

# TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP

of the  
British North America Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 38

Jack Arnell, Chairman

January 1994

## VARIOUS ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

There has been a very good response from Group Members to my call for a further contribution to support the production and mailing of newsletters. One person has resigned from the Group, having found little of interest—a small percentage of the whole. While new members are not expected to send in any money at this time, I do expect any who have received twelve newsletters [two years] to contribute.

I had hoped that I might have been able to greet the New Year with a coloured first page, but unfortunately the colour printer which has been expected for the past week or two has still not turned up due to a Christmas season backlog on the airlines serving the

Island. I have my scanner and all the rest of the equipment in place. However, not having a colour photocopier, there will only be the occasional coloured page, when there is an item worthy of special reproduction. So if anyone has such a cover and will send me a colour photocopy for scanning, I shall try and include it in a future newsletter.

As a contribution to the new *Topics*, I sent in a long article on Freight Money. I have heard that it will be included in the Jan-Feb-Mar issue. I attempted to consolidate all I know on the subject into a reference article. I hope that you find it useful.

You will find an index for 1993 on page 7 of this newsletter.

## MORE ON THE 2d. Stg./2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d. Cy. COLONIAL INLAND POSTAGE

Allan Steinhart has provided a review of the development of the 2d. Stg./2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d. Cy. colonial inland postage, which is reproduced below.

T.A. Stayner's General Post Office Circular from Quebec dated 19 August 1840 noted in part:

An essential charge is also made by this order in regard to Ship Letters, meaning letters conveyed between Ports in the United Kingdom and Ports in these Colonies by private merchant vessels. Such letters if posted or delivered at the Port of the ships arrival or departure in this Country will be liable to a postage on each letter no exceeding  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. in weight, of 8d. sterling equal to 9d. cy. — but if posted or delivered to an office in the interior — the Postage will be 10d. sterling equal to 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  currency.

This information was repeated in a 'Post Office Notice' dated 19 August 1840 sent out by Stayner to newspapers; it was printed in the *Kingston Chronicle* on 26 August. Although worded differently, the information was the same. It also noted 'that on letters sent by private ship from the Provinces the postage must be pre-paid'. This was again repeated in the *Report of the Commissioners to Enquire into the Affairs of the Post Office in British North America*, which is dated 31 December 1841 and signed by Stayner and others.

Treasury Warrant dated 11 October 1843, effective 5 January 1844 noted in relation to letters sent between the United Kingdom and British North America

that on all letters, not exceeding half an ounce in weight, transmitted by the post (whether by packet boat or private ship) between any place in the United Kingdom and any place in British North America... (letters posted or delivered at the port in British North America, ... at which the letters may be landed, or from which they may be despatched excepted, and which letters are to be charged the rates of British Postage only), there shall be paid, in addition to the rates of British postage payable on such letters, ... a uniform colonial rate of two pence, whether such letters shall pass between British North America, ... and the United Kingdom direct, or via the United States; provided always, that if such letters passing through the United States shall be charged with any foreign postage, such foreign postage shall be charged on such letters in addition to the British postage and the said colonial rate.

Again as a result of the above Treasury Warrant, a Circular of Instructions dated 1 December 1843 was issued by Stayner at Quebec to postmasters in Canada. Section 4 of which read:

but on letters between the United Kingdom and this country, via the United States, the Provincial Charge is reduced to a uniform rate on a letter not exceeding  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of two pence sterling or two pence half penny currency, from any part of Canada to the Frontier line between Canada and the United States or vice versa,....must invariably be prepaid.

