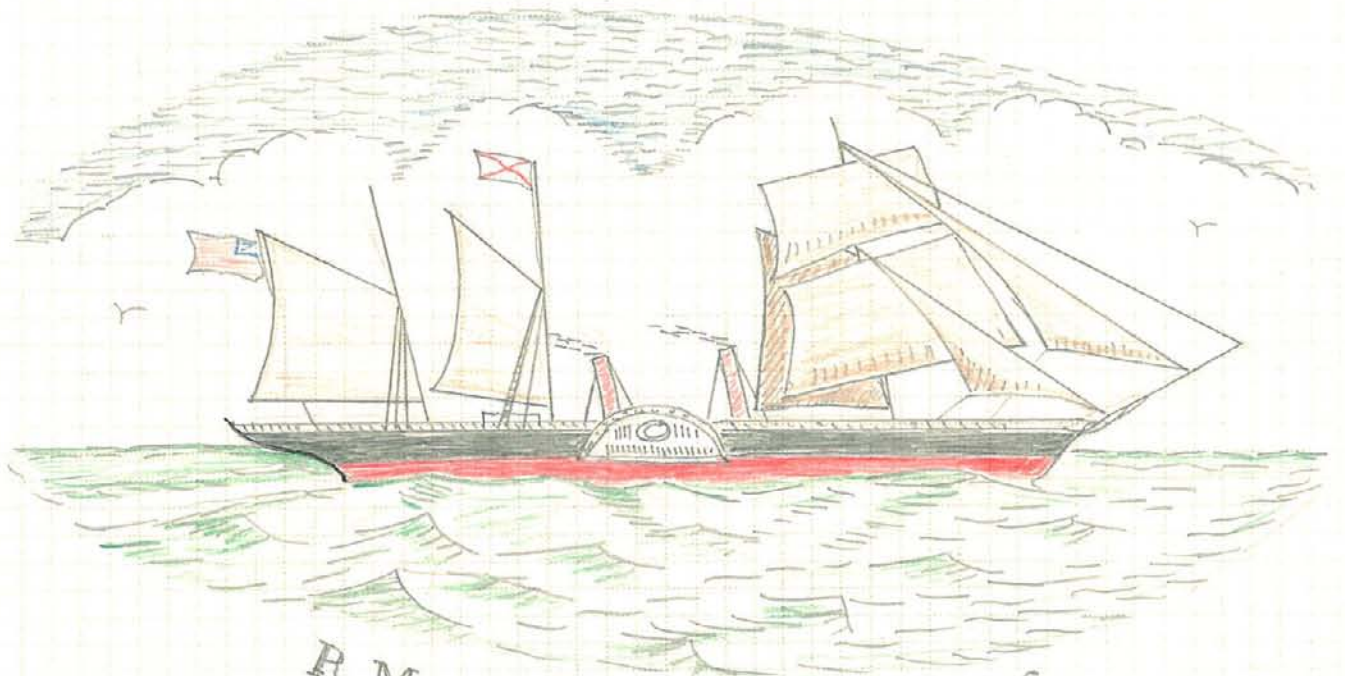


WEST INDIA MAIL

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY



R.M.S. ATRATO 1866

1906

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY



LONDON
UD
JA 17
06

Jan. 17, 1906. Letter posted on "High Seas" at Tenerife, Canary Islands, on Jan. 4, and cancelled at London on arrival there Jan. 17.



Pictorial view of waterfront at Vigo, Spain.

1836

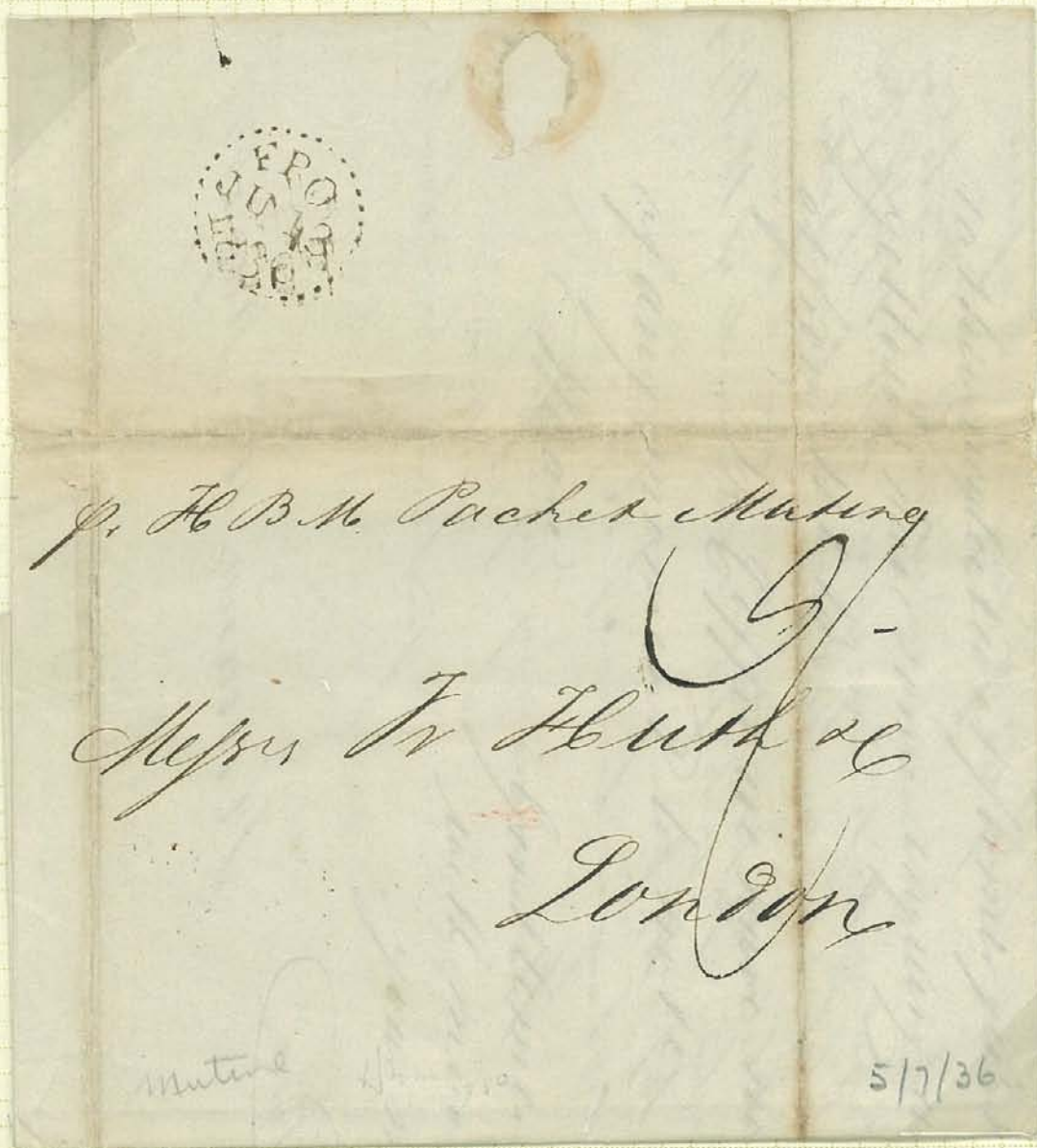
WEST INDIA MAIL - PACKET SERVICE

H.B.M. Packet Mutine

May 10, 1836. Letter datelined at Havana and directed per his British Majesty's Packet Mutine. It includes a duplicate of May 7, the original of which had gone per Packet Tyrian.

Mutine was a naval brig employed as a Falmouth packet since 1827. Tyrian, a similar vessel, went on station 1826.

The London Sun, Monday June 13, 1836: Packet Mutine arrived at Falmouth from Vera Cruz (sailed April 24th) and Havannah May 11.



June 13, 1836. London Foreign office receipt backstamp. Letter erroneously rated. 7 and 8 Geo. IV, Cap 6, 21 March 1827 rated Cuban letters at 3/1 single including inland delivery to London. Here a treble letter at 9/-, should be 9/3.

