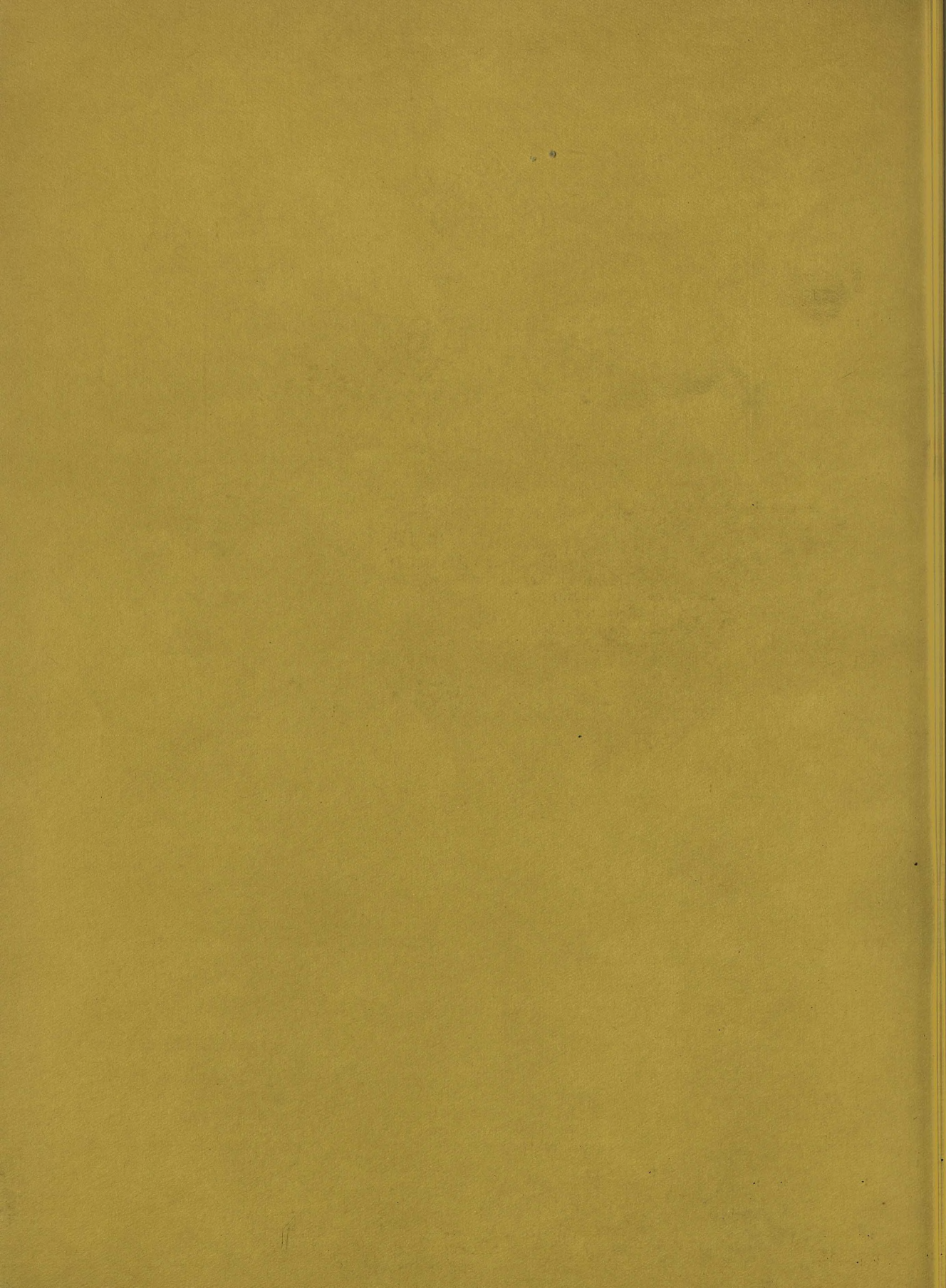


POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

# BULLETIN

No. 120.

JULY—AUGUST 1962.



# THE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

INAUGURATED 1936

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Editorial Office : Ormonde House, Sion Hill, Bath, Somerset.

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### "OPEN HOUSE" 11th JULY, 1962.

WITH the object of furthering the cause of Postal History, and making the Society's activities more widely known, arrangements are being made for a special July meeting in London. Through the philatelic press and other ways, the public are being invited to share an evening's Postal History entertainment as guests of the Society. Free tickets of admission (on this occasion limited to 100) are available to non-members on application before July 4th with a stamped addressed envelope to **O. W. Newport, Farm Cottage, 33 Halfway Street, Sidcup, Kent.** The intention is to entertain our guests with a number of brief and varied displays and short talks presented in a way which will appeal to the general public. The President will be inviting various members, each to give a brief performance to delight and astonish our guests with the individuality of their subjects. Light refreshments will be provided, and adjacent bar facilities will be available. (The latter on payment). The large room at the Shaftesbury Hotel has been booked, and please note that proceedings will commence earlier than usual at 6.45 p.m. Your President and Council, fervently hope for the support of all members able to attend this special meeting. This is an experiment, the success of which largely depends upon the presence of as many members as possible that our guests may appreciate our enthusiasm, and friendly informality. If successful this may well become an annual Postal History event of some importance in the philatelic calendar.

### THE SEFTON-FIDDIAN CUP.

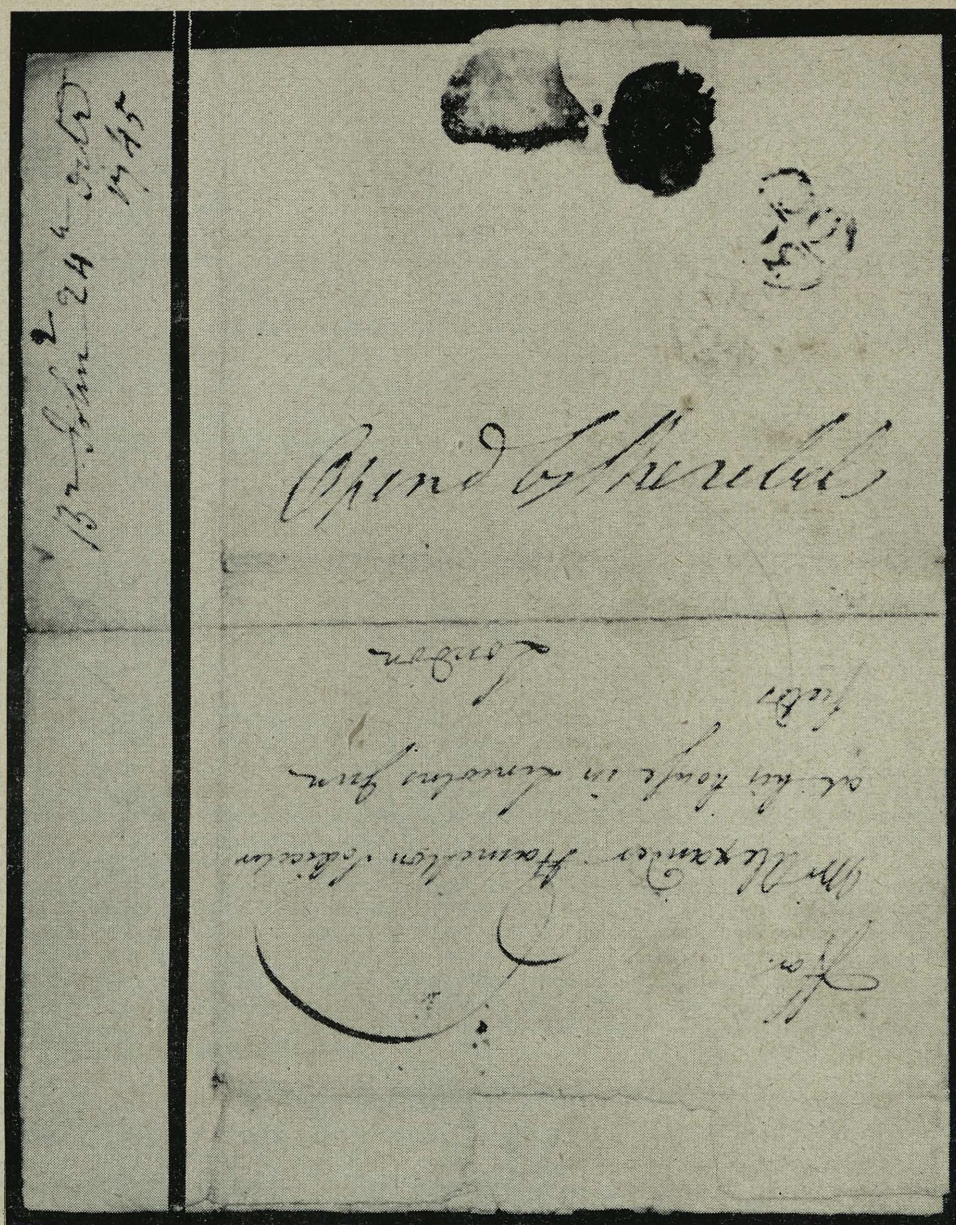
ENTRIES in recent years have been very few, and last year Rule 5 was only just implemented so as to make a competition possible. Members are therefore asked to make every effort to send in entries, as failing sufficient support this year the competition will be abandoned. This year's Judges are a panel of our members, and entries should be sent prior to September 1st, 1962, to **W. G. Stitt Dibden, 88 Lubbethorpe Road, Millfield Farm Estate, Narboro Road South, Leicester.** Rules regarding entries will be found on pages 24 and 25 of the Year Book.