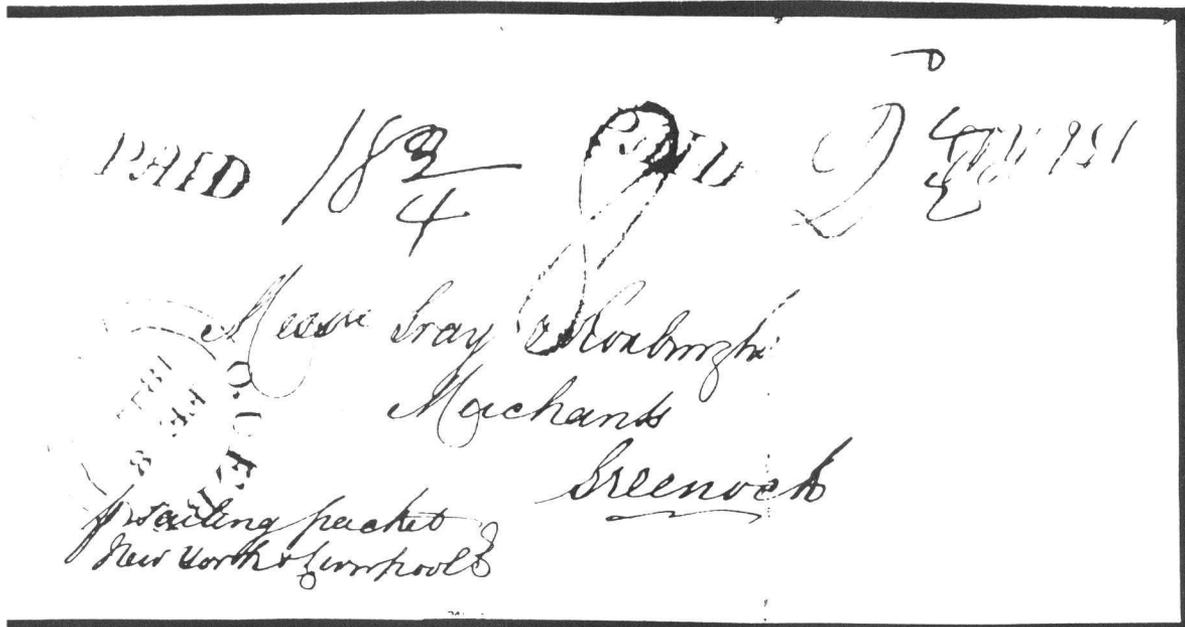
A General Post Office directory of April 1855 from London noted that

letters forwarded to or from British North America by the Liverpool Packets or by Private Ships, passing direct between the United Kingdom and British America, are charged with a Uniform Colonial rate

of two pence the half ounce when posted or delivered at any other towns than the Ports of Halifax (Nova Scotia), or St. John's (Newfoundland).

The British inwards and outwards ship letter rate at this time was 8d. Stg. single.

Allan sent along a photocopy of a letter from Quebec mailed on 8 February 1844, which was marked: 'p<sup>t</sup> sailing packet/New York & Liverpool', i.e. an American packet. The letter had  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. Cy. colonial postage and  $18\frac{3}{4}$  cents U.S. inland postage to New York prepaid. On arrival in the United Kingdom, it was rated 8d. Stg. postage due as a ship letter.



### A GLIMPSE AT THE OPERATION OF THE OCEAN MAIL CLERKS

Horace Harrison has sent along photocopies of two later covers, which form an interesting pair as they reflect of the operation of the mail clerks during a voyage. Both letters were from Kirkwall, U.C. and went through Rockton to Hamilton, where they were put into closed bags for transit. Both had the  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents postage prepaid by seven cents of adhesives and a 5-cent envelope stamp, with the half-cent paid in cash.