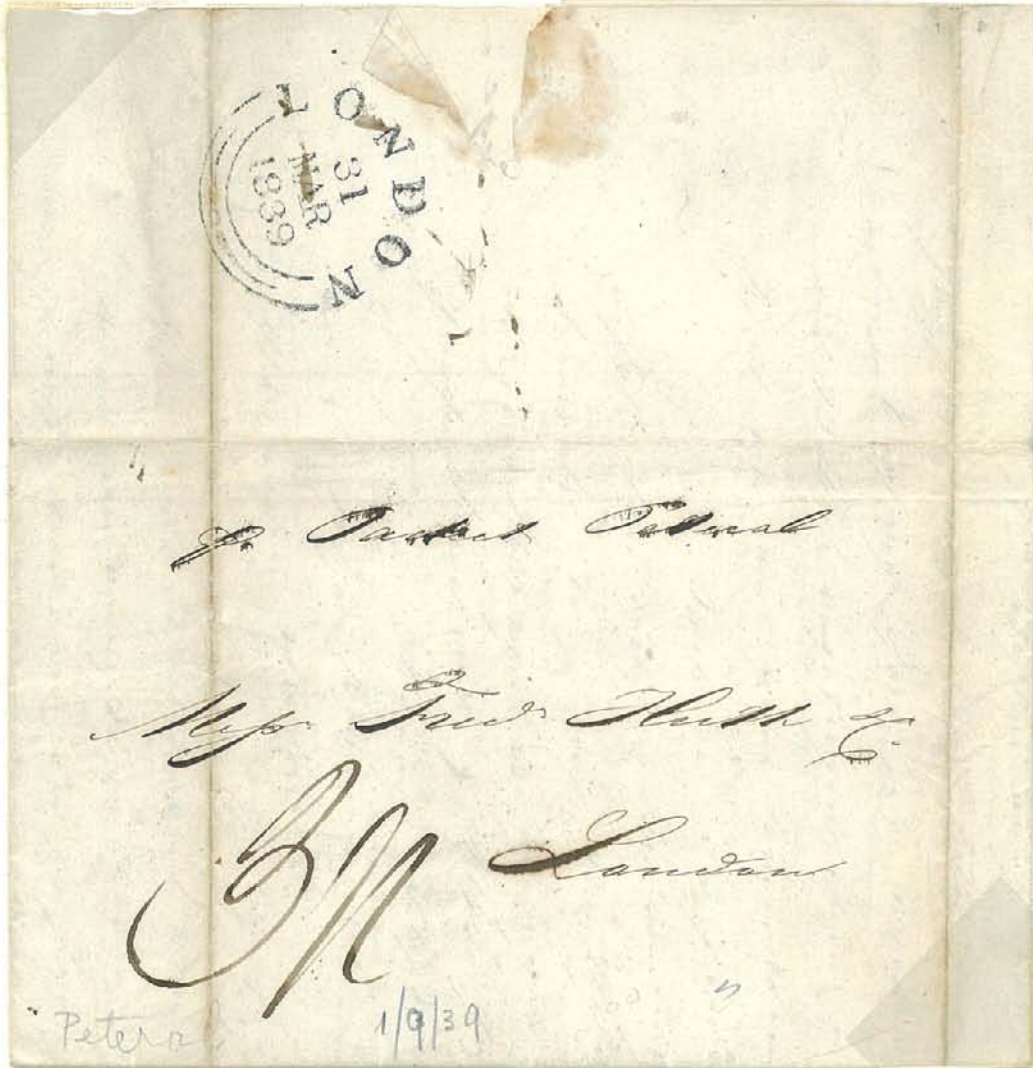
1839

PACKET LETTERS
TRANSATLANTIC MAIL
WEST INDIA MAIL— PACKET SERVICE

Packet Letter Rates Via Falmouth prior to 1840.

6. Geo. IV, c.44, 22 June, 1825.

Columbia and Mexico (certain parts)	Single* 3s.1d.	Double 6s.2d.	Treble 9s.3d.	Ounce 12s.4d.
-------------------------------------	-------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------



Letter posted
Jan. 9, 1839 at
Tampico, Mexico,
"per Packet
Peteral".



Mar. 31, 1839.
Letter rated at
London at 3/1,
*single letter
rate.

This is the
first London
postmark to
bear the word
"LONDON" and
first appeared
in 1836.

This is a typical Falmouth Packet Letter of the 1830's.
Though landed at Falmouth, the sealed bags of mail in bulk
remained unopened until handled by the G.P.O. at London. There-
fore, no Falmouth packet handstamp appeared on the letters as
was the case where "loose letters" were landed and given identity
at Falmouth.

1838

PACKET LETTERS
TRANSATLANTIC MAIL

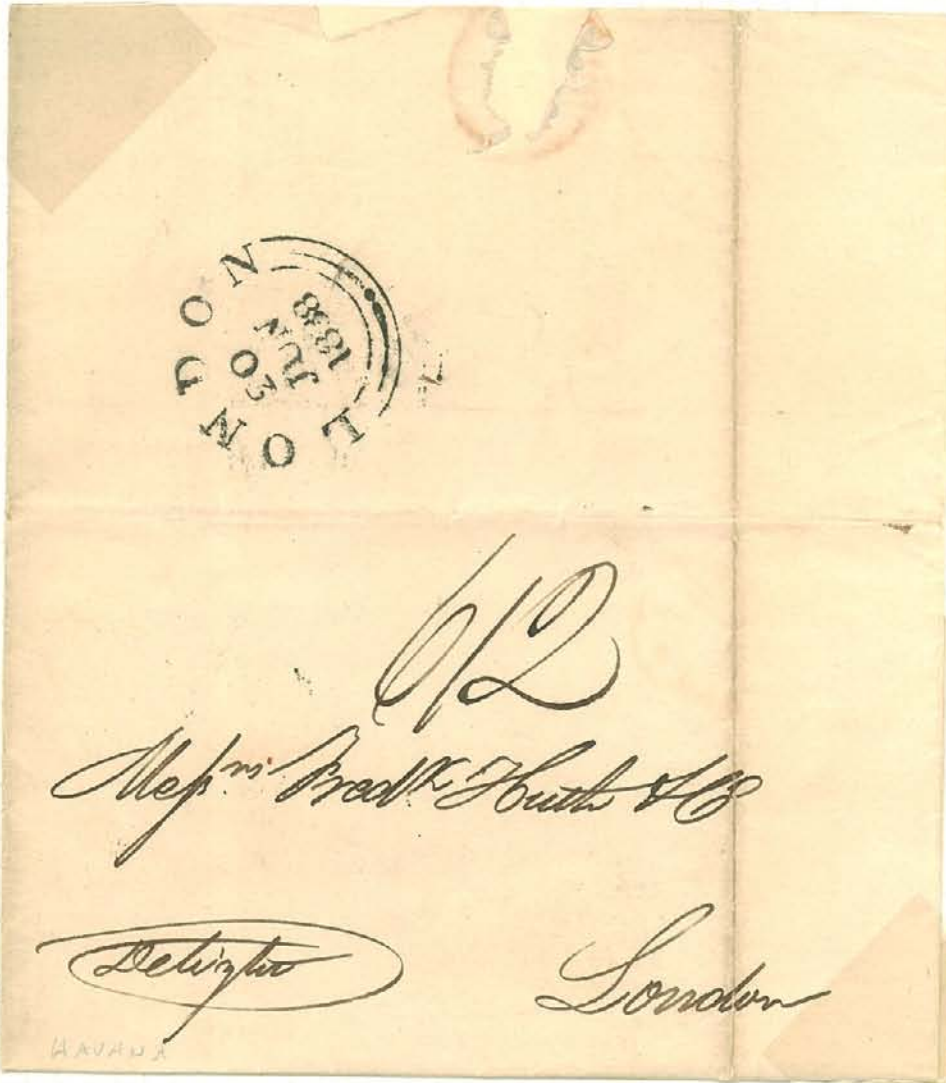
WEST INDIA MAIL - PACKET SERVICE

Packet Letter Rates Via Falmouth prior to 1840.

The establishment of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company Contract in 1840 ushered in low rates for mail to and from the West Indies and the Carabean area. Prior to the contract the rates on the Post Office Packet boats were quite high.

7 and 8 Geo. IV. c6, 21 March, 1827.

	Single	Double★	Treble·	Ounce
Cuba	<u>3s.1d.</u>	<u>6s.2d.</u>	<u>9s.3d.</u>	<u>12s.4d.</u>



Letter posted
May 21, 1838 at
Havana, noted per
the Post Office
Packet "Delight".



June 20, 1838.
Received at London
and rated 6s.2d.★
as a double letter.

Falmouth, June 19, 1838. Arrived the Mutine, packet from the W. Indies.
Sailed from St. Thomas on the 26th ult.

June 25, 1839. London Times ~~states~~ ^{NEW YORK} ~~of Great Western~~ ^{June 3} ~~By~~ ^{adviser} received this
morning from Vera Cruz, v. a. New
Orleans, it is understood that Mejia, the
Federal Mexican General, had been taken
prisoner and shot. The Schooner, H. Wether,
brought to New Orleans letters and papers
from Vera Cruz, dated the 16th of May.

