collins Line in 1855 is known as the 'Crimean War' rate, this is a misnomer, for one shilling and twopence was the rate from 1849 to 1854 and, for United States Packets, remained in force until 1st January 1868. The upper handstamp (Type 1) shows the 'P' of 'PACKET' to the left of the 'N' of 'CONVEYED', on the lower mark it is to the right.

CONVEYED BY UNITED STATES PACKET: RECORD OF USE

Serial	Date (Liverpool)	Height x Width	Colour	From/To	Remarks
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
1.	1855	?	?	Montreal, C.E. - Derby, England	Robson Lowe Auction, July 1980.
2.	10.6.55	?	Red	Montreal, C.E. - Co. Wexford, Ireland	A.L. Steinhart collection. Struck on reverse. Collins Line ' <i>Pacific</i> '.
3.	24.6.55	13 x 41 (Type 1)	Red	Toronto, C.W. - Plymouth, England	M.B. Montgomery collection. Collins Line ' <i>Pacific</i> '.
4.	24.6.65	?	?	Alnwick, C.W. - Southampton, England	J.C. Arnell collection. Collins Line ' <i>Pacific</i> '.
5.	8.7.55	13 x 41	Green	Quebec, C.E. - New Ross, Ireland	I. Little collection. Collins Line ' <i>Atlantic</i> '.
6.	22.7.55	13 x 41 (Type 1)	Green	Montreal, C.E. - Liverpool, England	D. Sanderson collection. Collins Line ' <i>Baltic</i> '.
7.	2.9.55	?	Green	Beaverton, C.W. - Darnaway, Scotland	A.L. Steinhart collection. Mark on reverse. Collins Line ' <i>Baltic</i> '.
8.	2.9.55	13 x 41 (Type 1)	Black	Hamilton, C.W. - Norfolk, England	E. Needs collection. Collins Line ' <i>Baltic</i> '.
9.	28.10.55	13 x 41	Green	Montreal, C.E. - Marlborough, England	B. Wood collection. Collins Line ' <i>Pacific</i> '.
10.	28.10.55	13 x 41 (Type 1)	Green	Quebec, C.E. - New Ross, Ireland	M.B. Montgomery collection (ex Arnell). Collins Line ' <i>Pacific</i> '.
11.	10.11.55	?	Green	London - Canada West	F. Staff collection. The only known use westbound.
12.	26.11.55	? (Type 2)	?	Harvey Hill, C.E. - Bristol, England	A.L. Steinhart collection. Collins Line ' <i>Baltic</i> '.
13.	26.11.55	13 x 43 (Type 2)	Green	Hamilton, C.W. - Glasgow, Scotland	J.C. Arnell ' <i>Atlantic Mails</i> ', p. 327 (measured from illustration). Collins Line ' <i>Baltic</i> '.
14.	9.12.55	13 x 43 (Type 2)	?	Leeds, C.E. - Bristol, England	A.L. Steinhart collection (J.C. Arnell(?)). Collins Line ' <i>Pacific</i> '.
15.	23.12.55	?	?	Perth, C.W. - Dumfriesshire, Scotland	Christies' Auction March 1993. Collins Line ' <i>Atlantic</i> '.
16.	23.12.55	?	?	Montreal, C.E. - Aylesbury, England	J.C. Arnell collection. Collins Line ' <i>Atlantic</i> '.
17.	31.01.56	? (Type 2)	?	Goderich, C.W. - Stockton-on-Tees, England	A.L. Steinhart collection; only post-1855 use recorded. Collins Line ' <i>Atlantic</i> '.

THE FALMOUTH PACKETS

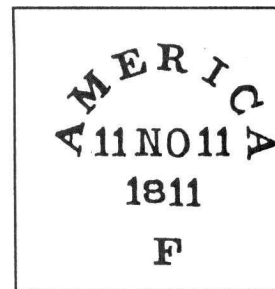
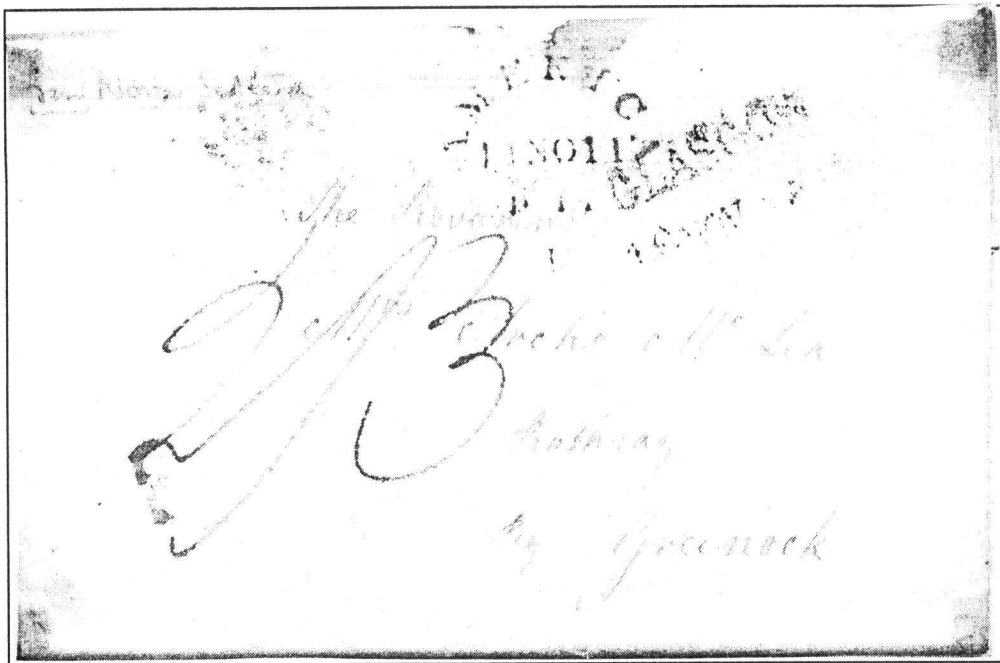
I propose to include the occasional letter carried by the Falmouth Packets, mainly as an introduction to an examination of the part that agents, both Post Office and private, played in the handling of letters between the United Kingdom and Canada.

