

The Stanley Howler
**STAMP
JOURNAL**

**Issue Number Fifteen
2008**



**4 years old
on the
9th July
2008**



THE STANLEY HOWLER



STAMP JOURNAL

DEAR READER,

I have been reading a new book from our mutual friend, it's called 'Nation'

Not Discworld as I'm sure you know. Never the less a fantastic book, one of the best.

We got a proof copy a few days ago and we all read it, and read it again, because it's one of 'those' books. You rush through it first captivated by the plot, then you stroll through it later, captivated by the writing.

There will be a stamp or two, Terry said we could.

There will be a sculpture or two, because when I outlined my idea, Terry said I must.

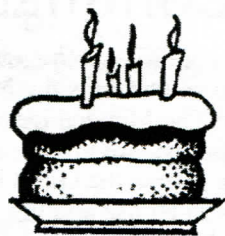
So I'm somewhat busy right now.

Happy fourth birthday, everyone.



Bernard.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DISCWORLD STAMPS



Four years of Discworld stamps. Four! Count them. We've all known marriages that haven't lasted as long. Not one of the 'big' anniversaries, but very respectable nonetheless.

Four years! Millionaire novelist Lord Archer got four years for perjury, though many said it should have been longer than that for crimes against the English language.

US Presidents, provided they don't get impeached or assassinated, get four years. Unless they're really bad, and then they might get another four.

So raise your glasses, ladies and gentlemen. Here's to being really bad and having another four years of fun and flatality.

Great Dates in Posting

18 July 1798: Publication of the Fourteenth Edition of the Post Office Regulations. Known to bibliophiles as the 'Tiny Post Book' because of a typographical error on page 127, so that the rules stated:

'Envelopes less than four inches (4") in length by two and three quarter inches (2 ¾") in width must be used.' The omission of the word 'not' led to the Broad Way Post Office being presented with more than two thousand letters measuring around one inch (1") by half an inch (½") before the edition could be recalled and corrected.

Extract from the Ankh-Morpork Post Office Handbook and Discworld Diary 2007
© Terry Pratchett

The Journal 15 Competition

The same handbook also recalls that a certain Mr CMOT Dibbler, a tradesperson of Ankh-Morpork, set up the first 'Mail Order' service on 16 May 1978, which was closed down again by Lord Vetinari on 17 May 1978. The competition is to write the copy for two items which CMOT might have offered for sale. The description for each item must be not more than 30 words, excluding size and price details which can be in addition, and illustrations will be accepted. Closing date for entries is September 29 2008.

Comings and Goings

In a bid to encourage tourism to Ankh-Morpork, the Merchants' Guild has sponsored two new stamps featuring The Dysk, to represent the cultural attractions of the city, and The Mended Drum, to attract the more 'adventurous' traveller. These two historic buildings are just the first to be pictured on stamps, which will be issued shortly. In due course the Guild has indicated that it wishes to sponsor stamps featuring the Royal Opera House and the Dwarf Bread Museum, so there should be something for everyone.

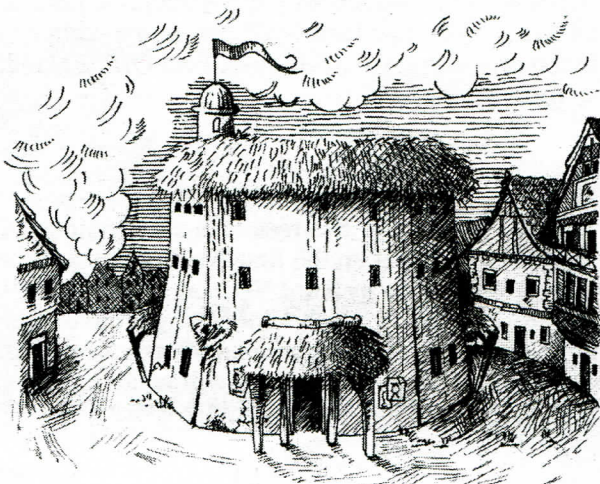
The Convention is sure to see us introducing a stamp or two. Perhaps something with a dragon. Or a turtle. Or both. And a first day cover is a racing certainty.

