

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP
OF THE
British North American Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 51

March 1996

FRONT PAGE NEWS

Following the trend set by some of the English tabloids, I thought that a little colour might encourage wider distribution and stimulate some fresh contributions. However, unlike the tabloids, the colour illustration will not be hiding coyly on Page Three, but will be brazenly displayed on the

front page so, if you have any covers which deserve special attention, please get in touch and I will make arrangement for colour copying. Cost dictates that the illustration be small enough to fit in the fold on the front page - a full-colour production would be prohibitively expensive!

NEW BRUNSWICK - A REDISCOVERED HANDSTAMP

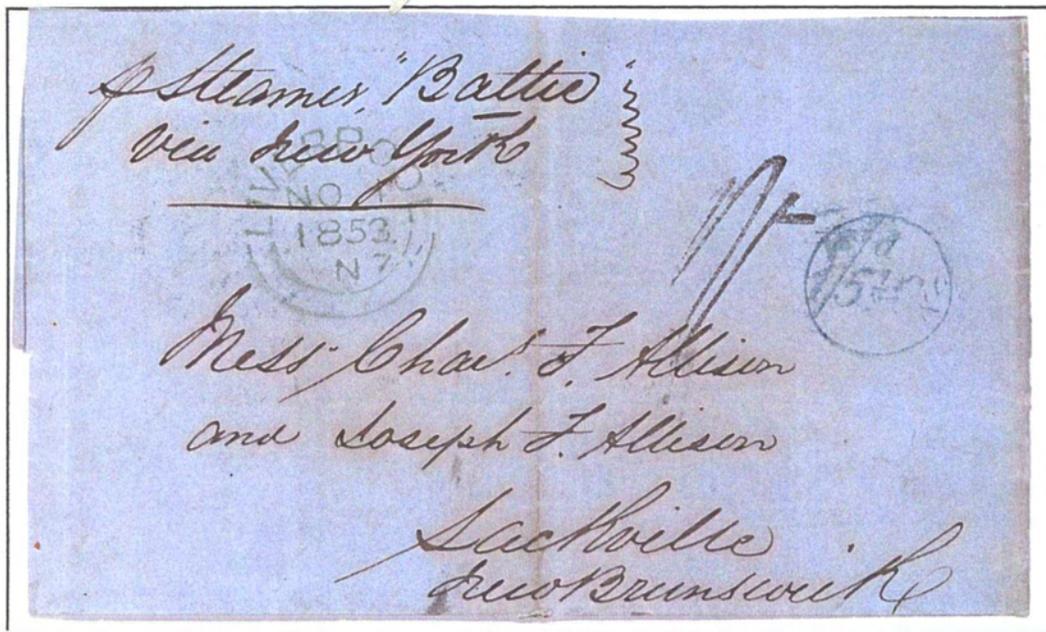


Figure 1: Liverpool to Sackville, New Brunswick, 1st November 1853.

I have been unable to discover any reference to the one shilling and fivepence halfpenny Currency handstamp illustrated above; similar to other circular Currency marks, this appears to be the first recorded example. The letter, courtesy of Dorothy Sanderson, is from Liverpool, written on 1st November 1853 and directed to the Collins Line 'Baltic' sailing the following day. 'Baltic' made New York on the 14th and the letter was passed to St. Andrews, New Brunswick.

The cover has three handstamps on the reverse, the first of which is the red-inked one and all over-

(blue, the same shade as the Currency marking); St. John, 18th (black); and Sackville, 19th (also black). Actual use of the handstamp may be rare, but the rationale is well documented. Rates to New Brunswick, and Currency equivalents, were re-stated in 'General Instructions to a Postmaster 1848', New Brunswick and Nova Scotia:

'Rate to and from 33. On letters between the United Kingdom and your Office, the rate is an Uniform Charge of 1s 2d. Sterling, or 1s 4d. Currency, the half ounce which may be

The next chapter in the story is explained in 'Post Office Instructions, No. 14, (April) 1849, cancelling Instruction No. 27, 1847.

'AFTER the 14th Instant, the Mails to and from Canada will be forwarded through the United States, and all Letters and Newspapers for Canada will be transmitted in such Mails, unless specially directed to be sent by some other route.

Letters for Canada will be chargeable with postage at the rate of 1s 2d, the half-ounce, as at present; and Newspapers will be liable to a postage of one Penny each to be paid on delivery.

Letters and Newspapers for any other part of British North America, may also be forwarded via the United States, if specially addressed; but the rule will be to forward them via Halifax, as heretofore.

