

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP

of the
Bristish North America Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 20

January 1991

BEST WISHES FOR 1991

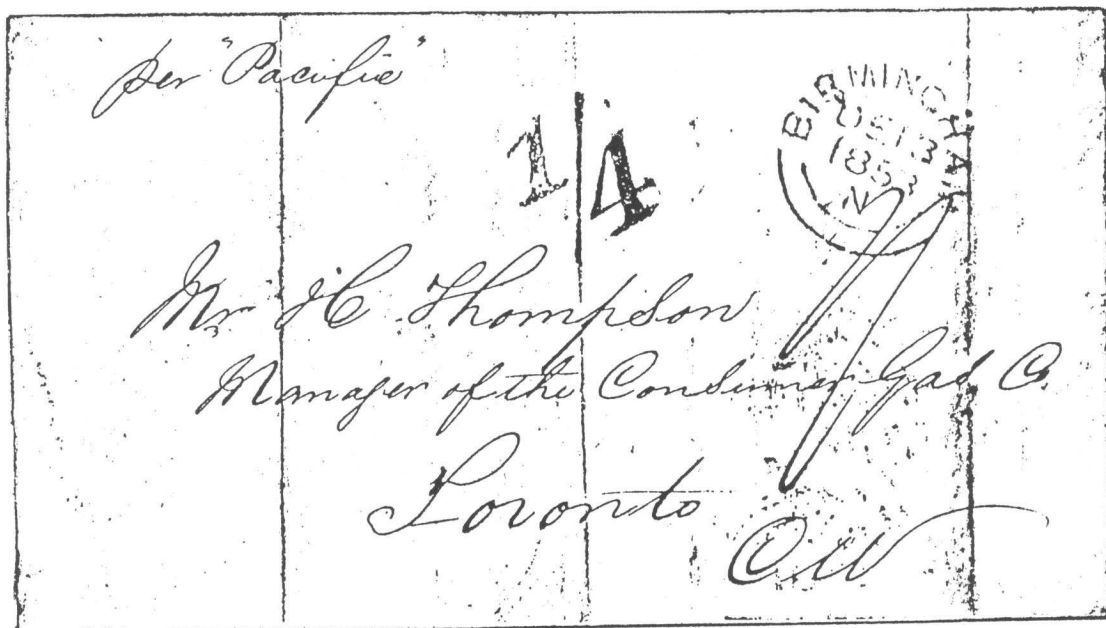
I had planned to send out a newsletter in December with greetings for the holiday season, but my editing work for the Bermuda Maritime Museum Journal interfered early in the month, and my wife and I went to England on the 15th to spend Christmas with my youngest daughter, so this has become the first newsletter in 1991 and brings my best wishes to all of you for 1991.

You may recall that three newsletters in 1989 (Nos. 11-13) were printed in high quality typeface using the museum's Apple Laser Writer. There was an inherent minor incompatibility between the formatting on my home Macintosh and the one I used for printing at the museum, even though they had the same software. This caused problems in placing illustrations, so I used my Image Writer at home, where I could control text and illustrations. I have given myself an Apple Personal Laser Writer as a New Year's present, and this marks its first use.