September sees the publication of The Folklore of Discworld, and we hope to bring out a couple of stamps with a folkloric theme, probably with a linked commemorative cover. In October new stamps will be issued sponsored by the Guilds of Seamstresses (the 'fourpenny horizontal') and the Assassins. The current Assassin stamp will be retired at that time, as will the two Thieves' Guild stamps. And soon after that we can all look forward to another Hogswatch stamp!

Over the course of the next year a complete range of Postage Due stamps will be introduced but, appropriately, they will not be available for purchase. Most will appear as extra treats in LBEs the 1p will be in the special Convention LBE or will be free with issues of the Journal. The 5p will feature in the Special 5th Anniversary LBE in July 2009 how's that for planning ahead?

The Proof of the Pudding

The more observant among you will have noticed that we are issuing fewer proof sheet designs. We were aware of a sharp decline in interest in proof sheets and responded accordingly, but we'll still release them from time to time when we think they're appropriate. And we thought that one for the new Postage Due stamps would be appropriate. It will cost £7.50 and, as usual, it can be ordered through the website - you will need to quote the new password:



PUDDING

NEWS FROM 'THE GREEN CABBAGE TRADING POST'

The Ankh-Morpork Consulate has installed its own Clax tower and has written to prominent merchants in Ankh-Morpork with a special introductory offer. The card and special stamp entitles the holder to \$1 worth of Clax message service. One such letter has been addressed to Mr A Parker, Ankh-Morpork's celebrated greengrocer, and this letter is the new Green Cabbage Trading Good. There will be 100 produced, and as usual they can be redeemed with 25 Green Cabbage Trading stamps or 24 plus one (only one) of the free stamps on the collection card.

Two new items in the 'return postcard' series will be introduced very soon.

Visitors to the website will find an updated form with trading rates for the new Sto Helit, Djelibeybi and Tsort stamps.

To save you the effort of running to your computer screen, they are:

16 Sto Helit 1p

10 Sto Helit 4p

10 Djelibeybi 1t

4 Djelibeybi 5pt

10 Tsort 1D

are all equivalent to 1 trading stamp

The outgoing Sto Helit 5p and Sto Lat 1p will only be accepted in exchange until 1 August 2008.



The new Clax Tower in downtown Wincanton

BACK TO BASICS

Those of you who have been with us from the start will recall that, back in the early days of Discworld stamps, we produced the Penny Patrician civic proof sheet on an ancient letterpress, using techniques that Gutenberg and Caxton would have recognized. It seemed the most appropriate method of producing a stamp, a system that would most closely replicate what Messrs Teemer and Spools would have been able to achieve.

But our stamp designs called for more colour and more complexity than could be achieved with letterpress alone, so other processes were used. At the time of its invention, offset litho was a quantum leap forward in the technology of print, but it seemed reasonable to assume that the clever chaps at Teemer and Spools would have made the leap at some stage. Litho produces excellent results, and in the early days when we had only a handful of designs, the large print runs that most litho printers insist on were exactly what we needed for filling LBEs.

Times have changed having started with six designs, at time of writing we now have 43 different stamps for sale, and we don't need huge quantities of every stamp to stuff LBEs with. The general consensus seems to be that stamps should have a relatively short shelf life, but offset litho is fiendishly uneconomical unless large runs of stamps are required. So with increasing regularity we have been resorting to digital printing.

Gentle reader, don't imagine that this is carried out on the sort of printer that you've got connected to your PC. Oh deary me no. These are fearsome beasts that would eat your humble inkjet for breakfast and still need three Shredded Wheat. But at core they use a technology that would baffle the craftsmen of Teemer and Spools as comprehensively as the theory of Schrödinger's Cat would a troll on a warm afternoon.

In 18 months or so, the film version of 'Going Postal' will hit our TV screens, exposing millions of fortunate new viewers to the ethos of Moist von Lipwig's Post Office, and to the bizarre idea that little bits of sticky paper can be made to represent so many things. They can be a form of money, a link to a loved one, a bite-size geography lesson, a small work of art. Postally, there are interesting times ahead but in a good way and frankly it's given us the impetus to shake up our ideas.

So we're going right back to basics for a range of stamps. We've discovered a letterpress printer here in Somerset who still practises the arcane art, and a couple of enthusiastic illustrators and graphic artists who can design with the needs of letterpress in mind. Our printer fellow has already come up with some cunning plans for combining litho printing with letterpress, which means that we can have a tinted background and possibly even a form of watermark throughout the range of stamps probably five in the first tranche.