They state that ~~Mejia~~ Mejia was taken
prisoner at the Battle of Ajecite, at 10 o'clock
in the morning; that he was tried, condemned,
and shot before 6 o'clock of the afternoon of
the same day, having received numerous
injuries from Santa Anna, who ordered him
to be shot with his back to the soldiery, as a
traitor. The Federal troops, it is said, were
nearly all cut to pieces by about 600
Government ~~troops~~ ^{volunteers}, led on by Santa Anna
in person.

Linca and his party had taken to flight,
with the view, it was supposed, of rejoining the
remains of the troops at Tampico. Bustamente
and Arista were marching on this point, and no
doubt was entertained of their success. If these
accounts are correct, the revolt in favour of
re-establishing the Federal Government may be

1839

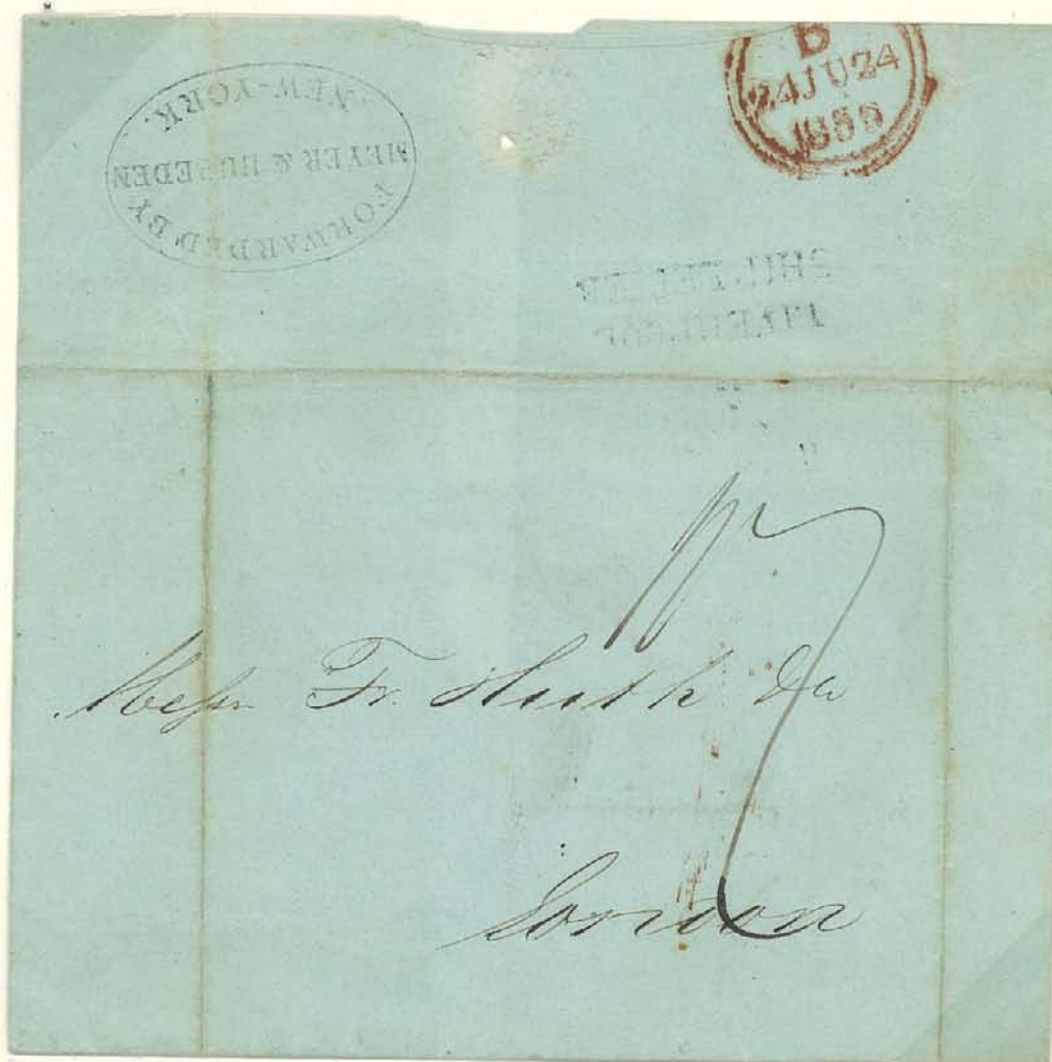
VERA CRUZ TO LONDON VIA NEW ORLEANS AND NEW YORK

Schooner Waterwitch, Vera Cruz to New Orleans

HOLMES LINE, a.k.a. Nelson Line, Ship Louisa, New Orleans to N.York

BLUE SWALLOWTAIL LINE, Ship George Washington, N.Y. to Liverool

Santa Anna puts down a revolt at Vera Cruz



May 8, 1839. Letter docketed at Vera Cruz, Mexico. The schooner Waterwitch departed from Vera Cruz.

May 20. Waterwitch arrived at New Orleans.

New Orleans Bee, May 20:- The schooner Waterwitch from Vera Cruz, which place she left on the 8th inst., arrived in this city early this morning. She brings the important intelligence of the total defeat of the Federal army under Urrea and Mejia, and the death of the latter. We have been favoured with the following extract of a letter which we hasten to lay before our readers:-

1839

VERA CRUZ TO LONDON VIA NEW ORLEANS AND NEW YORK

"SACRIFICIOS, May 7, 1839 - Yesterday an express arrived here with the intelligence of the complete discomfiture of Generals Mejia and Urrea. The former has been shot by order of Santa Anna. Urrea and Escalada have fled. The battle was fought at Acajeta, in the environs of Puebla. General Valencia commanded the Government troops. We rejoice at the defeat, as the federal party has for a long time impeded the march of commercial affairs."

May 23. Ship Louisa of the Holmes Line departed from New Orleans.

N.Y. Commercial Advertiser, June 8. ARRIVED June 8, ship Louisa, Trueman, 16 days (May 23), from New Orleans, with cotton &c. to Scott & Morrell. 31 cabin and 30 steerage passengers.



Letter came under cover to the forwarding agents Meyer & Hupeden at New York who struck their oval backstamp (RF 3) and then handed the letter directly to the packet ship George Washington of the Blue Swallowtail Line which departed from New York June 8.

LIVERPOOL
SHIP LETTER

June 23. George Washington arrived at Liverpool, transit backstamp at London June 24. Letter rated, Act of 1812, single letter 170 to 230 miles (206 miles L'pool to London) at 11d. plus 8d. Ship Letter charge = 19d. or 1sh.7d., shown as 1/7 in manuscript.



London Times. June 25, 1839. We have received New York papers to the 8th. inst., brought by the packet-ship George Washington, Captain HENRY HOLDRIDGE, which arrived at Liverpool at a late hour on Sunday night (June 23), after a remarkably short passage of only 16 days from

port to port. These papers contain some later intelligence from Mexico and Buenos Ayres than had previously arrived.

London Times, June 25. NEW YORK June 3. By advises received this morning from Vera Cruz, via New Orleans, it is understood that Mejia, the Federal Mexican General, had been taken prisoner and shot. The schooner, H. Wetter, brought to New Orleans letters and papers from Vera Cruz, dated the 16th of May. They state that Mejia was taken prisoner at the Battle of Ajecite, at 10 o'clock in the morning; that he was tried, condemned, and shot before 6 o'clock of the same day, having received numerous insults from Santa Anna, who ordered him to be shot with his back to the soldiery, as a traitor. The Federal troops, it is said, were nearly all cut to pieces by about 600 Government Calvary, led on by Santa Anna in person.

Urrea and his party had taken to flight, with the view, it was supposed, of rejoining the remainder of the troops at Tampico. Bustamente and Arista were marching on this point, and no doubt was entertained of their success. If these accounts are correct, the revolt in favour of re-establishing the Federal Government may be considered in a great measure at an end.