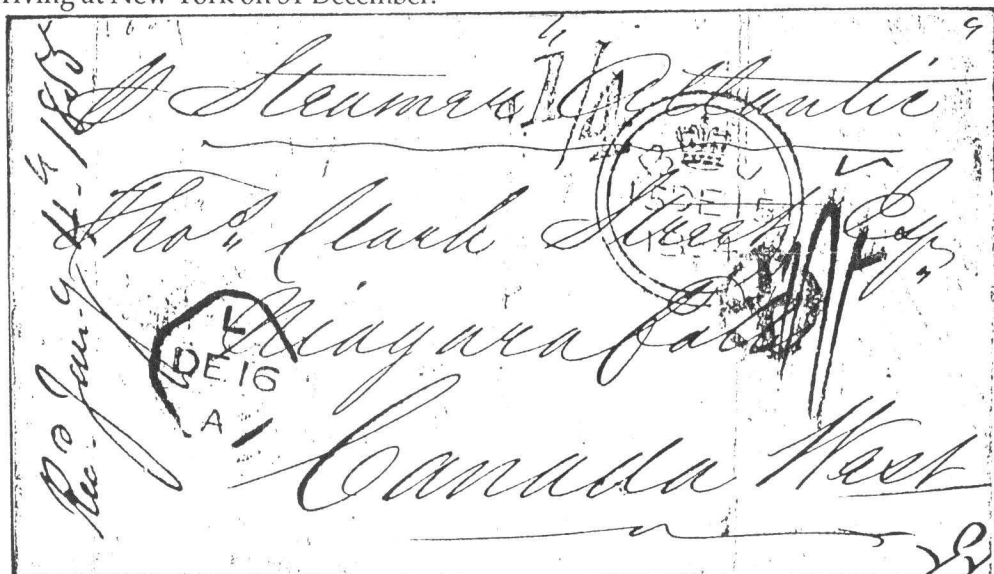
B.N.A. LETTERS BY AMERICAN CONTRACT PACKETS

Allan Steinhart sent along the cover shown below, which was mailed at Birmingham with the postage unpaid, as an example of a letter sent in a Toronto closed bag via the Collins Line, instead of Cunard, prior to the withdrawal of the Cunard service to New York in 1855 due to the steamers being used as troop transports during the Crimean War. I have three similar letters from the same correspondence dated 10 July and 8 August 1854, and 13 July 1855.

For reasons best known to W. Chance, Son & Co., the sender, these letters were mailed in time to connect with the fortnightly Wednesday sailings of the Collins steamers, rather than the weekly Saturday Cunard sailings. More puzzling is why this was done, when the postage via Cunard was 8d Stg. (10d Cy.) and 1/2 Stg. (1/4 Cy.).

