

Dornoch Postal Services

Pre-1819 the post from Tain to Dunbeath was carried by Foot Runners.

1822? The "Post Office" seems to have been in the Receiving House which also gathered the various tolls for ~~for~~ charged for selling at the Market

William Taylor was postmaster and Alexander Mackenzie who lived in the Receiving House was a postman probably till 1834?

1805-6 Donald Grant and John Murray were listed as "Posts"

1840 James Rose - Postmaster (Commutation list). probably in present Chemist's shop.

1851 Census William Mackay draper and postmaster
1871 " His widow, Hector Mackay's mother was postmistress - Alexandrina Rose Mackay

"William Taylor Postmaster and Sheriff Clerk in Dornoch 1796" page 2 of George Sutherland of Beary Rearcher.

The Receiving House

Dornock's Receiving House stood at the junction of Evelix and Poles roads. It seems ~~Correction to have been octagonal in shape, and to have~~ below: contained housing accommodation for a postman. It was there in the 1790s when William Taylor was postmaster. It is referred to in the 1881 census but it had been demolished before 1891. It served as a Post Office and, possibly, here would-be sellers at Dornock's fairs would pay their customs.

^{Wearle Ferry} Horsemen brought the mails north to Dornock but Foot Runners took the mail on in Mr Taylor's day as far as Dunbeath in two stages. The first stage across Ferrygoons (the Little Ferry) some $18\frac{1}{2}$ Scots miles to "Milk House" possibly Craik ^{King's well}. The second stage went from "Milk House" to Dunbeath, was another 21 Scots miles, for which the Foot Runners were paid two shillings and eight pence for each trip.

In 1819 the Stage Coach took over from the Foot Runners

The Receiving House.

Dornock's Receiving House stood at the junction of Evelin road and Poles road. Our knowledge of it comes from the Gilchrist of Ospreisdale papers and refers particularly to the period when William Taylor was Sheriff-Clerk and Postmaster in the 1790's. The Receiving House was a gathering point for letters and possibly also as a place where would-be sellers at Dornock's markets paid their customs dues.

From Dornock, Foot Runners carried letters via "Gerrygoons" - the Little Ferry, as far as the "Milk House" some 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ Scots miles north. Fresh Foot Runners would carry the letters across the Helmsdale river as far as Dunbeath, a distance of 21 Scots miles, for which they were paid eight shillings a week for three journeys per week.

We know that, an Alexander Mackenzie, a postman, was living in the Receiving House. ^{in 1831} It was still in use in 1881 but was knocked down prior to 1891.

The Receiving House

6 The Receiving House stood at the
7 junction of Cvelix Road and Poles Road.
8 It would have acted as the Post Office
7 and possibly as a collecting point for
customs dues by sellers at Dornoch
markets. We know that in 1831
Alexander Mackenzie, a postman,
lived at the Receiving House.

how Earlier documents # (1792-94) tell
of FOOT RUNNERS left from here, crossed
Ferrygoons - the Little Ferry - and on
to Wilks House near Crackalg, a distance
of $18\frac{1}{2}$ miles Scots miles. The next stage
of their journey took them on over the
Helmsdale river as far as Dunbeath
another 21 Scots miles. For making this
journey three times a week the Foot
Runners were paid eight shillings a
week.

The Dornoch Postmaster was
William Taylor one of three generations
of Taylors commemorated in the in whose
memory the giant table and inscribed
chairs in Dornoch Council Chambers were
gifted to the Royal Burgh.

Apparently the Receiving House was
an octagonal building whose
demolition saddened the citizens of
Dornoch.

Receiving House Boae.

Receiving House Boae runs from the west end of Castle Street to Dornoch War Memorial. A note from William S Taylor who was Dornoch's Postmaster and Sheriff-Clerk in the 170's and up to up to 1829 worked here. Possibly it served as Post Office and Customs House where traders coming to Dornoch's fairs and markets paid their dues. The mail was carried as far as Meikle Ferry by Sloop or boat. Then by FOOTRUNNERS from Dornoch to Dunbeath in stages, the first crossing "Ferry oons" to "Wilk House" near Kentradwell. The final stage seems to have been from Helmsdale to Dunbeath for which they were paid 2 shillings and 6 pence each trip plus 6d for crossing.

