

Copleston Family History

Cop(p)leston(e) Free Fronts

Live 1.1

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Purpose of this document

To bring together information about the
Cop(p)leston(e) Family.

VERSION HISTORY

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1 Free Fronts – What are they ?

WHY COLLECT FREE FRONTS?

What are Free Fronts?

Free fronts are items that have been cut from mail covers (envelopes), general from the pre-stamp period of 1699 up to the introduction of the universal penny post in May 1840. The origin of the Franking system was a decree of the Council of State in 1652, by which correspondence to and from Members of Parliament and of certain State Officials was permitted to pass free through the post. Despite this apparently restricted base, considerable numbers of letters were sent, not all legitimately. Widespread abuse and forgery led to the imposition of new rules in 1705, when a weight limit of 2ozs was imposed, and in 1715 when Members were required to write the whole address in their own handwriting. There is no evidence, however, that all the abuses ceased. Up to 1764, the privilege was a matter of custom and practice, but in that year by the Franking Act, it was given a statutory basis (forgers, incidentally, were liable to seven years' transportation). In addition to the hand-written frank, a 'free' hand stamp was applied to the cover. In 1764, an amending Act was passed to require a Member additionally to write, in his own handwriting, the name of the post town of despatch, and the date in words. By an Act of 1795, the maximum weight was reduced to 1oz, and among other restrictions, no Member was to send more than 10 nor receive more than 15 letters free a day. In 1837, there were 3,084,000 Parliamentary franked letters transmitted compare this with the 60 million 'penny black' postage stamps sold in 1840.



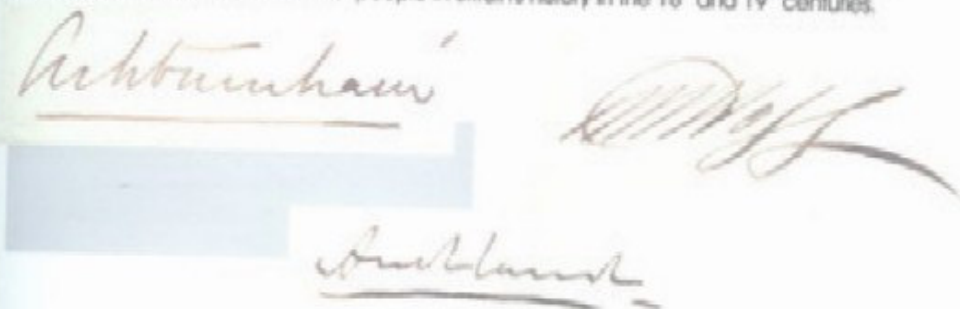
WHY COLLECT FREE FRONTS ?



Why Collect Free Fronts?

In the past, Free Fronts have not proven overly attractive to a large section of the philatelic collecting community presumably due in part to being cut from covers (entires) and without the original written message 'content', and in part due to a form of philatelic snobbery that feels collecting starts with adhesive stamps.

These attitudes belie a wealth of collecting interests: not least that each front contains the signature of arguably some of the most influential people in Britain's history in the 18th and 19th centuries.



In addition to the autographed signatures, examples of a wide range of 'Free' hand stamps are to be found. The letter's recipients are also often historically important. Associated genealogical material, family connections, coats of arms together with contemporary historical information etc. can all be used to bring individual fronts to life. (see reverse).

2 Edward Copleston – Bishop of Llandaff

BISHOP of LLANDAFF

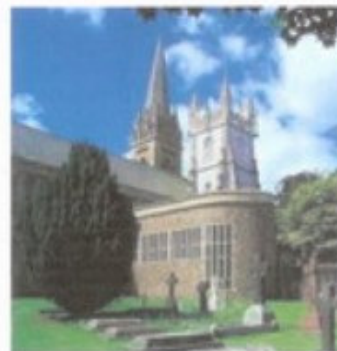
Edward Copleston (1776-1849), English bishop, was born at Offwell in Devonshire, and educated at Oxford. He was elected to a tutorship at Oriel College in 1797, and in 1800 was appointed vicar of St Mary Hall, Oxford. As Oxford Professor of Poetry (1802-1812) he gained a considerable reputation by his clever literary criticism and sound latinity. After holding the office of dean at Oriel for some years, he succeeded to the provostship in 1814, and owing largely to his influence the college reached a remarkable degree of prosperity during the first quarter of the 19th century. In 1826 he was appointed dean of Chester, and in the next year he was consecrated bishop of Llandaff. Here he gave his support to the new movement for church restoration in Wales, and during his occupation of the see more than twenty new churches were built in the diocese. The political problems of the time interested him greatly, and his writings include two able letters to Sir Robert Peel, one dealing with the Variable Standard of Value, the other with the Increase of Pauperism (Oxford, 1819).