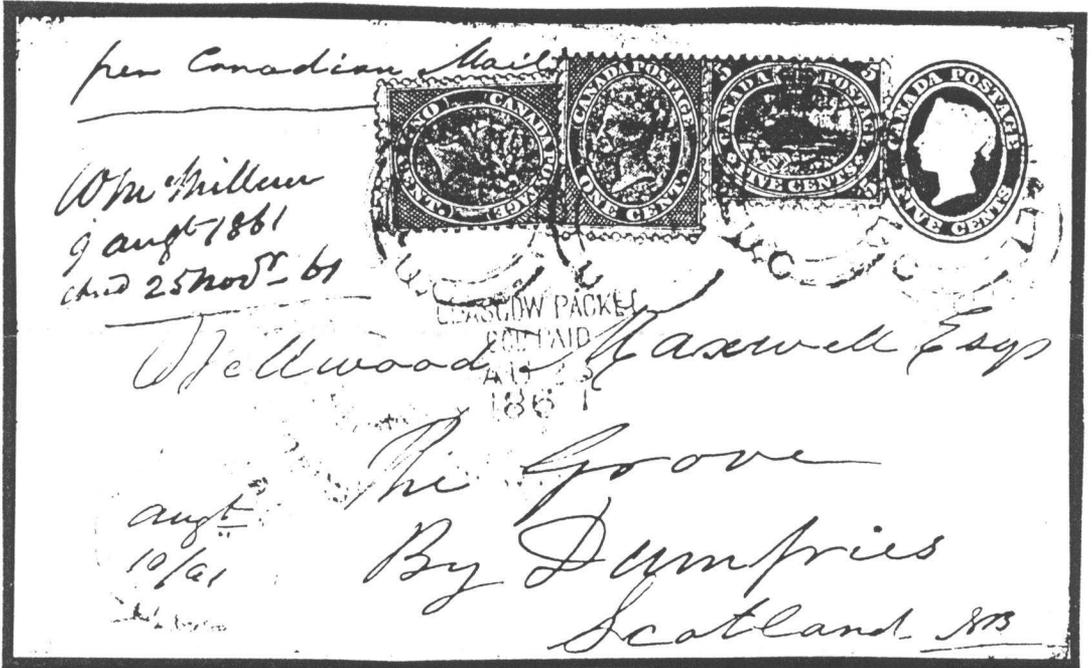
The first letter was mailed on 19 May 1860 and backstamped at Hamilton on the following day, when it was bagged and sent to Quebec to connect with the *Allan Canadian*, which sailed on 27 May. As it was addressed to Scotland, it should have been sorted on the steamer into the Glasgow bag for off-loading at Londonderry on 11 June, but was apparently

put in the Liverpool bag. It reached Liverpool on 12 June, where was incorrectly datestamped with a 'PAID LIVERPOOL COL. PACKET' as '11 June'. This mark was cancelled with the '4 C 6' hammer, and the colonial packet stamp with the correct date struck, tying the 5-cent Beaver and the envelope stamp. Delivered at Dumfries on the same day, it was readdressed to London and a Penny Red added for the forwarding charge, which was cancelled with the Dumfries '108' stamp. It was received at London on 15 June.

Horace noted that the Kirkwall postmaster had carefully refrained from putting a 'cross' on the Queen's face to cancel the 1-cent adhesives, but had no such compunction about the beaver.



The second cover was mailed on 10 August 1861 and again put in a closed bag at Hamilton and sent to Quebec to connect with the Allan *Anglo-Saxon*, which sailed on 17 August. This time, the ocean mail clerk sorted the letter to the Glasgow bag, so that it was off-loaded at Londonderry on 26 August. It was dated at Glasgow with a 'GLASGOW PACKET COL. PAID' on 28 August and arrived at Dumfries on the same day.



On an earlier postcard, Horace sent along information on Canadian packet date stamps, which he has on 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-cent large Queens. These are:

E  
SP 19  
1868

E  
MY 23  
186?

blank  
JY 24  
1869

I thought that there might be some of you interested in keeping a record of such usage.

### MORE ON CAPTAIN EDWARD WROTTESELEY

Some of you will recall the story of the Cove ship letter written by Captain Wrottesley in St. John's, Newfoundland during the War of 1812, which contained a note confirming that he had died and being buried there two months after the letter was written [No. 27, March 1992]. When writing this up, I suggested that Don Wilson might be able to track down what the captain was doing during the ten weeks between the letter and his death.

As a result, Don has had various people trying to find some information for him. Early last year, Don sent me a copy of a letter from a St. John's resident who provided the following facts.

1. The *Register of Burials* for the 'Burying Ground', later the Church of England cemetery records:

Edward Wrottesley, Esq, aged 29 years, Captain of H.M. Sloop Sabine was buried July 31st, 1814 by me David Rowland, Missionary.