The water of Helmsdale

amount to L. 170, which, with house-rent and other incidental charges, make the annual expenditure about L. 200.

The duties of Customs collected at the port, *communibus annis*, are not sufficient to defray the expence of the establishment; the goods exported to foreign parts, being such as are duty-free, and the imports being chiefly fir-spars and deals from Norway, of that description which pay only a low duty. The revenue, however, is increasing, and the establishment of a customhouse at Thurso, is essential for the convenience of its trade, and the commercial transactions of the neighbourhood.

SECT. II. *Post-Office*.—The postmaster of Thurso's allowance for salary and expence of runners to and from Dunbeath, is L. 47, 4 s. yearly. After defraying this expence, he remitted to the General Post-Office at Edinburgh, for the year ending 1796, the sum of L. 220, 19 s. of clear revenue, exclusive of the postages of letters sent in bye-bags. At present there are only three posts in the week to and from Thurso; but the gentlemen of the town and county have it in contemplation to apply for a daily post, which has been lately extended so far north as Dornoch, in the county of Sutherland.

SECT. III. *Excise*.—The present establishment of the Excise department at Thurso, including the county, consists of a collector, who likewise officiates as supervisor for the county, and five officers. Under the management of Mr Campbell, the present collector, the revenue has been more productive than at any former period. In the year from the 5th July 1796 to the 5th of July 1797, the gross
amount

Copies relative
to Thunners from
Bernich & Helmbold

Mr. Edwards to Wm Fraser 19 July 1794

Sir In consideration of your having engaged to keep a weaving house for letters, and to superintend the Thunners below Dunblow & Dunbeath fm the 10th Octr next - The allowance for the Thunners Helmsdale Water & for your own trouble will stand as follows, and be paid to you quarterly by the Postmr of Dornoch

- For the Thunners to Dunbeath 8/p week. £20.16
- For Helmsdale water 1.6
- For weaving house 2.12

£24.2

As parlar Directions will be given to the Postmr of Dornoch to remit to you at the end of every quarter the sum of £6.15; - I trust there will be no further Occasion for any mistake in your accounts with him, - should any part of the above allowances be retained by the Postmr of Dornoch or if he should not be regular in his pay to you or desired to acquaint me therewith by the first Post Jam &c

Mr Edwards to Wm Fraser 19 July 1794

Informs Mr Fraser that he spoke to Mr Mose & Mr Taylor yesterday at Dornoch respecting the money due to him, and that he may depend upon the sum of 19/- being remitted to him in a few days and also the 17/- for Dunbeath water soon after the end of the work quarter - Mr Edwards by giving this assurance of the pay of Mr Frasers demand expects he will immediately settle with the Thunners Bannerman & Dunblow the amount of 25/- that they claim for past services

Mr Gaylor to Wm Fraser 20 Dec 1794

To Sec^y of the Gentlemen on the coast side of South
 complain of the charges made by me in the quarterly
 post ducts - viz^t for paying the Munnors the carriage
 of their Bag, and viz^t promised the postmⁿ by their
 own Minutes for sealing the Bag free of duty &c
 I am resolv'd after the end of the cur^t (agreeable
 to Mr Edwards's Recommendation to me) to dis-
 continue to send any letters to duct in the Wilmho
 Bag as the Allowance of 1 sh for each Gentleman
 concerned for all the trouble of that Bag will hardly
 keep me in wa^{te}r for it, not to mention trouble of
 keeping of keeping Booms ducts & Outlay of
 Hoey - I prefer discontinuing a practice which
 I hitherto supposed did Services to the Gentlemen
 concerned in it without any adequate Return to
 myself than have Imputations made on me of
 wrong or extravagant charges. - after the end
 of the yr the letters and papers will be given the
 Munnors as usual and this you'll communicate
 to those concerned as my Services are either
 suspected or not required - I am &c

1. Mr. Munro's 10th of Graser 2y in 1792
From 3 July 1791 & after - the allowance credited
to the postm of Borneoch were:

1st For Runners fm Durnoch to Wiltho 18 miles at
2/4 each time or 4 shawkeem - p ann. 2.18. 11
For the 2 Mice Ferry - 2^d each crossing 3/4 2.12
or 1/2 to each 1/2 an
- for the Runners twixt Durnoch & Wiltho. 2.20. 16.