1840

FALMOUTH SAILING PACKETS

Naval Brigs

Brig Magnet

West Indies Packet

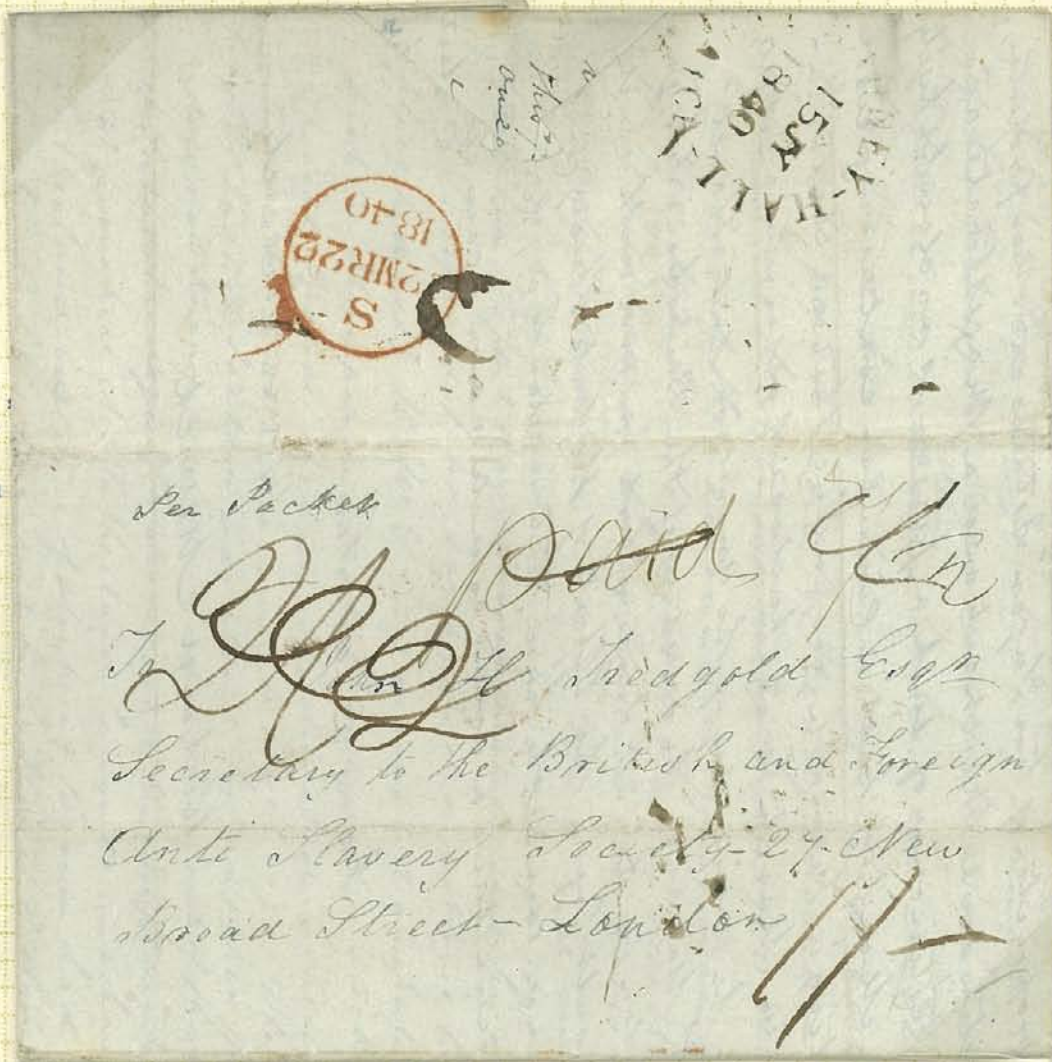
The Sun (London), Tuesday, March 24, 1840. Falmouth, March 18, arrived the Lyra packet from Havanah, Belize and Mexico; Magnet packet, West Indies.

From 1823, as new packet vessels were required, they were provided in the form of 10 gun brigs by the Admiralty. Magnet was supplied in 1836 with Smyth Griffiths, Lieut., R.N., as commander.



Jan. 10, 1840. Letter datelined "Jericho, St. Thos. in the Vale" which also happened to be the 1st day of the Uniform Penny Postal rate in England.

Jan. 15. Backstamp. Earliest recorded date (Foster) of the Type P2b cancellation at Rodney Hall. Local postage to Port Royal (Kingston) was paid at 7½d. as shown in mss.



March 22. Arrival backstamp at London. Sunday arrival mark with the code "S". Erroneously rated at the West Indies packet letter rate of 2sh/1d. + 1d. Inland = 2/2, this was corrected to the 1sh. rate from a British Colony. Letter to the British and Foreign Anti Slavery Society concerns slavery in Jamaica. Lyra brought a slavery paper the same day.

1843

FALMOUTH SAILING PACKETS

Naval Brigs

Packet Brig Swift

A second class of naval vessels used, the packet brigs, was specifically designed for the Packet Service in response to repeated demands for a bigger and more seaworthy class of ship. There were 11 brigs in this class built between 1832 and 1839, between 358 and 362 tons (Howat.)

Swift packet built at Depford in 1835-36, 361 tons, 6 guns, in service 1836-48. Capt. John Douglas, August 5, 1841.



STOCKMEYER, LALLEMANT & C.^e
 BROKERS.

Per Swift Packet.

Printed by J. Villeneuve & Co., N. 65, Rue d'Orléans.

April 21, 1843. Price Current published at Rio de Janeiro. It bears a printed directional endorsement: Per Swift Packet. Also endorsed on face: Per Swift Packet.

April 22. British Consular Post Office receiving postmark on face. The packet Swift dates were: Rio de Janeiro, April 23; Bahia, May 3; Pernambuco, 11th; Falmouth, June 10.

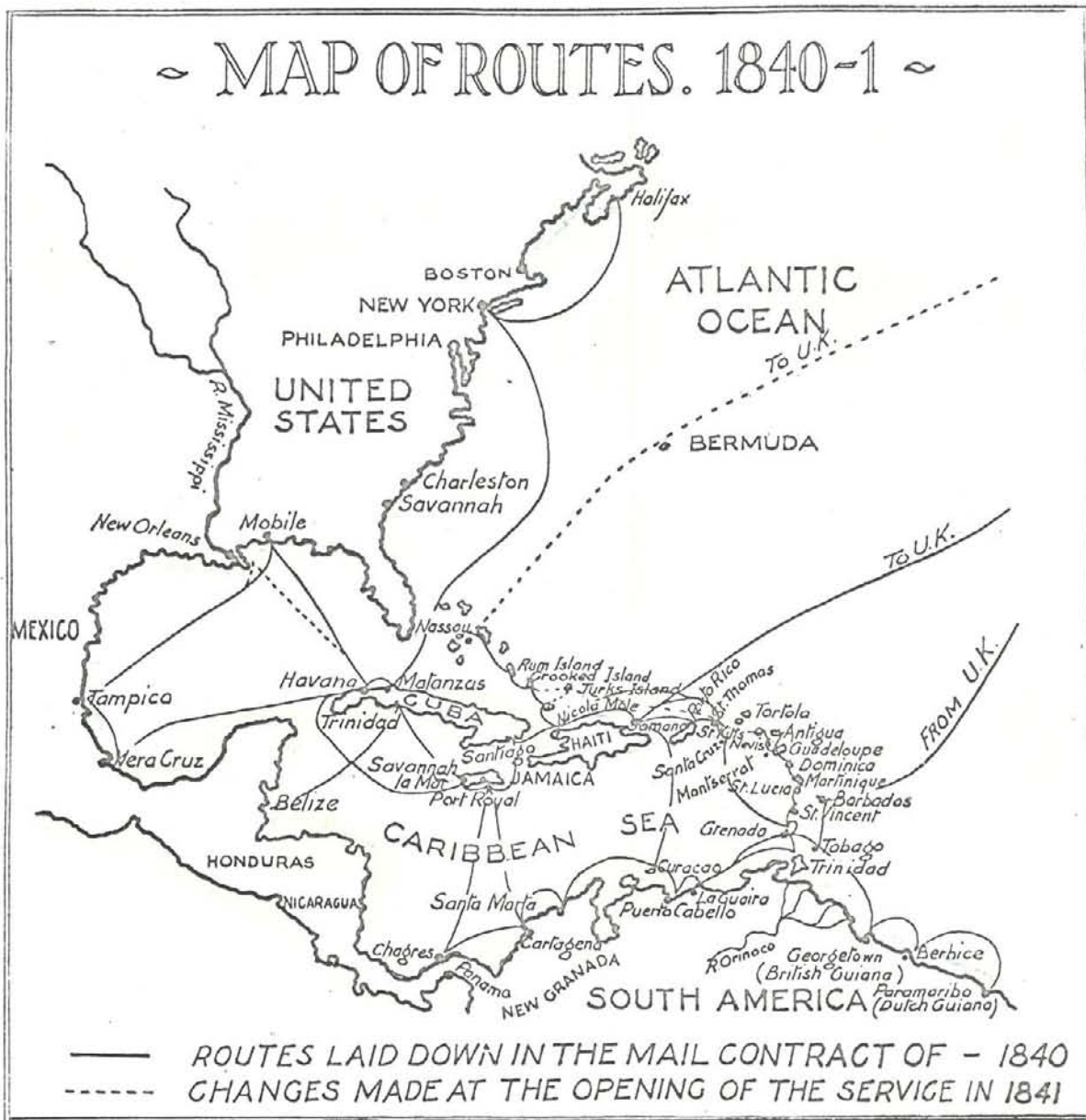
June 12. London arrival backstamp. Letter rated, Post Office Directory of 1843, rate from Brazil of 2sh.9d., shown as 2/9 in manuscript.