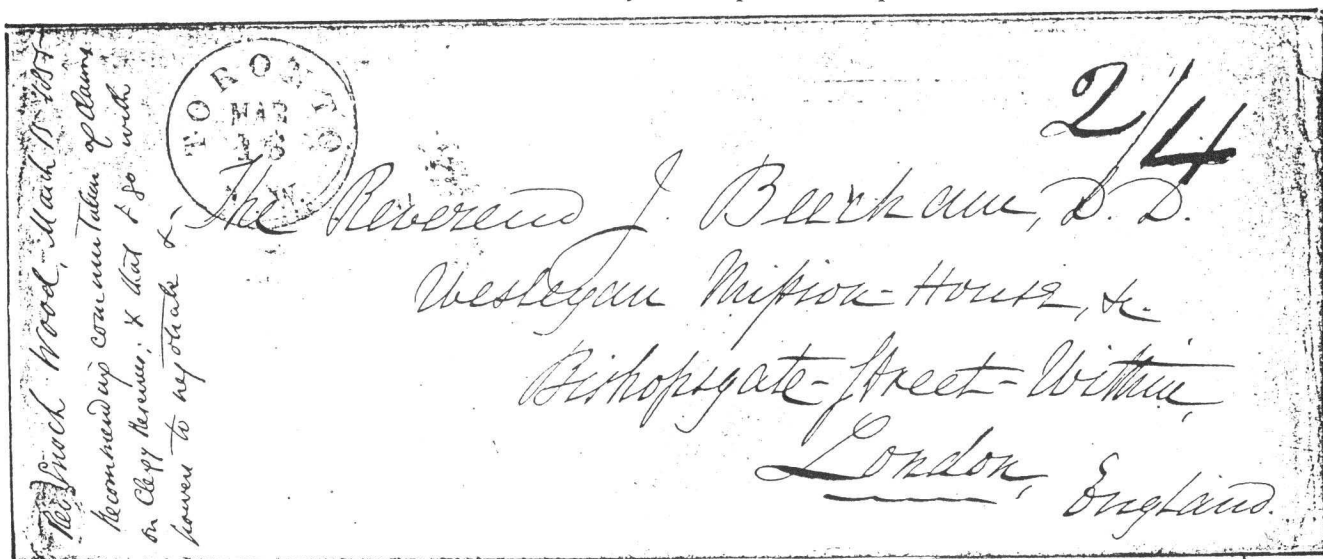


On the same subject, the next letter from Gillespie, Moffat & Co., London went by the first Crimean War Collins sailing from Liverpool. It was mailed on 15 December 1854 and should have gone on the Cunard *Arabia* on the following day. However, on her arrival at Liverpool from New York on 26 November, the *Arabia* was taken over by the British Government as a troopship. As a result, the Collins *Atlantic* delayed her departure from Wednesday, 13 December to Saturday, 16 December in order to take the Cunard Mails. On this occasion, the *Atlantic* was forced to return to Liverpool with a broken rudder, sailing again on 18 December and arriving at New York on 31 December.



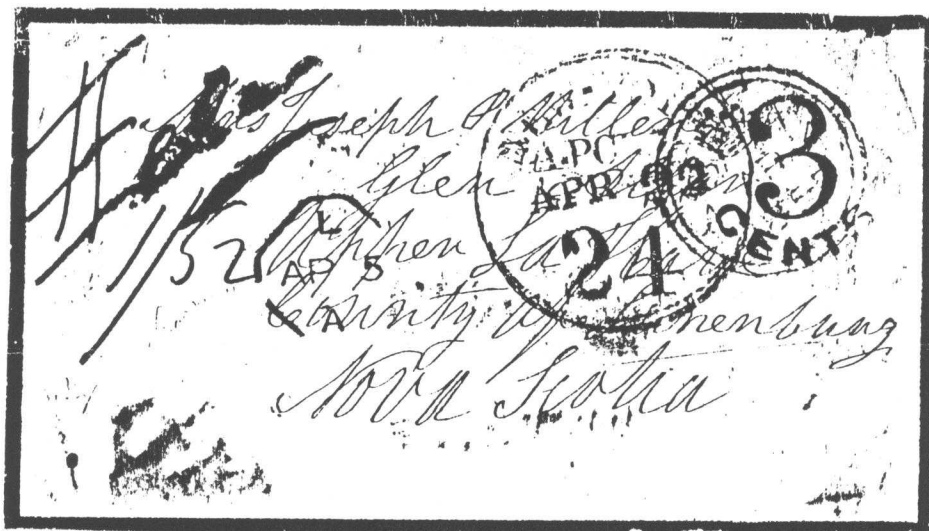
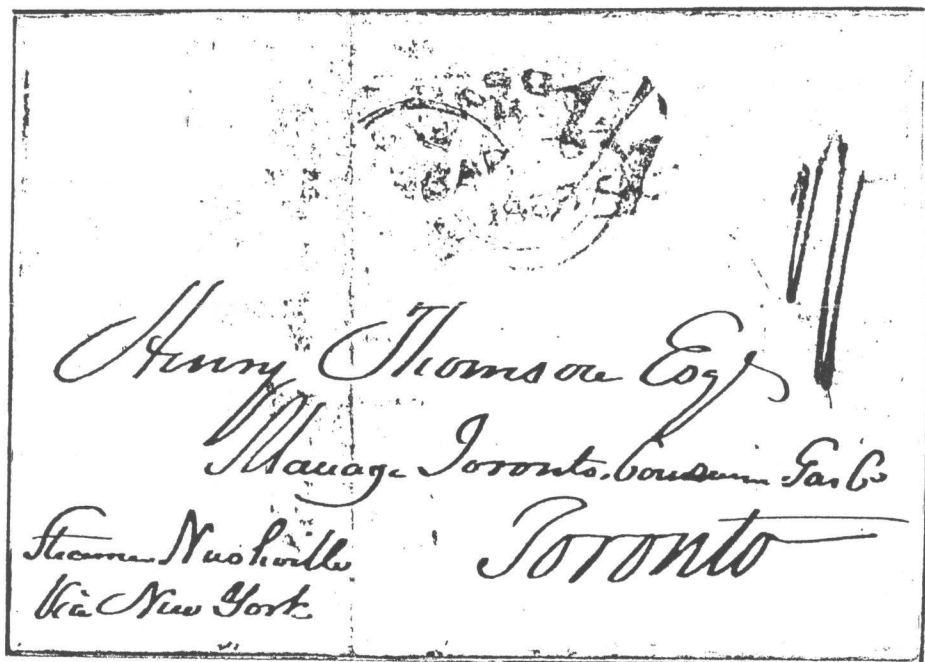
The Collins Line began its transatlantic steamship service with four steamers in 1850 - *Atlantic*, *Arctic*, *Baltic* and *Pacific*. This allowed some reserve capacity in maintaining a fortnightly New York-Liverpool service. On 27 September 1854, the *Arctic* collided with the French steamer *Vesta* in fog off Cape Race and sank a few hours later unexpectedly with a large loss of life. The three remaining ships were able to maintain the service for the next six months, until mid-March when the *Pacific* returned to New York on 14 March 1855 nearly

