

THE NEWFIE NEWSLETTER
OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND STUDY GROUP OF BNAPS

Number 53

March/April 1995

Welcome to issue #53 of the Newfie Newsletter. We are having our four season weather here on the Avalon Peninsula. Frost, snow, rain, fog, freezing drizzle and sun, sometimes all in one day. Great stamping weather.

We have in this edition:

1. Part 2 of Palmer Moffat's "Box & Oval Cancels of Newfoundland".
2. The continuation of David Piercey's "Labrador Town Cancels".
3. Duncan Campbell's "Early Postal History of Newfoundland".
4. C. Francis Rowe's "S.S. Labrador Shipwreck Cover".

AUCTION NEWS

I hope to have prices realized from auctions by Eastern Auctions & Maresh for the next newsletter.

The B.N.A.P.S. convention will be held in Edmonton, Alberta, September 1-3. Contact Keith Spencer, 5005 Whitemud Road, Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 5L2.

I N M E M O R I U M

Passed peacefully away at his home on Friday, March 24, 1995, C. Francis Rowe, age 78, a long time member of our study group.

Francis was probably the most noted collector of Newfoundlandia anywhere in North America, but his main interests were in stamps and coins. The famous C.F. Rowe collection of coins, tokens and currency of Newfoundland rests in the Newfoundland Museum, but his fabulous collection of stamps and covers remained with him until he passed away.

Our sympathy goes out to his beloved sister, Louise, and family. On behalf of all his friends in the local Newfie study group, I extend sincere sympathy to Louise and say, a void has been created in our group that will never be filled. Francis, you will be missed.

Support our member dealers

R.J. McGillivray, 1096 Richards Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 3E1
J.C. Michaud, Box 31248, Halifax, NS, B3K 5Y1

Chairman & Editor: John Butt, 264 Hamilton Avenue, St. John's, NF, A1E 1J7
Treasurer: Martin Goebel, 79 Highland Drive, St. John's, NF, A1A 3C3

BLACK TICKLE

Lat. Long.: 53° 28' N 55° 45' W
 Population: 164 (1971)
 Origin of Name:

Opened: 1893 (Post Office) [Almanac, Pratt]
 1906 [Walsh and Butt]
 before 1948, summer office, no money order service
 Closed: Mar. 31, 1949
 Reopened: June 2, 1954 Non-Accounting MOON 53122 year-round?
 POCON 005924

Postal Code: AOK 1N0

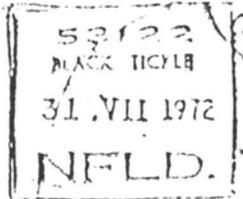
TYPE	COLOUR	FROOF DATE	EARLIEST	LATEST
C1		Dec. 12, 1953		
C2		Nov. 30, 1962	Mar. 10, 1978	Dec. 22, 1978
N1a	Ultramarine		July 31, 1972	
P1		Mar. 13, 1973	Apr. 5, 1974	Mar. 10, 1978
P2a	Ultramarine	Sept. 20, 1976	Feb. 6, 1978	
P2			Mar. 10, 1978	
P2b			Feb. 20, 1981	
P2			May 1, 1981	
P3			May 17, 1984	Apr. 16, 1992
R1a	Ultramarine		July 31, 1972	
P1			Oct. 15, 1974	



C1



C2

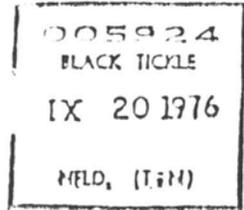


N1

005924

BLACK TICKLE
N F

P1



P2



P3

The 'Joys' of the Old Post Office

by
Mildred Winsor

In hundreds of settlements in Newfoundland as I suppose in other provinces and countries, there was a time when the Post and Telegraph offices were numbered among the most important centres in the towns and villages in which they existed. Because there were no other means of communication, such as radio or television, these constituted the 'life stream' to the outside world. Here the news was received over the wires, messages of all kinds sent and received. Also the days the mail arrived either by 'boat or train' were usually the highlight of the week. People who grew up before, or in the early thirties, will no doubt recall some of the same incidents related in this story of the post office at Elliston, my own little native village.