The Bishop of Llandaff is the Ordinary of the Church in Wales Diocese of Llandaff.

The diocese covers most of the County of Glamorgan. The see is in the town of Llandaff in the northwest of the City of Cardiff where the seat is located at the Cathedral Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul which was founded in 560.



Llandaff cathedral with the new spire completed in 1867 - 38 years after the Bishop's letter to Norfolk.



Llandaff today.

3 Church Reform in the 1830s

Church Reform in the 1830s

The 1830s proved a testing time of the established Church in England.

The ecclesiastical reforms of the Whig government in the 1830s were motivated partly by their desire for progressive reform in line with Benthamite thinking, partly by the need to win the support of non-conformist voters and Irish radicals in Parliament. However, despite their desire to woo the dissenters, there was no move to disestablish the Anglican Church.

The position of the Church of England had been weakened by the concessions to non-conformists in 1828 with the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, by Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and by the 1832 Reform Act which the Church opposed. Norman Gash, *Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics*, says the Church as an institution was "politically unpopular, socially exclusive, administratively corrupt."

In 1833 the Whigs planned a Bill to create new sees to reflect population changes and to redistribute the wealth of the Church from the richest to the poorest bishoprics. This proposal was lost when the Whigs lost office in 1834.

Peel, the incoming Conservative Prime Minister, was concerned to strengthen the Church as a established institution and appointed an Ecclesiastical Commission to look into Church revenues. This Commission, which provided an opening for the progressive forces within the Anglican Church, suggested the same reforms as the Whigs - the creation of new sees and the redistribution of Church income. When the Whigs returned to office they passed the Established Church Act in 1836 which made the Ecclesiastical Commission permanent and empowered it to prepare reforms for parliamentary legislation and to implement them. Beginning with the equalisation of diocesan incomes, the Commission went on to deal with the question of pluralism.



It stands to reason that Bishop Free Franks should be relatively scarce - only 26 were able to exercise the free frank privilege at any one time - compared with the 700 or so other Peers entitled to the privilege.



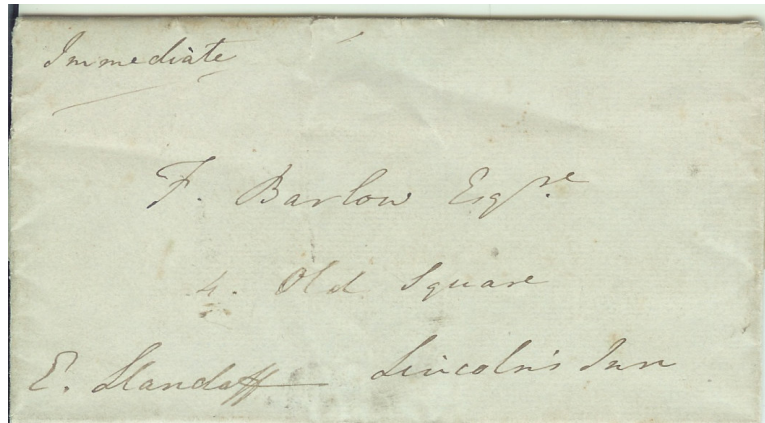
Anthony Trollope (1815-1882)
Trollope's 'Barchester' series exposed the confused and often corrupt conditions of the Church in the 19th century.

Bishops in the House of Lords

Bishops have always been members of the House of Lords. Originally they were summoned in their dual role as major landowners and as the king's counsellors. In more modern times, the presence of the Bishops became increasingly associated with the establishment of the Church of England, although in law the two are quite separate. The establishment of the Church of England rests upon Parliament's powers over its legislation and the requirement for the Sovereign as its Supreme Governor to be in communion with it. The Bishops and Archbishops now sit by virtue of the Bishops Act of 1878, which provides for the two Archbishops, the Bishops of London, Winchester and Durham, and the next 21 most senior diocesan Bishops to have a seat in the House of Lords. The Bishops are the only true ex officio members of the House of Lords, as they retire from the House on retirement from their see. When a vacancy arises, it is filled by the senior Diocesan Bishop without a seat, and the vacated See is placed at the foot of the list of those awaiting seats. Translation of a Bishop from one See to another does not affect his right to sit in the House of Lords.