From the period above mentioned, the reduction of postage, authorised by the Treasury Warrant of the 3rd Instant, will take place on Letters transmitted by British Packet between the United Kingdom and New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia (the Port of Halifax excepted) as well as on such Letters for Canada as may be specially addressed to be sent via Halifax.

On all these letters there will be charged a uniform rate of one shilling when not exceeding half an ounce in weight, 2s when above half an ounce and not exceeding one ounce in weight, and so on, according to the scale of weight at present in operation for charging Inland Letters.

Letters for Halifax, N.S., and for Newfoundland, will also be liable to the rate of one shilling, as at present.

It will be seen that, as a general rule, all Letters and Newspapers for Canada will be forwarded through the United States, and that Letters and Newspapers for the other Provinces of British North America, will be sent via Halifax. None will be transmitted by other routes unless specially addressed.'

This followed the 1848 Anglo/US Convention, and reflected the perception that some form of concession should be made in the case of letters not subject to United States' transit charges.

The following year, there was cause to re-examine the 'preferred route' to New Brunswick; this was explained in a letter to John Howe, a copy of which is on file in the British Post Office Archives:

'Post 48/129 America
John Howe Esq
S' John N.B.

683
General Post Office
29th August 1850

Sir, Her Majesty's Government have at present under consideration a proposal that the British Contract Mail Packets should cease to call at Halifax both on the voyage from Liverpool to New York and on the return from New York to Liverpool, and, if this arrangement be carried into effect, the Postmaster General has it in contemplation to forward Closed Mails for New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island through the United States, under powers reserved to this Country by the Convention of 1848. Mails for the United Kingdom being, in like manner forwarded through the States from these Provinces.

As the Packets between Liverpool and Boston will continue to call at Halifax, both in the Outward and the Homeward voyage, these closed mails will of course only be despatched by the Packets to and from New York.

Letters conveyed through the United States to and from the British Provinces are liable to a rate of 1¹/₂^d Sterling per half ounce, &c, and newspapers are liable to an United States' transit rate of one penny each.

In acquainting you with these contemplated arrangements, I have to request that you will give your attention to the subject, and, forward me with any suggestions which may occur to you in connection with these measures.

*I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
Tilley'.*

The 'contemplated course of action' was confirmed in a further letter from Tilley to John Howe (Post 48/129 America, 712):

'... I beg leave now to inform you that the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury have sanctioned the measure, and that the alteration will commence with the Packet leaving here on the 14th Instant, on this side and with the Packet leaving New York on the 25th Instant, on the other side.

I have to request that you will lose no time in announcing this new arrangement to the Public in New Brunswick and to the Postmasters under your control, informing them that Letters and Newspapers for the United Kingdom may still be forwarded in closed mails, by the New York line of Packets, if specially addressed "viâ New York" or "viâ the United States", but that those letters and newspapers which are not so addressed will be

forwarded in the regular mails by the Contract Packets proceeding from Boston to Liverpool viâ Halifax.'

There is one other comment in the letter, of relevance to printed papers and newspapers:

'I beg leave to add that the Treasury have authorized one penny Currency instead of one penny Sterling to be collected in British North America on the delivery of the newspapers forwarded in these closed mails.'

Now ... the question of '1s 5½d', and where the mark was applied. The Currency rate is explained in this extract from the first New Brunswick Post Office General Regulations:

'Secretary's Office 7 JULY 1851

His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor in council has been pleased to make the following Orders, Regulations and Appointments, in pursuance of the provisions of the Post Office Acts of 1850 and 1851:-

Packet to and from the United Kingdom: Letters

1. The Packet rates on Letters to and from the United Kingdom, will be as follows, namely: 'via Halifax', 1s sterling, or 1s 3d currency; and on letters specially addressed, 'via New York', or 'via United States', 1s 2d sterling, or 1s 5½d currency, prepayment being optional, the charge increasing according to the present rates'

In the last Newsletter I resurrected the subject of how mail was handled on its way to, and from, the coast. The three covers which follow illustrate some of the difficulties in what, at first sight, seems a relatively simple business. The first two are from Toronto, in 1849 and 1850; both were sent in the open mail through the United States, were prepaid the British North American portion of the postage, and were exchanged through Lewiston, New York. United States, trans-Atlantic and British postage was collect, twenty-four cents (of which five was claimed by the United States for inland postage, the remainder being retained by the United Kingdom from the shilling collect).