The actual gravestone with the inscription given in the note with the letter has long since disappeared.

2. Perhaps most, if not all, of the ten weeks between the time he wrote the letter in May and the date of his death on July 29th was taken up by a patrol along the Atlantic Seaboard for in the *Royal Gazette* of Thursday July 21, 1814 can be found the following notice:

Sunday. Arrival H.M.S. *Crescent*, Captain Quilliam and Tuesday H.M. Brig *Sabine*, Captain Wrottesley both from a cruise.

3. According to the above, Wrottesley was alive as he is recorded as being in command when the vessel entered port. If he died from injuries it would have been sometime later after entering port. Perhaps the true story of the cause of his death might be contained in the Log Book of H.M. Brig *Sabine* which is most likely in the Public Record Office, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, England TW9 4DU, or failing that in The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London SE10, England.

Another possible source of information would be the *Captains' Letters*. Every Royal Navy captain was required to send periodic letters to the Secretary of the Admiralty reporting any incidents, engagements or other matters which might be of concern to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. The originals of these are also in the Public Record Office in London, but there are microfilm copies of those from captains on the North American Station, extracted from the whole in the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa. On occasion in the past, I have worked through some of these volumes and they make fascinating reading. The letters were files in alphabetical order, making it easy to find a given captain's letters. Perhaps one of our Ottawa members could go into the Archives and see if there are Wrottesley's letters pertaining to this period. I certainly hope so!

### LIVERPOOL TRANSIT STRIKES

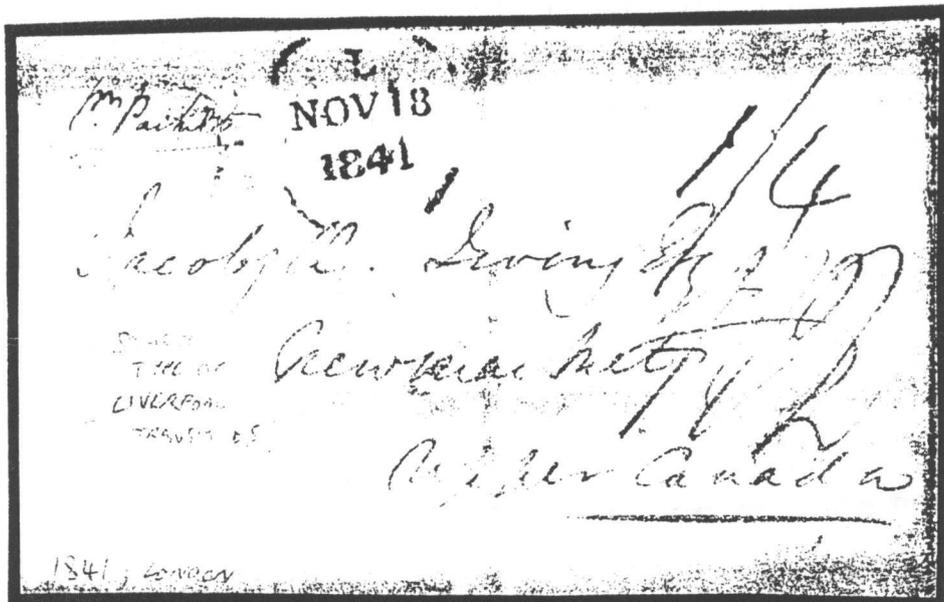
Peter Thompson has sent along photocopies of two rare Liverpool transit handstamp strikes from the early days of the Cunard steam packets. Prior to the Cunard contract, any letters moving in or out through Liverpool were treated as Ship Letters. During the first year or so of Cunard, incoming letters received the double oval 'AMERICA/L'. Late in 1841,

several different 'circular' handstamps were introduced. While two of them were round, two others had straight sections of the outer circle; at the beginning, these appear to have been octagons, but became distorted with use.

