

Bramford 1116 (10)



Hill (Pearson)

MEMORANDUM.

The following recent correspondence will help to show what value should be placed on any statements put forward by Mr. Patrick Chalmers.

[PARAGRAPH.]

The DUNDEE ADVERTISER, May 17th, 1868.

THE ORIGIN OF POSTAGE STAMPS.—Mr. Patrick Chalmers has for years been assiduously propounding certain opinions as to the invention of postage stamps. These opinions are by no means universally entertained, and Mr. Pearson Hill, son of Sir Rowland Hill, has issued a pamphlet for the purpose of enlightening the world as to their worth. He writes in a succinct fashion, and no one can pretend to be informed on the subject who has not read this work. (London: Morrison & Sons & Mallett.)

[CORRESPONDENCE.]

The DUNDEE ADVERTISER, May 21st, 1868.

THE ADHESIVE POSTAGE STAMP.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DUNDEE ADVERTISER."

SIR,—A copy of your issue of 19th inst. draws my attention for the first time to a pamphlet just published by Mr. Pearson Hill, entitled "The Chalmers Craze Investigated," with respect to which it will be a relief to your readers to find that the compiler does not now claim the invention of the adhesive postage stamp for Sir Rowland Hill. It would have saved editors and writers all over the world much trouble and racking of brains had this important admission been made sooner, and before I had shown this long-standing pretence to be wholly untenable. But the object of this pamphlet, the pretensions set up for Sir Rowland Hill being at last out of the way, is to draw certain red herrings across the path of Chalmers—"anybody but Chalmers" is the motto. My reply to this is—Having now disposed of the Hill delusion, let that anybody else stand up and I am ready for him. What is his name? Let him prove his case as I have proved mine, prove his invention and the date, produce his plan as I have produced that of James Chalmers, and show that the same was officially proposed for adoption in the reformed postal system prior to December 1837. That is what is wanted; not a string of vague assertions of which nothing was heard as long as the Hill delusion lasted or could

be palmed off upon a credulous press and public. To this I will only add that Sir Rowland Hill himself has left it upon record that up to the year 1834, the proved date of the invention by James Chalmers, "an adhesive stamp for postage purposes was undreamt of."

I am &c.

PAT. CHALMERS.

Wimbledon, May 19th.

The DUNDEE ADVERTISER, May 25th, 1888.

THE ADHESIVE POSTAGE STAMP.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DUNDEE ADVERTISER."

SIR,—Though, as your readers may remember, I long ago refused to enter upon any controversy with Mr. Patrick Chalmers, as he had published a false and garbled version of our correspondence—(see *Dundee Advertiser* of 15th and 30th April, 1883)—yet, as the good people of Dundee are now practically being asked to subscribe money on false pretences, I think it useful to call their attention to his letter in your impression of 21st instant. In the pamphlet I have recently issued on the origin of postage stamps, and the Chalmers craze—in which I again charge Mr. Patrick Chalmers with falsification of dates and documents, and challenge him to bring an action for libel if my charge be untrue—I distinctly claim and prove, by reference to Parliamentary and other publications, that Sir Rowland Hill was the inventor of that very minor detail of postal reform, the adhesive postage stamp—he having suggested the use of such stamps in his evidence of 13th February, 1837, ten months earlier than the date which James Chalmers himself gives as that at which he first made his plan public. Yet in his letter in your Monday's paper, Mr. Patrick Chalmers, referring to this pamphlet, coolly states that "it will be a relief to your readers to find that the compiler does not now claim the invention of the adhesive postage stamp for Sir Rowland Hill!" Could deliberate misrepresentation be carried further? Can any one now doubt that, either through mental or moral incapacity, Mr. Patrick Chalmers on this question has ceased to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

I am, &c.,

PEARSON HILL.

6, Pembroke Square, London, W.,
23rd May 1888.

The DUNDEE ADVERTISER, May 28, 1888.

THE CHALMERS-HILL
CONTROVERSY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DUNDEE
ADVERTISER."

NOTES.

SIR,—Looking at the letter just published in your columns from Mr. Pearson Hill, permit me to draw your attention to some salient points (1) necessary to be kept in view while your