However, the one on page 3 (Figure 2) was prepaid twopence halfpenny Currency in Canada, the other (Figure 3) only twopence halfpenny; the first is the Colonial postage on a trans-Atlantic letter, the higher rate is the charge for

And, last in the sequence, a further letter copied from the British General Post Office Archives:

'Post 48/129, America 947
John Howe Esq General Post Office
S' John New Brunswick 7th November 1850

Sir, Having submitted to the Postmaster General your letter of the 15th Ultimo I am directed to inform you that His Lordship approves of your suggestion that the Closed Mails between New Brunswick and this Country viâ the United States should be made up and opened at S' Andrews the frontier Office instead of at S' John.

The Postmaster General is pleased to authorize you to carry out the proposed arrangement and His Lordship has caused directions to be given to the Postmaster of Liverpool to commence the measure at once with regard to the Outward Mails.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient, humble Servant,
W Maberley

P.S. You will of course take care that arrangements of a similar nature to those made at Fredericton and Sackville are adopted at the S' Andrews Office for bringing to account in a proper manner the postage on the correspondence transmitted in the Mails from thence.'

I hope this explanation is satisfactory; if the handstamp could now be given a number, and readers uncover all the other examples ...

INLAND CHARGES ON ATLANTIC MAILS

a half ounce letter carried up to 60 miles (indicating a steamboat passage across the lake). Explanations or observations would be welcome.

The third letter, a recent acquisition by Dorothy Sanderson, is much rarer, in fact I have never seen its like. It was written at St. John, on 22nd November 1858 and directed viâ Boston in the Colonial Express Mail. It is worth remembering that, in 1858, the rate from New Brunswick by British Packet viâ the United States would have been eightpence Sterling, tenpence Currency; the chosen route was an expensive option, for the addressee in Scotland has been charged a shilling. Questions: how much was paid in New Brunswick to cover postage to the United States port of exit? Since the New Brunswick Post Office does not appear to have actually handled the letter, what is the 'box' referred to, how much was paid into it, and to whom and how was the money shared out?

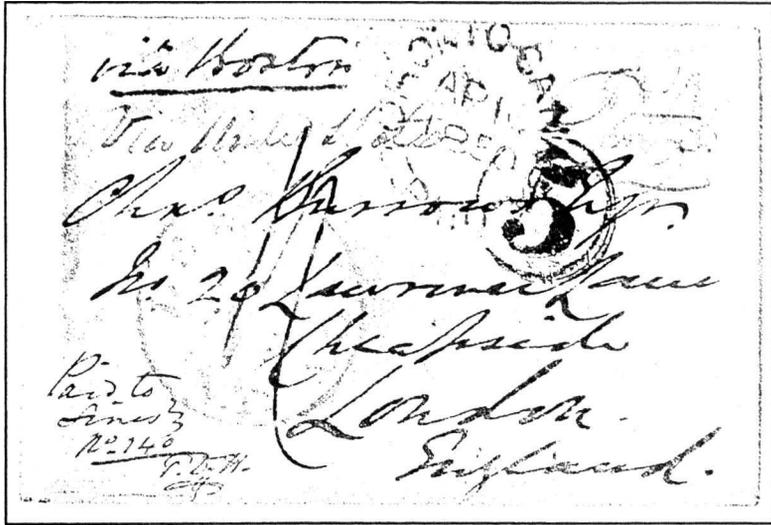


Figure 2: Toronto, Upper Canada to London, England, open mail via New York, 10th April 1850.