The letter from Nova Scotia illustrated below, posted unpaid and charged two shillings and threepence is an example of a letter handled by the Post Office Agent at Falmouth - the local Post Office did not, as far as I understand handle the mails from the Packets, this was done by a special Office and team of clerks under the supervision of an agent appointed by, and answering to, the Secretary to the Post Master General in London.

Some letters were charged, stamped and forwarded directly by the Agent, and on these the 'AMERICA F' handstamp was occasionally

used. Rarely seen, it has been recorded from 1811-1835 and is normally in green, except in 1819 when black ink was sometimes used (Colin Tabcart '*Robertson Revisited*'). The example below is the first recorded in black ink for 1811.

The letter was posted unpaid and carried by the Falmouth Packet '*Dispatch*' (J.C. Arnell (Editor) '*Handbook on Trans-Atlantic Mail*', page 27); '*Dispatch*' sailed out of Halifax on 16th October and made Falmouth on 10th November 1811. At Falmouth the letter was marked with the 'AMERICA F' transit and charged two shillings and threepence, the Packet and inland postage from North America to Glasgow. The rate was calculated as follows: a. No British North American postage charged in Halifax; b. The Act of 45 Geo. III, Cap. 11, effective 12th March 1805, fixed the North American Packet rate at 1s 1d; c. Falmouth to Rothsay is approximately 590 miles, inland postage 1s 2d, total charge 2s 3d.



Falmouth transit.

Figure 4: Halifax, Nova Scotia to Rothsay, Scotland, viâ Falmouth, England, 11th October 1811.

The following are letters from Falmouth to London in 1818, demonstrating that the course of the mails was not always an easy one:

9 Nov 1818.

Francis Freeling Esq
Sir,

A Bag of Paid Letters from Halifax N.S. was brought on shore last Night from the Speedy Packet, instead of being landed with the Mail on

Saturday. On requiring an explanation from Captain Richards, he sent me the enclosed Letter. He had observed on Saturday Night that the paid Letters from Halifax did not agree with the Bill, but as mistakes of this kind often occur, it was not otherwise noticed than by inserting the Amount received upon the Halifax Bill.