### CONGRATULATIONS.

TO our Members **Maurice Cary Blake (U.S.A.)** and **Dr. Reginald H. Urwick** on being elected to *The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists*.

To our President **Alan W. Robertson, M.B.E.**, for being awarded the medal of The Postal History Society of the Americas for the best article in their Journals of 1959, which was entitled "Rare and Interesting Ship-Letters of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales."

To our Member, **Harry C. Green**, for being awarded the medal of the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain for 1962, for services to philately.



## RELICS OF THE '45 AND BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE

By Adrian Hopkins.

THE cover illustrated, and another similar, are the earliest examples of Salvaged Mail or Interrupted Mail known to me, and their historical associations make them of particular interest.

Both are addressed "To Mr. Alexander Hamilton Sollicitor at his house in Lincolns Inn Fields, London, and both bear the endorsement "Br John" with the date of despatch from Edinburgh. The one illustrated, written on 24 Oct., 1745, has the Edinburgh Bishop Mark of OC / 24 and the London Bishop Mark of 30 / OC. (The day and month were of course reversed in the Scottish and English types). The other, not illustrated, was written on

2 Nov., 1745, and has the Edinburgh Bishop Mark of NO / 2 and the London one of 8 / NO. On this the endorsement is abbreviated to "Opened by/rebls."

The Rebels were of course Bonnie Prince Charlie's followers, who were on their way South at the time in the full flush of success. They entered Edinburgh on September 17th and defeated the King's troops on September 21st at Prestonpans. They started to march towards England at the beginning of November, and took Carlisle on November 9th.

These two letters therefore must have been seized by Bonnie Prince Charlie's men as the post riders left Edinburgh, or soon after. It is a matter for comment that there was little or no delay, as each letter took only six days in transit to London.

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## SOME NOTES ON THE POSTAL HISTORY OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

By Eric Glasgow, M.A., Ph.D.

I ncreasing attention has been given of late to the Postal History, and the postage-stamps, of the various Colonies of the British West Indies. Of these, one of the most interesting groups, historically as well as pictorially, is the Cayman Islands. Strictly speaking, these do not constitute a separate Colony, because they are administered as a dependency of Jamaica. Situated some 200 miles N.W. of Jamaica, the group consists of three coral islands—Grand Cayman, Little Cayman, and Cayman Brac. The capital, Georgetown, is at the western end of the largest island, Grand Cayman. Georgetown now has an air-port, linked regularly by British West Indian Airways with Kingston, in Jamaica, and Miami, in Florida ; its population amounts to 1,700, the total population of the Cayman Islands being just over 9,000. Bodden is the only other village on Grand Cayman.

Like most of the smaller British possessions, the Cayman Islands have sought to attract revenue from collectors by issuing large and very attractive postage-stamps. No doubt, they have largely succeeded in this purpose, for even as a schoolboy, as I remember, the two pictorial sets of 1935 and 1938 were amongst my favourites. These, together with the subsequent issues, of 1950 and 1953, have brought into our stamp-albums, to an unusual extent, much of the colour, warmth and vitality of life in the Cayman Islands, with their sunshine, blue skies, and the saving insulation of the legendary Caribbean Sea. The maritime influence is obvious in the boats, the seamen, the turtles, and the fish, which appear in the stamps. Indeed, when the islands were first discovered by Columbus, on 10 May, 1503, they were named "Las Tortugas," from the number of turtles found there. They were then uninhabited, but were settled from Jamaica, mostly in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The Cayman Islands were too small and unimportant to have an eventful or a disturbed political history. They remained as British as Jamaica, and did not suffer from foreign attack. Apart from that, however, little is known about the early postal history of the Cayman Islands, except that all letters, at first, came through the Jamaica Post-Office. Twice in the nineteenth century—in 1848 and again in 1854—the inhabitants of Grand Cayman sent urgent petitions that the Royal Mail Company's ships, plying between Kingston, Jamaica, and Belize, in British Honduras, should make a point of calling regularly, for both passengers and mail, at Georgetown, in Grand Cayman. Each time, however, the Company refused to accede to these requests. In fact, there was no well-organized local postal service until 1889, when a branch post-office, administered from Kingston, Jamaica, was opened at Georgetown, Grand Cayman. Another, similar branch post-office was opened at Stake Bay, Cayman Brac, the smallest and the most easterly of the three islands, in 1898. Both of these post-offices used adhesives from Jamaica, which had had them since 1860. A former and well loved President of The Postal History Society, the late B. F. Hounsell-Dammers, who died in 1951, was associated in his younger days with the old established rope making industry at Bridport, Dorset. He used to relate how, as a boy, he handled packets of rope samples coming in from the Cayman Islands with orders for fish and turtle nets. These used to be franked with Jamaican adhesives which were not preserved ! There was no special overprint, so the stamps so used can only be recognized by the postmark. An oval obliteration, reading "Grand Cayman" or "Cayman Brac" post-office, with the date in the centre, was applied in black. Covers carrying this handstamp alone, without any adhesives, appear not to exist, so the Cayman Islands differ from most of the other British West Indies in their lack of much pre-adhesive postal material. But then, of course, the postal needs cannot have been very large in the Cayman Islands, in the early years ; and although the group joined the Universal Postal Union, in 1877, that was only because it was drawn in by Jamaica.