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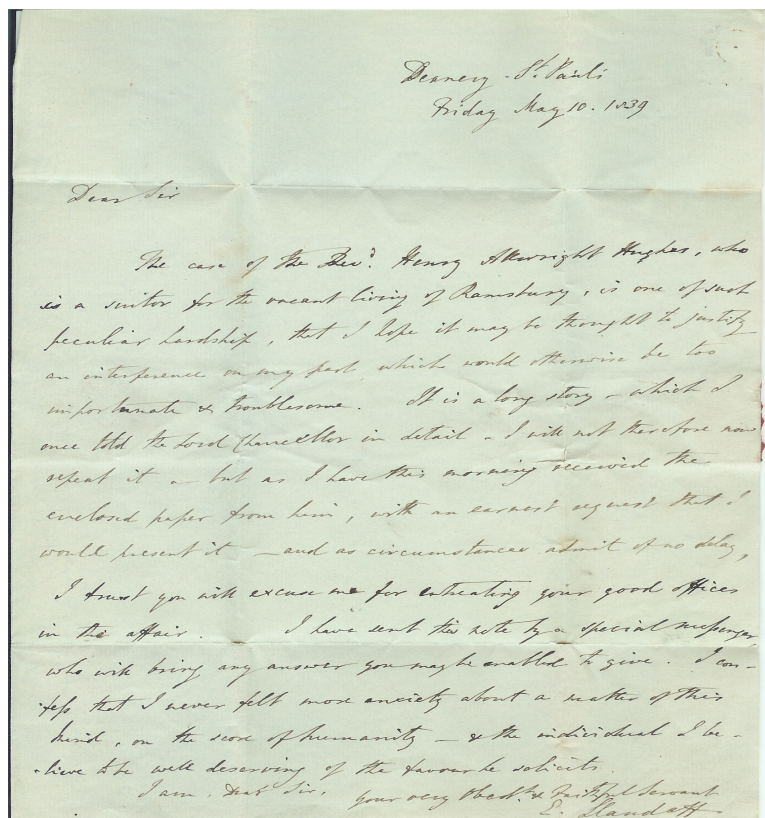
4 E. Llandaff Letter dated 1839



**The Bishops
letter addressed
to F Barlow Esq.**



The Bishops Seal



**The content of
the letter.**

5 E. Llandaff Letter dated 1839 - continued

Francis Barlow

Commissioner 1841 - 1886 Master in Lunacy 1842 - 1879

Francis Barlow was a close friend and political adviser of the Tory Lord Chancellor Lord Lyndhurst who appointed him to an honorary post on the Commission on 10.9.1841 and made him a Master in Lunacy (at £2.000 a year) in 1842. From evidence before a Select Committee in 1859/1860 it appears his only purpose on the Commission was to safeguard the interests of the Masters in Lunacy - He very rarely attended. The role of Masters in Lunacy is explained under Chancery Lunatics (1.3.4) and Chancery Visitors (5.4)

born 26.1.1799, died 1.2.1887

Eldest son of Rev. Francis George (or George Francis) Barlow (b.c. 1769, died 24.3.1850) Rector of Burgh, Suffolk from 1814 to his death.

Went to Charterhouse School. Admitted pens at Trinity Hall, Cambridge 23.3.1817. BA 1821. Fellow 1823-1828. MA 1824. Admitted Middle Temple 20.6.1820. Barrister 11.11.1825. An equity draftsman at 4 Old Square, Lincoln's Inn (1828-1843 LL). Barrister incorporated at Lincoln's Inn 1837.

Married a relative, Laura Sarah Mount, at Marylebone on 7.6.1828. (She was born 1802 and died 1867)

1827 (or earlier) to 1830 Secretary of Bankrupts to the Lord Chancellor (Lyndhurst was Lord Chancellor from 10.4.1827 to November 1830)

September 1836-1837. Lord Lyndhurst in Paris. "His friend Mr Francis Barlow fed him with such of the political news of the day as the newspapers did not supply" (Martin, T. 1883 p. 370)

1836 or **1837** to **1846** (or later) Secretary of Presentations to Lord Chancellors. (The Whig Lord Cottenham was Lord Chancellor from 1836 to 1841. Lyndhurst from 1841 to 1846 and Lord Cottenham again from 1846 to 1850).