We didn't seem to miss anything by not having the sophisticated means of communications we have today. There is no doubt about the fact that we did so, but 'where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise,; and it seemed a lot of the joys of living then were all bound up in 'going for the mail.' I can still see in my mind's eye that little post office. It was a small flat-roofed frame building, painted white outside, with two rooms. One, of course, was the 'inner sanctum.' That was where 'Uncle Al' the postmaster sat in his swivel chair, with the imposing-looking earphones on his head, listened to incoming messages and news and wrote it all down in a big black hard-covered book or tapped out his out-going messages. 'Uncle Al' was a short, stout, pale-looking man, with a lameness due to an artificial foot. He had a thatch of coal black hair, and behind his gold-rimmed glasses, his brown eyes usually appeared solemn, I supposed as became a man in his position. He was always dressed in a dark suit with white starched shirt and black tie. I can't ever remember Uncle Al enlivening his outfit with color of any kind. To me, as a child it was awesome to get a chance to watch him tapping out messages — those little 'dots and dashes' sounded so mysterious — and whatever was that 'morse code' I heard my elders talk about?

It was only if you happened to drop in for your mail much later than when it arrived, or the day after (very rarely) that one ever got the chance to get a good look around that inner room. This was usually closed off from the outer office by a shutter, which pushed back and forth much like the 'dumb waiters' between dining-room and kitchen in many of the old houses. There are some which still exist today here and there. When we did get the opportunity to look in there it was most interesting to look at the paraphernalia on Uncle Al's desk, and to watch him

at work. Sometimes it took a long time before he finished and then he'd come to the wicket to give you your mail or say, 'Nothing for you today,' words which we all hated to hear.

Uncle Al knew everyone in the village and all the members of the various families who were away from home and he had learned to recognize their hand-writing too. "I see your mother got a letter from Vickie today — long time since she wrote last; must be a month or six weeks," he'd say or "your brother has written to your father; he should write oftener." So it went. Although hardly anyone put their names on the outside of envelopes, Uncle Al could not be fooled. He would peer at the postmark through his thick lenses, "Now this is from New Glasgow — but it's not Sarah's writing. Looks like one of the youngsters wrote this — hope she's not sick or anything!" This was the same for every family and no one thought that this was not his business. Of course, not! He was the postmaster! and had a right to know his business and ours too!

Our mail had to come from Bonavista about five miles distance from Elliston. The old 'Bonavista Branch' train connected with the overland express at Clarenville and slowly — oh, so slowly — chugged its way to its destination. Here the mail was picked up by the mailman, and brought down to us. Ours was a man named Simon. He had been a victim of the Newfoundland Disaster on the ice fields and had lost his fingers and thumbs due to severe frost bite. I'll never know how he did it but he managed to wrap the reins around the wrists of his hands and handle the horses' reins in this manner. As far as I recall Simon was never known to have an accident in the years he carried the mail to and from Bonavista to Elliston, which was a miracle in itself, considering his handicap. Was there ever a kinder, warmer-hearted man? His cart was always 'lined off' with people hitching a ride to and from Bonavista and numerous packages were transferred as well. No one wondered if he were allowed to do this and Simon never said, I'm sure.

He carried the mail on an open dray cart all through spring, summer and fall and in winter by sleigh, both drawn by horse. There were no rubber tires on the iron-banded wheels on his cart, and the noise and 'racket' they made on the gravel roads, were to say the least simply horrendous. From where our house stood we could hear him coming long before he turned the corner on 'Crawler's Hill' (so named because in winter when it was ice-covered you had to crawl up and slide down it)". "There comes Simon with the mail!" someone would

yell, and around the bend he'd come in a cloud of dust which heralded his arrival. Once I heard my father mutter, "Simon drives like Jehu, there's no mistake about it." I didn't know then but later learned that Jehu was a Biblical character of whom it is written "He drove furiously."

His arrival was the signal for someone from nearly every house in the village to converge on the post office. There were young girls, older women, boys, young and older men, children of all ages — we were all there. Because of this very fact, we had to take care that our appearance was decent. We wore next to our 'Sunday best.' Had our faces washed and hair neatly combed. Later, as we neared our teens — we 'primped' a bit more to make ready for the occasion.

That little post office would be 'jam-packed' with the first crowd to arrive. There was scarcely room to breathe. The unlucky latecomers had to stand outside. Some stood on the threshold, others at least could get their heads inside the door. There was much chatting, giggling, gossip and all village news exchanged, while the mail was sorted. Many a romance blossomed there too. It was easy to hold hands in that crowd — no one could see you anyway and maybe they were doing the same thing.