a week behind schedule, and was not ready for its next voyage a week later. As a result, the *Nashville*, which had made two previous transatlantic round trips for the New York & Havre Steam Navigation Company, was chartered for a single round trip by Collins. The first letter shown below was mailed in Toronto on 16 March and rated 2/4 Stg. postage due as an unpaid letter. It was carried in a closed bag for London by the *Nashville* from New York on 21 March and arrived at Liverpool on 3 April.



(77%)

The next two covers were carried on the *Nashville's* return trip and are particularly interesting because one was in the regular Toronto closed bag, while that for Nova Scotia went in the U.S. Mail. The first was mailed in Glasgow on 6 April, passed through London the same day, and was backstamped at the Liverpool main post office, where presumably it received the '1/-' British debit strike, and the packet office on the next day in time to be put on board the *Nashville* later in the day.



The above illustration was sent to me by Malcolm Montgomery, one of two new English members of the Group. It was mailed in London on 4 April and stamped at the Liverpool packet office on the following day. It obviously posed a problem for the latter, as letters for the Maritime Provinces normally went direct to Halifax on the Cunard Boston steamers, and there probably was not enough correspondence for Nova Scotia via New York to justify a closed bag for Halifax on the Cunard New York steamers. In this case, either intentionally or in error, the letter was treated as one for the United States under the 1848 Postal Convention and struck with a 3-cent British deficit as an unpaid letter going by an American contract packet. On arrival at New York on 22 April, it was struck with an 'A.PCKT' datestamp showing 24 cents postage due. It went by the regular inland mail up the east coast to St. Andrews, N.B. (27