Will we abandon digital printing? Absolutely not. It has incomparable strengths, and we would be daft to discard such a versatile tool.

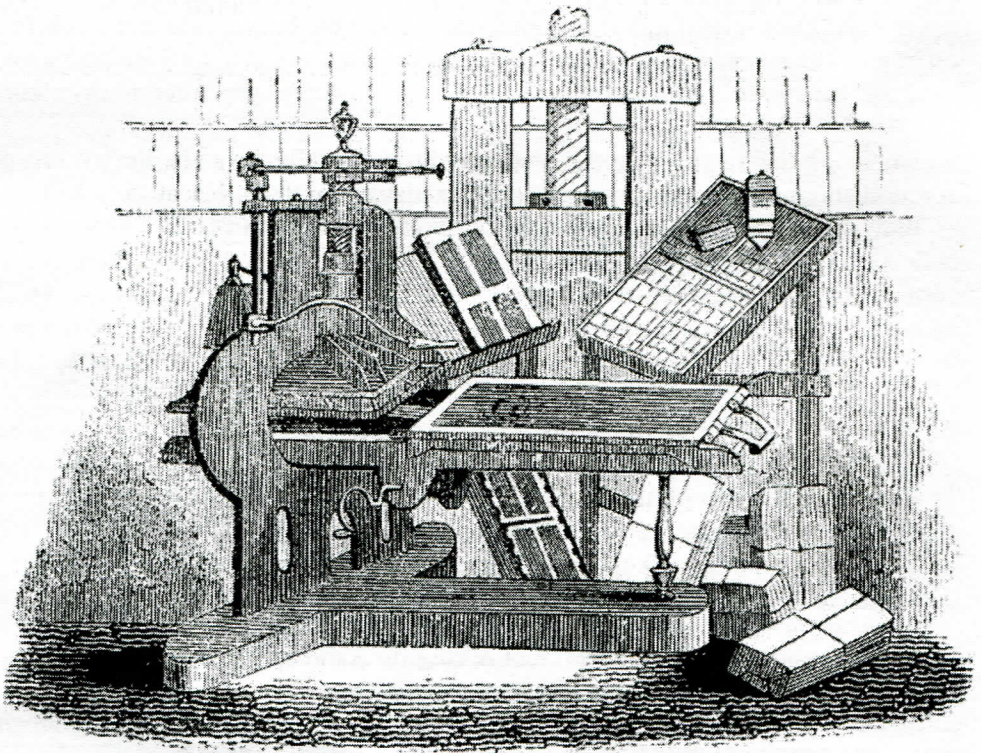
Why then are we so excited about going back to letterpress?

For a start, the development of letterpress print has probably had more impact on the human race than any other invention since the wheel.

Secondly, because it is a craft that is part of the stamp heritage and should be treasured and supported whenever possible.

Thirdly, because it sets us a whole new range of challenges, which after four years of stamp production is rather thrilling.

And finally, because those serious chaps at Teemer and Spools would approve.



Auction Price-Watch

By Gavin Arnold

Over the last few months there have been a number of new collectors seeking advice on buying stamps and sports so I've decided to devote this issue to the new flatalists looking to get a good collection up and running as fast as possible.

As can be seen from the prices give in the table - the good news all round is that average prices are beginning to settle again with a good assortment of stamps, covers, LBEs and specials finding their way onto the internet auction pages, but you need to be careful. Many of the prices are an average and individual prices can vary widely – so take care when bidding. Examples of the range of prices at the moment are the Samedi Nuit Mort stamp that fetched anything between £2.19 and £12.50 and the Patrician Racing Sport with prices ranging from £12.11 to £91.63!

A good rule of thumb is that the newer the Sport or special the higher the price, although having said that the rarer bits will always fetch a high price. Unless you really must have it let the first few go to those with the money. At some point or other that elusive stamp will come up for sale again, even if it's a year later as with the 2006 Convention stamps (at long last! – that's another gap filled in my album).

So where are the bargains for the new collector? It really has to be the job lots of assorted stamps that are becoming a regular feature on 'the other place'. Bundles of 30 to 40 assorted stamps are selling for anything between £10 and £25 (a starter collection of 75+ stamps went for £19.99). The same also applies to those very collectable covers and empty LBEs you need for your complete collection. An added bonus of buying in bulk is that you only pay one lot of postage (which in itself is a massive saving). All in all a very inexpensive way of filling those gaps.