I can still feel that sense of excitement when suddenly Uncle Al pushed back the shutter and looked out over the gathering, over the rims of his thick glasses. There was a 'Sabbath hush over all' as we eyed the pile of mail, and craned our necks to see if any parcels were inside on the shelf next to the wicket — especially if we expected one. If the pile were large there might be a chance there just might be some mail for us. I don't think any king looking out over his domain felt as proud as Uncle Al at these times, as he gave his little discreet cough and gazed out at the waiting crowd. He was the man on whom every eye was fastened — his was the voice we awaited with bated breath to hear.

"Mrs. —" he'd say. Someone would call "Here!" and reach out a hand. Sometimes the letter, paper or what-have-you, would have to pass through several pairs of hands before getting to the rightful owner.

"Mr. and Mrs. —" "Oh! I'll take that. She's too busy to come today and told me to get her mail." "Miss —". There would sometimes be giggles and sly winks, and someone would be bound to say, "It must be getting serious — another letter today!" If your family name was called it was exciting, if not, disappointing but we took it all philosophically, after all there were two mails a week! Maybe next time.

Nearly everyone took the 'Family Herald' and Gerald S. Doyle sent the Newfoundland songbooks and the 'Family Fireside' free of cost. These, together with a few other publications including the "Fisherman's Advocate," almost always assured you of getting something. Besides, usually there was someone who couldn't make it, and asked you to bring her (or his) mail, so no one was quite empty-handed — hardly ever.

The post office was really the social centre of the com-

munity in those days. From all parts of our village, north, south, east and west, people came, as I'm sure they did in all the little outports in our province. It afforded an opportunity for people to see each other, to exchange happenings of all sorts — good and ill — and maybe just to enjoy a social chat.

I think though that the highlight of the year, as far as the post office went was in the month of December. Nearly everyone had relatives or members of their families "over in the States" or "Up along" (which meant the Canadian mainland), so there were always lots of cards, and mysterious-looking parcels (what could be in them?) Usually at this time of year, the mail was late arriving. This was because the branch train was delayed, waiting for the express train. There was no greater disaster, it seemed to me then, that could happen or no more onerous words, which could be spoken than: "The train is stuck on the Gaff Topsails." How we hated those "Gaff Topsails," whatever or wherever they were! "It may be three or four days before the mail gets here now," my father would say solemnly, and how our spirits sank. However soon the day arrived when we heard the joyful words "The mail is down!". This could be late in the evening of a winter day. That meant a lot more fun for the younger folk because they could get a chance to walk home from the post office, with that special someone — so romantic, — in the gloaming.

I can still recall how the grey painted walls of that little room reflected the light from the one bare electric bulb hanging from the ceiling, and feel the singing joy when our names were called by Uncle Al. There was such a warm cosy feeling too as we all were 'bunched' together, waiting for our Christmas mail.

Only once in all my remembrance of our post office and Uncle Al can I ever recall the latter being a bit flustered or disconcerted. He always seemed to have every situation in hand. This time though he did not know quite what to make of it when nearly every girl in the community — and some boys too — each received a small wrapped package, "What can be in them?" You could almost hear him say. It was of course the result of an advertisement from the Gerald S. Doyle songbook, offering a tube of a substance called Staccomb. This was guaranteed to make your hair soft and shiney. Horror of horrors! We all looked like we had been dipped in oil, or as one of the old villagers said, "Like dey ben dipped in the blubber barrel." It goes without saying that offer was never taken up again.

Well, the old post office has gone, now, and a new modern one stands there. Uncle Al and Simon have gone the way of all flesh. As I think back a feeling of deep nostalgia assails me. We had few of the modern means of entertainment then, but I think we enjoyed somehow, more pure fun and pleasure in our simple way of life of which the old post office was surely a part. To my mind I can think of no words which can evoke more memories of pleasurable excitement than: "Simon is down with the mail!"



The first postmaster general in Newfoundland was Mr. Simon Solomon, whose office was located on Duckworth street, opposite where the Commercial Bank now stands. This edifice had one window and two sliding shutters, one of which the late Mr. John Freeman attended to, and the other was presided over by Miss Solomon. Mr. Martin Shea was the book-keeper. All letters intended for the naval officers and military staff were delivered first, after which, Miss Solomon, by a gentle wave of her hand, intimated to the general public that their time had now come, which was followed by a general rush to the window.