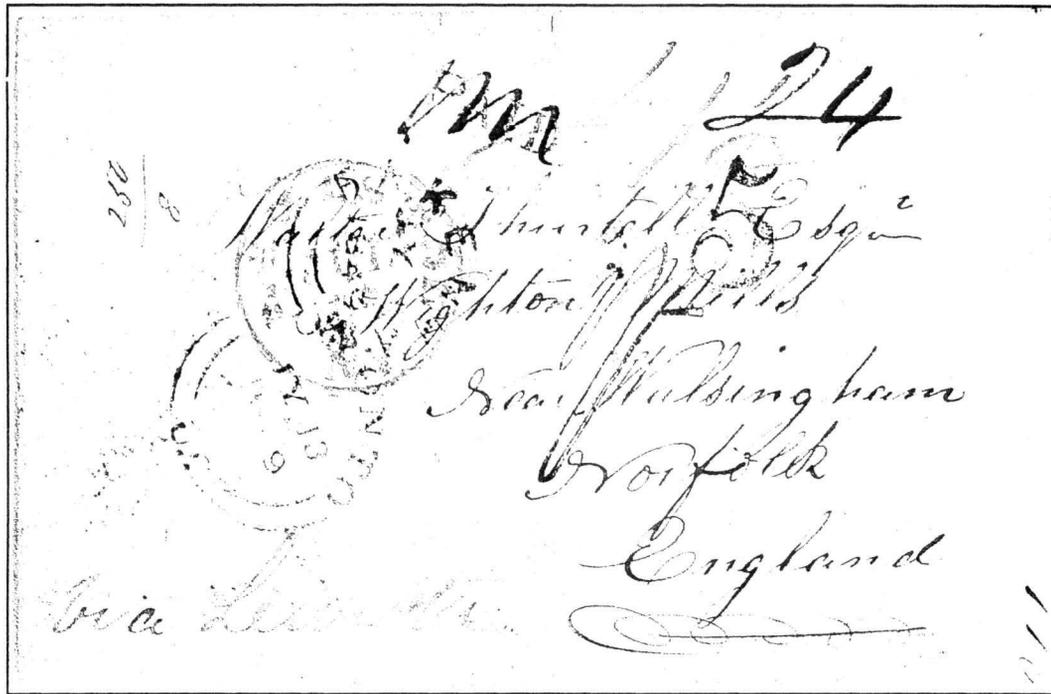


Figure 3: Toronto, Upper Canada to Norfolk, England via Lewiston, New York, in the open mails, 13th July 1849.

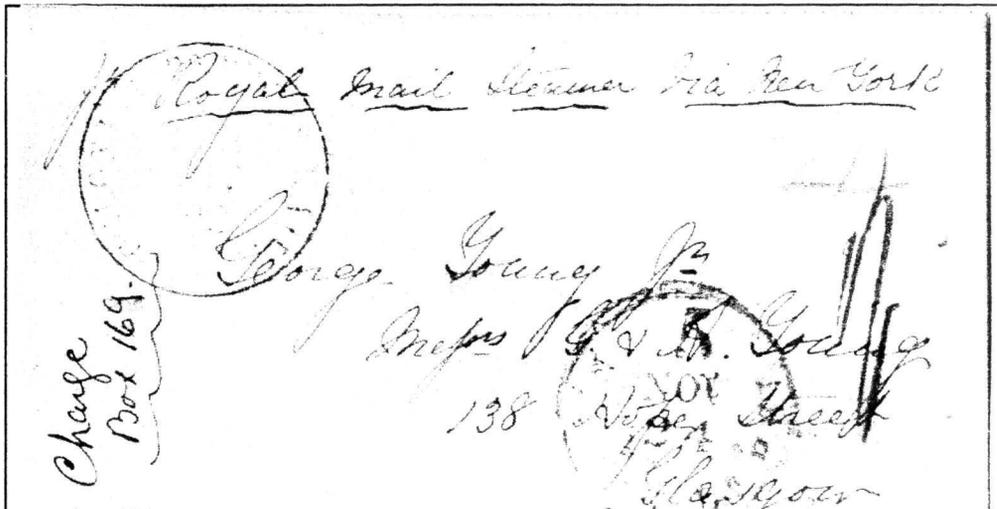


Figure 4: St. John, New Brunswick to Glasgow, Scotland via Boston, by Colonial Express Mail, 22nd November 1858.

FORWARDING POSTAGE DUE - UNITED KINGDOM

Not totally unrelated to the previous letters is the subject of forwarding (to use the North American expression) unpaid postage. Examples in North America are relatively common, not so in the United Kingdom. To date, on letters from British North America, I have seen only two

examples of marks indicating that postage remained unpaid, and was to be carried forward. The London Couriers' Office used: 'L.C.O. POSTAGE NOT PAID TO LONDON'; Edinburgh had a similar handstamp. Records of other examples would be welcome.