The use of Jamaican adhesives in the Cayman Islands ceased in 1900, when the first definitives were issued. Stamps of Great Britain were never "used abroad" in the Cayman Islands, as they were in Antigua, Dominica, Montserrat, and other places. The early stamps of the Cayman Islands are dignified and colourful, and they contain a number of interesting philatelic varieties, especially in the surcharges of 1907-8. These surcharges have an interesting and very unusual history. According to the commonly-accepted story, a former owner of the now-defunct Queen's Highcliffe Hotel, at Margate, Kent, who was a leading philatelist in his time, used to make annual voyages to the Cayman Islands in a yacht, in order to collect their most abundant product—turtles—which he afterwards supplied to the Lord Mayor's Banquet, and other exotic functions.

On his 1907 visit, he caused a shortage of the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. King Edward VII adhesives by posting large quantities of (unnecessary) circulars and other low-rate mail; and then he persuaded the Postmistress of the Cayman Islands, Gwendoline A. Parsons, to use up redundant stocks of the high, 5/- value by creating  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. provisionals, to meet his further demands. Apparently there was no official authority for this, at all. It further seems that not only the 5/- value, but also the 1d. and 4d. values, were surcharged, to counteract temporary shortages of the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d. and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. values, either in 1907 or in 1908. There are also other handstruck provisionals of that period, in which the initials of the Postmistress ("G.A.P.") appear. At any rate, the story of the "Gwendoline Parsons" provisionals was much talked about at the time, and it is one of the most unusual in the whole of the postal history of the British West Indies.

The later stamps of the Cayman Islands include many interesting colour variations, and surcharge varieties, especially amongst the "War Stamp" issues, of 1917. The set of 1921-26 has a contrasting and highly decorative design, with a similar array of colour shades. An unusual series of provisional handstamps was produced from 9 November to 20 December, 1932. These read simply "Postage Paid," in a single line, in either red or black. They were applied in lieu of postage-stamps, at Kingston, Jamaica, on all letters from Cayman Brac, after the destruction of the post-office there, in the hurricane of 9 November. This is a very collectable item, especially with full cover, and it is not unduly expensive.

The Cayman Islands are a group which still need and deserve more attention from postal historians and stamp-collectors alike. With a background of the highest interest, they form a very rewarding subject for detailed and specialized study. Of course, they assume a prominence in the stamp-album which they do not possess, politically or administratively. In fact, not a great deal has been written about the Cayman Islands, outside the pages of philatelic journals. That is partly because they have, since 1873, been governed as a dependency of Jamaica, and so became somewhat absorbed in the larger, and more manifold unit. The Cayman Islands really resemble the Turks and Caicos Islands, geographically a continuation of the Bahama Islands, but attached to Jamaica since 1863; these, too, have had an impressive array of postage-stamps, since the first stamps for Turks Islands were issued, on 4 April, 1867. But for collectors in search of a small and scenically attractive unit, full of the sunshine and colour so often lacking in our traditional British climate, the Cayman Islands are an obvious choice. They have, moreover, an interesting background of postal history, despite the fact that our information about this is fragmentary before 1889, when the first branch post-office was opened at Georgetown, Grand Cayman. No doubt, some study of the archives of the Jamaican post-office, at Kingston, would throw a valuable light upon postal affairs in the Cayman Islands, in the earlier part of the nineteenth century.

There is no large literature on the Cayman Islands, whether philatelic or otherwise. However, an indispensable handbook is the *Introduction to the Postal History of the British West Indies*, published in 1960 by the British West Indies Study Circle. Useful, too, are the *Biennial Reports* of the Colonial Office on the Cayman Islands, the latest being that of 1957-58. These books apart, the only "travel-notes" on the Cayman Islands, of which I am aware, are those contained in pages 377-378 of Patrick Leigh Fermor's *The Traveller's Tree* (London, 1950), and in page 80 of Sir Harry Luke's *Caribbean Circuit* (London, 1950). As always, of course, another good reference book is Sir Algernon Aspinall's *Pocket Guide to the West Indies* (10th edition, London, 1954. Reprinted with corrections, 1960). Two long forgotten books on Cayman Islands philately are those in the Melville Series. *The Cayman Islands, Their Stamps and Post Office*, by D. B. Armstrong, in collaboration with C. B. Bostwick and A. J. Watkin. December 1910. (Stamp Lover Booklet No. 3) and *The Cayman Islands* by F. J. Melville. 1912. (The Melville Stamp Books No. 17). Also *The Philatelic Handbook of the Cayman Islands*, by our member, E. F. Aguilar, and P. T. Saunders. 42/-.



James Chalmers.  
An early portrait.

## Christina Chalmers

THE death of Miss Christina Chalmers on January 12th, 1962, severs the last link of The Postal History Society with James Chalmers of Dundee, one of the pioneers in the fight for Penny Postage and who first advocated the use of an adhesive label as a receipt for prepayment of postage. He was the Father of the Postage Stamp.

With her sister Leah, Miss Christina constantly attended meetings of the Society from the end of the War until 1955 when Miss Leah died. These two ladies were the daughters of Patrick Chalmers, son of James Chalmers. Through them, the Society had a direct connection with 1840.

In August 1834, James Chalmers, a bookseller and printer, produced on his premises an adhesive stamp for letters. Chalmers had, nine years before, succeeded, after protracted correspondence with the Government lasting three years, in obtaining an acceleration, by a day each way, of the Mail between London and Edinburgh. *The Edinburgh Magazine* for August 1825 referred in grateful terms to this achievement.

James Chalmers was in business communication with Charles Knight, another printer and publisher very greatly interested in the improvement of the Post. Knight was a friend of Rowland Hill, who was urging forward the reform of the postal services, and it was probably through Charles Knight that Rowland Hill first heard of the idea of an adhesive label, for the prepayment of postage which was the king-pin of his plan.

Rowland Hill, whilst himself proposing a plan of printed envelopes and wrappers, did not disdain any idea supporting his general plan and thus readily accepted Chalmers' label. Later however when the Mulready envelope and wrapper proved unattractive and the adhesive label was a great success, Hill conveniently ignored the source of their inspiration and even accepted them as his own idea.

Later Rowland Hill's son, Pearson, carried on a long and vicious campaign against James Chalmers' son Patrick when the latter endeavoured to obtain official and permanent acknowledgment of his father's achievement. This family feud was carried on even down to our day.

The story is told graphically by Miss Leah Chalmers in a pamphlet she published in 1939, entitled *How the Adhesive Postage Stamp was born*. The controversy is fully explored, with annotations, by Professor Howard Robinson in his *The British Post Office: A History* (pages 310/313) published by Princetown University Press, 1948.

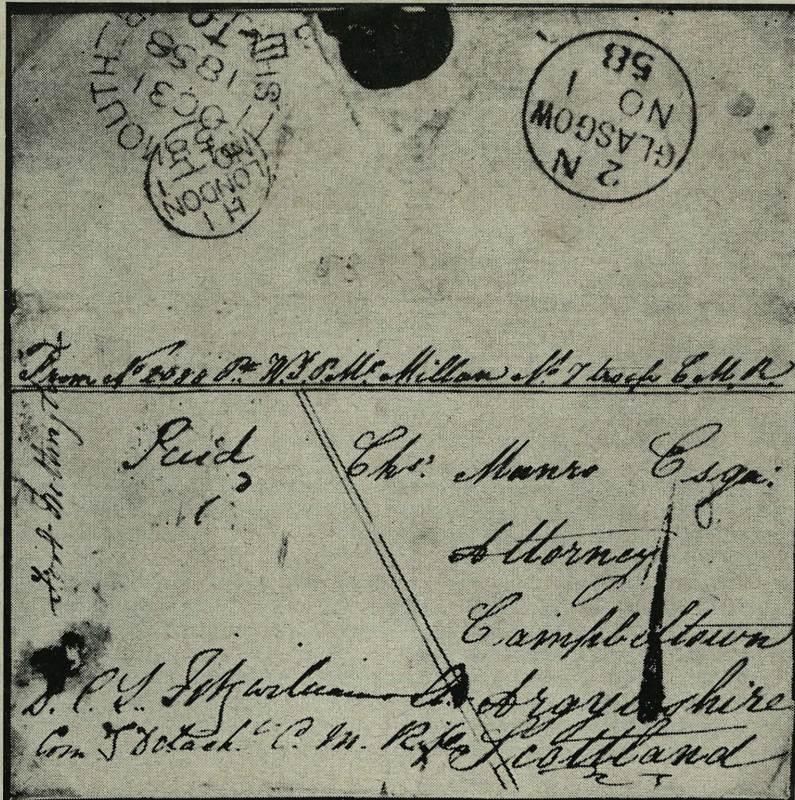
F. G.

