

The MICHAEL SULLIVAN Correspondence Revisited

Following the great response from members, new information has been received, and details of six additional covers can now be shown, together with other new details. Mrs. Janet Young sent several photographs which she had specially taken of George Street and Brighton Road, being two of the addresses of Mrs. M. Sullivan.

Details of 1882 cover from member **Mr. A. L. Kennedy**, Royston Hertfordshire

1882 HMS *Euryalus*



Figure 4 A

Malta, HMS *Euryalus* 6 February 1882 Michael Sullivan Skilled Ship Wright.

One Penny Concession Rate letter, to comply with the regulations, countersigned by Sub-Lieutenant Ernest J. Carus-Wilson, (Handstamp), Officer in command. GB One Penny Lilac adhesive cancelled with MALTA Duplex; datestamp February 6 1882 & A25 barred oval obliterator.

Backstamped, **BIRMINGHAM circular date stamp 11 February 1882.**

Sub-Lieutenant Ernest J. Carus-Wilson, joined as a Naval Cadet 15 July 1872, Midshipman 18 January 1875, Sub-Lieutenant 15 February 1879, promoted to Lieutenant 18 November 1882. Prior to joining HMS *Euryalus* on HMS *Alexandra* 9 August 1880, and after serving aboard HMS *Euryalus* joined HMS *Achilles* 22 August 1883
HMS *Euryalus*, recommissioned at Malta 27 January 1882, left on 1 March 1882 for Port Said & Suez.

Details of 1882 cover from member **Gary Brown**, Melbourne, Australia

1882
HMS *Ruby*



Figure 5A¹

Aden, HMS *Ruby* c 18 July 1882 Michael Sullivan Skilled Carpenter's Mate. Two Pence Concession Rate letter, to comply with the regulations, countersigned by Lieutenant Michael P. O'Callaghan, Officer in command. GB Twopence Rose adhesive cancelled with barred circular obliterator, (letters FB within circle) at the Foreign Branch of the Chief Post Office London. Backstamped, **BIRMINGHAM circular date stamp 11 August 1882.**

The Log of HMS *Ruby*, has not yet been researched

The P&O *Brindisi* was at Aden 18/19 July, having left Galle on 9 July 1883. Because of the war in Egypt, the overland route was unsafe so the *Brindisi* went through the canal on to London. By rights this letter having paid the 2d concession rate should have been transferred and picked up at Port Said by the P&O *Catbay*, going to Brindisi, arriving there on 31 July. However from the arrival date, it appears that the letter remained on board the P&O *Brindisi*, which reached Malta 31 July, Gibraltar 4 August, and London 10 August and finally at Birmingham on 11 August 1882.

¹ Robson Lowe Auction 15 December 1976 - Lot 783

Details of Cover from member **Richard Wilson**, New York USA.