1840 - 1841

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY

The original routes and mail-services established with the award of the first contract to the Company in 1841.



Note:— The following summary refers only to the FIRST R.M.S.P. MAIL CONTRACT, established in 1841. Subsequently, and up to the present time, the Post Office contracts were periodically renewed and amended (see p. B.48/B.2 para. 3). R.M.S.P. mail-services were later extended down the east coast of S. America via major national ports to Buenos Aires.

THE TRUNK ROUTE

The Main Route outwards from England was to Barbados the most easterly British island colony in the Windward Is. group of the lesser Antilles. From thence the ports of call were at Grenada...Santa Cruz...St. Thomas...Nicola Mole (Haiti)...Santiago de Cuba...Port Royal (Jamaica)...Savannah la Mar (Jamaica)...and Havana (Cuba).

The homeward voyage to England began at Havana, calling at Savannah la Mar...Port Royal...Santiago de Cuba...and Nicola Mole, from which port the steamers set course north-eastward direct for Southampton.



NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC,

AND

**INSTRUCTIONS to all POSTMASTERS, SUB-POSTMASTERS,
and LETTER RECEIVERS.**

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
December, 1841.

ON and from the 1st of January next, the Mails between the United Kingdom and the WEST INDIES, MEXICO, CUBA, &c., which have hitherto been conveyed by Her Majesty's Packets, will be forwarded, *twice in every Month*, by the Contract Steam Vessels of the "ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY."

These Mails will be made up in London, on the *First and Fifteenth* of every Month, and will be forwarded from FALMOUTH.

In addition to the Places for which it has been the practice to make up Mails under the existing arrangement, it is intended that, in future, Branch Packets shall touch with Mails at the following Ports: viz.—

Paramaribo (Surinam)		Maracaibo
St. Juan de Nicaragua		Bahia Honda

The Rate of Postage on Letters not posted or delivered at the Port of departure or arrival in this Country, will be,—

To and from Surinam.....	^{s.} 2	^{d.} 7		To and from Maracaibo.....	^{s.} 2	^{d.} 8
Ditto St. Juan de Nicaragua....	2	5		Ditto Bahia Honda.	2	8

Newspapers to and from the first two places will be liable to a charge of *Two-pence* each, and those to and from Maracaibo and Bahia Honda will be forwarded *Free of Postage*.

The Steam Packets will also touch at NEW ORLEANS, SAVANNAH, CHARLESTON, NEW YORK, and HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA; but no Letters or Newspapers will be forwarded from the United Kingdom for those places, unless specially addressed, "*By West India Steam Packet*."

The following is a List of the Ports comprised in the Scheme of the "Royal Mail Steam Packet Company," with the Rate of Postage chargeable on a Letter not exceeding half an ounce, annexed to each place.

On Letters addressed to those places marked (*) the Postage must be pre-paid, or the Letters cannot be forwarded.

	^{s.}	^{d.}		^{s.}	^{d.}		^{s.}	^{d.}
Antigua	1	0	* Havana	2	8	* Santa Martha.....	2	8
* Bahia Honda	2	3	Jamaica	1	0	* Savannah.....	1	0
Barbadoes	1	0	* La Guayra	2	8	* St. Jago de Cuba	2	8
* Belize (Honduras)	1	0	* Maracaibo	2	3	* St. Juan de Nicaragua	2	8
Berbice	1	0	* Martinique	1	5	* St. Juan (Porto Rico)	1	5
* Cape Nichola Mole (Hayti) 1 5	1	5	* Mayagues (Porto Rico)	1	5	St. Kitts	1	0
* Carthagena.....	2	3	Montserrat.....	1	0	St. Lucia	1	0
* Chagres.....	1	2	Nassau (New Providence) ..	1	0	* St. Thomas.....	1	5
Charleston	1	0	Nevis	1	0	St. Vincent's.....	1	0
* Curaçoa	1	5	* New Orleans	1	0	* Tampico	2	8
Demarara	1	0	* New York	1	0	Tobago	1	0
Dominica	1	0	* Paramaribo (Surinam)	2	7	Tortola	1	0
Grenada.....	1	0	* Ponce (Porto Rico)	1	5	Trinidad	1	0
* Guadeloupe	1	5	* Puerto Cabello	2	5	Turks' Island.....	1	0
Halifax (Nova Scotia)	1	0	* Santa Cruz	1	5	* Vera Cruz	2	8

On the Return Voyage the Packets will touch at BERMUDA, and at FAYAL; and a Branch Packet will proceed, twice in every Month, from FAYAL to MADEIRA.

By Command,

W. L. MABERLY,
SECRETARY.

1840

WEST INDIA MAIL - PACKET SERVICE

ACT OF 1840 RATES

GREAT BRITAIN - JAMAICA



AYR
MAY 30
1840

May 30, 1840, Ayr, Scotland, letter
posted to Great Valley, Manchester, Jamaica,
per packet.

The Act of 1840 rates were 1/- for all packet letters
per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. when addressed to Kingston, Jamaica. This letter
was so rated (mms. at U.R.). As it was addressed beyond the
port, it was subject to an additional rate of 2d. for inland
delivery, mms. "2" at U.L.

1877

PACKET LETTERS
TRANSATLANTIC MAIL
WEST INDIA MAIL - PACKET SERVICE

"A new scheme (1850) for the West India Mail-packet service having been sanctioned by her Majesty's government, the mails from the United Kingdom for the West Indies, Mexico, &c will be dispatched....."

"All letters for Cuba will be dispatched in the mails for Havannah, and the correspondence for Venezuela will be forwarded to St. Thomas and conveyed thence to its destination by the vessels provided.....by the government of Venezuela."

Rates for letters not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. for South America, prepaid 2 shillings, must be paid in advance or the letters cannot be forwarded.



Jan. 18, 1877. Manchester receipt canceller on 2/- stamp, correct rate for South America via West Indies packet.

".....letters by each dispatch of the West Indies packet..... departure from London on the 17th of the month."

Note letter was mailed Jan. 18, one day after sailing of British West Indies packet. By agreement such mail could be routed via French packet at St. Nazaire (mms U.L.).

1869

PACKET LETTERS
TRANSATLANTIC MAIL
WEST INDIA MAIL - PACKET SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

Early 19th century mail arrangements with the West Indies were exceedingly defective. In 1842 the British Government made a contract with the West India Mail Company to establish a fortnightly mail to the West Indies in steamers of 400 H.P.; the route being so planned as to accommodate the whole of the islands as well as the adjacent American territories.

The main voyage was a circuit from Southampton calling at Corunna, Maderia, Barbados, St. Vincent's, Grenada, Santa Cruz, St. Thomas, Turk's Island, Nassau, Bermuda and Fayal, thence to Southampton, distance 9,208 miles.

A fifth route, taking the mails from Turk's Island, went by way of Cape Nicholas, St. Jago, Kingston (Jamaica), Carthagena, Chagres, River St. Juan de Nicaragus, and back to Turk's, 2,520 mi.