*I am, &c,
C Saverland.*

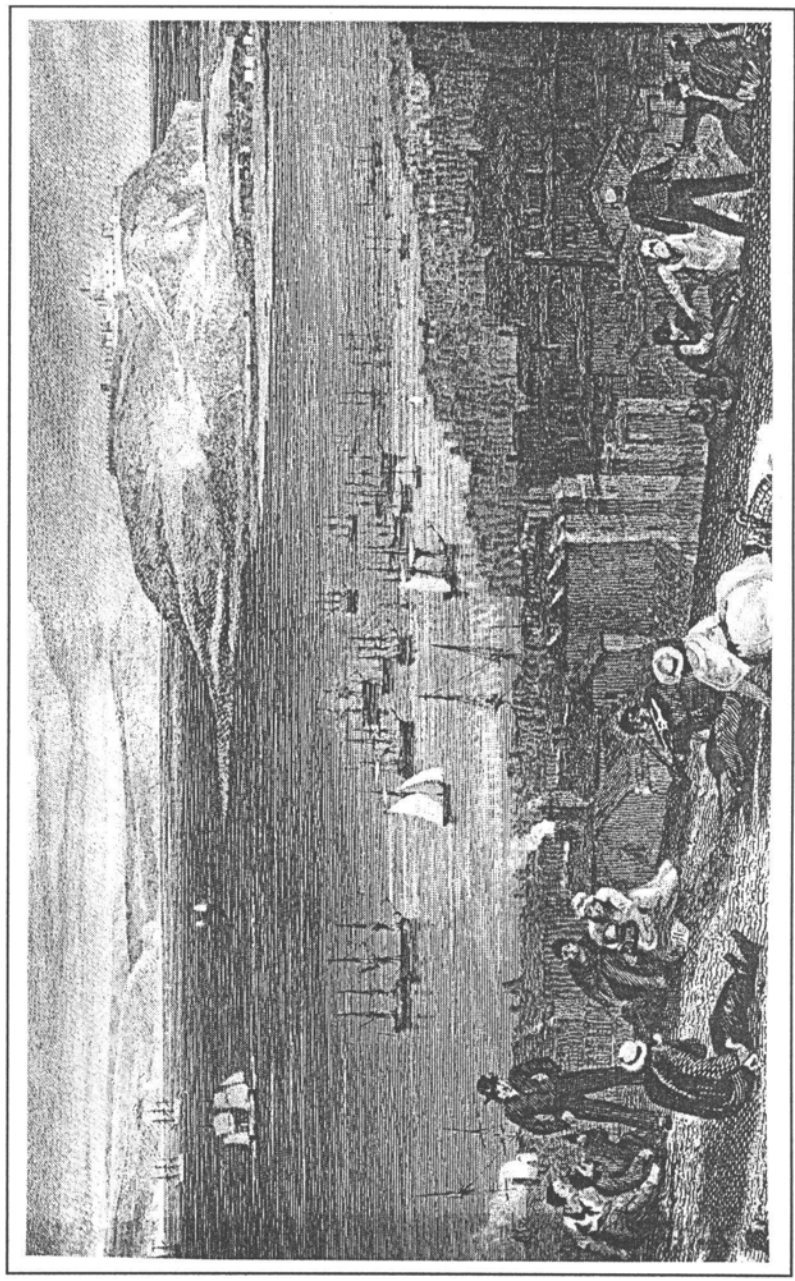


Figure 5: Falmouth in the early Nineteenth Century
(after a painting by R.M.W. Turner).

9 Nov 1818.

C. Saverland Esq^r.

Sir,

I am exceedingly sorry to find that a small Bag of Letters should have been neglected to have been sent from the Speedy on her arrival. The cause was briefly this. When I received the Mails in Halifax it was blowing strong so that one of the Portmanteaus got very wet in coming on board. I immediately discharged its contents fearing the consequences of letting it remain damp - after drying the small bags they were placed on a bed Place in the Cabin that unfortunately had not a perfect Sacking with the continual motion of the Ship having bad weather nearly the whole of the Passage one of the Bags fell down & was therefore overlooked in repacking the Mail. I repeat my great sorrow that the circumstance should have occurred

*I remain &c
John Richards*

*I am, &c,
C Saverland.*

And a further letter from the agent at Falmouth:

14 Nov 1818.

Francis Freeling Esq

Sir,

I have received your Letter of the 11th instant on the subject of a Bag from Halifax, containing 184 Letters being left on Board the Speedy Packet from Midnight of Saturday last till the following Afternoon. My Letter of the 9th instant enclosing one from the Commander of the Speedy will have informed you of the cause of the unfortunate delay.

On the Mail being landed at Midnight as before mentioned all the Bags were examined & found correct, as to number, properly tyed & sealed. The Revenue Officers were on board rumaging the Packet from the minute of her Arrival till the following afternoon, when the Bag was found by them in the Locker under the Bed Place, mixed with Bottles of Porter, Straw and other tings, into which it had fallen as stated by Captain Richards, & delivered it to the Steward of the Packet, who brought it to this Office. I find from Captain Richards that this bag was loose in the Mail Case, tyed & sealed it is true, but not put into either of the Bags from Halifax to London or Falmouth, as it ought to have been, & to this neglect the delay is chiefly to be attributed, for all the usual Bags were right on repacking the Mail. I am not aware of any effectual regulation being made which shall prevent mistakes. If the Postmaster of Halifax had put these Letters into either of the Bags to Falmouth or London as it was his duty to have done; or Captain Richards had counted the Bags out, & into the Mail again, the Bag being missed would have been looked for

and found. All should do their duty - one link of the Chain broken the most simple Machine becomes out of order. I will issue a Circular Letter to the Commanders on this occasion, which I hope will have the proper effect, not being of opinion that a Clerk sent to search the Packet could have discovered this bag so concealed, or in any other case; besides all hands are required to stamp, tax, & make up the Mails, which was not finished till 4 o'clock in the Morning. The Wellington from Jamaica having landed her Mail the same Evening from a distance of ten or twelve miles from this Office, the ship continuing at Sea, in which case a Boat might have been rowing about all Night without finding her & we should be perpetually getting into Quarantine & suspected of Smuggling.

The Commanders are always questioned upon their landing whether all Bags & Packages are brought on Shore.

Of interest is the mention of the fact that mails were sorted at Falmouth and, at least some, were charged and marked by the Packet Agent's Office. The relationship between the Revenue Officers and the Packet Boats' crews appears to have been an interesting one, and I understand that there was considerable discussion and dissent about what the crews were allowed to bring home from overseas - certainly the crews considered the right to carry small items of freight to be one of perquisites of their business.

I had not realised that quarantine was a constant issue, sufficient to be used as an excuse not to employ a clerk to check the ship (which seems to have been a suggestion from London). Nor that the mails were sometimes landed away from Falmouth itself, although it must have been quite common for the Packets to have to stand off from the port when tides and winds prevented them from entering the harbour.