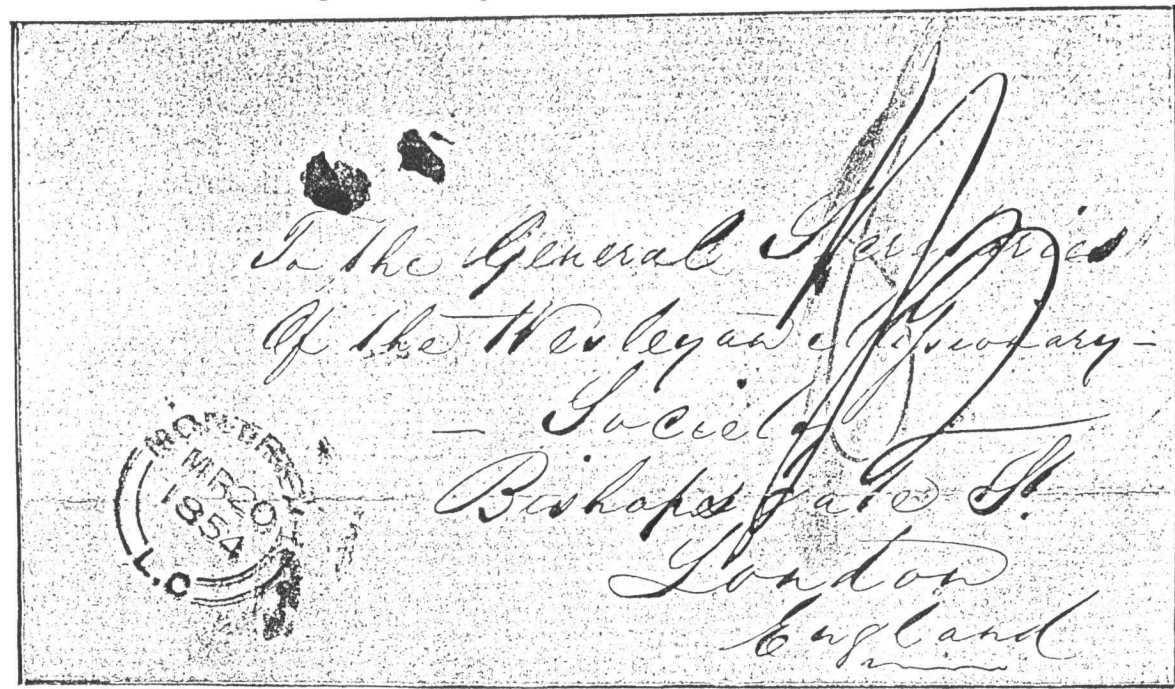
April); St. John (28 April); across the Bay of Fundy to Annapolis (30 April); to Halifax on 3 May, where the 24 cents was converted to 1/3 local currency, and 2¹/₂d Cy. added for a total postage due of 1/5¹/₂; and finally reached Bridge water on 5 May.

If the letter had been held at Liverpool until the Cunard *Africa* sailed on 14 April, it would have reached Halifax on 24 April – more than a week earlier – and with a postage due of only 7¹/₂d Cy.!

REDUCTION IN PACKET POSTAGE

It is always pleasing to find an uninteresting looking letter marking a major event in transatlantic postal history. The letter below was mailed at Montreal on 20 March 1854. It was rated 1/2 Stg. postage due as an unpaid letter and put in a closed bag for London. Carried from New York by the Cunard *Asia* on 22 March, it reached Liverpool on 3 April. It

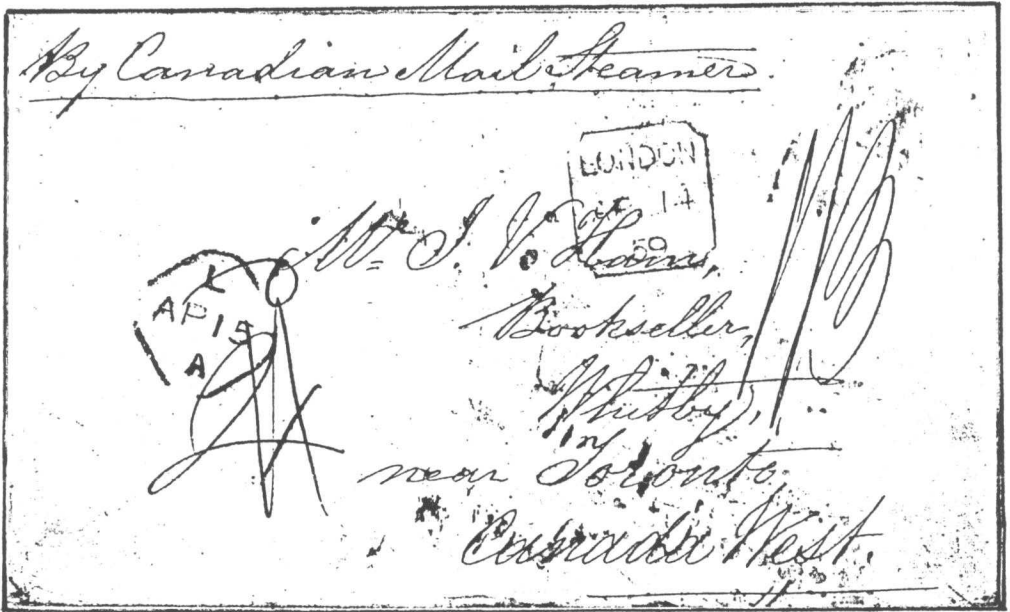
was backstamped at London the next morning and the postage due reduced to 8d Stg. in accordance with the newly issued P.O. Regulation covering letters carried by Cunard steamers via Boston or New York, which had not reached Montreal when the letter was mailed



