

VEREIN FÜR GEOGRAPHIE UND STATISTIK and William Topley

The CORRESPONDENCE SERIES is an investigation into the background of recipients of British pre-stamped postal stationery. The "collection" was purchased in South Africa in 1999 as a job lot, the which took me six months to sort and mount, creating a collection spanning 140 years. I have no idea of the provenance.

The Reference work is British Postal Stationery, A K Huggins.1970. The first date with catalogue number refers to the year when the pre-stamped envelope was first issued; the second, the year when the envelope was actually used.

Philatelic Description of the item of Postal Stationery:

1883 (WP15)_Verein für Geographie und Statistik, Frankfurt am Main, Prussia
(from W Topley, 28 Jermyn St, London) (actually used from London 6 8 85)

Comment:

Verina für Geographie und Statistik (that is Geographical and Statistical Society)

28 Jermyn St, London originally housed the School of Mines, the Museum of Practical Geology¹ and the Office of the Geological Survey of England and Wales. The need to move components of this cluster elsewhere was highlighted in the Duke of Devonshire's Commission on Science (1874) and later through parliamentary debate (1881).

William Topley F.R.S., F.G.S.

William Topley FRS FGS was born at Greenwich 13th March 1841. Schooled in the village, he attended the Royal School of Mines, where he obtained his scientific training. In 1862, he was appointed to the staff of the Geological Survey of England and Wales. There he spent the rest of his life, devoted to the advancement of the science of geology and of its applications. *Inter alia*, he was an acknowledged expert on the geology of the Weald, on various aspects of which he contributed his most important work "The Geological Survey Memoir of the Weald". For a period, he was a sub-editor, and later editor, on the Geological Record.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1888; and was elected a Member of the Library Association October 1889. He was Secretary of the Geological Section of the British Association for fifteen years; Secretary of the Committee on Coast Erosion; and President of the Geologists' Association from 1885 to 1887.

He died at his home in Croydon on 30th September 1894 having contracted "gastritis" contracted during a geological visit to Algeria.

¹ The Museum of Practical Geology (later The Geological Museum) started established in 1835 and is one of the oldest single science museums in the world. It now forms part of the Natural History Museum in London. It was moved from 28 Jermyn Street to Exhibition Road, South Kensington in 1935.

1881 Census of England and Wales.

Household Dwelling: Elgin Road (Hurstbourne) Croydon, Surrey, England

Name	Relation	Marital Status	Gender	Age	Birthplace	Occupation
William TOPLEY	Head	M ²	Male	40	Greenwich, Kent, England	Geological Surveyor
Ruth TOPLEY	Wife	M	Female	39	Woolwich, Kent, England	
William W. TOPLEY	Son	U	Male	12	Northumberland, England	Scholar
Emma E. ANDERSON	Serv	U	Female	26	Lewisham, Kent, England	General Servant

Selected Publications:

1. Sub-Wealden Exploration. Topley, W. Feb. 7., 1875. Nature, Volume 11, Issue 276, pp. 284-285 (1875).
2. Geology of the Weald (The Weald: parts of the Counties of Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Hants). W. Topley H.M.S.O., London. 1875.
3. Geological model of the south-east of England, and part of France, including the Weald and the Bas-Boulonnais. Founded upon the maps of the Ordnance, Admiralty, and Geological Surveys. Contributors: Text by W.Topley, F.G.S., Geological Survey of England and Wales & James B. Jordan, Mining Record Office; topography John Bartholomew, F.R.G.S; embossed Henry F. Brion, London. Publ: E. Stanford. 1880
4. Aseismatic Tables for Mitigating Earthquake Shocks. Topley, W. June 27., 1884 Nature, Volume 30, Issue 766, pp. 216 (1884).

References:

1. Geological Museum. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
2. Debate, House of Lords. Hansard 28 February 1881
3. Obituary. W Topley Nature 50, 579-580 (11 October 1894)
4. Obituary. William Topley. F.R.S., 1841-1894. Author: UNKNOWN
Institution of Civil Engineers: Minutes of the Proceedings, Volume 119, Issue 1895, pages 411-412
5. Obituary. William Topley. Popular Science Monthly 1895 Volume 46 pg 432
6. The Geological Record for 1880-1884, Volume I, Edited by William Topley FRS, FGS & Charles Davies Sherbourne FGS

² Married 17 April 1867