I will continue to scan the considerable correspondence from the Falmouth Post Office Agent for other material - it would be helpful if you could look through your collections for examples of the Falmouth handstamps, and for unanswered questions from this area. I would also be grateful for information and examples of mail handled by agents at other ports, and would like to compile a list of agents known to have handled Canadian trans-Atlantic letters.

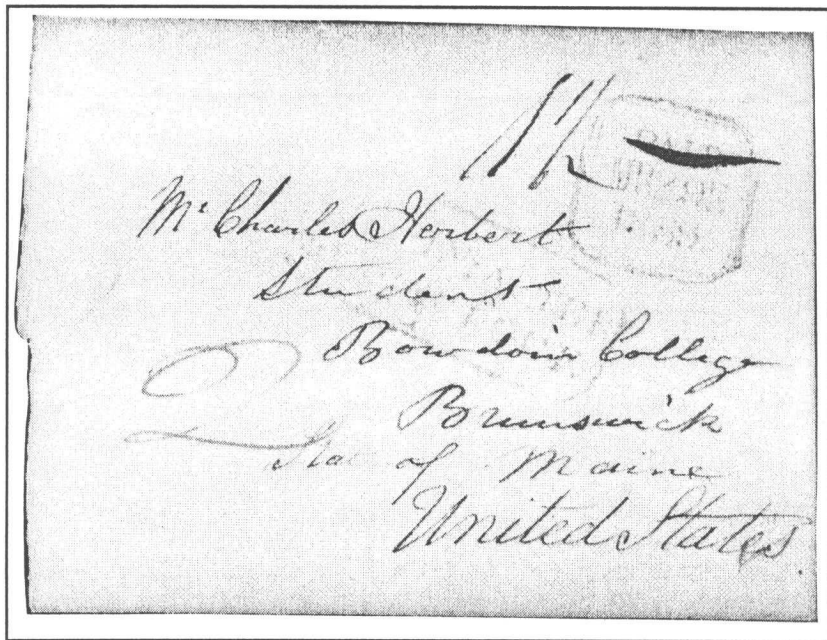
In the meantime I would like to thank the Post Office Archives at Mount Pleasant from which the copies of letters quoted above were taken (Post 48/10, pages 469/470 and 477/478).

PRINTED PAPERS

There will be a 'special' devoted to printed papers, etc, sometime in the future; the early ones are scarce (for newspapers, all periods are scarce), and so I have included this illustration from David Robinson immediately. David published a book *'For the Port and Carriage of Letters'*, which deals with British rates from 1660-1840. In my opinion, it is the most comprehensive available on the subject, explaining awkward matters, such as Irish and Scottish rates, so clearly that even I can understand them. It is also one of the few books which explains ship-letter rates correctly. Back to the wrapper. David explains it as follows: A newspaper wrapper from Dublin to Brunswick, Maine, charged in Dublin in red manuscript '2', with a red Dublin 'PAID' handstamp, and 'PUT IN AFTER SIX O'CLOCK'.

There is also a black line through the 'PAID'. The wrapper is open at each side and sealed also at each side. Under the Anglo-US Postal Convention of 1838, and as stated in the General Post Office Notice 21st June 1838, the charge for newspapers was 2d, 'until British newspapers be allowed to circulate free within such foreign parts'. In America, 'if carried over 100 miles and out of the state in which they are mailed', the charge was 1½ cents (Act 1825, Sec. 20). They were not required to be turned into the port post office by arriving ships' captains, but there was nothing to prevent them being entered into the US mail system for delivery to their destination. Each country retained its own charges. I will seek further details of the *'Anglo-US Postal Convention of 1838'*, which may be '1848'.

Figure 6: A newspaper wrapper from Dublin, Ireland to Brunswick, Maine, 29th March 1839.



CORRIGENDA AND COMMENTS

John Rawlins writes: *'Amendments to trans-Atlantic Registration Rates ...*

2. This rate was actually established effective 1st January 1878. 9. 13th June 1921. 35. Inland only. Overseas rates from 1st October 1957*. 40. 29th April 1963 (John has a copy of the Post Office Circular); inland only, overseas rates from 1st July 1963*. 47. Inland only. Overseas remained at 15p until 1st July 1971*.

* Special overseas registered envelopes were issued with embossed stamp in puce, rather than grey.'

Dick Winter writes: 'Figure 6 showed a registered cover 1863 from Vancouver Island to England

formerly in the Wellburn collection. I briefly wrote about this cover in an August 1989 Chronicle article (Chronicle No. 143) titled 'Registered Letters Under the U.S. - British Treaty of 1848.' The 29c prepayment on this letter was the regular letter rate from the West Coast of the United States to England. The registration fee was paid in cash and does not show in the adhesives. When this letter was posted in early 1863, the single letter rate from all of the U.S. was 24c except the West Coast which was 29c. In your Newsletter you mistakenly thought the prepayment included the 5c registration fee. Registered letters from the U.S. did not require the registration fee to be paid by adhesives until 1867.'