(1) *Other matters introduced to distract attention from main charges, viz., falsification of dates, documents, and facts.*

readers are in danger of being misled. When the late Mr. Samuel Morley proposed an "arbitration," which I accepted, why was nothing more heard of the proposal? (2). Again, in 1883, Mr. Pearson Hill himself challenged the verdict of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" on the subject, when, after a lengthened investigation, the decision was given in my favour—"James Chalmers was the inventor of the adhesive postage stamp, in the month of August, 1834"—confirmed by the "Dictionary of National Biography." All usage and right feeling should have led Mr. Pearson Hill to accept this decision challenged by himself, and to retire with dignity if with regret (3). On the contrary, he sneers at it, and continues his course of wild and reckless abuse of me (4). As such will only be laughed at by all who have impartially read my publications, I have no intention of troubling the lawyers in the matter (5) let Mr. Hill be as abusive as he may. I am content with the records of standard historical works, and the official recognition of now nearly the entire philatelic world, including thousands of studious and able men. Again, I certainly do not gather from Mr. Pearson Hill's late pamphlet that he still looked upon Sir Rowland Hill as having been the inventor of the adhesive stamp. No date is assigned to the invention (6), no attempt to prove the accuracy of that opinion which, if still held by Mr. Pearson Hill, he stands quite alone in holding amongst the world of philatelists. If Sir Rowland Hill invented this stamp, why did he not propose to adopt it for the purpose of carrying out the penny postage scheme until that course had been pressed upon him by others? (7). We have the official facts from the lips of the Ministers of the day, and from members of both Houses of Parliament, that up to the introduction of the Penny Postage Bill on the 5th July, 1839, Mr. Rowland Hill had not proposed to adopt the adhesive stamp, that his plan was that "an impressed stamped cover was absolutely to be used on all occasions" (8). These proceedings, Sir Rowland Hill in his writings, and Mr. Pearson Hill in his letter to you, have wholly ignored, while it is proved and admitted that

(2) *An impudent case of SUGGESTIO FALSI.* It was I, who, when Mr. Samuel Morley spoke to me, offered to place the facts before him. It was Mr. S. Morley who soon dropped Chalmers when he found no reliance could be placed on anything he said.

(3) *Misrepresentation of facts.* See "Origin of Postage Stamps," par. 27 and note to par. 33. Mr. Chalmers himself quarrels with this decision, and ignores that of the far more competent body—the London Philatelic Society.

(4) *The statement for the prosecution (however temperate) is probably always regarded as "wild and reckless abuse" by the criminal.*

(5) *Dares not enter a court of law. See my reply in DUNDEE ADVERTISER of 2nd June.*

(6) *No reader of my pamphlet could possibly doubt that I look upon Sir R. Hill as the inventor. The date, 13th February, 1837, is given at least seven times. See especially par 12.*

(7) *Misrepresentation of fact. Sir R. Hill, as Mr. P. Chalmers knows perfectly well, proposed it in his very first evidence in February 1837, and never abandoned it.*

(8) *Distortion of meaning. See para 30, 34. The words quoted simply meant that Mr. R. Hill advocated prepayment by STAMP in all cases, instead of allowing prepayment in MONEY or permitting letters to be sent UNPAID. Even if the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other M.P.'s HAD declared that up to that date Mr. R. Hill had not proposed to adopt adhesive stamps, it could not have got over the*

James Chalmers had sent his plan officially to London, and to Mr. Rowland Hill himself, a year and a half before the introduction of the Bill! (9). Unable to set aside the records of Parliament, Mr. Pearson Hill simply ignores them, upsetting as they do conclusively and unanswerably pretensions now wholly exploded in all quarters where the facts have been impartially investigated (10), but which he still hopes may be swallowed by the public of Dundee.

I am, &c.,

PATRICK CHALMERS.

Wimbledon, May 26.

fact that his pamphlet and evidence conclusively prove he did.

(9) *Old misrepresentation. See especially second note to par. 34 in "Origin of Postage Stamps."*

(10) *Arrant nonsense.*

The DUNDEE ADVERTISER, June 2nd, 1888.

THE ADHESIVE POSTAGE STAMP.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DUNDEE ADVERTISER."

SIR,—As I fully expected, Mr. Patrick Chalmers, though publicly accused of falsifying dates and documents, and of deliberate misrepresentations of fact, made to support a worthless claim, declines to take the only course—an action for libel—by which a man so charged can clear his character, he has "no intention of troubling the lawyers," or, rather, has no intention of giving lawyers the opportunity of "troubling" him.

Your readers will appreciate the significance of his decision when I remind them that, if my accusations were in any way untrue, Mr. Patrick Chalmers, by taking the case into Court, could not only obtain heavy pecuniary damages, but would have the finest public opportunity of establishing his father's claim (if it were well founded) by bringing it before a tribunal where every statement must be made on oath, and be subject to the severest cross-examination.

This ordeal he will not face, even for the manifest advantages which, if he were speaking the truth, he would obtain.

Satisfied with having, after five years' uncontradicted misrepresentations, deceived some persons into a belief that his father first invented penny stamps, he is content, as his letter of 26th inst. shows, to remain under the gravest charges of fraud. If his thus submitting to be publicly discredited could in any way advance the claim he has put forward there might be a possible explanation of his conduct—the hope of solid reward might to him be ample compensation—but the very claim for which he seems willing to sacrifice every consideration of truth and honour must obviously be fatally injured rather than benefited by his shrinking from the ordeal which, for the second time in five years, I have publicly dared him to face.