## SOLDIERS' AND SEAMEN'S LETTERS (Part 2).

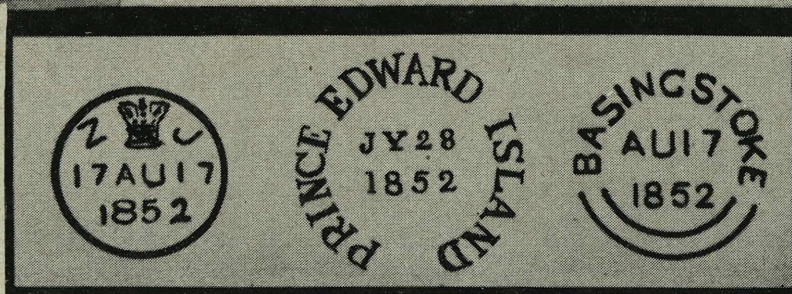
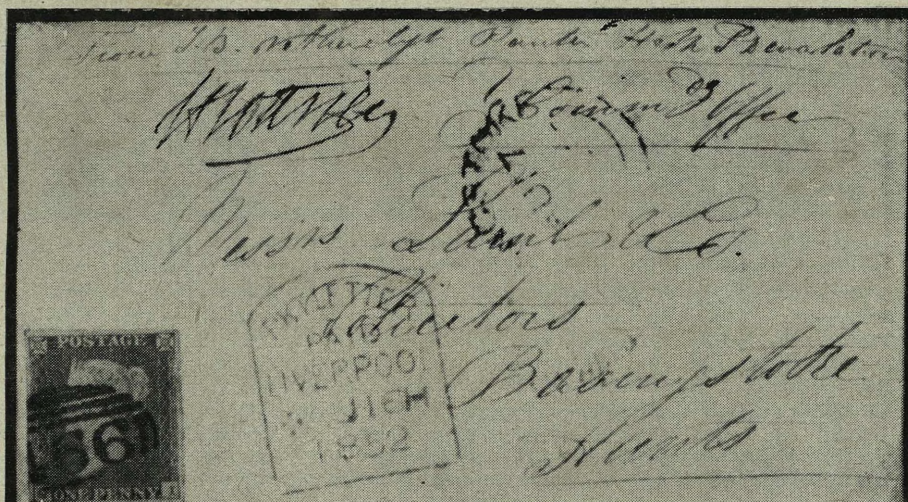
By Alan W. Robertson, M.B.E.

PART 1 of this series of articles appeared in Bulletin No. 116 (November 1961). In that article the beginnings of the system by which letters to and from soldiers and seamen were sent at a low, privilege rate of postage were described. The basic rate was one penny, providing it was paid at the time of posting, and the letter front carried the correct endorsement of the sender's Commanding Officer in a form laid down by regulations. The privilege rate of 1d. applied to letters within the United Kingdom and Ireland, which involved simple inland transmission, at "no additional expense to the Post Office" and the regulations regarding such inland letters were not complicated. It was when letters to and from soldiers and seamen left the country or were posted home from abroad that other considerations arose. The penny rate was conditional on the letter being carried by ships in regular Post Office Packet Service (including ships of the Royal Navy). If sent by private ship, the master of the ship was entitled to his gratuity of 2d. per letter, which was an "expense" to the Post Office, and the sender therefore had to add a further 2d. to his privilege 1d. rate . . . or the addressee had to pay the difference on delivery. Also if such letters passed through foreign countries incurring foreign postal charges these charges were payable over and above the basic privilege 1d. It will therefore be appreciated by the reader, that although the "Soldiers' and Seamen's Penny" is the basic part of the story, there were themes and variations according to the postal course of some letters and whilst the total of postages involved resulted in an amount much lower than paid by the general public the actual rates paid by soldiers and seamen in some cases was often considerably more than one penny. The further aspects of this will be dealt with in the next of this series of articles.

In article No. 1 I considered the applications of the basic "PENNY" rate, with illustrations of letters from soldiers and seamen not later than the first half of the 19th century. In this present article I continue on the theme of the "basic 1d." in the second half of that century, mainly by illustrating and describing a quartet of letters each of which tells its own story.



This is the outside sheet of a letter in the John Harris collection. Written by Private W. F. P. Mc.Millan . . . 7th Troop Cape Mounted Rifles. There is no indication of the date of writing and the only clue as to the place of origin is what appears to be "Fort Nottingham" in manuscript on the letter front. (Your Hon. Editor and the writer have been trying to discover where this place was, and what the Cape Mounted Rifles were doing there, so far without success. Any helpful advices from readers will be appreciated). The letter front is ruled off in accordance with regulation and is countersigned by Lieut. Fitzwilliam commanding the detachment of the C.M.R. Private Mc.Millan paid his privilege 1d. rate (Endorsement "Paid 1d."). The letter then travelled by private ship to Plymouth . . . thence on to the addressee at Campbeltown via London and Glasgow. Since the letter has been brought to England by a private ship on which the master had claimed his ship letter gratuity of 1d. (Master's gratuity reduced from 2d. to 1d. in September 1854) the letter was struck with 1d. due handstamp indicating that the addressee had to pay this amount on receipt of the letter.



This interesting letter is Leslie Tomlinson's collection. The basic 1d. Seamen's rate applied since the letter was carried by a steamship under Post Office mail-contract. Two years previously by Treasury Warrant dated 30th July, 1850, authority was given for the "use of Postage Stamps for the payment of letters forwarded to the United Kingdom by Seamen employed on board Her Majesty's Ships on Foreign Stations . . . Seamen will be supplied with Postage Stamps by the Purser of the Vessel to which they are attached". Such Letters brought in bags by Packet to Liverpool were opened there and the uncanceled adhesive stamps were then cancelled, as in this case with the 466 barred-oval obliterator of that place, before continuing postal course to destination.

From 3/6. Sgt W Anderson to Mr Laid Port Said

Mr J. E. Harnden  
20 Railway Street

Chatham  
Kent England



H. Gritton, Captain  
Commanding Officer

This 1882 envelope is illustrated by courtesy of John Firebrace. The sender was Sgt. W. Anderson, Royal Marines . . . The Royal Marines Office, Admiralty, have been unable to trace the service record of Sgt. Anderson. His commanding officer Capt. Henry Gritton (Retired Lieut. Col. 1899) whose endorsement appears on the letter front was at that time Paymaster R. M. Battalion Port Said Garrison, so it may be assumed that Sgt. Anderson was on Garrison duties, and therefore entitled to the privilege 1d. Soldier's and Seamen's rate, payable by affixing a penny adhesive. The bag of service mail was carried to Plymouth by private ship . . . there the mail was checked and the adhesive appropriately dated stamped "Plymouth Ship Letter". The claiming of gratuities by ships captains had virtually ceased by this time and since no additional cost to the Post Office was incurred the letter went through normal postal channels to the addressee in Chatham, all for one penny.