EDIN^b CARLILE SORTING

TENDER D
MR 16
99



NEWFOUNDLAND SHIPWRECKED MAIL

S. S. L A B R A D O R

LOST FEBRUARY 28TH. 1899

Built in Belfast, Northern Ireland 1891
 Registered in Liverpool 1891
 Owners Dominion Steam Ship Co. Ltd. Liverpool.
 Built of steel construction.
 Length 401.0 feet.;width 47.2 feet. Depth of hold 28.3 feet.
 Registered tonnage Net 2998; Gross 4737 tons. Horse Power of engines 650.
 Sailing under Captain Erskine out of Halifax on return voyage to Liverpool with a crew of 118.
 Ran ashore on the Mackenzie Rock four miles from Skerryvore lighthouse, in the Hebrides, early on Wednesday morning the 28th of February 1899, in a dense fog and became a total loss. All the passengers and crew were saved by the German steamer Viking with the exception of one boatload who landed at the lighthouse.

The Labrador carried some mail from Newfoundland it having been forwarded earlier from St. John's to Halifax to connect with an Atlantic crossing. According to A.E.Hopkins in his "History of Wreck Covers" two letters and a postcard are known with the strike "RECOVERED FROM WRECK/OF S S LABRADOR"

The letter illustrated above addressed to Scotland bears a Newfoundland two cent orange (Scott No 81) postage stamp and a poorly struck St. John's closed circle date stamp of Feb 16th. The arrival datestamp in the lower left hand corner on the front as "LIVERPOOL MR15/99" and the date of arrival in Edinburgh occurred the following day as "MR 16/99 EDIN^b CARLILE SORTING TENDER". Some repairs were made by using a white gummed label with a thin red line running along it's lower edge and another short piece to seal down the flap.

The other cover described by Hopkins in his History of Wreck Covers was addressed to Liverpool it had a half cent Newfoundland Dog stamp remaining on cover. Data concerning the postcard is not available.

SHIPS NAMED "S.S.LABRADOR."

In researching the location of the loss of the SS Labrador whilst enroute from Halifax to Liverpool, England, during the early morning hours of Feb.28th,1899 the captain's Record of Agreement and Account of Crew covering that fatal voyage indicates that she ran ashore on MacKenzie Rock four miles from Skerryvore Lighthouse during a dense fog.

Newspaper reports state other positions for the loss of the ship. In a Halifax dispatch to the St. John's Evening Telegram it states that the SS Labrador was a total wreck on the coast of Ireland. Another writer puts the Skerry Rock four miles from the Skerryvore Lighthouse in the Hebrides.

At present, to the writer, it seems that the most likely location of the MacKenzie Rock would be just off the Northwest Corner of Wales, with the Port of Liverpool due east. If the Labrador came up the channel she would have to sail around the MacKenzie Rock and then almost directly eastward to Liverpool.

It is also interesting to note that at the time -1899- there were three ships bearing the name S.S. Labrador listed in "Janes Alphabetical List of British Registered Steam Vessels."

- 1 Register No 102946 Built in Hull in 1891 Gross Tonnage 139 owned by the Hull Steam Fishing and Ice Co. of Hull.
- 2 Register No 97869 described above and
- 3 Register No 54697 built of wood in 1866 in Sunderland having a gross tonnage of 436 tons. Owned at the time by James Baird of St. John's, Newfoundland. She was originally built for the Hudson Bay Company.

This ship, No 3, was purchased by James Baird Ltd in 1891 to prosecute the sealfishery. She too met an untimely end having left St. John's on March 1st, 1913 for Channel on the West Coast to prosecute the sealfishery in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Stops were planned along the way to pick up a crew. On Sunday she ran into heavy seas and a blinding snowstorm. Eventually she sprang a leak and water flooded into the engine room. Despite heroic efforts by the crew the Captain decided to run her ashore and on Tuesday March 4th she entered St. Mary's Bay where he beached her at a small settlement named Branch. Luckily like her namesake no lives were lost although she became a total loss.

Acknowledgements:

A History of Wreck Covers by A.E.Hopkins Published by Robinson Lowe Ltd. 50 Pall Mall, London SW1 3rd.Edition.