As pointed out in my last letter, Mr. P. Chalmers on this question seems to have lost sight of the distinction between truth and falsehood. Could better proof of this be desired than his extraordinary assertion that I give no date for Sir Rowland Hill's suggestion of the adhesive stamp, or than the fact that the other assertions in his letter of 26th inst. are for the most part mere bald repetitions of mis-statements which,

in my pamphlet on the Origin of Postage Stamps, have already been fully exposed?

Could any sane person have been so foolish as to supply me—just when it was most useful—with so abundant a crop of misrepresentations as those contained in Mr. P. Chalmers' last two letters—misrepresentations which require no knowledge of postal matters to discover, and which even the least intelligent of your readers who has seen my pamphlet could not fail to detect?

Surely after this exposure I may safely leave the public to draw their own conclusions as to what are the real facts of this truly threadbare case.

I am, &c.,

PEARSON HILL.

6, Pembridge Square, London,
31st May 1888.

P.S.—I purpose, with your permission, in another letter to deal—quite in a friendly way—with the statements of Miss Walker, which also appear in your paper of 28th instant.

NOTE.—In his printed reply to the Dundee Burns Club, dated June 1888, Mr. Patrick Chalmers attempts no reply to the distinct charges I bring against him of falsification of dates and documents and misrepresentation of facts. He pretends [see p. 22] that he does not know what "iniquities" he has committed to cause my refusal to trust him with copies of letters!

P. H., 26/6/88.

The following is a fair specimen of the so-called evidence put forward to support the Chalmers claim.

The DUNDEE ADVERTISER, May 25th, 1888.

MR. CHALMERS AND THE POSTAGE STAMP.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DUNDEE ADVERTISER."

SIR,—I do recollect one evening very long ago, my father, the late Thomas Walker, Notary Public, Dundee, was late of coming home to supper, and explained that he had been detained in Mr. Chalmers, the bookseller's shop. "He is a most ingenious man. He has been busy for some time, he says, devising a plan for reducing the expense of postage, and he thinks it would succeed if carried out." He went on to say that Mr. C. thought that the postage to pay for a letter ought to be the same whether the letter came from London or from Perth, these expenses of postage being so hard on poor people who had friends at a distance. Therefore his plan was that letters should be paid for by stamps made for the purpose, to be sold at the Post Office, to be put outside the letter by the person who wrote the letter; that people might be able to supply themselves with those stamps, "so that after your letter is addressed you will have nothing to do but gum on a little square piece of paper in one corner." My father was exceedingly delighted, and added:—"He has shown me his whole plan, even the little bit of paper with 'Value one halfpenny' printed upon it, and he demonstrated the same to us.

I have quoted the sentences, which are exactly as my father uttered them, to the best of my recollection; and all this happened, as it appeared to my youthful mind, a good while before Rowland Hill's invention was published. That astonished my father not a little. I have seen it to be my duty to make the above statement to the Editor of the *Dundee Advertiser*.

I am, &c.,

A. L. WALKER.

8, Windsor Street, 25th May 1888.

The DUNDEE ADVERTISER, June 5th, 1888.

THE ADHESIVE POSTAGE STAMP.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DUNDEE ADVERTISER."

SIR,—Though, as stated in my last letter, the question about the origination of the adhesive postage stamp is truly threadbare—one, indeed, which has by most people been long ago relegated to the ever-increasing class of public nuisances—I ask your permission to say a few words in reply to Miss Walker's letter which appears in your paper of 28th ultimo. Her letter is so typical of the so-called "evidence" upon which the Chalmers claim is now based, that my showing in perfect friendliness its insufficiency will practically answer others of similar character.

I need scarcely point out that all the circumstantial statements which have appeared at first or second-hand, about old people recollecting James Chalmers showing them his adhesive labels, or of their having actually helped him to print, gum, or cut them up some fifty years ago, though very interesting, are quite useless as evidence on the only question at issue, viz., the date at which all this took place—such recollections being perfectly consistent with Mr. James Chalmers own statements as regards his plan—and he surely must be the best authority on such a point—namely that the date at which he "first made it public" was "nearly two years" before 1st October 1839, which necessarily must mean close upon the end of 1837.

Indeed, without in the least imputing a want of good faith on Miss Walker's part, such evidence reminds one of the attempts sometimes made to establish a fictitious *alibi*, the witnesses deposing to real facts, which, however, occurred not at the time they contend for, but on some other occasion.