SOLDIERS' AND SEAMEN'S ENVELOPE.

Address. Miss A. Seekings  
Roshu  
Lindau Road  
Biaford  
England

via Italy


Sender's Name and Rank. } No 4498 A/C J. Seekings. B. Company

Regiment, Ship, or Office. } 1st Bann Rifle Bn Upper Burma

COMMANDED BY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT. }  
 Capt. J. E. Harnden

Sgt. and Rank. }  
 Sgt. W. Anderson

Ship, or Official locality. }  
 17th Company 1st Regt. 3rd Bn  
 1st Bann Rifle Bn Upper Burma



This Burma campaign letter<sup>1</sup> is in the collection of Mr. Gerald Davis. It is a little beyond the terms of reference of this present article, but is of particular interest (apart from the Campaign postal course of the letter etc.) as it is the first item of Soldiers' and Seamen's Postal Stationery officially issued for that purpose. The 8 pies adhesive stamp of India (Type S.G.51) when issued in 1860 provided a stamp of the denomination equivalent to the soldiers' letter rate of 8 pies. Soldiers and Seamen were still able to send letters addressed and countersigned according to regulations for 8 pies, but this envelope with embossed stamp was available at a cost of 1 pie extra. The datestamp on the letter-front is that of Taungdwingyi 18th Feb. 1886 (in error for 1887) the Bedford receiving datestamp on the reverse is 7th March, 1887.

<sup>1</sup>There is an intriguing Burma postal history story connected with this envelope, which perhaps Gerald Davis will submit in writing to the Hon. Editor for inclusion in a future *Bulletin* ?

## POST OFFICE PERSONALITIES No. 7.

### THE POSTMAN POET

EDWARD CAPERN

19th January, 1819—4th June, 1894.

By W. G. Stitt Dibden.

THIS account of Edward Capern is included in this series, not so much to commend the excellence of his verse, but to provide background to the life of a humble member of the postal service whose name, by chance, has come down to us. He represents, as it were, a vast throng of men and women who in all ages have performed the menial tasks of the postal service. People who, on average, have carried out their duties in a conscientious manner, and on whose continuous labour the Department has functioned, year in and year out ; in times of peace and war, in remote places and busy cities, on land and on sea, by night and by day, and in all seasons.

Capern published in all five books of poems between 1856 and 1881, and the noted philanthropist of Barnstaple, Mr. W. F. Rock, who was responsible for the publication of the first book, said in its preface, " I am entrusted with the delightful privilege of introducing a man of genius to the world ". Nevertheless the world has since judged the poetic works of this rural postman as those from the pen of a minor poet.

To be fair to the man himself, he remained modest of any ability he had right throughout his life. The very first stanza in his first book " Poems " opens with these words—

" No classic tutor watched my lips  
Nor speech with beauty fraught  
Refined my uncouth Mother Tongue  
Or woo'd my virgin thought . . . "

Yet when he died in 1894 more than a dozen newspapers gave long and enthusiastic reports about his work. He was fortunate in two considerable respects. He found a patron (or one found him) early enough in his career for him to enjoy the fruits of being " discovered ", and with commendable acumen he penned poor, but at the time well appreciated, verses that had a patriotic ring to them. And the public consumed these verses to a background of military resurgence in the war at the Crimea ; with its defeats immortalised later by Tennyson in " The Gallant Six Hundred " ; its misery for the soldiers of the line and its jingoistic public fever that has found an echo in the " Hang the Kaiser " and " Shoot Hitler " sentiments of more recent times.

Capern, in a poem entitled " Loud the Triumph Ring " wrote these words—

" War ! till the Muscovite  
Crouches for Peace  
Tyrants succumb to right  
Freeman welcome.

England, Old England  
Shall triumph again " .

And for the British public of the time, they were just " what the doctor ordered " .

The poem, "The Lion Flag of England" which appeared before his first book was printed, was said to have had a greater influence in the creation of patriotic sentiment in favour of the war against Russia than any other piece of current literature. It commences—

"The lion flag of England!  
Say Britons shall it wave  
The scorn of every base-born serf  
And jest of every slave".

In this stanza, as in many others, the exact meaning seems obscure to modern eyes, but there is no mistaking the meaning of a later verse—

"They know from history's reddest page;  
That nations when opprest  
Must point their swords for arguments  
Against the tyrant's breast".

Of this war time jingoistic stuff nothing now appeals except perhaps the "Angels of Mercy"—

"Let babes unborn", he says, "bless Florence Nightingale" and in verses not over distinguished for literary ability there occur lines worth quoting—

"A gentle creature, formed in tenderest mould  
But strong in love and piety and prayer  
Who soothed the sufferers and hushed their wail . . ."

Capern personally knew all about suffering and privation. His eyesight was failing, at 37 years of age, before his first book was published, and his family were in need. When told that "Morning" and "Apostrophe to the Sun", two of his earlier poems, were to be included in the first thin volume, he exclaimed "Why, Sir, I wrote those pieces when I had but four shillings a week to live upon, which gave but frugal meals". Under such circumstances the rude bar of some Devonshire stile or field gate often served him as a writing desk when pencilling out his thoughts in the rough, to be polished up later in the little cottage at his journey's end. And his necessarily philosophical approach to life comes out in many of his poems. "I have learned to look on earth", he says in the opening poem quoted above—

"As if she lay in bliss  
And bless each floweret of the earth  
With an admiring kiss".

An obituary in the *North Devon Herald*, one of many to praise his simple approach to life, says, "His music is distinguished by faithfulness to Nature, by force and point, sweetness and grace, tenderness and truth. His success was the triumph of a sunny disposition . . ."

At his funeral the Rev. C. E. Lamb, one of three officiating clergy, went so far as to say, "This able and distinguished man has been described as a man of genius. He has been called the Postman Poet of Devonshire, and by some has been compared to the Scotch Poet, Burns". But Capern was not a southern Burns, and he knew it; in his own epitaph he pleaded for recognition only in simple things, "O' Bury me not in the desert's sand . . . (but) neath the hawthorn tree, we'll be buried there!", in the countryside that he loved and which he knew so well.

As a rural postman he tramped thirteen miles a day, seven days a week, between Bideford and Buckland Brewer, in Devon, for a wage of 10/6d. a week. His wife, Jane, who appears gently and lovingly sketched in many of his poems, bore him two children; a girl, Milly, who died in 1863 at the age of eleven, and a son, C. H. Capern, who at the time of his father's death was in charge of some of the work of the Chicago World Fair, and editor to the Official Exhibition Catalogue containing about 20,000 entries. Jane died in February 1894, and there seems little doubt that the shock killed the old man who was in his 76th year. They were buried side by side in the little village churchyard of St. Augustine's, Heanton, Purchardon.

Capern's continuous popularity seems, at this distance, to be quite remarkable. Even in his own day the *Ilfracombe Chronicle* was moved to remark, "Thirty-eight years is a long time for a poet of the people to maintain a reputation, achieved at one leap, but Edward Capern, Rural Postman of Devon, managed to do it". The explanation lies, I think, in two factors; he was undoubtedly a man of considerable charm, and this in turn enabled him to make friends of some quite influential figures of his day.

His sponsor, W. F. Rock, succeeded in gathering to the subscription list of the first book of *Poems* published in 1856, such distinguished names as the Rev. Charles Kingsley, the

Christian Socialist ; James Anthony Froude, and Walter Savage Landor, the critic, who put an imprimatur on the poems, " They are full of freshness and stamped by the love of nature ". By subscription 500 copies were sold before printing and the subscription list was headed by the Duke of Sutherland, the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of Argyll.