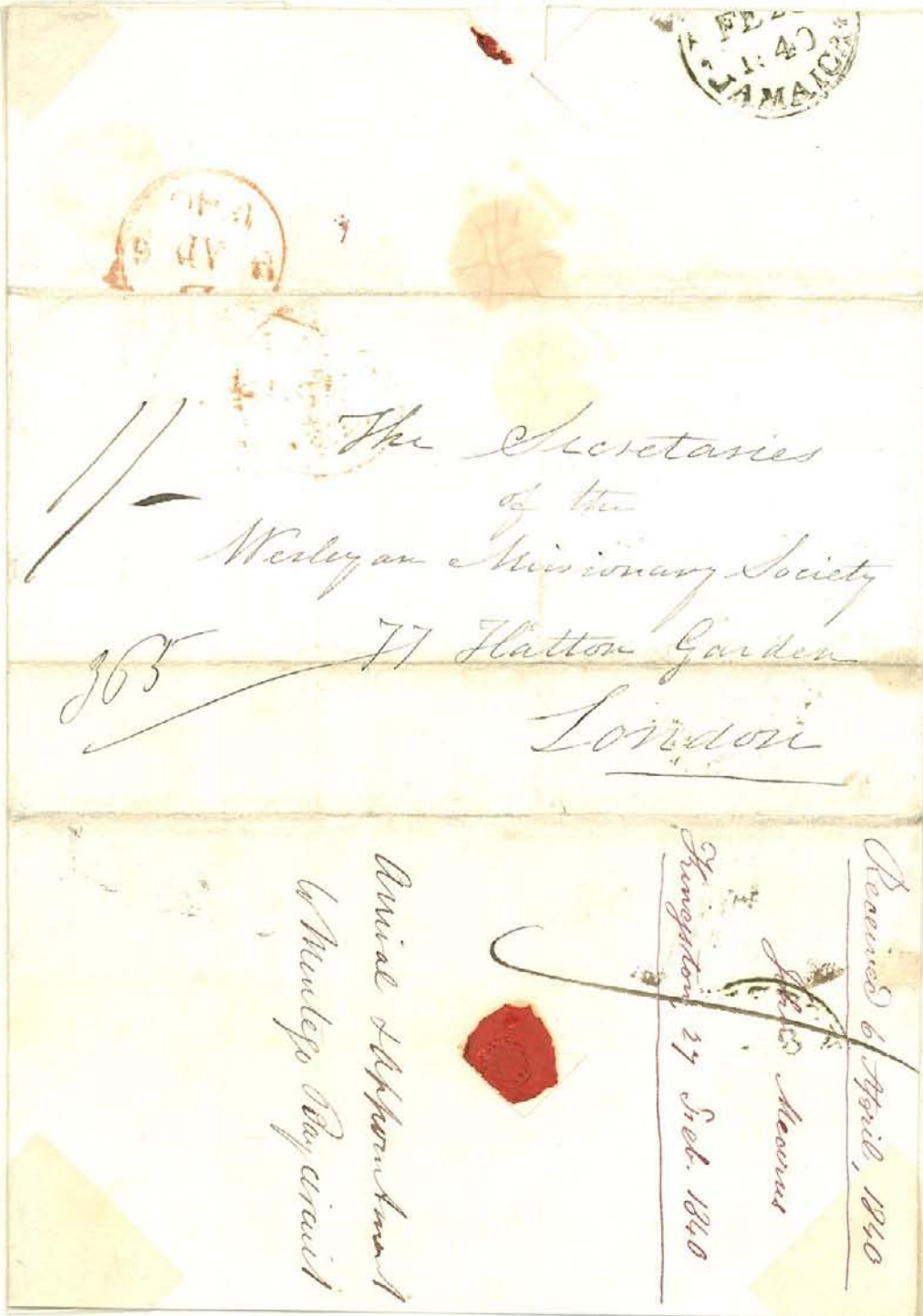


June 1, 1869. London District,
Second series obliterator. "Single
rate" of 1 shilling for West India
Mail Packet.

Backstamp:
June 20, 1869. Kingston
Jamaica receipt.

1840

WEST INDIA MAIL - PACKET SERVICE
KINGSTON, JAMAICA - GREAT BRITAIN



KINGSTON
+ FE 28
1840
+ JAMAICA +

Feb. 28, 1840.
Letter posted
unpaid at King-
ston for London.
(Foster Type K4).

B
6 APR 6
1840

April 6, 1840.
London receipt
backstamp where
1/- rate was
assessed, due
from recipient.

1842

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY

Jamaica to London via Havana and Bermuda

R.M.S.P. Tweed, Jamaica to Turks Island

R.M.S.P. Tay, Turks to Havana

R.M.S.P. Forth, Havana to London via Bermuda



Single

Paid 8

MONTREGO - BAY
 MR 1
 1842
 JAMAICA

Single
Paid 8

James Irving Esq
 Care of N. E. Jenkins Esq
 Lime Street Square
 London

March 1, 1843. A letter datelined at Leogan St. James, Jamaica and concerns sugar crops. "We have made 23 hds. at Hartfield and this day we make a beginning at Goushore..." Letter is noted as "single" and was paid the inland rate, Montego Bay to Port Royal (Kingston) at 8d. for a letter over 100 miles. This letter was carried in the first year of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.'s contract to carry mails, previously carried by H.M. Packets.

Routing by Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.'s steamships was:

R.M.S.P. Tweed, Jamaica to Turks Island.

R.M.S.P. Tay, Departed Turks ca. March 18, arrived Havana March 25

R.M.S.P. Forth: (Also carried the North American mails):

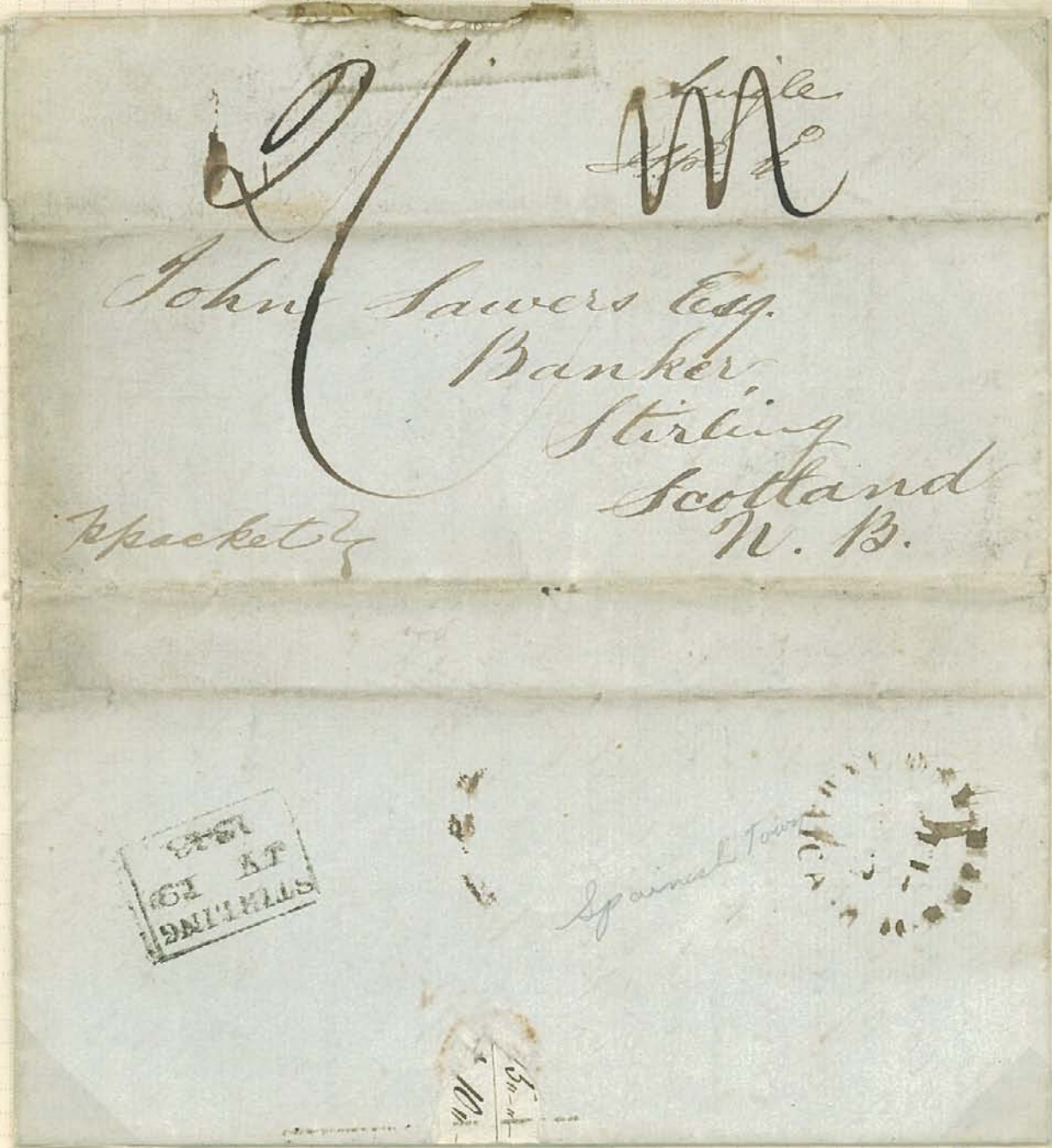
Havana	Mar. 28	Fayal	Apr. 14
Nassau	Apr. 1	Falmouth	20
Bermuda	5	London	23.

April 23. London arrival backstamp. Letter rated one shilling per ½-oz., the January 1, 1842 Packet Letter rate from the British West Indies.