Eleven years ago, Peter wrote to the late Susan McDonald asking for her help in sorting out the various Liverpool marks. Susan in turn

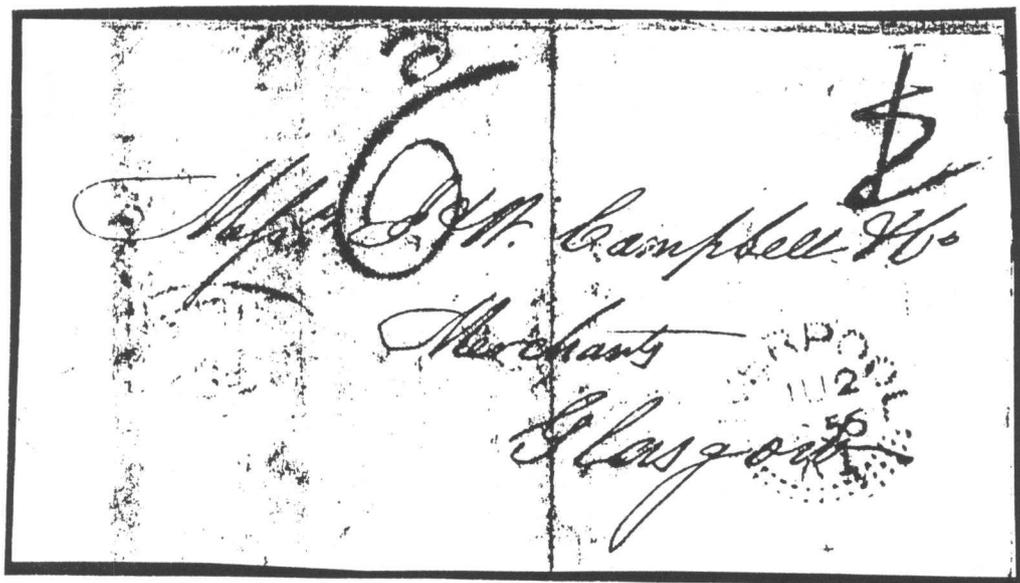
passed the letter to me, beginning a very sporadic contact with Peter on the subject. He has continued his study of these marks, hence this contribution. The first one below was backstamped at London on 17 November 1841 and

struck at Liverpool on the following day with 'L NOV 18 1841' enclosed in four short arcs, instead of a full circle. This is similar to Fig. 3 in C. Tabert's article in No. 193 of *Postal History*, stated then as being very rare.



The second one was mailed at Chatham on 19 May 1856 with the postage unpaid. It was backstamped at Sackville on the next day. A B.N.A. debit of 1d Stg. is shown by the blue '1'; as this is similar to that used at Halifax, I assume it was applied there, even though there is no Halifax datestamp. Carried by

the *America* (58<sup>th</sup> voyage) from Halifax on 23 May and arrived at Liverpool on 1 June, where it was struck with an unusual circular handstamp with many dots replacing solid lines [see page 8], backstamped with a tombstone 'PACKET LETTER LIVERPOOL' and rated 6d Stg. postage due.



Other strikes from the 1841-42 period include a similar one to the above, except that it has a complete circle made up of 47 dots [Fig. 2 in Tabcart]. My earliest example of an octagon has fairly straight sides, which are approximately 27 mm between parallels in all four directions. This is backstamped with 'D DEC 18 1841' on an outgoing letter. Later ones dated 25 January and 2 February 1842 show the beginning of line distortion and do not have a letter before the date, while half the outer perimeter appears to be circular on one for 18 April. A strike on 2 June 1842 has the