An Agreement and Account of Crew on Foreign Going Ships. For S.S.Labrador Feb 2/99-Mar 3/1899. Memorial University's Maritime History Archives, St. John's Newfoundland.

The Evening Telegram, March 2nd. 1899, Memorial University Library, St. John's, Nfld.

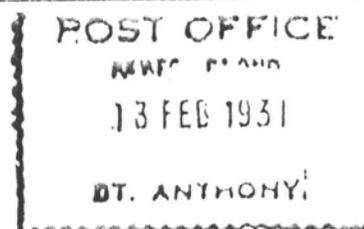
An Alphabetical List of British Registered Steam Vessels for 1899 from MUN Maritime History Archives, St. John's.

The Newfoundland Historical Society, Colonial Building,
St. John's, Newfoundland.

From the C.F.Rowe Collection
St. John's, Newfoundland.

Wavy Line Rectangle

"Post Office" on Top Line
Size 43+mm x 28+mm



POST OFFICE	COLOR	E.R.D.	R	L.R.D.	R	NOTE
ADMIRAL'S COVE, FERMUSE	B,R,BL	16OC24	JF	19DE27	DC	
BELL ISLAND	B,P	02JA28	DC	07MR31	PM	
BELL ISLAND MINES	BL,P	15NO27	DC	28AU29	DC	
BISHOP FALLS	P	24JU26	JF			
BUCHANS	B			xxAP28	PM	
BURIN NORTH	BL,G,P	10OC27	DC	26MY31	DC	
CARBONEAR	P	05FE29	DC	10MY33	DC	
CARMANVILLE	BL,P	09NO27	JF	15MY30	DC	LETTERS 5mm HIGH
CLARENVILLE	BL,P	09AU20	JF	28SP32	DC	
CLARKE'S BEACH	BL,P,R	24JY29	DC	21SP34	JB	
COACHMAN'S COVE	R	12NO29	DC	24JY33	PM	
COLEY'S POINT	P,B	20DE29	DC	13FE36	PM	
CORNER BROOK	B,BL	11NO23	PM	xxFE33	JF	
GAMBO	B,P,R	09JU27	DC	17JY33	PM	
GLOVERTOWN	BL,P,R	17JY29	DC	xxFE31	DC	
GREEN'S HARBOR	B,BL,P	05DE28	PM	13OC34	PM	
HANTS HARBOUR	B,BL,P	05NO28	PM	03OC35	PM	
HEART'S CONTENT	PM	18OC28	JF	06FE31	DC	
HILLVIEW	B,P	16JY29	DC	14MY31	DC	
HOWLEY	B	04NO27	DC	27AU46	DC	
INGLEWOOD, T.B.	BL	27AU28	BN			
LITTLE HARBOR	P	31AU27	PM			
LOCK'S COVE, ST. BARBE	P			20MR33	PM	
MILLERTOWN	P	03AP28	JF	06OC28	DW	
MILLERTOWN JUNCTION	R,B,BL,P	15MR28	DC	04NO42	PM	
Mundy Pond, St. John's	P	07FE29	BN	28FE33	PM	
PORT ANSON	B,P	24SP29	DC	12JY32	PM	
PORT DE GRAVE	BL,G	11OC29	BN	08JY31	PM	

POST OFFICE	COLOR	E.R.D.	R	L.R.D.	R	NOTE
PUSHTHROUGH	B,BL,P	18AU29	DC	xxAU33	PM	
ROBINSONS'	BL,R	25NO27	BN	02NO29	DC	
ROSE BLANCHE	B,BL	27JA27	JF	19FE31	DC	
ST. ANTHONY	B,BL,P	xxSP25	PM	28NO34	DC	
ST. GEORGES	P	21JA26	DC	20JU27	PM	
ST. JOHN'S, NFLD.	BL			26FE31	PM	T/D/ GENERAL DELIVERY
ST. JOHN'S, NFLD.	P	23MR29	PM	22JU29	BN	T/D/EAST END
SOUTH BROOK	B,P	09OC29	PM	16AP35	PM	
SOUTHERN BAY	B	11JA34	PM	22JA35	DC	
STAG BAY, LABRADOR	B			28JU23	WW	
Stephenville Crossing	P			x0AP30	PM	
TERRA NOVA	B	25MR36	PM	27JA52	JB	
TRITON WEST	B	06MR31	BN	03MR33	PM	"T" & "W" LARGER
VICTORIA	B			09JA33	DP	
WHITE ROCK	B	24JY29	PM	xxxx31	DC	

