

VALUE FOR MONEY


Written by Colin Clark

Never spend your money before you have earned it. – Thomas Jefferson

By the mid-1830s, the British Post Office was ripe for reform. Postage rates were complex, extremely high and they were based on the distance carried, multiplied by the number of sheets.

ON AND AFTER THE 10th JANUARY, a Letter not exceeding HALF AN OUNCE IN WEIGHT, may be sent from any part of the United Kingdom, to any other part, for ONE PENNY, if paid when posted, or for TWO PENCE if paid when delivered.

UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE made the British postal service far more affordable for the public in **1840**. Uniform Penny Postage, introduced in **January 1840**, was an interim step towards prepaid stamps (e.g. **Penny Black**), which were issued later, in **May** of 1840.

 **NOTE:** Extract from the POST OFFICE REGULATIONS handbill, giving details of the Uniform Penny Postage, dated 7th January 1840.

Case Study: Newcastle-on-Tyne to London (one sheet):



Penny Pink embossed postal stationery: Sideways duplex 545 oval-shaped. Posted: **NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE MR 3 1857**.

Prior to the implementation of UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE, the cost of sending a single-sheet letter from Newcastle-on-Tyne to London was **12 Pence** (twelve pence). This information was documented and published in 1830.

Following implementation of the new system, the cost became **ONE PENNY** (one twelfth of the 1830 cost).

An example of ONE PENNY POSTAGE from Newcastle-on-Tyne to London is shown opposite.



NOTE: The addressee is **Alfred Bell Esq., 49 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London**. This letter was received and sorted in London, prior to delivery to the London recipient, on **MR 4 1857**, (back-stamp opposite). The index letters "**RI**" indicated the specific employee stamper using this hammer. These employees of the London Chief Office (Inland Office) transit stamped on average 100 letters per person per minute. It is unknown who "**RI**" was.

