

A Case of Mistaken Identity?



Letter postmarked Wellington 7 MY 83 and addressed to London.

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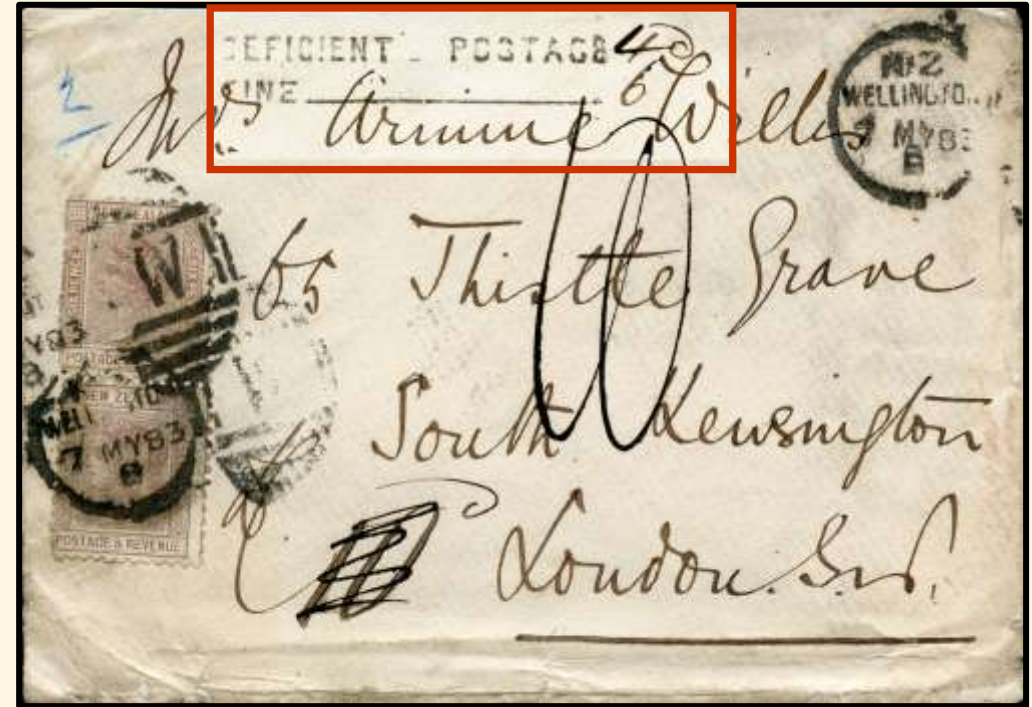
- '2' in blue indicates the letter has been assessed as being double rate.
- Rate to the UK, by direct steamer or via San Francisco, in 1883 was 6d per ½ oz.
- Two 6d stamps are paying the 1 shilling double rate.



So why is the letter considered to be 4d underpaid with 10d extra to be collected?

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- 'Deficient Postage' 4d
- 'Fine' 6d
- 'Total Due' 10d



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- 'Deficient Postage' 4d
- 'Fine' 6d
- 'Total Due' 10d
- 10d marked twice, although one crossed through.



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- The rate via Brindisi or Naples was 8d per ½ oz - a double rate letter would be 1s 4d.
- So 4d short for that route.
- Letters had to be specifically addressed 'via Brindisi' or 'via Naples'.
- The letter is backstamped London 2 JY 1883 - these dates are consistent with steamer sailings on the San Francisco/New York route.



So why is the letter considered to be 4d underpaid with 10d extra to be collected?

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- On 1 April 1882 New Zealand issued a new set of stamps which could be used for both postal and revenue purposes.
- The new stamps were little used for several months whilst the previous issue was used up.
- Designs for the new stamps were based on the previous issue.
- The new 6d stamp was based on the old 4d stamp.



The new (1882) 6d stamp (left)



The old (1874) 4d stamp (right)



- Could the two 6d stamps have been mistaken for two 4d stamps?
- In that case the letter would be considered to be 4d deficient for the San Francisco route.
- At some later point (in better light) the mistake was noticed and the '~~10d~~' cancelled.

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