October 1840: Lyndhurst wrote to Barlow from Bohemia asking him to act for him in a matter requiring political discretion. (Martin, T. 1883)

6 E. Llandaff Free Front dated 1829

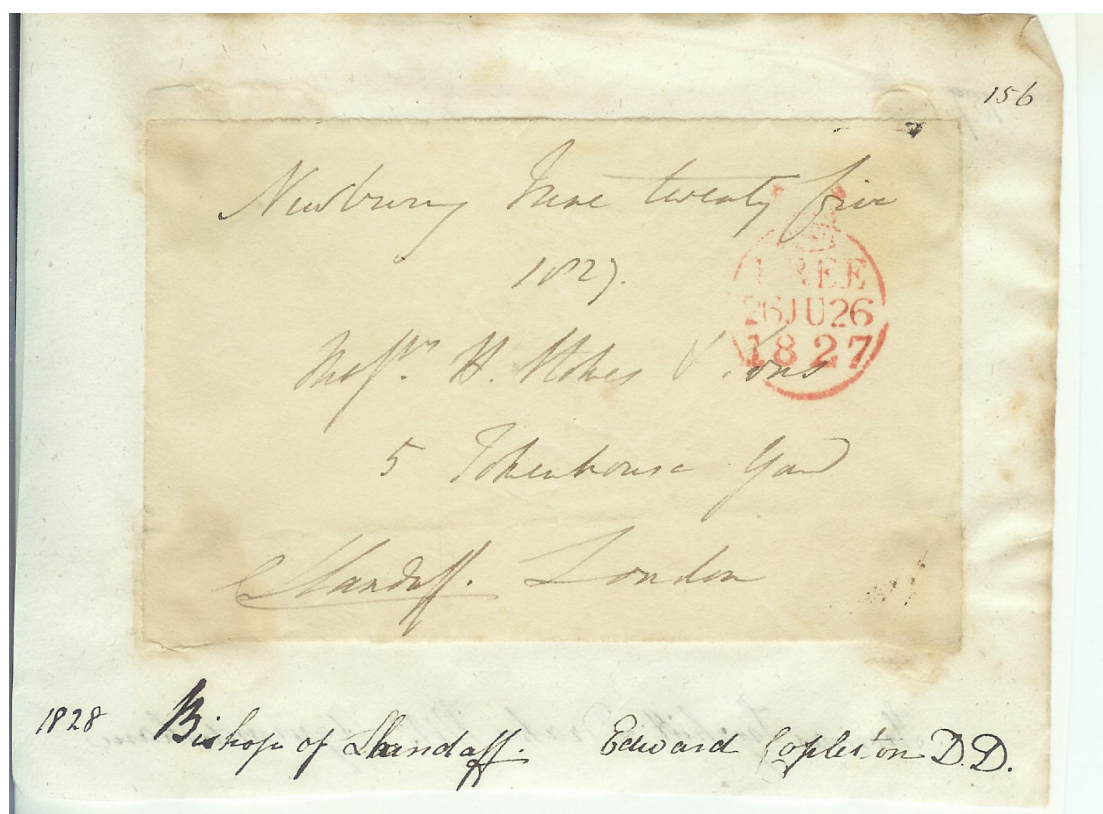


1829 addressed to Mrs Parke



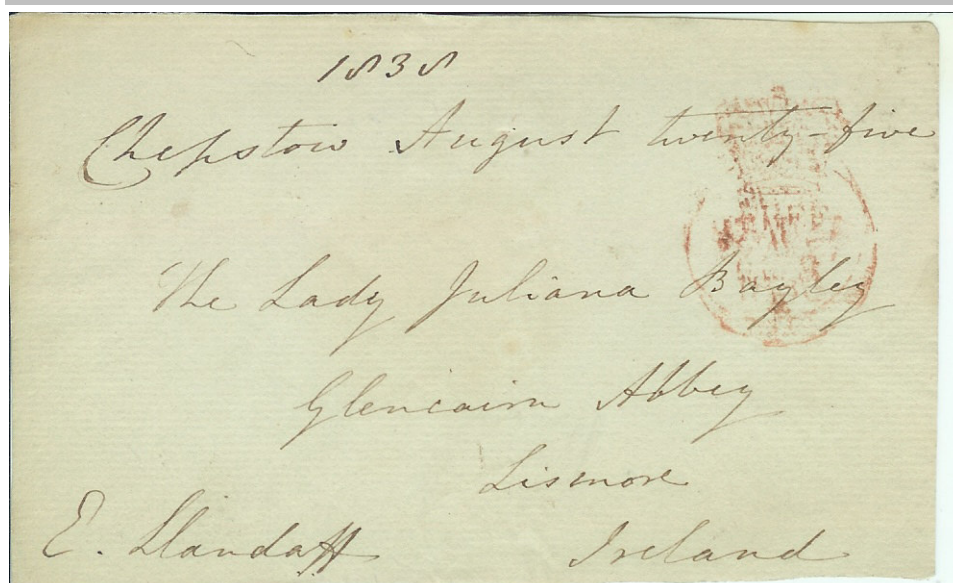
Part of the same letter.

7 E. Llandaff Free Front dated 1827



This Free Front was acquired from the USA in December 2006.

8 E. Llandaff Free Front dated 1835



This Free Front was acquired in December 2006.