EX
 23AP23
 1842

1843

WEST INDIA MAIL
ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY
DRY HARBOUR, JAMAICA to SCOTLAND



DRY-HARBOUR
JUL
1843
JAMAICA

June 14, 1843. Letter posted unpaid at Dry Harbour for Scotland "North Britain". The sender confidently marked the letter "single" in the U.R. corner.

STIRLING
JY 19
1843

July 19, received Stirling. Packets landed at Falmouth and letters sent on to London in bulk for rating. Rates to Gr.B. were 1/- per 1/2 oz. (P.O. Notice No.40-Dec.1841). Clerk boldly marked out "single" and rated double of 2/-.

1844

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY

R.M.S. Clyde

Forwarding Agent
Wright Brooks & Co
Santiago de Cuba

The 1350 ton wooden paddle steamer Clyde was the first of the Royal Mail Clyde-built fleet, launched by Duncan in 1841. She served in the fleet until 1865.



April 11, 1844.
Written at Santiago de Cuba by James J. Wright of Wright Brooks & Co. to James MacQueen, founder and owner of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co., reporting on Cuban conditions and noting the need to forward mail by the men-of-war regularly running from Santiago de Cuba to Kingston. Endorsed "via Swansea", H.M. Ship to Kingston. Marked on reverse with Wright Brooks & Co.'s forwarders stamp.



April 20. Transit backstamp at Kingston (Type K6 used 1 Feb. 1840 - 12 Feb. 1851.) Clyde departed Kingston the 23rd.

May 23. Arrival backstamp at London. The Sun, London, Thursday, May 23, 1844: Southampton, May 22. Arrived Clyde steamer, Simonds, West Indies, left St. Jago de Cuba 19th, Jamaica 23rd, Jacmel 24th, St. Thmoas's 30th ult. and Fayal 13th inst., on freight about 100,000 dolls. in specie, and twelve boxes platina; experienced strong head winds all the passage.



1 shilling, Royal Mail Steam Packet rate, Act of 1840, all packet letters 1/- per half-ounce, shown in manuscript. London Chief Office time (10 A.M.) backstamp.

1844

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY

R. M. S. Avon

1350 ton, 213 x 34 ft., wooden paddle steamer, 8½ knots. She was one of the steamers named after British rivers. The Isis, built just prior to the Avon sailed on her maiden voyage April 1, 1842, but bankruptcy of the engine-builders delayed the completion of the Avon and Severn, which did not sail until Feb. and June of 1843. Avon outlasted the others of her class until Nov. 21, 1862, where a gale tore her away from her moorings alongside at Colon and on to the rocks.



9
NOV
1844



November 8, 1844. Unpaid letter at Pointe-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe. A British feeder steamer carried the mails to St. Thomas, where the Avon sailed on the 15th (see the London Sun article elsewhere). Unusual unframed date stamp of Nov. 9.



Dec. 12, 1844. Recorded arrival of the Avon at Southampton. Letter processed at the Foreign Office, London, where it was marked to be debited to France under ARTICLE 12, and subject to a charge to France of 1 sh.4d per 30 grams (abt. 1 oz.) on a bulk basis for mail handled by British steamer.

18



Dec. 13. French entry mark showing mail entering France at Calais from England. 18 decimes, equivalent to 1 shilling 6d., due from recipient.



Dec. 14. Le Havre arrival backstamp.

1849

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY

R.M.S.P. Thames, Havana to Bermuda

R.M.S.P. Conway, Bermuda to Southampton

Conway replaces R.M.S.P. Trent to undergo repairs.

CK
23MY23
1849

COLONIES
&c ART. 13

ANGL.
24
MAY
49
BOLOGNE

FERNANDEZ Y POZO
* HABANA *

HAVANA
AP 26
1849
A



April 21, 1849. A letter dated at Havana bears inside the oval handstamp of Fernandez Y Pozo at Havana. It is endorsed: Per Steamer Thames.

April 26. British Consular Post Office backstamp at Havana.

The Royal Mail Steam Packet Thames had left Vera Cruz April 15, and touched at Havana April 26, where this letter went aboard. The Thames then went on to Bermuda to meet the homeward bound R.M.S.P. Conway who was returning to England for repairs, she having been in the West Indies for two years performing inter-colonial service. The Trent took over her station.

May 8. R.M.S.P. Conway took on the Gulf of Mexico mails from the Thames.

May 23. London Times. SOUTHAMPTON, May 22. The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's ship Conway, Capt. Clarke arrived here at 3 o'clock this afternoon.

May 24. London transit backstamp. The London Foreign Office struck the Franco-British accountancy stamp which charged France 3sh.4d. per oz. on a bulk basis for mail handled by British Packets. These letters were noted under Article 13 of the Letter Bill. ¶ May 24. French entry mark at Bologne-sur-Mer. 15 decimes due, equivalent to 1sh.3d.

1849

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY

France to Peru via Southampton and Panama

R.M.S.P. Medway, Southampton to Jamaica via St. Thomas

R.M.S.P. Avon, Jamaica to Chagres (Route G - Spanish Main)



na



October 12, 1849. Letter datelined at Bordeaux and endorsed: Packet Inglese/Via Panama. A pencil notation on the reverse indicates it was paid at the rates effective August 1, 1849, from France to Peru via England and Panama at 21 decimes per 7½ grams. This letter weighed 7½ to 15 grams, thus was at double port or 21d. x 2 = 42d., as per the reverse note.



October 16. London PAID transit mark. The letter was forwarded to Southampton for handling by the Rpyal Mail Steam Packet Co. steamships as follows:

<u>R.M.S.P. Medway</u>		<u>R.M.S.P. Avon</u>	
Southampton	Oct. 17	Jamaica	Nov. 17
Barbadoes	Nov. 9	Chagres	22
St. Thomas	11		
Jamaica	16.		

The closed mail went transisthmus by river boat and mule, Chagres to Panama, then by packet down the west coast of South America to Lima, Peru.

1849-50

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY

R.M.S. Trent

Southampton to Vera Cruz

The first 14 vessels of the Royal Mail Line were 1350 ton wooden paddle steamers, 213' x 34' beam, capable of doing 8½ knots. They were all named for rivers and were built on or as near as possible to the river whence they derived their names. Trent was built at the Pitcher Yard on the rhames in 1842 and served until 1866. She also saw duty as a Crimean War transport.

Nº 11



December 29, 1849. Paid letter posted at Receiving House No. 11 at Wells, Somerset. Originally rated at 2/6 in error, this was corrected to the proper rate of 2 shillings 3 pence to Vera Cruz, which rate had to be prepaid (G.P.O. Notice No. 49, Dec. 1841), by marking over in red ink.



December 31. Paid transit at London. The Sun, London, Jan. 3, 1850, Thursday evening edition, carried the notice: Southampton, Jan. 2, sailed, Trent, steamer, to the West Indies.



Feb. (Jan.) 30, 1850. Receipt mark at the British Post Office, Vera Cruz, where Messrs. De Wilde & Co. picked up the mail and acted as poste restante for the addressee. No Mexican postage required. This is a very scarce variety of the British consular office marking.

Normal transit time, Southampton to Vera Cruz was 27 days, so it would appear that the month date was set in error on this handstamp and should be JAN, not FEB.