As always though it's best to check out the trading thread on the Discworld Stamps forum before heading to 'the other place'. Many collectors give first refusal on the Trading thread before putting stamps up for auction. It's also worth asking if anyone has any spare retired commons, most have the odd few lurking in the back of some forlorn stock book that they forget to list and if you ask nicely and tell them you're new you never know.

Finally, a number of people have been asking for a more comprehensive price guide than the select few space allows for here and for the next Journal I intend to ask the editor very nicely (failing that beg and/or bribe) for a double sided insert giving all the average prices for the first nine months of 2008. Given that there have been nearly 700 lots so far this year I'd better get started.....

Discworld Stamps Resale Price Guide
 (~ based on average auction prices in April, May and June 2008)

Item	Average Price (£)	Number Sold
1 Bonk Werewolf Sport (various phases)	5	9.75
\$5 Genua Sport	3	12.00
100 Bonk Sport	2	7.85
Samedi Nuit Mort	7	5.23
Stanley Gibbons 150th Anniversary Stamp	2	55.00
Widow's Mite Stamp Booklet	3	22.02
Rat Stamp Candle	2	42.00
Blue Triangle	2	21.51
Purple Triangle	2	12.99
Jamboree Green Triangle	2	7.25
Patrician Racing Sport	6	48.93
Penny Black Civic	2	3.50
Penny Black Gris	2	3.85
Penny Red Patrician	2	25.76
Stampex FDC	2	3.91
Mis-Perforated 2p Seamstress & Valentines 2008 LBE	3	6.07
50 Wol Klatch Sport	2	5.58
1b Bad Blintz Sport	2	2.85
5 Ptascp - Djelibeybi (Border Sport + joined)	2	6.75
April Shower 2005 LBE (empty)	2	1.55
Assassins Postage Paid Zombie	5	6.75
Discworld 2006 Convention Stamp	2	12.00
Mrs. Parker's Opera Ticket envelope	3	36.99
Dr Zelter's Junk Mail Envelope	2	38.00
Blue Bernard Sheet	3	20.03
Troll Postcard	2	33.33
Going Postal FDC	4	8.45
Penny Patrician Civic Proof Sheet	1	33.18

(As always prices do not include postage (which can add up to £5.00 per item!))

Postage Due

In the days before postage stamps, the recipient of a letter would normally be expected to pay the cost of delivery on receipt. A letter sent from Ghent to Bruges in 1533 is believed to be the oldest-known cover with a postal marking it carries a bold 'P' on the front showing that postage was due.

The problem of how to deal with unpaid or inadequately paid postage became more of a problem when pre-paid postage stamps were introduced, as the decision on which value stamp should be used was more often in the hands of the customer. Some countries opted for the approach of returning the letter to the sender, but this had obvious disadvantages for all concerned. In the US, the letter would be held at the post office and the recipient would be notified that he needed to pay the balance. In other countries, the underpayment would be marked on the letter and the postman would be expected to collect payment from the addressee before handing it over.

This last system was unfortunately open to abuse by unscrupulous clerks and mail carriers, who could write on a letter any amount they thought they could get away with. It would be invidious to suggest that France had a particular problem with dishonest postmen, but certainly theirs was the first postal service to devise an official 'Postage Due' stamp, starting with a 10 centime. Introduced in 1859, the scheme meant that postmasters could tally cash collected with postage due stamps issued, and cut out any creative accounting on the part of postmen.

By its very nature, postage due stamps are not expected to travel beyond the national borders of the issuing postal service, so they rarely bear the name of the country, and they are usually quite simple in design, with a prominent numeral indicating the value. There would usually be a variety of values to cover all circumstances.

Surprisingly, it is not unknown for countries to imitate the designs of others. When Australia first introduced postage due stamps in 1902, they bore a startling resemblance to those issued by the USA in 1879. The 'U' and the 'S' had been replaced by images of a kangaroo and an emu.

Fortunately, the Ankh-Morpork Post Office has not felt it necessary to resort to this underhand approach, and any similarity with a Royal Mail postage due stamp of the late 1950s is entirely coincidental.



