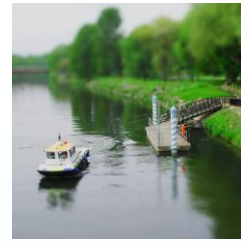




River Dee Ferry Mail



The River Dee rises as a trickle on the slopes of Plynlimon in the west of Wales. It flows into Lake Bala, past the small town of Corwen and through Llangollen before forming the boundary between Wales and England for a few miles. Its estuary used to extend right up to the City of Chester which was a port in Roman and medieval times. Now its lower reaches are a managed dredged channel before entering the present day much silted up estuary lying to the west of the Wirral peninsular.

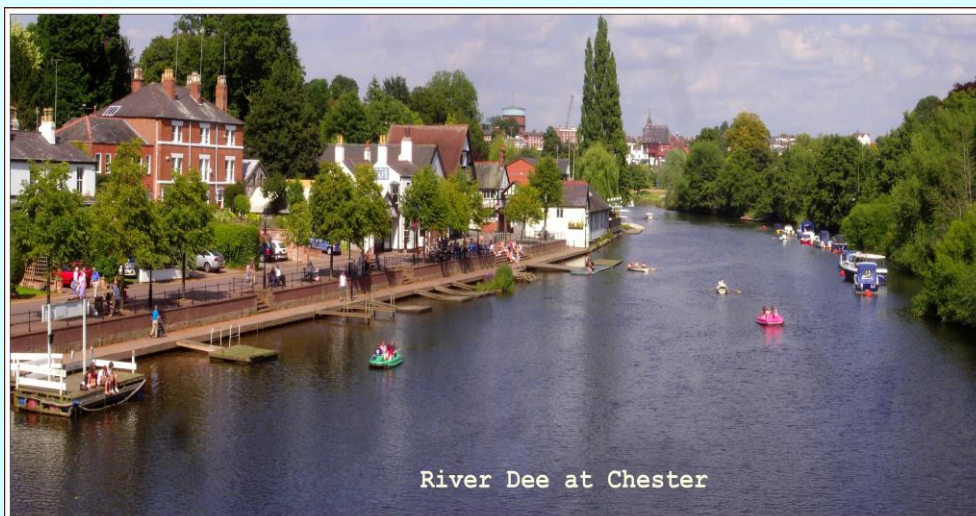
Between 1927 and 1939 a local mail service of sorts operated on the River Dee between the villages of Overton and Bangor-is-y-Coed to the City of Chester. Originally it was a cash-in-hand operation, with no stamps or franking used, but after the Inland Revenue took an interest some stamps were hastily printed. There was just one rate, 1½d for any item. The stamps were in blue, but an apparent printing error has thrown up some mysterious pink stamps. Sometimes the service was taken advantage of, with a basket of fruit or even a live chicken, with stamp attached, sent as mail. A pig was refused even though it was clearly stamped (if you lifted its curly tail). With the outbreak of war in 1939 the service ceased, but was resurrected in 2004. A small motorized ferry boat travels this 10 mile stretch of water twice a day in each direction. Up to 12 passengers can be carried.



The old bridge between Holt and Farndon

The service now it starts at Farndon and crosses over to the Welsh bank to Holt, before continuing downstream and zigzagging between England and Wales to moorings at Churton and Almere farm. It continues onto the villages of Aldford and Eccleston before arriving at Chester. Mail can be posted at each of the moorings in a small locked postbox. The ferryman collects these and franks the stamps. Stamps can be bought at a few shops near the river. The cost of the revived service has remained at 25p for letters and 55p for packets. Provisions whether animal or vegetable can no longer be sent. Items can be collected in person (by the more patient or those who just enjoy a relaxing

wait on the riverbank) direct from the ferryman, but if going further afield the mail must have full Post Office stamps as well. The ferryman posts ongoing mail at Chester or Farndon.



River Dee at Chester

Of course, none of this is true!