THE RETALIATORY RATE

The illustration which follows, not strictly trans-Atlantic, was sent by Arthur Blundell. I include it, because there is little published on the movement of letters around the north-east coast of America (more correctly, what has been published is scattered through many articles and books, and is difficult to assimilate), and this area deserves further attention. Using Arthur's description: the illustrated cover was posted in

Halifax, Nova Scotia paid a shilling for the British Packet. It was carried by the Cunard Line 'Cambria' to Boston, where it was charged twenty-nine cents (twenty-four cents ocean postage, the 'retaliatory rate', plus five cents inland. Arthur comments that it appears as though the '29' has been used to obliterate the Halifax handstamp - and that this seems to be a feature of this period.

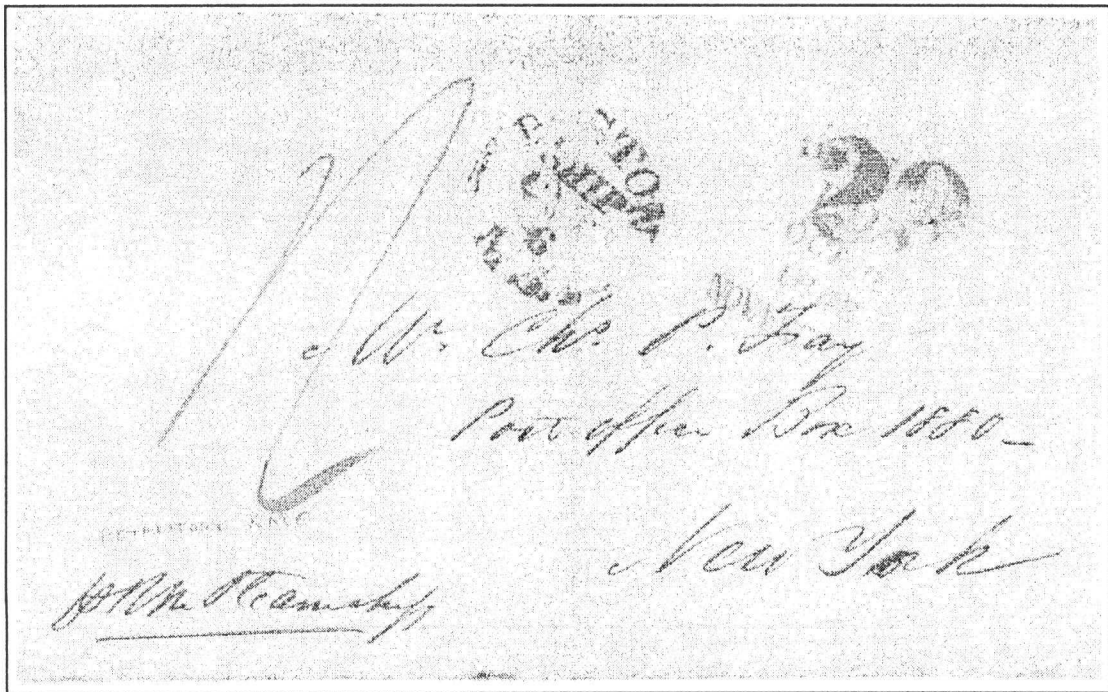


Figure 7: Halifax, Nova Scotia to Boston, United States, 2nd October 1848.

FINES IN THE EARLY GENERAL POSTAL UNION YEARS

Jack Arnell sent me photocopies of two covers (opposite) some time ago - unfortunately, he had no record of where he had obtained them, and so I am unable to give a credit. If they are yours, please let me know.

Quite apart from the fact that they are both to Prince Edward Island, and so are quite scarce, the covers are nice examples of fines raised on overweight letters in the period immediately after the formation of the General Postal Union. The first also bears an unusual '7½^D' handstamp, probably of Dublin. I have a similar cover to Showville County, Pontiac, Quebec, dated 28th November 1877, from Newry, but am not aware of any record which can confirm that the charge mark was used in Dublin.

The charge was calculated as follows: the Union rate was twopence halfpenny (five cents) per half ounce paid, double if unpaid. Thus the postage due on an underpaid ½ - 1 oz letter was tenpence less the prepayment, sevenpence

halfpenny, or fifteen cents. The British Post Office Guide dated April 1879 states that: *'...unpaid letters are charged double the prepaid rate, and those partially prepaid are charged double the deficiency.'* This was under the terms of the Convention of Paris, and presumably effective in both Canada and the United Kingdom from 1st April 1879.

The second cover predates the change, but bears the 'T' (taxe) handstamp and a manuscript '2/25' (25 centimes deficiency), in accordance with Articles III and V of the detailed regulation of the Treaty of Berne.

Despite carefully re-reading George B. Arfken *'Canada and the Universal Postal Union'*, I remain unable to translate '2/25' into 15 cents, and would be grateful for anyone who can explain it clearly, in words of not more than 2/3 syllables, to use in a future edition of the Newsletter. But be careful, it's been attempted before.