From Potter to Potter

By Darren Hill

Authors and the world of literature in general have a long association with British postage stamps. From literary classics such as the Lord of the Rings and Sherlock Holmes to classic authors such as Shakespeare (twice), Dickens and Hardy, the written word has been a mainstay of designs and source material for stamps for over 40 years. The appeal is not just from the adult classics though - it ranges from poetry (both Burns and Tennyson have featured on stamps) right through to children's work such as "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" and, of course, there is Potter.

I refer of course to Beatrix Potter, whose life and works featured in the 1993 prestige stamp book "The Story of Beatrix Potter". Peter Rabbit also appeared in the 1st class "Greetings Stamps" issued the same year, in the theme of Children's Illustrators. This also featured nine other much loved children's characters and books, including Rupert the Bear, Dennis the Menace, the BFG, Just William, The Snowman, Wind in the Willows, Alice, Aladdin and Treasure Island.

Fantasy novels also have their share of attention; including an issue all of their own in July 1998 entitled "Magical Worlds". The set depicted characters from children's books, and marked the centenaries of both the death of Lewis Carroll and the birth of C. S. Lewis. Indeed one producer even managed to issue a special first day cover, signed by a certain Mr Pratchett.

Not to be outdone, female authors have their fair share too. The first set dedicated to such a lady was the issue featuring Jane Austen in October 1975. Indeed she was only the second woman to have a stamp issue dedicated to her, following on from the Florence Nightingale issue in 1970. But this was followed up 5 years later by the July 1980 "Famous People" issue, featuring not one but four famous Victorian lady authors (Charlotte and Emily Brontë, George Eliot and Mrs Gaskell).

But the next female author to have her creation grace an issue had to wait until last July, when the fantasy novels of J. K. Rowling featured in the popular "Harry Potter" issue. These seven stamps depicted the front covers of the books in the series (plus a mini-sheet with the Hogwarts crest and those of the four school houses), and were issued to celebrate the release of the final book, "The Deathly Hallows". Alongside other recent Potter issues from the Isle of Man, Australian, Taiwanese and French Post Offices (not to mention various illegal unauthorised stamps from various countries), these modern stamps can be seen to be the continuation of a fine tradition of literary and philatelic association.



*Dr Darren Hill & Agatha Christie
discussing stamps and hinges
5th Dec 1926*

Competition Results

As you may recall, the competition set in Journal 14 was to... well, let James Page explain it:

I declare that I have understood the rules regarding this competition and do duly stand by them. I state that the rules of the said competition are that you would like us (the readers) to submit or suggest an alternative motto **WHICH MUST BE NOT MORE THAN 20 WORDS**. And that 20 must include qualifications, small print or any other diversionary tactic. In order to comply with the aforementioned rules and regulations I have reread the rules and regulations which you have mentioned in the journal where you mentioned the competition and the aforementioned rules and regulations regarding the competition, and I have decided to submit this motto that is not more than 20 words and therefore is not in breach of the rules and regulations that were stipulated by you. This preamble is not deemed to be a diversionary tactic, more an acceptance of the fact that I recognise the need to read and follow the previously mentioned rules and regulations of the competition mentioned in the latest journal to enter my small suggestion for your perusal.'

Well I'm glad that's clear then. All things considered it was therefore surprising and very welcome - that so many newcomers joined in with this competition, and more entries from more countries than ever before. Also surprising was the tone of the contributions. We send out a lot of post. And I do mean a lot. But it is surprisingly rare for anything we send to go missing. Admittedly we do take a lot of care that everything is well packaged and clearly addressed, but are we unusually lucky to have such a low rate of attrition? It would appear so, because almost everyone who entered the Journal 14 competition seemed to have an unusually jaundiced view of the Postal Services.

Julian Fagandini with his 'motto-ivational vision statement' is a prime example:

The POST delivery service does exactly what it says on the tin. Guaranteed delivery LATER than you want it.

Per Stalby from Sweden, who admittedly has more postal problems than most, offered:

Ransom letter or a bill, Usually deliver it we will
Maybe at the wrong door, But who could ask for more?

Meanwhile in Canada, Heather Avigdor has a more sympathetic approach to the brave men and women of the postal delivery service:

Only incorrect postal codes or poor handwriting or strike action can stay these messengers about their duty.