Capern personally travelled around the countryside as far as he could delivering subscription copies, and it seems that his personal charm influenced his many admirers to press upon him the advisability of striking whilst the iron was hot with the publication of a second book of verse. The first had brought in a profit of £150. Reluctantly he introduced a second volume, *Ballads and Songs* in 1859, and in the preface written at Bideford on 18th November, 1858, he relates—" It is not without some misgivings that the author sends forth this second volume to the public. He knows that much of the favour with which his first poems were received was due to a kindly sense of the difficulties under which they had been composed, and he is much aware that in the present instance he has less of that favour to expect, that his work will be judged purely on its own merits, and that it is not the Postman, but the Poet whom critics will now review ".

Meanwhile, Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister, had been prevailed upon to grant a pension of £40 a year to Capern from the Civil List, and this was later increased to £60 per annum. Whether in response to the poem " The Rural Postman's Sabbath " and its pointed emphasis on the seven day week of all postmen outside London, is not known, but shortly after the publication of *Poems* in 1856 Capern was excused Sunday duty. A few quotations from this, one of the very few poems written by Capern which directly mention his Post Office service, calls attention to the " seven day duty ".

" The mellowed sounds of Sabbath bells  
Fall gently on my ear . . .

In Sunday garb, all neatly clad  
With joy upon each face,  
The Dame and Sire, and lass and lad,  
Approach the holy place.

'Tis true, in yonder sacred fane  
I cannot praise my King,  
Yet in the meadow and the lane  
I will be worshipping . . .

I ask no priest neath fretted dome  
Their holy prayers to read,  
No pew beside the marble tomb  
When God is overhead."

and he writes a little later of—

" All the birds at once  
Shall chant the morning hymn ".

By 1859 his *Poems* had gone into a third edition, and in 1865 he published his third book, *Wayside Warbles*, to be followed by *Willow Leaves*, and in 1881, *Sunbeams and Shadows*.

In this last of his collections, at over 60 years of age, ironically he included twelve " Lays for the Little Ones " with stunted and unchildlike lines such as—

" Old Mother Cupidee went for a walk  
With her seven little chickens and one little duck "

which perhaps mirrored the Victorian sentimentality for children (seen but not heard), but which one reads today with nausea.

Very few copies of the original books are now extant, but in 1939 the Bellman Press of Bristol issued a selection of the five books under the general title *The Postman's Poems*.

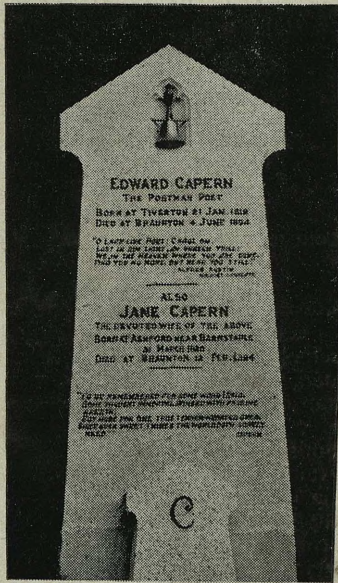
Best known today of all of the four hundred titles is " The Rural Postman " in which he sums up his philosophy in three lines—

" Watching the lark as he soars on high  
To carol in yonder cloud  
He sings in his labour, and why not I ? "

but the rest of the poem is in a sort of pseudo heartiness—

" O, the postman's is a pleasant life  
As anyone's, I trow ;  
For day by day, he wendeth his way  
Where a thousand wildlings grow ".

He left his native Devon and went to live at Harbourne, near Birmingham, for a number of years, and here was a friend of George Dawson, the preacher, and also of Cardinal Newman, but his wife's failing health forced a return to Devon. On leaving Birmingham he was given a public dinner and a cheque for £100 by Aldermanic friends. By this time he had collected a library of books and a vast accumulation of letters from men eminent in literature and science, both of which were a source of some pride to him. But the tragedy of his life and that of his son was at the very end. Charles, hearing of his mother's death, and then that his father was sinking fast, hurried across the Atlantic, but he was too late. He landed at Southampton on the day of his father's death, and two days later, at the graveside, completely broke down and cried like a child, on his knees.



The death of the "Devonshire Burns" was marked by two lasting features. Alfred Austin, Poet Laureate to Queen Victoria, wrote on invitation from Sir Thomas Acland and Sir Richard Tangye, who had organised a memorial subscription, a four-line stanza for the stone—

"O, lark-like Poet! Carol on  
Lost in dim light, an unseen trill;  
We, in the Heaven where you are gone  
Find you no more, but hear you still".

The words were so obscure that Mr. Parker Smith, M.P., laid down two questions in the House to the First Lord of the Treasury—

1. Can a trill in any possible circumstance be seen?
2. Who, in addition to Mr. Alfred Austin, contributes the "We in Heaven where you are gone"?

and *The Westminster Gazette* published the parody—

"O, Alfred Austin! Piffle on  
And recognise *you* cannot trill!  
We, on your poetry, are *not* gone.  
Read you no more, but pay you still".

Probably the most remarkable feature of the whole affair was the final monument erected in unpolished grey Dartmoor granite. "In its upper portion the identical bell was inserted that Capern

as a humble rural postman in North Devon was wont to carry upon his rounds. To his death he always treasured this relic of early days and on more than one occasion said he hoped it would be buried with him".

We may well ask "Art thou a poet?", leaving his own words to answer—

"No classic tutor watched my lips,  
Nor speech, with beauty fraught,  
Refined my uncouth mother-tongue  
Or woo'd my virgin thought.

I never cursed in college cell  
The thought I could not brook,  
Nor pored amid the antique page  
For lore from musty book.

I never in the schools was made  
A fool against my will,  
Nor danced with dames in rich brocade  
My studious hours to kill.

But I have loved, as all should love,  
The whole of human kind,  
And there are men of worth who know  
How much I honour Mind.

And I have heard the wild bird sing  
High up the vault of heaven,  
Till there, on Inspiration's wing  
I felt my spirit driven.

And I have heard old Ocean roar,  
Whilst wonder seized my soul,  
And bound me to the rocky shore,  
To watch his billows roll.

And I have learnt to look on earth  
As if she lay in bliss,  
And bless each flow'ret of her birth  
With an admiring kiss;

Till zephyrs seem as angels' breath,  
And stars as cherubs' eyes,  
And Beauty as no child of death,  
But goddess of the skies.

At length I learnt to look above,  
And found life's pilgrim-road  
Was but a path of heavenly love,  
That led right up to God.

I took my lyre and dash'd its strings,  
And music, wild and free,  
Sent forth the tuneful echoings  
Of Nature's minstrelsy".

## THE POSTAL MARKINGS OF SAUDI ARABIA.

By H. Hibbert.

*Editor's Note :—This paper accompanied the display at the Society's meeting on Wednesday, 16th May, 1962. At an earlier period, our Member was helping "Lawrence of Arabia" to blow up railway bridges.*

QUITE a fair amount of literature can be found concerning Turkey used abroad and your collector of those marks seen in the Hejaz generally knows his subject. He will mention all the types of Turkish date stamps used and will, no doubt, make passing reference to the Egyptian Consular Post Office at Jeddah. He will state that the Arab Revolt in 1916 saw the end of the Turkish administration in the Hejaz. He will conclude his study by mentioning the Fee Paid marks, the first cancellators to be seen in the new Hejaz regime.

Our imaginary collector ended his study all too soon. He finished where he should have begun. He missed the most exciting part of the journey, admittedly a journey of only some forty odd years but full of pleasure to the collector of postmarks. But probably our collector would say, "So what? It's an unpopular country, anyway."

