The 1836 Anglo-French Postal Convention
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15/20 July 1836 to 31 May 1843.

I abbreviate as AF1836. Also AF1843, AF1833 for conventions of other years.

How Postal Treaties Influenced Postal Reforms
9th Postal History Symposium
Some Influences of AF1836 on Postal Reform

• The upper right corner as the position to place stamps.
• Internal rates became independent of distance.
• Britain subsequently adopted weight-based postal units.
• For some international letters, postage could be paid in full by sender; or in full by receiver; or to the frontier.
• Accountancy amounts had to be written legibly.
Sending letters to France from Overseas Places via Britain

Britain provided the shipping. Very often using the regular packet shipping service, which was expensive to operate. Britain wanted to receive postage fees.

The letter had to be addressed to someone in Britain. This person/agent paid the postage:
- Inwards postage to Britain.
- Outwards postage to France.
Letter addressed to an Agent

New York  30 Nov 1834,  to Bordeaux
**Forwarding Agent – Before AF1836**

The letter was mailed to an agent in London.

The agent paid the incoming postage, 4s9d.

The agent crossed out his name in the address panel, and mailed it paying postage of 3s6d.

4s9d incoming British postage. Triple rate ship letter via Plymouth.

3s6d postage from Britain to France triple letter. Prepaid by agent so red ink.

5 francs 7 décimes French rate, triple from Britain to Bordeaux.

New York 30 Nov 1834, to Bordeaux
The 1833 Convention permitted a letter to be addressed directly to France. Britain claimed the full postage from France. One penny was really worth about 1.06 décimes, and the French Post Office collected 13 décimes for each shilling. Only four examples known.

Postage due to Britain at top right 3s8d on double letter: 1s4d India Letter Gravesend; 2s4d to France.

French postal clerk’s working on reverse to convert to 47 décimes.
AF1836 Packet Letter

The top right corner was not used for postal markings by Britain or France. That space was reserved for accountancy amounts, here 3s7d. Colour of black or red indicated who owed whom this amount.

Letters carried by British packet ships were stamped with the framed *Packet Letter* mark. The accountancy rate depended on the route. 3s7d was the single rate for the South American packet.

French rate of 55 décimes = 43 décimes for Britain for 3s7d; 12 décimes French AF1836 rate from Calais to Nantes.
Another AF1836 Packet Letter

New Orleans, 2 May 1841 to Le Havre

One shilling accountancy at top right. The rate for the Cunard packets.

Packet Letter mark in red from about April 1840 on.
AF1836 Postage paid by sender

It was only possible for the sender to pay postage at places with British Post Offices, i.e. The British West Indies and British North America. Only packet letters could be prepaid – not ship letters.

Dissection at top left.
2s3d accountancy packet rate from Jamaica.
2s4d the French internal rate – twice 14 décimes Calais to Lyons.

28 at top right is written in red. Britain owed France 28 (pence/décimes) as already collected at origin.

P-D oval. Paid to Destination. Stamped at London.

Kingston, Jamaica   8 Dec 1841   to Lyons
AF1836 Ship Letter

For letters carried by private ship, the accountancy rate was 1s6d. The accountancy amount was 4s6d for this triple letter.

The accountancy rate did not depend on the British port of entry. Uniform rate independent of distance travelled in Britain.

Letter was stamped Bristol / Ship Letter at port of arrival. Also framed Ship Letter at London to indicate to France.

Endorsed “p(er) Panama”. The name of a ship, not the route.

Valparaiso, Chile 7 Jan 1839 to Bordeaux
AF1836 Ship Letter

Letter from Africa via Britain to France.

The framed *Ship Letter* mark was used on about half the letters up to 1839, but not from 1840.

By British ship from St Louis to Liverpool. Senegal was well-served by French ships at the time, so it was unusual for a British ship to call and carry mail.

Liverpool / Ship Letter mark on reverse.

St Louis, Senegal  25 June 1839  to Bordeaux
AF1836 India Letter

The India Letter concessional rate applied to letters from India. It was extended to many other origins including the Malay peninsula, Cape of Good Hope, the Australian colonies and parts of South America. The ship letter fee was a flat 4d, instead of 8d per unit.

India Letter / Gravesend

AF1836 accountancy rate of 1s6d, same as an ordinary ship letter. Britain did not give the India Letter concessional rate to France.

Penang, 6 July 1838, to St Peray
From Overseas via France to Britain
AF1836 Period

Accountancy amount, 27, written in black at top right.

By French naval ship from Rio to French naval port of Brest.

27 décimes French postage = 1 décime de mer (ship fee) + double 13 dec Brest to Calais.

British 3s11d = 2s3d due to France + double 10d France to London.
From France via Britain to Overseas
AF1836 Period

Carried by non-contract steamer *Great Western* from Bristol to New York. So a ship letter. AF1836 accountancy amount of 1 shilling in red.

Accountancy amount for a ship letter was 1s0d from France, yet 1s6d to France.


Paris, 25 August 1841 to New Orleans
AF1843 Procedures

The British rate system became based on weight from 5 Dec 1839.
The next Anglo-French postal convention calculated the accountancy amount by the
bulk weight of a group of letters subject to the same basic rate.

Individual accountancy amounts were no longer needed. Instead a stamp to indicate which rate. London applied Colonies &c Art 12. The bulk accountancy rate was 3s4d per ounce.

French rate 27 décimes. 10 décimes for ¼ of 3s4d due to Britain. French internal 1½ (tick) by 11 dec for 750-900 km. Fraction rounded up.

St Pierre, Martinique 11 Jan 1845 to Montfort
AF1836 affected other mail

AF1836 specified procedures for other mail not shown in this presentation.

- Mail between Britain and France.
- Mail between Britain and European countries which went via France.
- Mail from Britain via France to Marseilles and then by sea to other places. This affected mail to Mediterranean places, but also the mail via Alexandria and Suez to India and the Far East.
- Mail in the opposite direction from India or the Mediterranean via Marseilles to Britain.