

THE STORY BEHIND THE COVER

It is surprising how much information can be uncovered with a little bit of research. This piece of correspondence, printed on thin card in 1943 during the Second World War, was originally acquired because of the George VI cypher printed by a Universal Franking Machine.

Just out of interest, research into the senders Smith & Walton Ltd revealed the following:

They were paint manufacturers based in Haltwhistle, Northumberland, away from any risk of bombing.



They developed their output to support the war effort, and along with their usual range of paints, they devised a very clever range of products.

- Anti-glint paints, to prevent reflection from glass.
- Killyre fire resistant paint for rafters, to help limit damage caused by incendiary bombs.
- Blackout paint for windows.
- White kerb paint and road marking paint to improve road safety during the blackouts.
- Superfine varnish for windows, to prevent bomb shattered glass from flying.
- Hadrian reflex paint for use by factories. Using this, light bulbs were painted orange and windows were painted blue. During the day, light could enter through the windows. At night the orange light from the bulbs was filtered out by the blue of the windows, providing a complete blackout.
- Luminous paint for lamp posts, road signs etc.
- Camouflage paints, manufactured to Government specifications, for brickwork, roofing materials, tarmac, concrete etc. Available in 13 approved shades!
- A translucent varnish that produced a coarse finish, thus preventing reflection from wet or dry surfaces.

There is more to this story, detailing what happened to the company as time went by. However, this basically shows that sometimes all is not what it seems!!