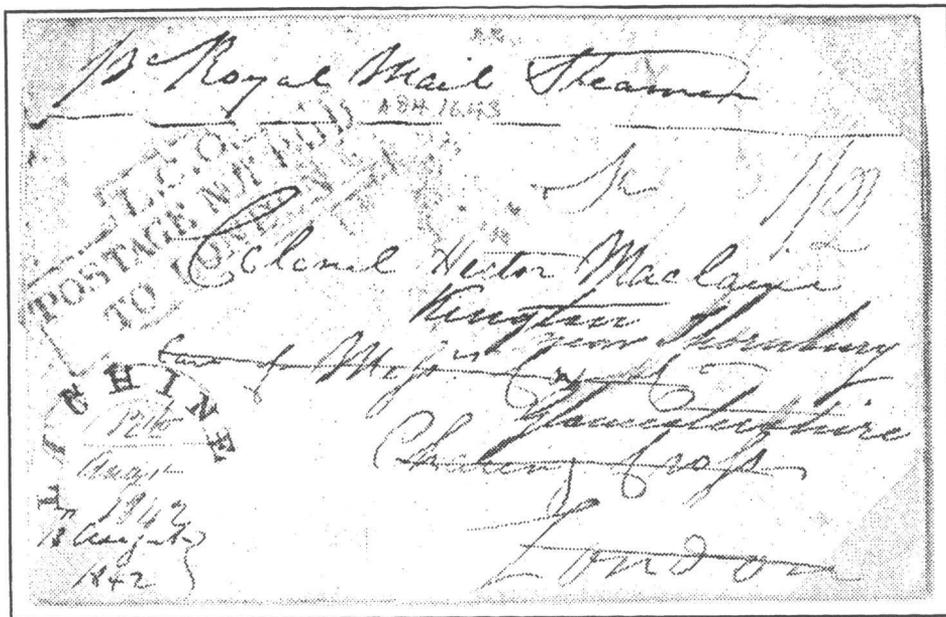


Figure 5: Lachine, Canada to London, England, forwarded to Gloucestershire, 13th August 1842.

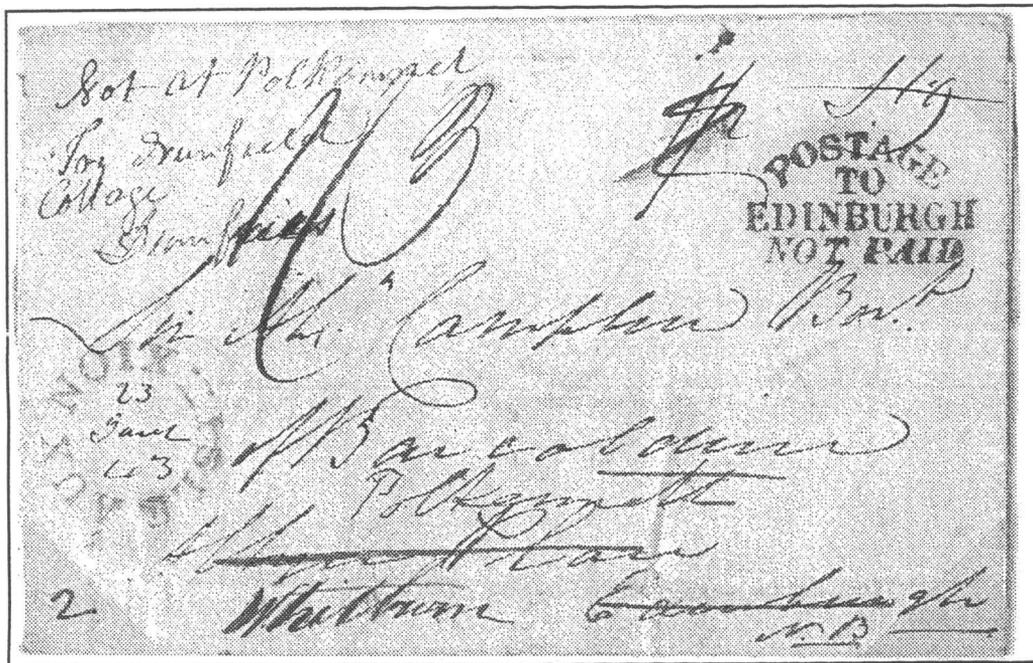


Figure 6: Isle Aux Noix, Canada to Edinburgh, Scotland, forwarded to Whitburn, 23rd January 1843.

THE WAY AHEAD

I have had several responses to my appeal in the last Newsletter. In particular, some beautiful material from Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland from Douglas Campbell, of which more later. I have also had a suggestion that we should open out the discussion, and thus broaden the reader base. I had not recognised that there is a perception that the Study Group was principally concerned with the pre-UPU period, or was constrained in any sense, geographic or period (except as suggested by the title). I have not seen any terms-of-reference, if indeed there are any. My personal view is that we should not restrict the subject matter, and that letter and non-letter trans-Atlantic mail of any period (BNA interests predominating) should be included. That said, I would like to reflect your wishes, and would be grateful for your views and your contributions!

In future issues I would like to begin to focus on specific subjects, not necessarily because they have been neglected, but because information and references may poorly collated, fragmentary or lost in forgotten journals. Some may even require original thought and speculation or deduction! While it would be over-optimistic to plan to devote an issue to a subject, I would like to begin to draw the information together, then, if a subject merits further development, seek to publish a folio (or some similar composition), containing a summary of the story, references, and some illustrations. Subjects include: aspects of letter mails and rates, Provinces (particularly the Pacific Coast), registration, printed papers, military, air, etc. Since there have been a number of relevant articles published recently, I thought that I might start with trans-Atlantic registration, in Newsletter #53. You know my address!

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