1884
HMS *Euryalus*

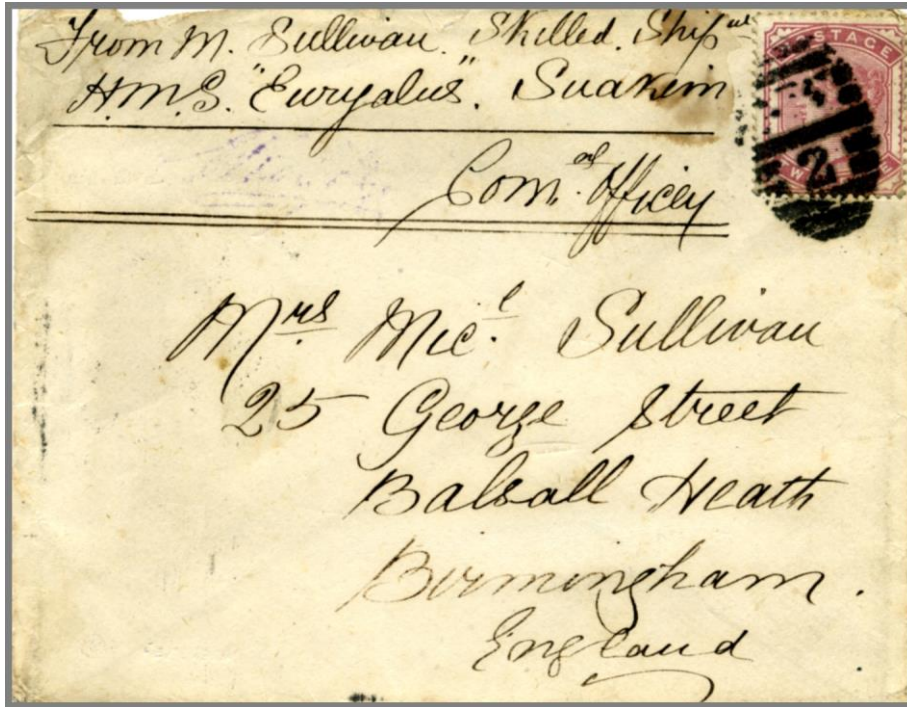


Figure 23A

Suakin, HMS *Euryalus* circa 4 February 1884. Michael Sullivan Skilled Shipwright
Two Penny Concession Rate letter, countersigned by Commander Ernest N. Rolfe. GB Twopence
Rose adhesive cancelled with the vertical oval obliterator letters FB over No. 2.
Backstamped BIRMINGHAM 19 February 1844.

HMS *Euryalus* was at Suakin from 17 December 1883 until 2 April 1884

Letter placed in the Navy bag and appears to have been picked up by the Orient Line SS *Iberia*, which reached Naples on 17 February 1884. The P&O *Shannon*, at Suez 5 Feb. 1884, was another possible carrier, however she went direct to London dropping off some mail at Plymouth on 19 February, and arriving at London on 20 February 1884.

Details of 1884 cover from member **Professor David R. Stirrups**, Dundee.

1884
HMS Himalaya



Figure 25 A

Gibraltar, HMS Himalaya 27 November 1884. Michael Sullivan Skilled Shipwright.

One Penny Concession Rate letter, countersigned by Lieutenant Reginald C. Prothero (RP).

GB One Penny lilac adhesive cancelled with Gibraltar Duplex. 27 November 1884, Barred A26.

Backstamped BIRMINGHAM cds 2 December 1884.

It would appear that the letter was carried on the P&O *Shannon*, out of Bombay 7 November 1884 and at Suez on 17 November 1884, which could mean that she was at Malta on 23 November and Gibraltar on 27 November, arriving at London 2 December 1884.

The above cover ties in with **Figure 25**, letter posted at Malta on 2 December 1884. The log of HMS *Himalaya* confirms she left Plymouth on 18 November 1884, which was the date that Michael Sullivan signed off HMS *Asia*, and signed on with HMS *Monarch*, which was at that time stationed at Alexandria.

HMS *Himalaya* was a troopship and was carrying troops and supplies out to Egypt. After leaving Plymouth on 18 November, the next stop was Portsmouth on 19 November, leaving 20 November, arrived at Gibraltar on 26 November, leaving next day 27 November at Malta 1 December, leaving on 3 December (see Figure 25, letter posted at Malta 2 December) finally arriving at Alexandria 7 December 1884, at which stage Michael Sullivan joined HMS *Monarch*.

This now explains why Michael Sullivan's service records do not show him serving on board HMS *Himalaya*. Likewise the letters posted aboard HMS *Seagull* and HMS *Humber* was whilst Michael Sullivan was in transit between commissions.

Details of 1885 cover from member (SPH) **Richard Wheatley**.
(Cover now in the Authors collection)

1885
HMS *Monarch*



Figure 27 A²

Alexandria, HMS *Monarch* c 2 February 1885. Michael Sullivan Skilled Shipwright.
One Penny concession Rate letter, countersigned by Lieutenant John A. Home (JH)*
GB one penny lilac adhesive cancelled with the barred vertical oval obliterator,
Letters FB within circle, at the Foreign Branch of the Chief Post Office London.
Backstamped BIRMINGHAM cds 19 February 1885.

HMS *Monarch* was at Alexandria from 19 November 1884 to 26 March 1885.

Letter placed in Navy bag, and carried on the P&O *Thames*, carrying the China mails,
left Suez 2 February 1885, arriving at London on 19 February 1885.

** It appears that Lieutenant Home was no longer serving on HMS *Monarch* at this date. A possibility is that it was signed by the Ship's Carpenter; John H. Bennett. As there is now some doubt in my mind that the initials are actually Home's, any suggestions to who in fact signed the letter would be very welcome.*

² Thierry Lallevee, Lugdunum Philatélie, Auction No. 63 September 2007, Lot 765

I can now illustrate details of the 1888 cover Figure 36.