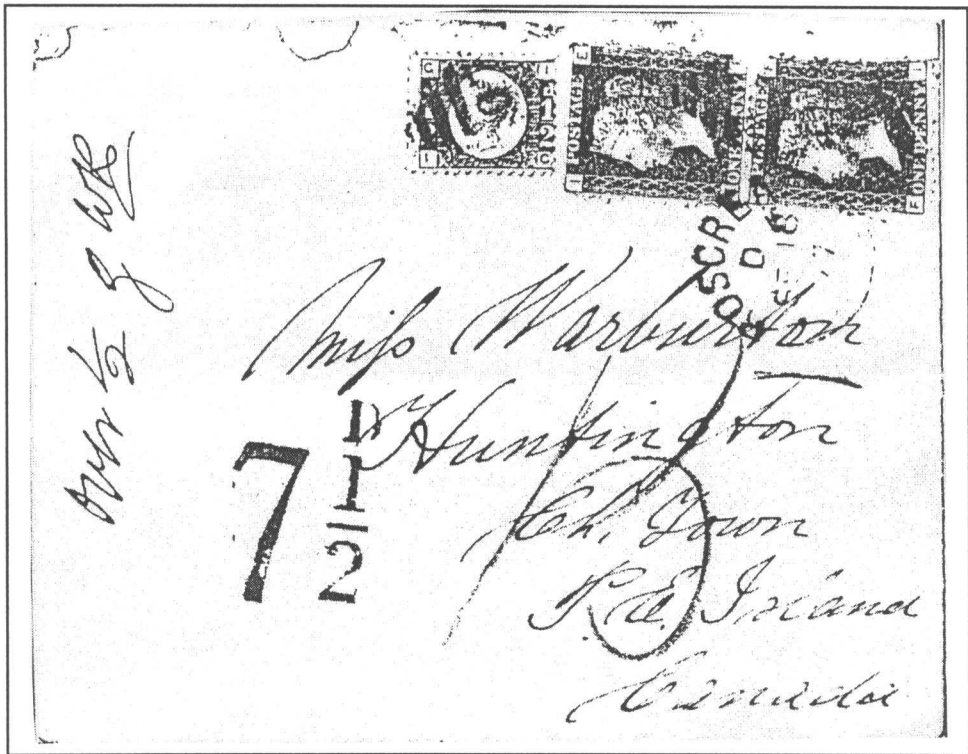


Figure 8: Roscrea, Ireland to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, 18th September 1877.

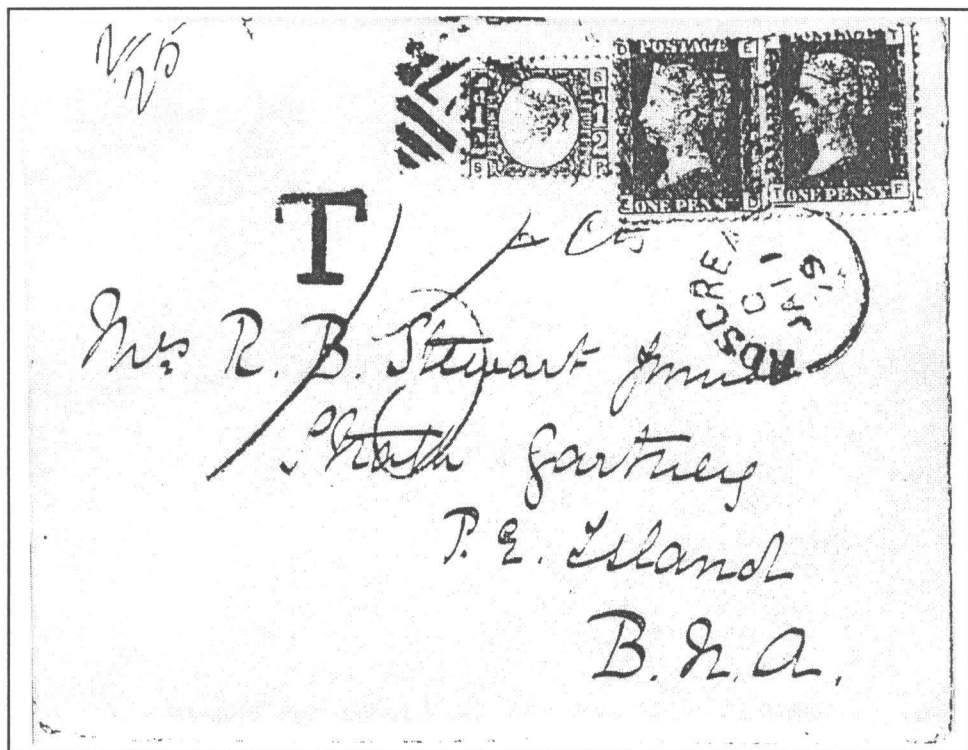


Figure 9: Roscrea, Ireland to Strath Gartney, Prince Edward Island, 11th January 1879.

THE SEVENPENCE RATE

John Forbes-Nixon has sent a cover (Figure 9) showing the sevenpence rate (with the comment 'you'd think they'd have something better to do than write letters on Christmas Day'). Also included is a cover (Figure 10) in the same period paid for the Canadian Packet; not so directed and sent by the first to sail, it was charged United States transit, a penny.

The rate by British Packet was effective from 1st January 1868 (GPO Notice 43/67, December 1867) to 5th January 1870 (GPO Notice 2/70, 3rd January 1870).