Other Wording on Top Line

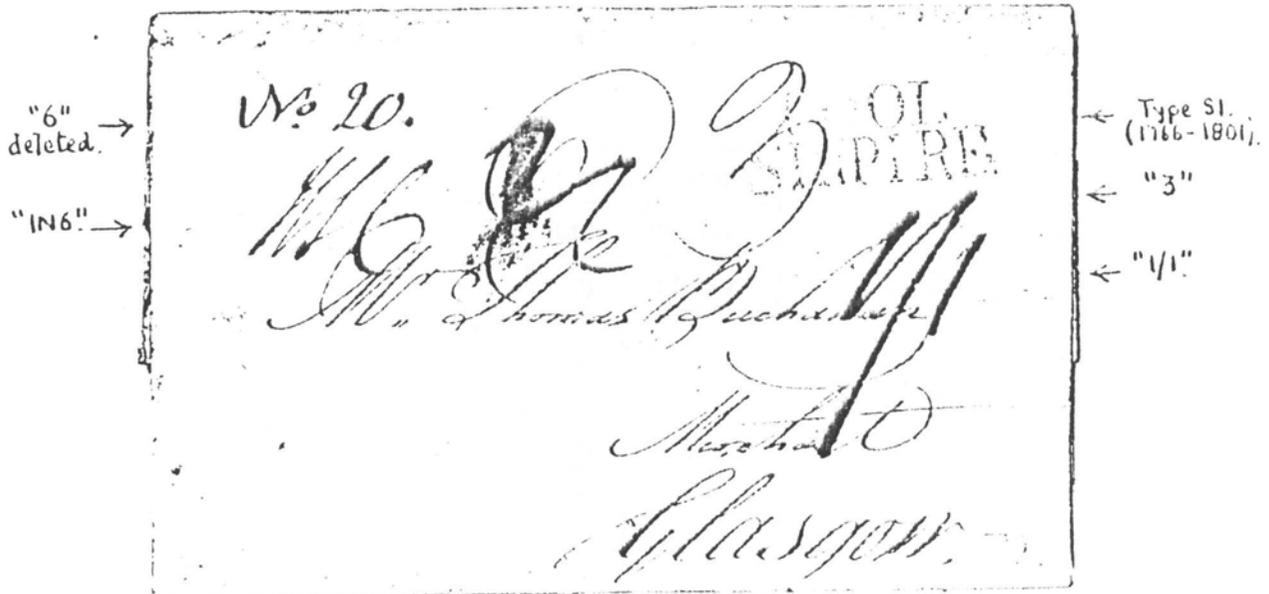
POST OFFICE	COLOR	E.R.D.	R	L.R.D.	R	NOTE
GANDER BAY, NFLD	B	13DE30	DC	07MR31	DC	TELEGRAPH OFFICE/ D/T
ST. ANTHONY, NFLD.	B	02AU24	LA	08JA27	CS	INTERNATIONAL GRENFELL ASSOCIATION/D/T

Newfoundland

"POOL SHIPLRE"

1787.

Early Legal Correspondence.



December 10, 1787. St John's to Glasgow, via Poole. Received Jan 27.
 "POOL SHIPLRE". Manuscript "6" deleted and replaced by "1/1". Also "3" and "1/16". Ship and inland rates.

Letter, which is a copy of one dated November 15, concerns the state of accounts on winding up an estate.

As there were no ship-letter charges, apart from the Captain's gratuity of 1d, until 1796, the "SHIPLRE" handstamp was only applied to identify the letter as being subject to the inland rate and not the Colonial packet rate.

A possible explanation of the complex rate marking is as follows:-
 "6" - Captain's gratuity of 1d plus inland rate of 5d Poole-London.
 "6" deleted and replaced by "1/1" to include the inland rate to Edinburgh.
 "3" - this could represent the 3d inland rate Edinburgh-Glasgow.
 "1/16" represents the grand total of 1/6 to be paid on receipt. This would include the local delivery charge, in this case, of 2d.

There were no Postal facilities in Newfoundland before 1805, all letters being handled by the Masters of vessels calling at various ports along the coast. Most mail was concerned with trading, so this is not considered an inconvenience until the latter part of the 18th century.

Transit time 48 days.