

**SUBMISSION OF THE SIR  
ROWLAND HILL COMMITTEE, WITH  
DECISION OF THE DICTIONARY OF  
NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY, IN  
FAVOUR OF JAMES CHALMERS**

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Submission of the Sir Rowland Hill Committee, with Decision of the Dictionary of National Biography, in Favour of James Chalmers by Patrick Chalmers

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**PATRICK CHALMERS**

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SUBMISSION  
OF  
The Sir Rowland Hill Committee.

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THIRD EDITION,  
WITH DECISION OF  
The Dictionary of National Biography  
IN FAVOUR OF JAMES CHALMERS.

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BY  
PATRICK CHALMERS,  
*Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.*



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1887.  
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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE pamphlets lately published under the titles, "Concealment Unveiled, a Tale of the Mansion House," with "Sequel" to same, or "Submission of the Sir Rowland Hill Committee," were drawn up not for the purpose of reflecting upon this Committee for having, under circumstances of much embarrassment, concealed from the subscribers to the Memorial Fund and from the public vital and essential facts. The object of these publications was to show from the proceedings and practical assent of this Committee that the reformed penny postage system was no invention whatever on the part of Sir Rowland Hill, but was, by their own assent, simply an unacknowledged reproduction of the prior proposals of other men. And such being the case, as with the scheme so with the adhesive postage stamp which saved the scheme and has carried it out in practice. The stamp, too, was not an original idea, but equally the prior proposal of another man, now clearly proved to have been the invention and timely proposal of James Chalmers, bookseller, Dundee, who laid this plan before the Mercantile Committee of the City of London, and before Sir Rowland Hill himself a year and a half before the Penny Postage Bill was introduced into Parliament, in a letter now in the South Kensington Museum Library, bequeathed by the late Sir Henry Cole, then Secretary to this City of London Mercantile Committee, and which now historical document is here re-published.

A first edition of this "Submission of the Sir Rowland Hill Committee" having been exhausted without having reached the provincial and Scottish press, a second edition is now published, to which is attached a number of additional articles from the press in recognition of my late father as having been the originator of the adhesive postage stamp. Friends and supporters at a distance from each other, not in the habit of seeing their respective publications, will thus have an opportunity of noting the mutual and widespread recognition which the name of James Chalmers has now obtained in respect of a boon the value and importance of which, with the circumstances under which the same became adopted directly from

the hands of the inventor, will be found shortly stated in my letter addressed to the *Dundee Advertiser*, at page 62.

In the additional recognitions now obtained amongst the London press, I have reason to be especially gratified with the repeated articles in *Bric-a-Brac*, edited by the well-known and popular Mr. Palmer of the Strand, as representing the views of an important section of Philatelists, that body of stamp collectors brought into existence by the reformed postage system, to whom that system has been a study, and the originator of the adhesive postage stamp their special deity. The allegiance of *Bric-a-Brac* has been transferred to James Chalmers as having been beyond dispute the originator of that stamp dealt with in countless numbers throughout the world. Nor does *Bric-a-Brac* stand alone amongst Philatelists in this transfer of allegiance. Perhaps in no country do such stamp collectors exist in larger numbers than in the United States, and there, too, the verdict upon the indisputable case I have been enabled to present is, "It will be well for "stamp collectors to change their patron saint, and to recognise as the "real inventor, James Chalmers." The *Stamp Collector* magazine of Chicago joins that of St. Louis in this declaration. Further important recognitions have been obtained in American literary and historical quarters, where not only in the Bureau of Education at Washington, but in every library of importance, the facts in recognition of James Chalmers are being read and considered upon the evidence.

Reverting to London articles, I would point to the circular of the great publishing firm of Messrs. Trübner & Co., and which will carry the facts to all quarters of the globe—to the support which has been afforded me by that learned and popular writer, Mr. E. Walford—also to the favour which has been accorded me in the City proper by those journals specially recording the proceedings of the great City Corporation and of the London Vestries. Perhaps no more complete, if indirect, recognition of the validity and unanswerable nature of my statements could be desired than in the remarks of the *Citizen*, specially representing, it will be seen, the Sir Rowland Hill Committee itself.

Nor have I omitted to publish opinions unfavourable to my cause, such as the article put forward in that important journal, the



*Liverpool Daily Post*, page 67, and to which I ask reference. Why this matter has not been more generally noticed by the London papers most usually read by the public is easily explained. Added to the natural indisposition to admit a mistake, powerful influences have been at work to stifle the fresh light I have brought to bear upon the whole subject of penny postage reform. Some idea of the vituperation to which I have been subjected will be found under the article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*—while amongst other misrepresentations it has been freely circulated that I am a person under the hallucination "that his father invented the penny postage scheme," thus rendering my claim too ludicrous to obtain attention. But all this is only a tribute to the unanswerable nature of my case, and sooner or later my father's name and services, recorded by the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and already widely recognised elsewhere at home and abroad, will equally obtain from the London press that recognition which is ever generously accorded to those who have done some public service. For what is the use of a scheme, however desirable, if you cannot carry it out in practice? This it is which James Chalmers at a critical moment effected in the case of the reformed postage system, and however difficult it may be to dispel a long cherished delusion, to disperse preconceived ideas, every fresh effort on my part to vindicate my father's name and services continues to be attended with ever happier results, such as cannot fail ultimately to bring about a powerful reaction in favour of a neglected and unassuming public benefactor.