I understand that there are some twenty covers from Canada franked with the fifteen cent Large Queen paying this rate (I suspect from recent sales that the number may be slightly larger); since the stamp was not issued until 1st April 1868, it would be interesting to record the incidence of covers in the first three months of the year. I have not seen any covers carried by this route to or from the Maritime Provinces, although they may exist - if you have such covers, photocopies (preferably both sides, if there are markings on the back) would be appreciated.

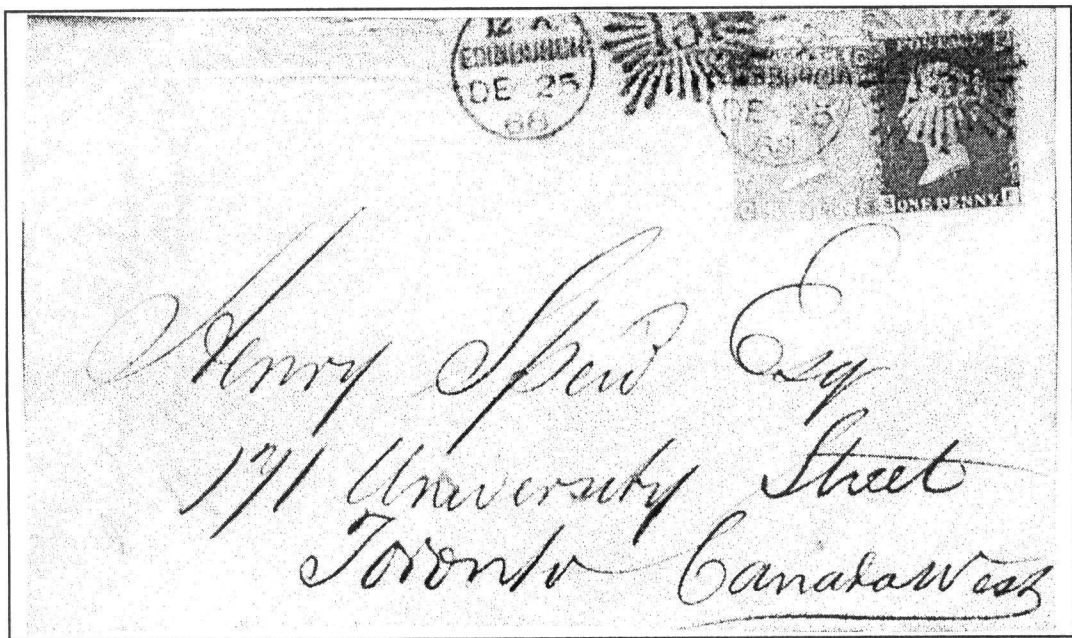


Figure 10: Edinburgh, Scotland to Toronto, Canada West, 25th December 1868.



Figure 11: Bristol, England to Montreal, Canada, underpaid, 13th March 1869.

FERRIAGE AND SUCHLIKE

The two letters illustrated below have been puzzling me for some time, and you may be able to help explain them better. The first, dated 4th July 1820, rather predating the 'published' introduction date of ferriage in Upper Canada, was 'Paid 1N2'.

I have interpreted that to be (approximately) 3d Currency ferriage plus 11d for the 18½ cents United States postage. The second, dated 15th October 1836, shows no British North American or ferriage charges, just the 18¾ cents United States postage to New York. Any ideas?



Figure 12: Kingston, Upper Canada to London, England, 4th July 1820.

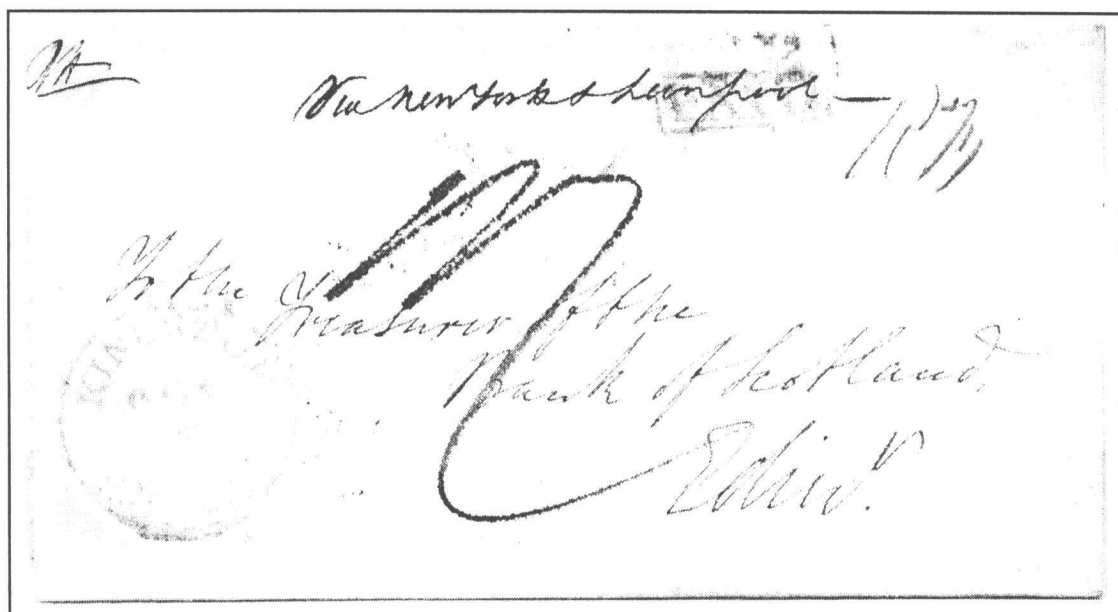


Figure 13: Kingston, Upper Canada to Edinburgh, Scotland, 15th October 1836.