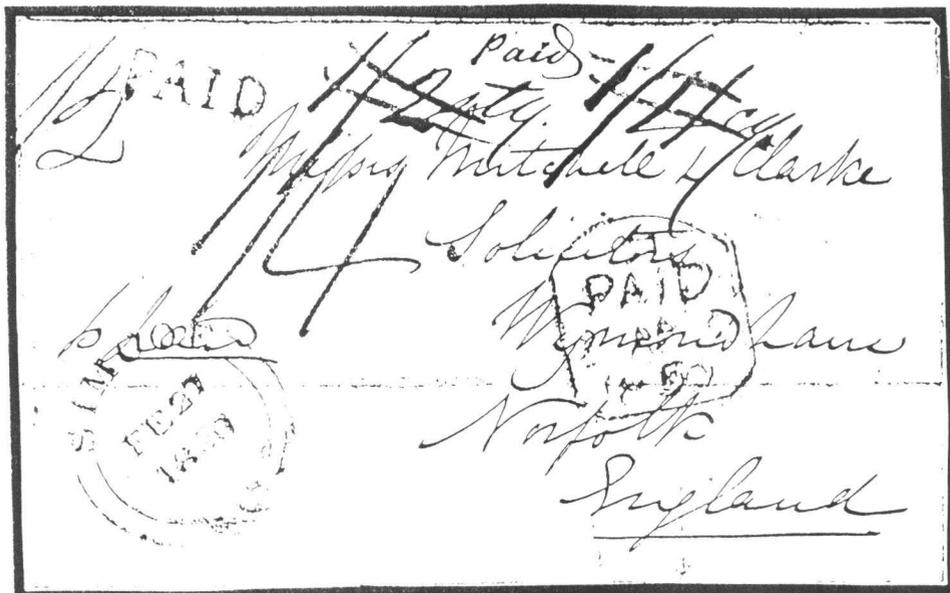
letter 'L' and the year reduced to the last two numbers. This appears to be at least 1-2 mm smaller than the earlier ones, as does another for 28 December. My latest example of this latter is 13 April 1843. My first oval appears in a 1 June 1843 strike, suggesting the abandonment of the several earlier handstamps, which are stated to have been experimental. There were several different ovals, as well as the lozenges, which were contemporary with them. These strikes are shown below as they are not as common as the ovals and lozenges, and do show distortion.



#### PROBLEMS WITH RED INK

I have commented in the past on the difficulty various postmasters had in obtaining the proper ingredients for mixing *red* ink, with the result that Paid postage was sometimes shown in *black*. Alan Steinhart has sent along a very nice example of this. Unfortunately, it cannot be shown in proper colours, being a B & W photostat. The letter was mailed at Simcoe, C.W. on 27 February 1850 with the postage prepaid. This was shown as '1/2 stg. Paid 1/4 cy.' in *black* manuscript. It went through Brantford and reached Montreal on 4

March, where the postage markings were crossed out and rewritten in *red* manuscript and 'PAID' struck in *red*. This was done to be in accord with the regulations and prevent the letter being charged a second time in England. As it was too late for the 6 March sailing of the *America* from Boston, the letter was sent to New York in a closed bag for London to connect with the *Canada* (10<sup>th</sup> voyage) on 20 March and arrived at Liverpool on 2 April. It was datestamped 'PAID' on the same day at London.



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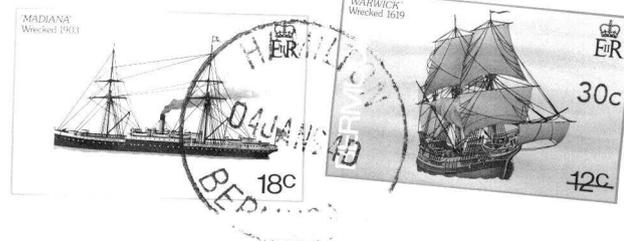
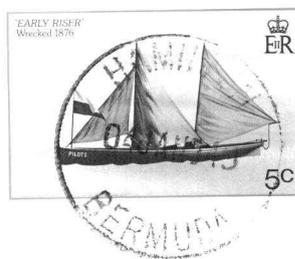
# LIVERPOOL PACKET OFFICE HANDSTAMPS IN USE IN 1858

Sometime ago Alan Steinhart picked up a sheet on which a Post Office employee had struck the handstamps in use in the Liverpool Packet Office in 1858. I had intended to reproduce these at the time, but did not. In view of Peter Thompson's above covers, here they are.



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