Not content with organising the stamp update, Helen Hill was busy coming up with:
Through rain, through snow, through hail and more
We'll bring the message to your door*
*When we want to

One of several Journal competition virgins, Steve Tandy seems to have got the hang of it straight away, with his deliciously laconic offering:

Expecting a letter? Then we're right up your alley. Or will be when the weather is more clement.

Nigel Rogers, who is too clever by three-quarters, suggested:

A Full and Franked Exchange

His covering letter from Messrs Starchy & Starchy, Ethical Advertisers, is sadly too long for inclusion here. You'll just have to take my word for it, it was very funny.

Larry Hart suggested:

According to the Post Office Computer System (POX) the official Post Office Motto is: +++out on delivery error+++

David Waskett is another with a jaded view of the post office. This was one of four equally cynical suggestions:

Alas, poor envelope, entrusted to our care your fate waits in our hands, to deliver at our leisure.

Su, Danny and Josh Hyam discovered that the old DHL campaign 'Ain't No Mountain High Enough' came to exactly 20 words, but their more original offerings were rather pithier, such as:

The Postal Service less hassle than doing it yourself (9)

Michael Collard's suggestions included the rather more optimistic:

Dogs shall fear the tread of the determined messenger of post

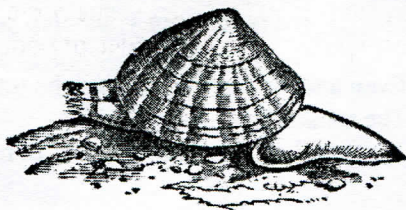
And one which we may adopt:

All post delivered or cunning excuse guaranteed

Martyn Ransom gets extra credit for actually mentioning Ankh-Morpork. His suggestions include:

Stamp and deliver, your money or your wife no package too valuable or troublesome for the Ankh-Morpork Post Office

And: From Ramtop to Rimfall, the Disc is our bivalve mollusc



Jonty Hird got even more specific:

Hail, rain, snow and Mrs Cake
Bandits, dogs and dragons left in our wake
Endured, for Post Office customers' sake

Jean Tillson in the USA believes that rain and snow are the least of the postman's problems:

Neither snails nor toads nor snakes nor mongeese nor unknown maritime creatures can stay these messengers about their duty

The finalists are:

James Page for his 'small suggestion'.

Buggerin' our backs for bloomin' years for pieces of bloomin' paper.
Bugger this for a game of posties.

Brian Delaney in New Zealand for:

Mail Delivery is Dependable. Your Postman is Reliable.
Your Dog is Non-insurable

The Hyams for a motto that was certain to appeal to us:

If you don't like the service, at least the stamps look good

Nigel Rogers, for:

Pushing the Envelope

Ian David Petrie for:

Don't Mess With Us, We Know Where You Live

Darren Hill for:

Why take a chance on losing your mail? Give it to us and be sure!

Heather Avigdor for:

A lways
M ostly
P ossibly
O n time

But the one that gave us the biggest laugh came from Narelle Cairns in Australia:

Ico pedis cum volo! Ico pedis cum volo!

Even adding the translation, the total word count comes to just 16 words.

The translation? Oh yes, it's:

Kick it to me! Kick it to me!

Your Editorial Team

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Sub-editor	Hilary Daniels
Stamp Update	Helen Hill
Historical Consultant	Darren Hill
Business Editor	Gavin Arnold
Art Editor	Bernard Pearson
Oldest Person Here	Isobel Pearson

Diary Dates:

Monday 11 Saturday 16 August

Arkle Theatre Company will be performing Terry Pratchett's Wyrd Sisters as part of this year's Edinburgh Fringe. Find them at Venue 110.

Thursday 4 Saturday 6 September

The Point 303 Theatre Company is presenting Terry Pratchett's Night Watch at The Studio, Questors Theatre in Ealing, London.

Wednesday 15 October

Any flatalists in the vicinity of Watton, Norfolk in October are welcome to attend a meeting of the Watton Society, at which David Waskett will be giving a talk and Power Point show on Discworld stamps. The meeting will start with an AGM at 7.30pm, so the talk is likely to begin at 8pm, and the meeting is at the Watton Christian Community Centre (next to the Methodist Church), High Street, Watton, IP25 6BG.

Number



2008

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