

GWR SAILOR'S TIE-ON LUGGAGE LABELS

The broad design of these labels was first laid down by the Railway Clearing House (RCH) Superintendents Meeting held on 6 July 1892 which was later adopted by the GWR at its Superintendent Meeting held on 21 October 1892. The design subsequently appeared in the RCH Coaching Arrangements Book of 1902 and 1916 and probably other editions as well. Despite this early period, the GWR labels seen to date only have print dates ranging between 1922 and 1947.

The label consisted of brown card printed in red, except for the stamped number, which was in black. The label had a stock number of (733) and was approx. 204 mm x 60 mm, it consisted of two parts, one was tied to the sailor's canvas bag and the other torn off and given to the sailor who was required to present it when claiming his bag on arrival at the destination station. The reverse of the label required a standard luggage label to be pasted on each half, showing the station of destination.

At the time the RPS Handbook on GWR Luggage Labels (Issue 2) was published in 2003, just two stations of origin were known – Barry Docks and Birkenhead. Then in 2004 an example from Paddington emerged (**Figure 1**) which was a rather unusual departure station for a label, which was intended for use from seaport towns! A second example, which has a rather different typeface has also appeared (**Figure 2**), but because only the tare off half has survived, it is not possible to see the print information which only appeared on the tie-on half.

A further interesting example has just recently been discovered, this time from St.Ives, Cornwall (**Figure 3**), again a rather unusual departure station, for what was a remote, quiet fishing village. I wonder how many seamen arriving there by sea needed to complete their journey by rail? Certainly the GWR considered there was sufficient business to warrant producing a pre-printed label.

In addition a number of print runs of the Barry Docks label have been discovered (table 1). One such example had a print run of just 1,000, but with a serial number of 8786 (**Figure 4**). It is likely that this represented a top-up order which the printer continued the run of serial numbers.

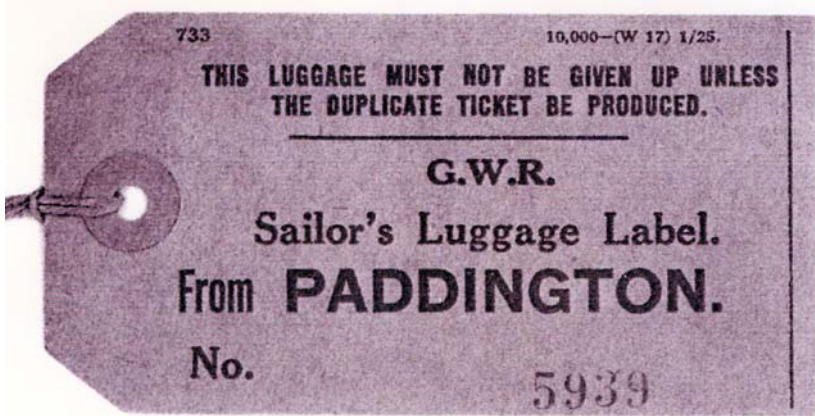


Figure 1

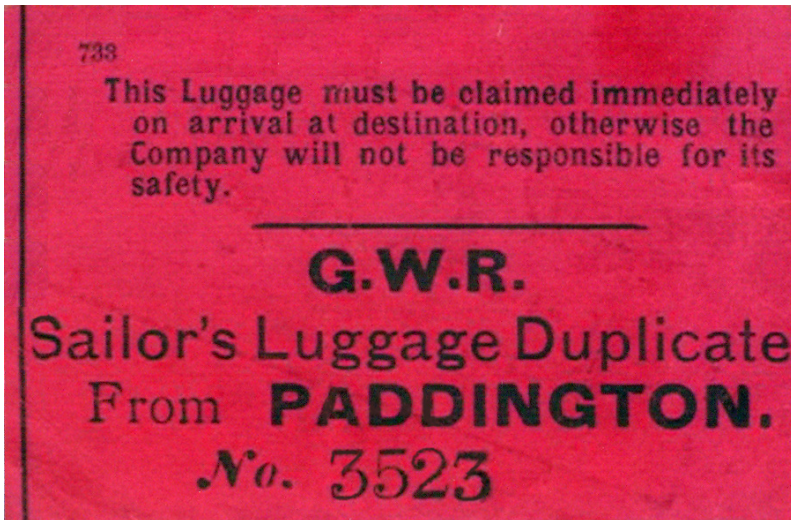


Figure 2



Figure 3

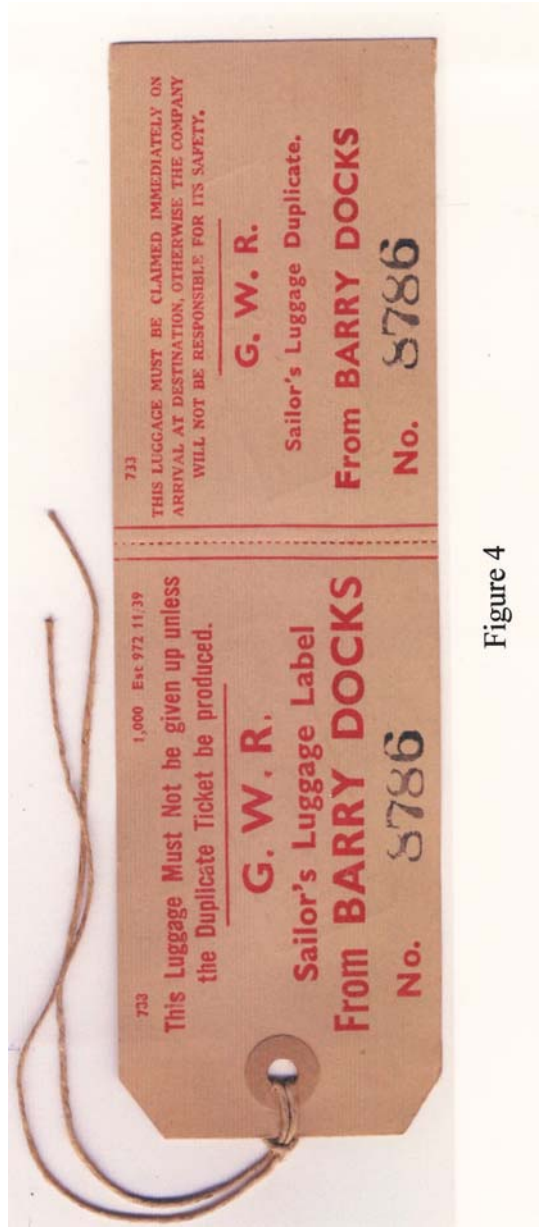


Figure 4

PORT OF ORIGIN	PRINT INFORMATION
Barry Docks	6,000-Est 707 11/37
	1,000-Est 972 11/39
	Est - 168 9/44
	500 - Est.589 10/47
Birkenhead	500 (W 17) 9/31
Paddington	10,000 – (W 17) 1/25
St. Ives, Cornwall	1,000 – (W 17) 5/22

Table 1

I am grateful to Brian Harding (266) for the provision of the illustrations for **Figures 3 and 4**. As an RCH recommendation, these labels were also used by other railway companies, including the Barry Railway (from Barry Docks to Birkenhead G.W.R. via Cardiff and Wrexham; from Barry Docks to Plymouth Millbay G.W.R. via Cardiff and Severn Tunnel; from (blank) to Aberayron G.W.R. via Cardiff, Pencader & Lampeter), London, Midland and Scottish Railway (from Liverpool Lime Street), London & North Eastern Railway (blank) and Severn & Wye Joint Railway (from Sharpness). Details of other examples would be most welcomed.

Michael Turner (93)