1888
HMS *Griffon*

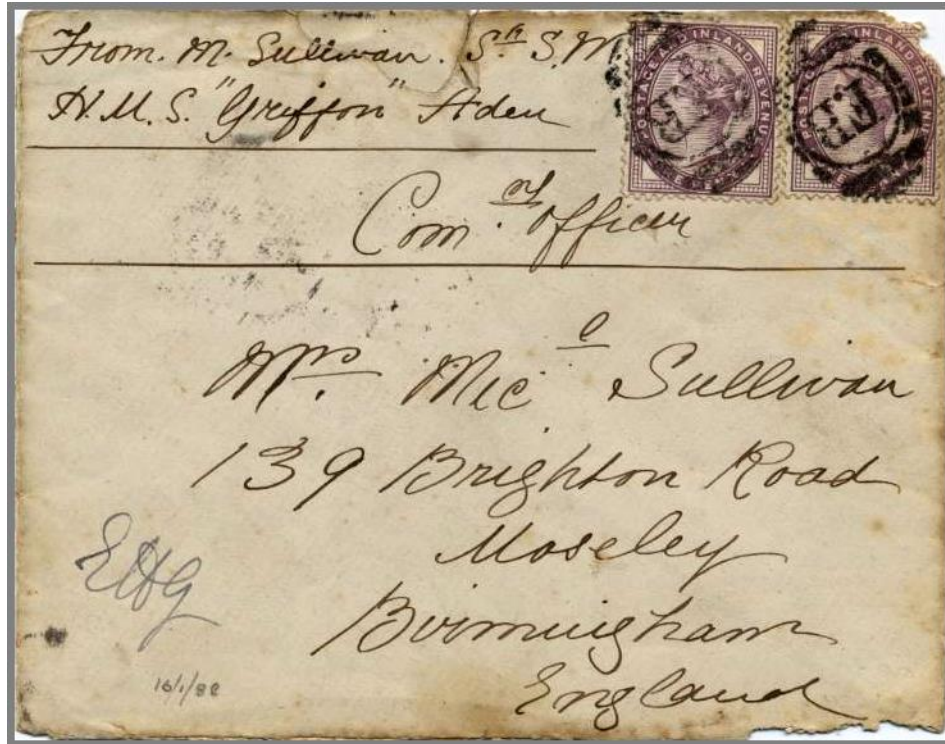


Figure 36³

Aden, HMS *Griffon* circa 4 January 1888. Michael Sullivan Skilled Shipwright

Two Penny Concession Rate letter, countersigned by Lieutenant Ernest H. Grafton (EHG).
GB Two One Penny lilac adhesives cancelled with the upright oval barred obliterator, letters F. B
within a circle (A&H No. 1556) applied at the Foreign Branch of the Chief Post Office, London.

Backstamped BIRMINGHAM cds 16 January 1888.

HMS *Griffon* was at Aden 22 December 1887 – 7 January 1888.

During this period, there were three P&O Line ships Homeward bound, picking up mail at Aden, P&O *Khedive* -27 December 1887, P&O *Nizam* -29 December 1887 and P&O *Malwa*- 5 January 1888. The mail direct to London aboard the P&O *Khedive* reached London on the 17 January 1888, whilst the mail via Brindisi arrived at Brindisi on 6 January 1888. The most likely route was the P&O *Malwa*, with the mail at Suez 9 January 1888, and at Brindisi on 13/14 January 1888.

³ Originally ex Chris Rainey,
Channel Islands Postal Bid Sales >dtomlin@cipostal bids.co.uk< Auction 31 March 2008

Letters were also received from **Robin Startup**, New Zealand. **Dean Mario**, Canada. **Louis Mima Bugeja**, Malta and **Michael Dobbs**.

Michael Dobbs raised a question relating to the meaning of the letters "I.C" in "I.C. Advocate" on page 22, unfortunately this could not be resolved, the handwriting on the copy of the service record, could have been either I.C. Ady or L.C.Adj.

Can anyone help solve this query please?

I look forward to any further information and comments, and if possible would like to hear from the owners of the covers which are illustrated and which currently are lacking dates and other facts. I am also willing to correspond with anyone who is interested in Concession Rate letters of the Royal Navy prior to 1911, when Australia joined the Imperial Postage Scheme.

Gerald J. Elliott

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March 2008.