Now the only evidence which could be of any use to prove that James Chalmers when writing in 1839-40 did not know what he was talking about, and ought to have said "1834" as the date of his scheme, when over and over again he would persistently and consistently keep on saying "1837," would be clear and unquestionable documentary evidence as to date. Not a particle of such evidence, however, has as yet been produced by Mr. Chalmers' advocates. Miss Walker's testimony on this point is vague in the extreme. She remembers her father's telling her he had seen Mr. James Chalmers' stamps, and goes on to say that "all this happened, according to my youthful mind, a good while before Rowland Hill's invention was published." What possible weight—say in any Court of Justice—would be accorded to any number of such statements, based upon some fifty years' "recollection," or rather forgetfulness, of events, when flatly contradicted by Mr. James Chalmers' own written testimony?

The words just quoted, "a good while before Rowland Hill's invention was published," raise in my mind a very probable explanation as to how the idea, long prevalent in Dundee, that James Chalmers originated adhesive postage stamps may have arisen. Those of his friends and neighbours who saw in November 1837 (the earliest date he claims) his plan of adhesive stamps, were doubtless as little aware as he himself then was that a similar plan had already been suggested months before by Mr. Rowland Hill in his evidence of 13th February 1837. When, therefore, in May 1840 the adhesive postage stamps first appeared, probably many "Dundonians (now of 60 years' standing)" (1) at once jumped to the very natural conclusion that here at last was James Chalmers' scheme in operation, which he had shown to them some two and a-half years before (2).

Old beliefs rapidly crystallise, and, indeed, sometimes get all the stronger as memory and judgment fail; but, luckily for those long past middle life, old people are never expected to part with opinions, however erroneous, to which for any reason they prefer to cling.

With all apologies for the length of this letter, and with thanks for your having kindly afforded me so much of your time and space.

I am, &c.,

PEARSON HILL.

6, Pembroke Square, London, W.,
2nd June, 1888.

NOTES.—(1) This refers to the writer of an anonymous letter, with that signature. The statements of this *anonymous* writer are quoted by Mr. Patrick Chalmers as important evidence in his behalf!! Where good evidence does not exist, bad evidence, of course, is the only choice.

(2) This may also explain why the old people of Dundee have so readily been got to adopt the 1834 claim. Honestly believing James Chalmers' invention was some two or three years before Sir Rowland Hill's, they would require but little prompting to fix on 1834 or thereabouts, when the fact was proved that Sir R. Hill's suggestion was made in 1837. That any one person in Dundee should be able by mere recollection to fix dates for events some fifty years gone by would of itself be most surprising; but when *all* Mr. James Chalmers' old friends and *employés* (now necessarily far advanced in life) are found to possess the same marvellous memories, one is irresistibly reminded of how short a space divides the sublime from the ridiculous.—P. H., 6 June 1888.

MEMORANDUM.

In his printed reply to the Dundee Burns Club, dated June 1888, amongst a host of other mis-statements, Mr. P. Chalmers repeats one so deliberate that it cannot possibly be the result either of accident or ignorance. This mis-statement when first put forward by him four years ago was so thoroughly exposed in a leading article in the *Postal, Telegraphic, and Telephonic Gazette* that a perusal of that article will, I think, convince most people—if any still require conviction—of the impossibility of placing any reliance on anything Mr. P. Chalmers says, so long, at least, as he avoids being obliged to make his statements on oath. The following is a reprint of that portion of the article in question which bears upon this matter. Mr. Chalmers, I should add, is perfectly aware of this contradiction, to which, at the time, he attempted a very lame answer.

*From the POSTAL, TELEGRAPHIC, AND TELEPHONIC GAZETTE,
14th March 1884.*

But perhaps the most lamentable instance in which Mr. Chalmers indulges in the *suppressio veri* is where he quotes, as conclusive evidence of his charges against Sir Rowland Hill, the paragraph from the Treasury Minute of 11 March 1864, in which a passing allusion is made by "My Lords" to such honour as "may be due to those who, before the development of the plans of Sir Rowland Hill, urged the adoption of Uniform Penny Postage." The highly complimentary minute on Sir Rowland Hill's retirement, in which this passage occurs, our readers will find quoted at full length in the "Life of Sir R. Hill," Vol. II., p. 391,* and they will see that a note is appended to this very passage showing that the statement was at once challenged and disproved by Sir Rowland Hill; that the Treasury in reply admitted the correction, and stated that they had had no intention of questioning his originality. Mr. Patrick Chalmers' letters and pamphlets prove that he has read this book. His suppression of the above fact, which shows that the statement he quotes as an authoritative decision in his favour was a mere clerical error, immediately corrected and admitted, can therefore hardly have been accidental.

Surely every fresh utterance of Mr. Patrick Chalmers only makes the case blacker than ever against himself.

PEARSON HILL.

26 June 1888.

* See also "The Post Office of Fifty Years Ago," p. 32.