MORE ON LATE FEES

In the August 1990 (No. 18) newsletter, I showed examples of the 1d, 2d and 3d British Late Fees. After additional study of Stitt Dibden's treatise, I find that there were other rates to watch out for.

Although it was undoubtedly rare, there was a 6d Late Fee between 7:00 and 7:30 p.m. at the London Chief Office until December 1864, after which this was reduced to 4d between 6:45 and 7:30 p.m. Several different square and circular datestamps were used as backstamps, beginning in 1797 to show the Late Fee being paid in cash – such letters do not additional manuscript postage before 1840 nor extra adhesives thereafter. I only appear to have one such letter dated 1859 in my B.N.A. collection, which is shown herewith, and four in my U.S. collection – three dated 1859 and one dated 1861.



One might question whether a Late Fee was paid on this letter or not, because the datestamp in question was struck on the front, rather than the back, and in light of the order from the Controller's Order Book for 1 January 1859, quoted by G.F. Oxley in *Postal History*, No. 252, page 117, which read:

For the future the unpaid letters and letters prepaid by stamps arriving in the evening in the bags from the different Government Offices will be stamped with the same description of stamps as on ordinary letters posted in London and the stamp which has hitherto been used exclusively for this purpose will be withdrawn.

The unpaid letters posted in the evening will hereafter be stamped with the stamp an impression of which appears in the margin. [The illustration is the same stamp as on the above letter.]

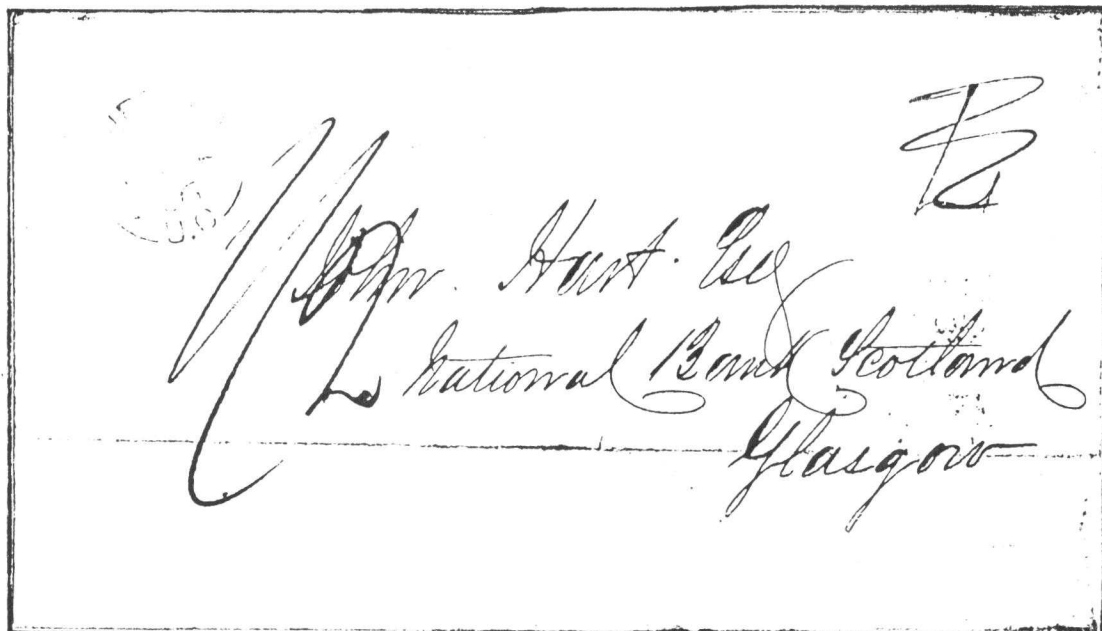
My interpretation of this order is that the Late Fee stamp used on ordinary letters was to be used on government mail without being charged, and that unpaid ordinary letters would be accepted, provided that the 6d Late Fee was paid. My five examples were all unpaid and were in either Liverpool or Queenston the next day, so must have gone by the night mail train on the evening they were stamped. Perhaps a group member can offer more information on this point.