2dly. And which you should have received 2y
For Runners fm Wiltho to Dunbeath 21 Miles
at the rate of 2/8 each time or 5/10 each p ann. 2.20. 16
- for Helmsdale Water at 10 each time or 5/10. 1. 6
And for your own trouble 2.
which you ought to receive as pay for
yourself & Runners twixt Wiltho & Dunbeath
3/6 above fm Borneoch to Wiltho. 2. 16
Total allowance for the whole 2. 44. 18

So that you should have received at the end of each quarter 26. 0. 6
making as before stated 224. 2/4 year

From this you see that the Runners fm Wiltho to Dunbeath
includg the allowance for Helmsdale Water should have 2/10
each time or 5/6 a week belevial them - making 4/3 a
week to each

As the Water of Dunbeath as that is fordable except in
spouts, an auct should be made & attested by the Post
m there when they are obliged to take the Road that
an allowance may be made for it according to the actual
& real expence so as to prevent any delay

As to the letters you received Wiltho I think you
should receive half of the allowance made by the Gentlemen
for the Wiltho Post as having 2 the trouble of it with
the postm of Borneoch

2. Numbers John Sulphur
 Bannerman - 3 times
 amount to 100 from Hills
 to Benbeath at 2 1/2 miles
 or 8 1/2 to 10 kph to
 Pumping of 19 Weeks 25.4
 of 60 gals each for the Water 6.6
 of Helms date
 receiving he 5.10.6
 2000

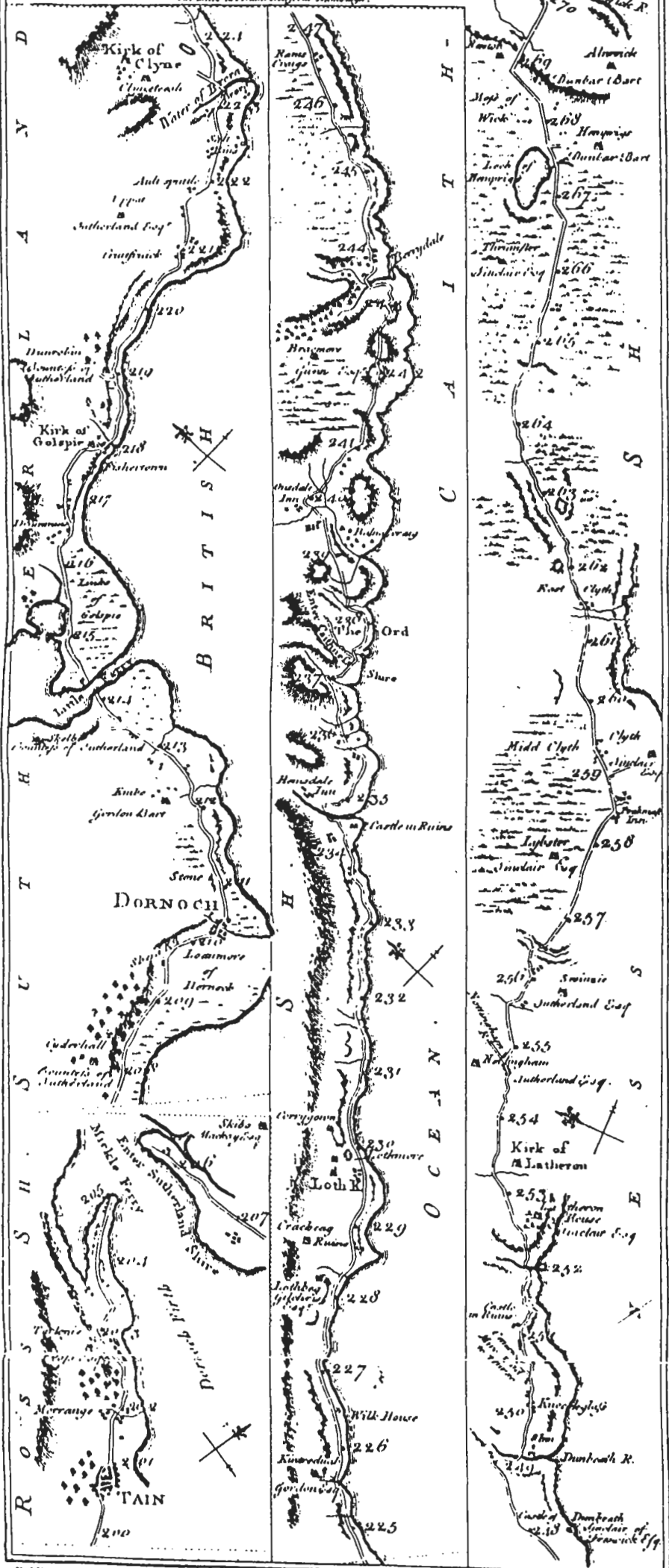
Dornoch to Helmsburgh 2 miles
 2/6 each of 3 times or 7 1/2
 Wagon for 9 1/2 24.11
 Herringon Hall 13
 13.4