BY CANADIAN PACKET

The back-cover illustration was sent to me by MacDonnell Whyte of Dublin and shows another scarce Liverpool handstamp 'BY CANADIAN PACKET' - the mark had a similar life-style to its

United States fellow, and is less often seen than might be expected, given the considerable quantity of mail carried by the Canadian Packets. The illustration is of an 1856 cover to Ireland charged

six-pence Sterling. The Canadian Packet' handstamp (Robertson M10) is in red, and there is a Liverpool 'tombstone' transit on the back. Details of other examples would be appreciated for a future edition.

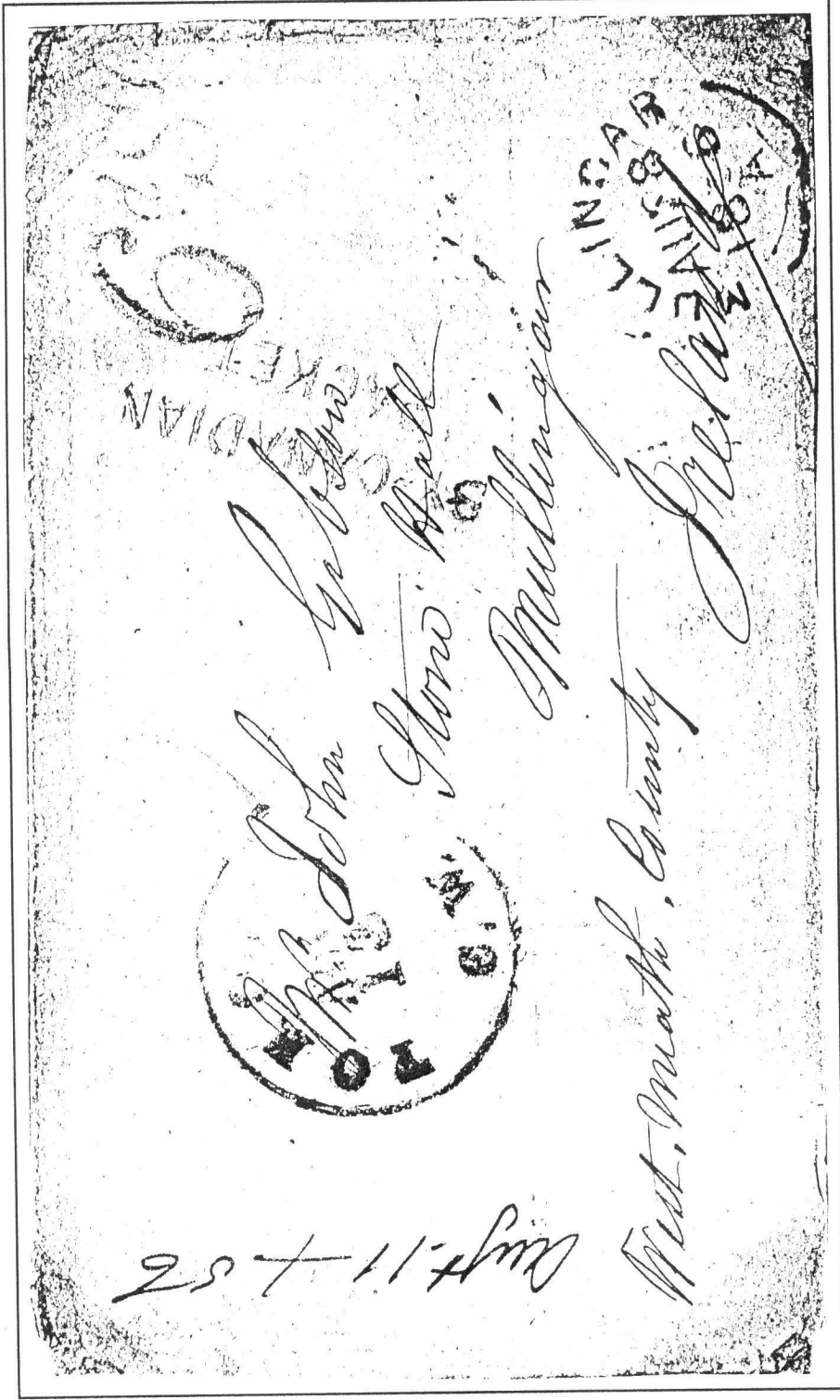


Figure 12: Toronto, Canada West to Mullingar, Ireland, via Liverpool 13th August 1856.

From: M.B. Montgomery, 76 Glen Eyre Road, Southampton, SO16 3NL, ENGLAND