The boxed 'L1', 'L2' and 'L4' handstamps were introduced in 1868 to show Late Fees of 1d, 2d and 4d respectively, replacing previous markings.

A very rare Late Fee marking, which I have seen, but do not have, is that of the Liverpool Floating Receiving House. This was used between 1849 and 1864 on letters from Liverpool to North America, having an additional 1/- in adhesive postage stamps, which were delivered to an office on one end of the steamship landing stage up to the time of sailing. Such letters were struck with a circular broken double ring datestamp with 'LIVERPOOL' at the top and 'F.R.H.' at the bottom.

VERY UNUSUAL USE OF A RATE MARKING HANDSTAMP

Another photocopy received from Malcolm Montgomery is of an unpaid letter mailed at Chippawa, U.C. on 2 June 1860. Being unpaid, it was subject to a 6d Stg. fine and thus was rated 1/2 Stg. postage due. As a result, the Canadian debit was 4d Stg. (1d inland postage + 3d half fine). Instead of writing the '4' in manuscript, a '7¹/₂d' handstamp, similar to E.21, with the '1/2d' removed was struck upside to simulate a '4'. While I have had examples of locally-assembled temporary handstamps used for a similar purpose (cf. G.8 '30', Quebec and G.14 '23', Hamilton), this is a most original adaptation of an existing handstamp. Also below there is another example of the latter type of local handstamp. This came with a query as to the significance of the '2¹/₂', which was struck at Hamilton where the letter originated to show the British credit.

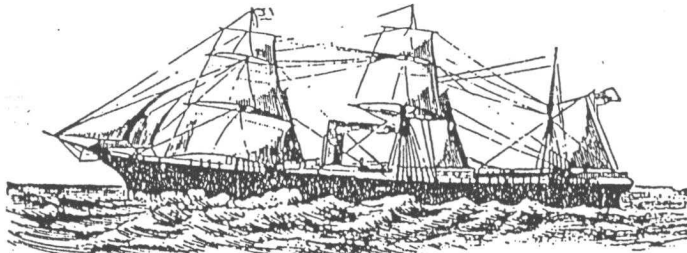


Numbers strengthened.

I do not remember where this came from, but I thought that some of you might find it interesting, particularly the NOTICE, just below the list of ships, giving the route followed to avoid collisions. The crossing point at the 50th meridian was about 400 miles SSW of Cape Race, well off the Grand Banks and away from the fishing fleets.

CUNARD LINE.

THE BRITISH AND NORTH AMERICAN ROYAL MAIL STEAMERS.



ABYSSINIA.
ALGERIA.
ALEPPO.
ATLAS.
BATAVIA.
BOTHNIA.

CALABRIA.
CHINA.
CUBA.
DEMERARA.
HECLA.
JAVA.

KEDAR.
MALTA.
MARATHON.
MOROCCO.
OLYMPUS.
PALMYRA.