So let us have a look at this awkward child who had to follow in the footsteps of a classical parent. First of all, a brief survey of the postal history of Saudi Arabia. I have a map engraved and printed in 1814 showing the Turkish Empire as it then was in Asia. The map shows that the most southerly province to be under the rule of Constantinople is the old Palestine. Not even the smallest part of Arabia is shown as being under Turkish suzerainty. Although the map was printed in 1814 it was drawn from information the designer had received during the previous two years.

The Wahabi tribe of the Nejd, two of whose elders were the principal chiefs of that province, had captured Mecca, in the Hejaz, in 1802 and this act met with great disfavour in the eyes of the Turks who, up to a point, regarded themselves as guardians of "Mecca, The Sacred". The Sublime Porte desired Mecca to be under its jurisdiction and around 1812, it was decided to send an army to the Hejaz. So Constantinople ordered Mohammed Ali, Ruler of Egypt, to send an army there.

It was not until 1818 that the Saud Dynasty, the head family of the Wahabi, was overthrown. They were turned out of Mecca and retreated to Riyadh, their capital in the Nejd. And that was how the Turkish Empire came to garrison the Hejaz until 1916 when they themselves were thrown out as a result of the Arab Revolt. But nearly 40 years elapsed, around 1854 to be exact, before a Turkish regiment from Europe came as part of the Hejaz garrison. The officers were used to the fleshpots of Constantinople, they were men of intelligence and the authorities had to make arrangements for their letters to be sent back to the homeland. These postal arrangements were, at first, very haphazard but they were the beginning of what, in this year of grace coupled with the finding of oil, brought handsome rewards to the Saudi Posts and Telegraphs Department.

The concession to officers was later extended to the rank and file and then a few years later the Turkish authorities realised that, if the civilian population were allowed to participate, their contribution would help to pay for a better postal service.

A brief summary of the postal history of Arabia is as follows :—

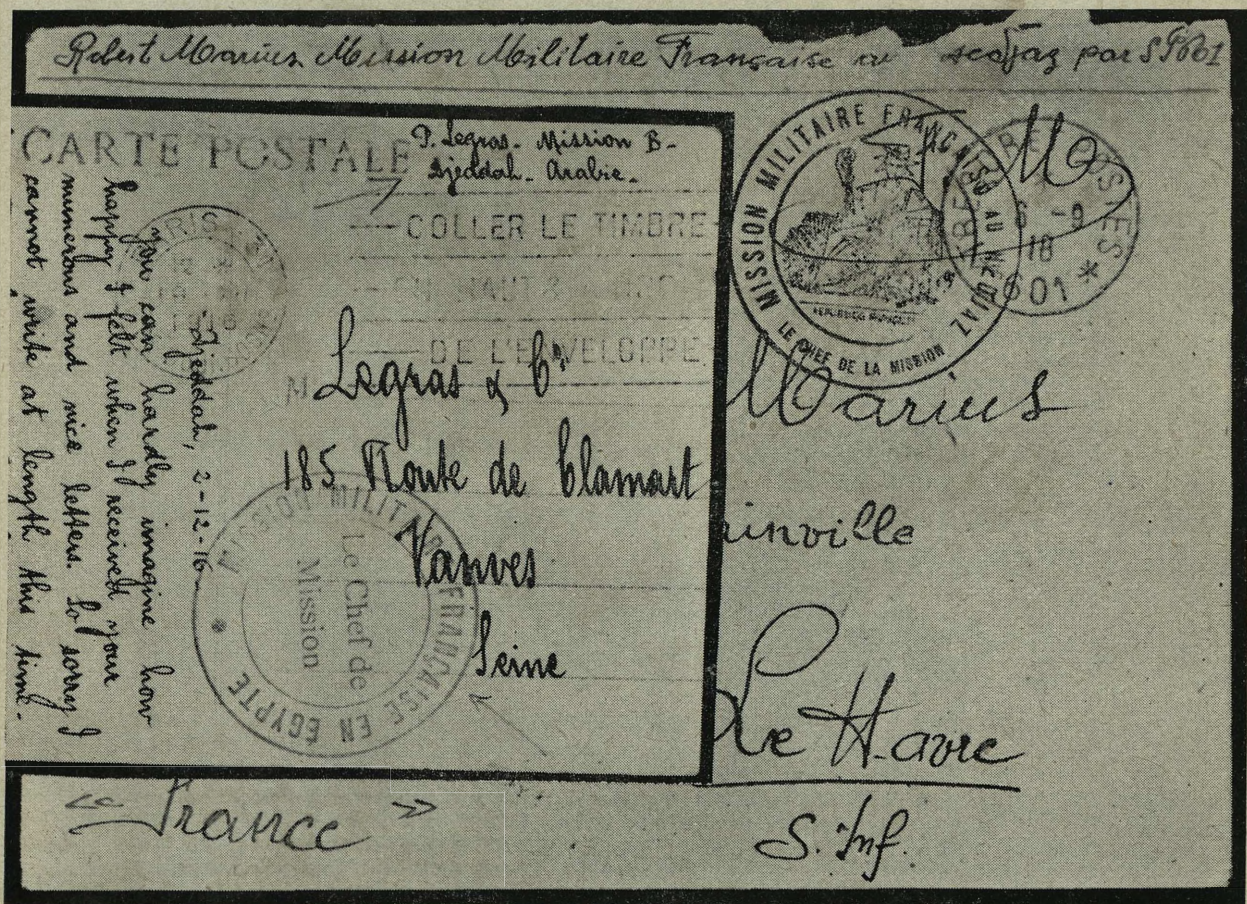
- (1) To May, 1916, the Turkish regime.
- (2) To Feb. 1925, the Hejaz regime under Emir Hussein and his family which period can be divided as :—
  - (a) June, 1916, to June, 1917, depending on the particular post office, the authorised period for Fee Paid marks.
  - (b) From late Aug. 1916, when Hejaz adhesives were in use.
- (3) Mch. 1925 to Feb. 1926, the Nejd regime when Ibn Saud of the Nejd overthrew the Hussein dynasty and ordered the Hejaz stamps to be overprinted "Nejd Sultanate Post".
- (4) Mch. 1926 to Dec. 1933, the Hejaz-Nejd regime when Ibn Saud ruled the joint provinces as King.
- (6) Jan., 1934, to present time, the Saudi Arabia regime when the joint provinces were declared a Kingdom after Ibn Saud had been declared Heir Apparent.

I do not propose to describe the postmarks of the Turkish period as they are quite well known. I do, however, desire to say a little concerning the Egyptian Consular post office at Jeddah that was open from mid-1865 to mid-1881. It was therefore concurrent with the Turkish administration.

Egypt was still under Turkish domination but when Ismail succeeded to the Viceroyalty in 1863 he created many opportunities for Egyptian trade in the Middle East. To help this trading Ismail ordered Consular Post Offices to be opened in certain of those countries ; one being at Jeddah as mentioned in the previous paragraph. As Ismail was the first Viceroy to be elevated to the rank of Khedive, which took place in 1868, that is the reason why two Egyptian date stamps were in use at Jeddah during the 16 years the office was open. These are the " Poste Vice-Realli " and the " Poste Khedeuie " ; both cancellations being rare, especially on cover.

The end of the Turkish regime also saw the only other foreign mark in the Hejaz. This was the double circle seal, not a date stamp, 40/28½ mm. diameters, of the " MISSION MILITAIRE FRANCAISE AU HEDJAZ ". This Mission was set up, under a Colonel Bremond, to represent French interests whilst working alongside our own small force helping the Arab Revolt under Lawrence and Storrs. Bremond and Lawrence became embittered and eventually Bremond was ordered back to France.