3/6 a gr to post for every
 the bag is with the post
 chd by Mr Taylor

What is the meaning of this
 is not the (to 25) in full to
 the posts

The ROAD from TAIN to WICK.

The Miles are Numbered from Edinburgh.



Scotland's first postmark from 1731 to go under the hammer

Frank O'Donnell

A LETTER bearing Scotland's oldest postmark – more than 100 years before the first postage stamp – will go on sale tomorrow at an auction.

The letter, which cost just 2d to send from the Borders town of Duns to Edinburgh on 2 October 1731, is expected to attract a bidding war between Scottish collectors and philatelists worldwide.

The handstruck "DUNs" postmark is the earliest recorded from a Scottish post office. It appeared seven years before cities such as Glasgow and Aberdeen had handstamps and more than a decade before most other post offices.

The single-sheet missive is a business letter from a Francis Scott of Duns concerning a

payment of expenses. It was sent to a Mr George Innis, "general receiver depute" at the Royal New Bank in Edinburgh.

The unique postal artefact is one of several Scottish lots to be auctioned at the Great Britain and Worldwide Auction to be held tomorrow in Derby, by

'The letter bearing the postmark dates 100 years before the first postal stamp'

Cavendish Philatelic Auctions.

Ken Baker, from auctioneers Cavendish, said: "The Duns letter will certainly attract a lot of attention – particularly to collectors of Scottish origin – because the postal handstamp showing the town of origin is just so early. The fact that Duns

was the first in Scotland, long before a city like Glasgow, could be because of its position in the Borders, with mail travelling through to England.

"Nobody knows for sure why Duns was first. The postal handstamp is one made locally, so they clearly wanted one before

anyone else thought of it."

Prior to the first widely used British postal stamp on 6 May 1840, towns had their own, often privately organised, postal systems.

Despite worldwide fanaticism for the subject, Britain is still regarded as the world's

most important centre for postal artefacts. More than 1000 collectors from across the world are expected to bid at the auction in Derby, in person or via phone, fax or the internet.

Other lots include the only recorded letter sent in Scotland on American Independence Day, 4 July 1776, valued at around £1,000.

Mr James Fraser's letter concerning a property dispute – lot 435 – was relayed by the private Williamson local post in Edinburgh to his lawyer, a Mr Charles Gordon, writer to the signet, also of Edinburgh.

The auction will also feature the only envelope franked directly from Scotland to an overseas address, sent in 1832 from Inverness to Delhi, India, and a rare oval Dundee ship letter from 1827, valued at £500.