PARTHIA.
RUSSIA.
SAMARIA.
SARAGOSSA.
SCOTIA.

SCYTHIA.
SIBERIA.
SIDON.
TARIFA.
TRINIDAD.

Appointed by Her Majesty's Postmaster-General to sail every Saturday for New York, Direct and every Tuesday for New York and Boston.

Extra Steamers on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

NOTICE.—With the view of diminishing the chance of Collision, the Steamers of this Line take a specified course for all seasons of the year.

On the Outward Passage from Queenstown to New York or Boston, crossing Meridian of 50 at 43 Lat., or nothing to the North of 43. On the Homeward Passage crossing the Meridian 50 at 42 Lat., or nothing to the North of 42.

Early in Spring, Steamers of this Line will sail twice each Week for New York, and twice each Week for Boston.

Rates of Cabin Passage-money: 15 GUINEAS, 17, GUINEAS, and 21 GUINEAS, according to the accommodation.

RETURN TICKETS (available for Six Months) 30 GUINEAS.

Rates of Passage-money by the Steamers carrying no Steerage Passengers: CHIEF CABIN, TWENTY-SIX POUNDS; SECOND CABIN, EIGHTEEN POUNDS.

RETURN TICKETS (available for Six Months): CHIEF CABIN, FIFTY POUNDS
CHILDREN BETWEEN TWO AND TWELVE YEARS, HALF-FARE.

These rates include Steward's Fee and provisions, but without Wines or Liquors, which can be obtained on board.

Passengers booked through to San Francisco, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, and Australia, by Pacific Railway and Mail Steamers.

DOGS not taken on any terms.

To prevent disappointment or difficulty, Passengers are respectfully informed that packages of Merchandise will not be allowed to be shipped as Luggage, or with their Luggage.

All Cabin Passengers are allowed twenty cubic feet of Personal Luggage free of freight, but the Agents do not guarantee to reserve room for more than that quantity; and Passengers will be charged freight on their Personal Luggage when it exceeds half-a-ton measurement.

The Passengers and Goods for New York are intended to be landed at Jersey City, within the jurisdiction of the Custom-house of New York.

Goods for Chicago and the West are taken *via* Boston at through rates.

Freights payable either here or in America, at the current rate of Exchange for Bankers' Bills on the date of Steamer's arrival. All risks of river craft, lighterage, and fire to be borne by Shippers.

Goods will only be taken subject to the clauses and conditions printed in the Bills of Lading of this Line.

Letters for Consignees, or others, must pass through the Post Office. None will be received at the Office of the Agents.

Parcels will be received at the Office of the Agents here until Six o'clock on the Evenings previous to sailing.

Drafts issued on New York, for sums not exceeding £10, free of charge.

Apply to the Company's Office, New York, to CHARLES G. FRANKLYN, Agent; at the Company's Office, Boston, to JAMES ALEXANDER, Agent; in Havre, to BURNS and MAC IVER, Quai d'Orleans; in Paris, to BURNS and MAC IVER, 12, Place de la Bourse; in London, to WILLIAM CUNARD, 6, St. Helen's Place, Bishopsgate Street, E.C.; and 28, Pall Mall, S.W.; in Dundee, to G. and J. BURNS, 11, Panmure Street; in Glasgow, to G. and J. BURNS, 30, Jamaica Street; in Belfast, to A. G. S. McCULLOCH & SON; in Queenstown, to D. and C. MAC IVER; or in Liverpool to

D. & C. MAC IVER, 8, Water Street.

NEW MEMBERS AND OTHER MATTERS

Since my last report on membership, there have been three more join the Group – one from Indiana and two from England:

Maurice Nymeyer
Malcolm Montgomery
Peter Thompson.

I have known Malcolm and Peter for some years and am delighted to have them with us. This brings the group to forty-eight.

The other matter is that once again I must make a plea to those of you who have never contributed to the newsletter to search your collection and see if you can find something that might interest the rest of us.

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AIRMAIL



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