

Following the publication of my comments on Lew Ludlow's hammer analysis of N-57 in "The R.P.O. Cowcatcher" column of *BNA Topics* Vol 50/5, I have received additional information from Bill Robinson, Ross Gray, Don Wilson, and Douglas Campbell. With their assistance I now have data on over 80 dated copies and consequently must correct and/or amend my earlier conclusions and suppositions as follows:-

* Previously having concluded that there were at least four hammers, I have reexamined enlarged copies of more than fifty of the strikes and found that both copies of my hammer III were slightly distorted and, as such, do not provide a firm basis for my earlier conclusion. In addition, the condition of most strikes of indicia A deteriorates significantly from mid 1902 onwards, making accurate measurements of chordal dimensions rather difficult.

* The presence or absence of the dot 'Y•T' appears spurious, depending on the quality of the strike and, on the basis of arguments previously propounded by Lew, I must share his view that a dot is insufficient evidence in itself to positively identify a hammer.

* Don Wilson has not been able to produce evidence of indicia B; one cover with a double strike of indicia D resembles a B and the date coincides with that reported for indicia B.

* Having taken the factors above into account, all of the strikes known to me fall clearly into three hammers with indicia A, C, and D respectively and I am unable to support Lew's conclusion that his hammer II appears with all three indicia.

* Strikes of the reversed D indicia are dated between JY 27 02 and NO 21 02. Normal D strikes exist for JY 6 02 and JA 9 03, thus defining boundaries for the period of use of the reversed D.

* Meyerson reported (*BNA Topics* May 62) indicia C in use from DE 15 99 to OC 25 02 and those dates have been perpetuated more recently in works by Pratt and Kidd/Cockrill. Could it be that a poor strike of the reversed D was mistaken as a C? It seems more than coincidental that the latter date falls within the period of the reversed D. Both of the August 99 dated copies of indicia C have the date and indicia slugs inverted. I suggest that the scarcity of known copies of indicia C might indicate that the hammer was destroyed in the wreck of January 27th 1900, resulting in the introduction of N-60 (N.&W. RAILWAY.T.P.O./NEWF'D) some six months later.

* Investigation of the use of the three indicia identifies that A and D were used on all three sections of the line and on mail travelling in both directions. This indicates that the hammers were associated with the mail car, rather than with the mail clerks as was postulated previously.

In conclusion, may I thank Messrs. Campbell, Gray, Robinson, and Wilson for their invaluable contribution to this study. There is clearly scope for further analysis. Herewith a summary of my findings . . .

("Chordal Dimensions" and "Incidence of dated copies" on next page.)