1849 - 50

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY

Chagres to Southampton via Barbados and St. Thomas

R.M.S.P. Medway

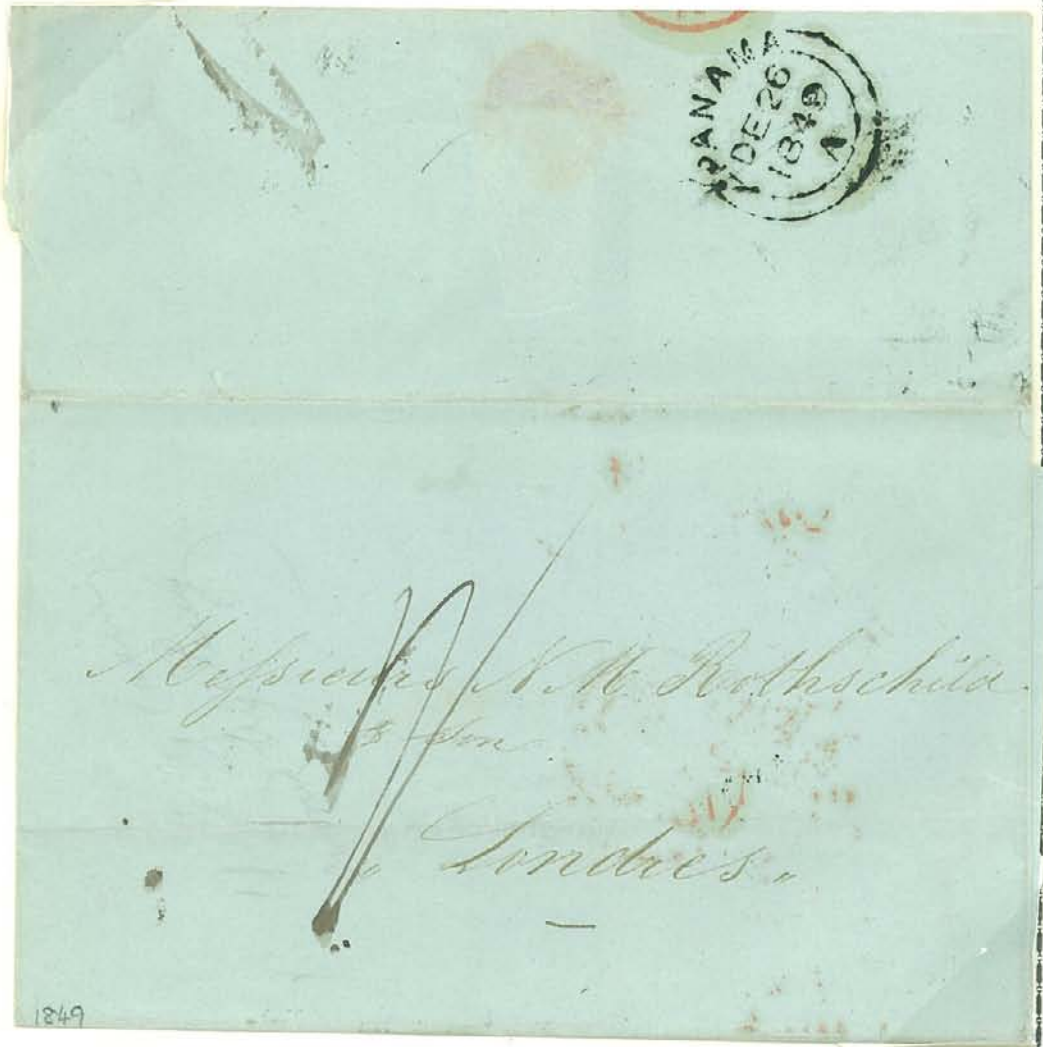
2nd Contract

Per Post Office Notice of October 1847, a Packet Letter rate to Chagres was set at one shilling under the 2nd contract. Outgoing (from Britain) letters had to be prepaid. This incoming letter was sent unpaid.

December 26, 1849. Letter posted at the British Consular Office at Panama (City). It went by mule train and river boats to Chagres on the Caribbean side of the Isthmus.

December 29. R.M.S. Medway took this letter from Chagres all the way to England. Her dates were:

Chagres	Dec. 29, '49	Barbados	Jan. 12
Cartagena	Dec. 31-Jan. 1, '50	St. Thomas	12-15
Jamaica	Jan. 4-7	Fayal	25
Jacmel, Haiti	10	Southampton	Feb. 2.



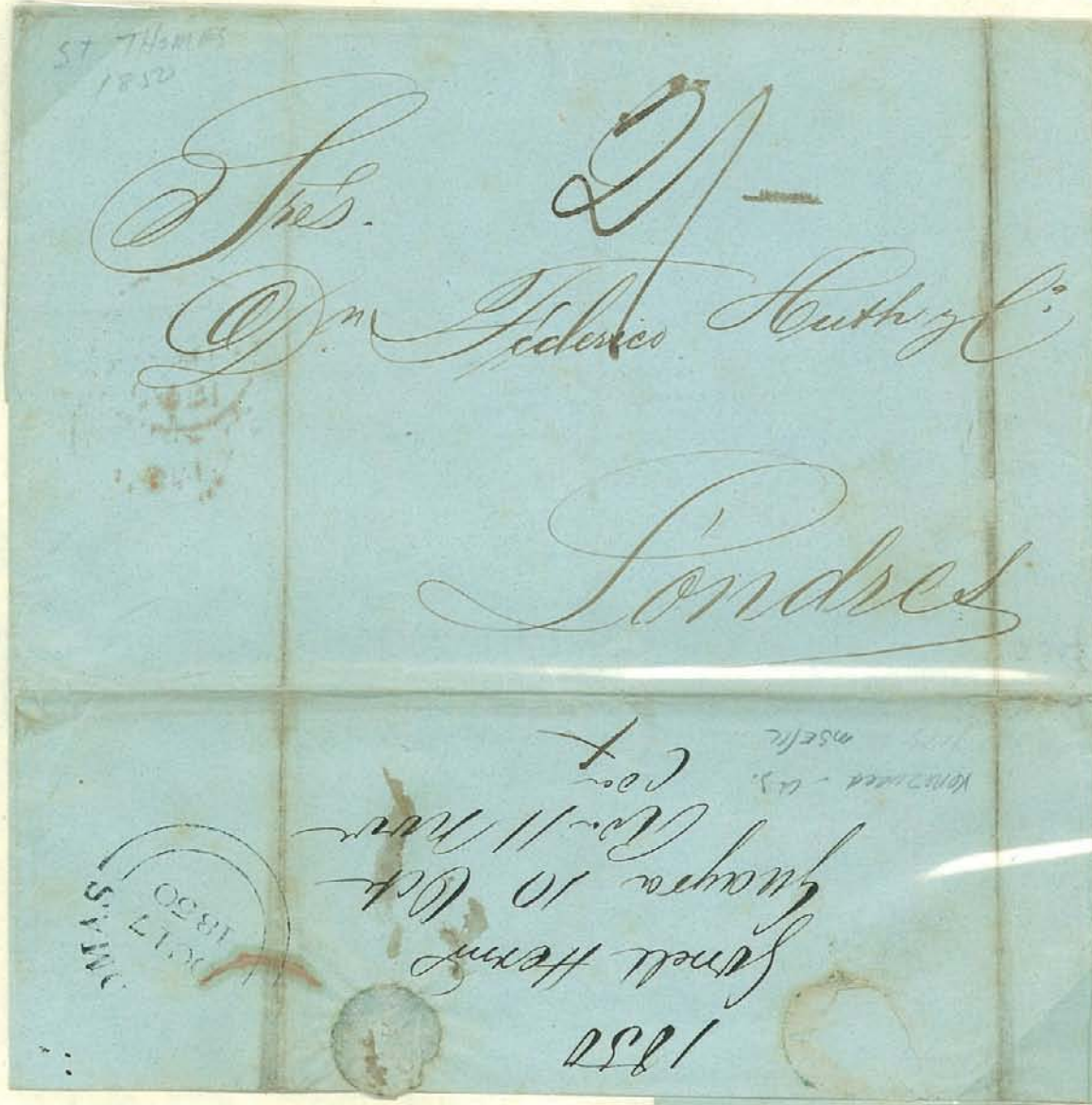
February 2, 1850. London arrival back-stamp.

1850

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY

Venezuela to London via St. Thomas

R.M.S.P. Dee



1850

ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY

Venezuela to London via St. Thomas

R.M.S.P. Dee

October 10, 1850. A duplicate letter headed at LaGuayra, Venezuela.

The original 1842, contract of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company included carriage of the Venezuelan mails from St. Thomas to LaGuayra and Puerto Cabello (Route 9) by the R.M.S.P. Liffey, Larne and Graciosa.

This arrangement continued with the 2nd Contract of November 2, 1847, with the Larne being the station steamer. The last Royal Mail voyage to Venezuela was the return of the Larne to St. Thomas on August 14, 1850, she having left LaGuayra on August 11. The Post Office notice of July 1850, stated that the West India Packets will cease to call at St. Jago de Cuba, LaGuayra and Puerto Cabello. The Government of Venezuela entered into a contract with RMSP Co. to carry the Venezuelan mails by schooners and steamers to and from St. Thomas.* Postage was to be paid by the recipient.



October 17. Transit backstamp at St. Thomas. This letter had been conveyed from LaGuayra by a Venezuelan steamer under the RMSP Co. contract.

October 20. R.M.S.P. Dee departed from St. Thomas for England.



November 10. Dee arrived at Southampton, London receiving backstamp of November 11.

Letter rated under the November 5, 1844, rate of 1/- per $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz., here double rate, 2/- due.

*The Venezuelan schooner Jane arrived at St. Thomas from LaGuayra on October 16 with this letter aboard. There were no arrivals at St. Thomas on October 16 other than the Jane, or a few days before. (St. Thomas Tidende.)