Mail from the French Mission was carried free provided it were franked with the Mission's official seal. Such mail was taken from Jeddah either by the Royal Navy or the R.A.F. to Suez where it was handed to the appropriate Army Post Office, English or French. What collectors do not realise is, that while covers bearing the seal of the Mission are quite rare, a more highly prized mark is the forerunner of the Mission "AU HEDJAZ ". This is the seal, again double circle measuring 38½/25½ mm. diameters, of the " MISSION MILITAIRE FRANCAISE EN EGYPTE " with the addition, in manuscript, " MISSION B — DJEDDAH ".



This "Mission B" was set up in late 1916 and an extremely interesting account of it is to be found in the book, *Wingate of the Sudan*, by Sir Ronald Wingate, being the Life and Times of his Father, Sir Reginald Wingate. It was published by Murray in 1955 and the extracts to which I refer can be found on page 191 et seq.

The postmarks of the Arab Hejaz Government commenced with the Fee Paid marks. Emir Hussein was so flushed with success in his revolt against the Turks that he ordered the complete destruction of all Turkish stamps in the country. This took place in May, 1916, and then Hussein was informed that the new Hejaz stamps would not be ready for several months. To tide over this "no stamp" period, handstamps stating that the requisite postage or fee had been paid were introduced.

There were only five Post Offices open in the Hejaz at that time and each office was authorised to use the Fee Paid mark over varying periods for about a year from mid-June, 1916. The office was supposed to place the Fee Paid mark on the front of the cover and place its own date stamp alongside but the latter are to be found anywhere but close to the mark. In view of the length of period these marks were in use note that they were concurrent with the new Hejaz stamps when these became an issue from late August the same year. The Fee Paid marks are to be seen in all-English, all-Arabic and bilingual. So far as I have been able to discover the following are the types of the three varieties :—

All-English, 3 types of a single line.  
All-Arabic, 3 types of which 2 are a kind of oval format while the third is in manuscript form and is therefore not a handstamp.

Bilingual, 4 types of varying designs.

In my opinion the following are the rarest of each of the varieties :—

All-English, The words, "FEE PAID", in upper case with serifs but of the size 35 x 4½ mm. with ornaments before and after the words so making the handstamp 62 mm. in one line.

All-Arabic, The manuscript form in either ink or blue pencil.

Bilingual, Within a regular octagon showing "Fee Paid" in English, upper and lower case with serifs, 27 mm. long by 5/3½ mm. high with two lines of Arabic above and one line below.

Now for the actual date stamps. The principal difference between the date stamps of the Arab regime and those of the Turkish administration is that the Muslim calendar replaces the Turkish Fiscal calendar. I consider it would be easier to describe the date stamps, first, of Mecca, being the capital; secondly, of Jeddah, being the port on the Red Sea through which goes the bulk of the Hejaz mail both outgoing and incoming; and, lastly, a generalisation of all other offices.

#### MECCA DATE STAMPS.

From the inception of the Fee Paid marks and up to the end of January, 1917, the cancellators were the octagonal and the later type circular date stamps of the Turkish regime. Both types are bilingual and the French spelling of the name is "MEKKE" with the last "E" generally having an acute accent. The octagon type differs from the circular in that the name is followed by a number. Emir Hussein and his family had been the official guardians of Mecca for many years. It was not inappropriate, therefore, that the first new date stamp seen in the Hejaz regime should be one created in honour of the Sherifian authority and the city of Mecca itself.

The new cancellator was all-Arabic. It was a single circle, 32½ mm. diameter, divided by two parallel chords to form a band 8 mm. wide. In this band was shown the Muslim date only; the year in full, i.e., 4 figures, as was also the Arabic word for the month. Above the date band, in a striking Arabic script, was the word "MAKKA" while below, in the same script, a eulogium, "AL MAKARRAMAH", or, as we would say, Mecca, The Sacred. This date stamp came into use towards the end of January, 1917, and can be found in conjunction with the later Fee Paid marks as well as mail carrying the new postage stamps.

Around mid-1921 a similar sized date stamp was brought out but in a different Arabic script. This type remained in use until 1926 apart from a few months in 1924 when a date stamp in the same script but of which the circle was 1 mm. smaller in diameter was used. Then, somewhat surprisingly under the Nejd regime, a third variety of this special date stamp appeared in 1926. As mentioned previously, the second variety was in use until the same year, 1926.

Ibn Saud of the Nejd had captured Mecca in 1924 and quickly assumed control of the remainder of the Hejaz with the exception of the port of Jeddah and the surrounding district. King Ali and the Hejazi Government had taken refuge in Jeddah but in 1925 Ibn Saud

caused Ali to capitulate. That, briefly, is how Ibn Saud became ruler of the whole of the Hejaz. Ali was a son of Hussein and therefore a Sherif of Mecca. Ibn Saud was the principal Emir of the Nejdian dynasty that had been forced by the Turks to quit Mecca just over a century ago. The wheel had turned full circle.

Owing to a shortage of date stamps Ibn Saud had to use the second variety but it is a surprise that he ordered the third variety seeing that he had no real love for Mecca. The third type is again in a different script and as it was only in use for some four months, it is naturally the rarest of the "Makka" date stamps.

Having made himself ruler of the joint provinces, Hejaz-Nejd, Ibn Saud decided to have new adhesive stamps printed to commemorate the event and also ordered new date stamps. Those for the city of Mecca were two, one for registered post which will be mentioned later while the other was for ordinary mail. It is again somewhat surprising that, as regards the date stamp for registered post the French name of the town is spelt "MEKKE" while that for ordinary mail showed the spelling as "MECQUE". This latter spelling has been continued until the present time.

The new cancellator for ordinary mail came into being in mid-1926 and remained in use for some 10 years. It was bilingual; being composed of a single circle, 31½ mm diameter, and broken by a horizontal date band. Above and below the band was an arc enclosing the number of the office while above and below the arcs was the name curved within the circumference; the Arabic name and number in the upper half with the French equivalents in the lower. The only office numbers I have seen are "2" and "6". The former was used only on registered mail and the circle was of a diameter of 32½ mm.

The first new date stamp of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia appeared in 1936 and was in use for a further period of 10 years. Like its predecessor it was a single circle of 30 mm diameter broken by a date band but at both ends of the band was a thick arc joining up to the circumference. There were no arcs above and below the band, and the French name was in a straight line and was quite large, 20 mm long by 5 mm high. Below the French name was a large curved ornament concentric with the circumference.

(To be continued)

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THE Honorary Treasurer requests that our Members in Canada and U.S.A. shall make allowance for bank charges when sending subscriptions or remittances of any sort. Personal checks are heavily discounted when cleared in England.

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### OFFER OF £50 RESEARCH PRIZE.

IT has always been understood and accepted that Ralph Allen of Bath, Postal Pioneer, was transferred from St. Columb, Cornwall at the age of eleven (in 1704) to Exeter, where he served under Postmaster Quash until he moved on to Bath in 1710. From that year he was Deputy Postmaster at Bath until his appointment as Postmaster in 1712.

The years 1704-1710 remain undocumented, and the Post Office Records at Exeter were destroyed in the Blitz. This prize of £50 is offered to anyone who can authenticate Allen's activities between 1704 and 1710 and document these years.

All known facts about Ralph Allen's early life are set out in *Ralph Allen's Own Narrative* Special Series Publication No. 8, published in 1960, and obtainable at 17/- (including post) from the Honorary Editor. It is necessary that all aspirants for the prize should be in possession of this book. The known clues to the investigation are set out on pages 12 and 13.

The closing date for entries is 31st December, 1962, and for finished work 31st December, 1963.