1, MAYFIELD ROAD,

WIMBLEDON, November, 1886.

I have omitted in the above to call attention to the fact that this claim of mine on behalf of my late father is nothing new, if generally unknown and the credit attributed to the wrong man. In proof of this I may point to the local honours conferred upon James Chalmers over forty years ago; to the remarkable letter of Sir Bartle Frere, given at page 36, and to an article which lately appeared in the *Leisure Hour* descriptive of a day in the Post Office, wherein the able writer, when arriving at the adhesive stamp, designates same "the Chalmers stamp," though, as in the case of Sir Bartle Frere, never having heard of me or my publications.

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

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### DECISION OF THE *DICTIONARY OF NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY* IN FAVOUR OF JAMES CHALMERS.

IN now issuing this Edition, I am enabled to accompany same by an announcement of the highest importance to my cause. In the 9th Volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, just issued, is contained a biographical notice of James Chalmers as Post Office Reformer and Inventor of the Adhesive Postage Stamp. This standard work is well known to be conducted by the leading literary men of the day, and acknowledged as being the special authority in such matters of historical research. No stronger testimony could be borne to the irresistible nature of the evidence I have been enabled to produce than now to find in this further instance of investigation by a learned tribunal, as in the case of the former investigation by the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, an emphatic decision in my favour—and this notwithstanding that I have continued to labour under the disadvantage of being without the correspondence betwixt my late father and Sir Rowland Hill—a correspondence solely in the possession of my opponent in these investigations; while only such “extracts” from same as he has thought desirable has he yet been called upon to produce. Consequently, any “admissions” said to have been obtained from James Chalmers, now brought forward under such circumstances without the context, are of course valueless; more especially so as it will now be seen, from a perusal of this pamphlet, that Sir Rowland Hill was an adept in obtaining admissions to which he was not entitled.

Graceful recognition is further bestowed in this biographical notice upon the early postal and general public services of James Chalmers, who “laid his plan before Mr. Wallace, M.P. for Greenock,” and Chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons of 1837 and 1838 upon the proposed penny postage scheme

of Mr. Rowland Hill; "he also corresponded with Joseph Hume, " M.P., with Patrick Chalmers, M.P., and with Rowland Hill himself " in 1839 and 1840."

James Chalmers, then, is again declared to have been the inventor of the Adhesive Postage Stamp "in the month of August, 1834"—a period on referring to which, in his "Life," Sir Rowland Hill has left it on record that, as far as he knew or was concerned, "Of course, "adhesive stamps were yet undreamt of." Nor has it been shown that at any period Sir Rowland Hill invented this stamp; while on the other hand it is proved in this pamphlet that, so far from having been the inventor of this stamp, the penny postage scheme itself, hitherto taken as his invention, was nothing more than the unacknowledged reproduction of the prior proposals of other men.

So much for the invention. But coming now to the question, Who first proposed to *apply* James Chalmers' invention for the purpose of carrying out the proposed reformed postal system? This biography tells us that "Mr. Pearson Hill has satisfactorily shown that his father " (Sir Rowland Hill) had contemplated the possible use of the adhesive "stamp before Chalmers' plan was made known." That is, made known to Mr. Wallace in December, 1837, the House of Commons Committee having first met in November. If such was the case, it would be interesting to know what possible or practical benefit the penny postage scheme derived from this, the "contemplation" of Sir Rowland Hill? While Rowland Hill was, as we are told, "contemplating," James Chalmers was *acting*, in that he at once wrote up, with his plan of August, 1834, to London, urging its *adoption*. That was practical, and had the grand practical effect of saving and carrying out the scheme; while Mr. Hill's contemplations extended up to the 26th December, 1839, when at length he adopted Chalmers' plan after the passing of the Penny Postage Bill. In thus finding it stated that Sir Rowland Hill "contemplated the possible use" of this stamp, I have again been placed at a disadvantage, inasmuch as this biographical notice, emanating from learned men whom I have never seen, was drawn up *prior* to the publication of my pamphlet, *The Adhesive Postage Stamp*. In that pamphlet it is easily and clearly proved that the adoption of the Adhesive Stamp for the purpose of carrying out the penny postage scheme in practice formed no part of the original