

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.midlandphs.org.uk



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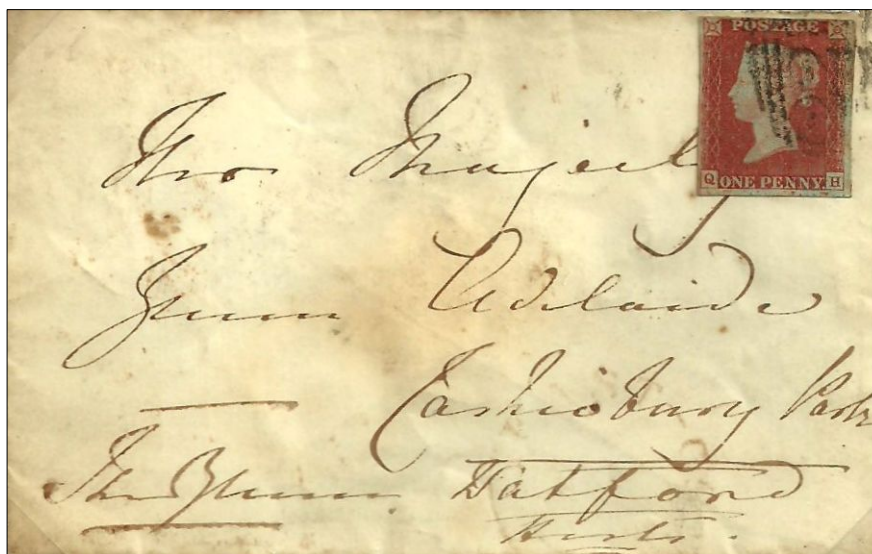
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Envelope written and signed bottom left by Queen Victoria to Her Majesty, Queen Adelaide, Cashiobury Park, Watford, Herts. The 4-margin 1d red is cancelled by the 225 of Cowes. COWES SP 16 1846 date stamp on the reverse. See page 6 for an account of Robert Danzig's wonderful display at Burton-on-Trent

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We have been informed that **Brian Brookes** passed away in May; condolences have been sent to his family.

AGM & AUCTION LOCATION – The AGM and auction are now to be held at our regular venue of St Germain's Church Hall, 180 Portland Road, Birmingham, B16 9TD. 11am viewing of auction lots; 1pm AGM; 1.30 Auction

JON BAKER TROPHY 2017 /18 – A change in voting procedure, members will be contacted by email and requested to vote the same way by replying to the editor (sniktab@gmail.com). Members not on email will receive a slip as per usual. The following articles might be considered but please feel free to cast your vote wherever you wish:

The Midlands & Internal Air Mails until 1940 by Ian May	MM194 /7
The Royal Show at Stoneleigh by Alan Godfrey	MM194 / 22
A Ruddington Contribution by Alan Marshall	MM195 / 10
Shropshire, a Railway, a Tunnel to Italy and beyond by Brian Atkins	MM195 / 14
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FEBRUARY 10th MEETING: A map showing the location of the meeting will be put onto the website, www.midlandphs.org.uk



We haven't had any photographs for a while.....

Left - Left out due to lack of space in the last issue – some of the committee manning the post (pun totally intended) on a lovely, warm, summer day at Midpex, July 2017.



Right & Below - A few of the faithful at Nick Bridgwater's excellent talk on Bristol Postal History at the meeting at Warwick (see page 3) with the aforesaid Mr Bridgwater in the blue sweater below pointing out something of extreme importance.





Bill Pipe

THE MAGPIE

*Buying and Selling Postal History
and Postcards of the World*

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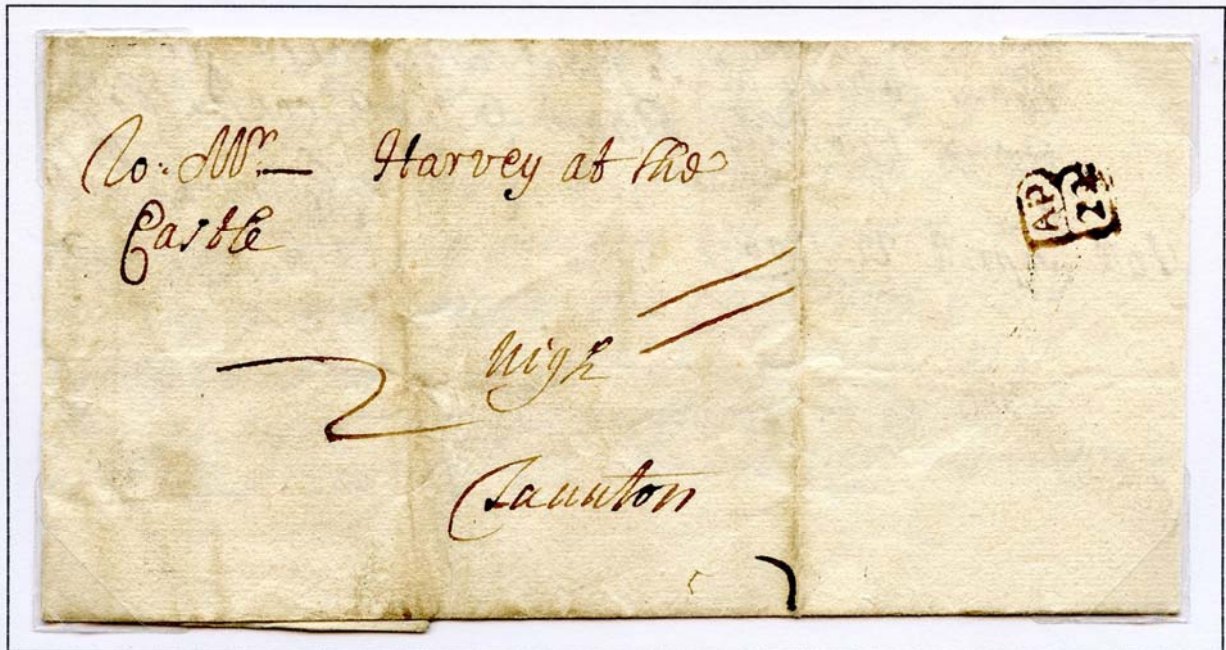
THE 11th NOVEMBER MEETING AT THE PREMISES of WARWICK & WARWICK

After an uneventful committee meeting and a quiet luncheon giving those present time to catch up with friends and acquaintances, **Chris Jackson**, standing in for **Malcolm Allinson**, charged the 22 members and guests present to attend to what was to be a marvellous display from **Nick Bridgwater** of **Bristol Postal History**, particularly apt as the Bristol Postal History Group had recently published their four volume **The Postal History of Bristol**.

Nick began by saying that Bristol rose to prominence in the Norman era, gaining a charter and county status in 1373. By the end of the 14th century it had become well established as the second port to London. From a postal viewpoint, Bristol was at the end of the original cross post to Exeter, it was a port (maritime marks), had a very large penny post system with 70 receiving houses and by 1911 there were over 1000 postal employees in the Bristol area.

His first page had a 15 Feb 1670 letter from 'Bristoll' to London with Bishop mark and this was followed by an undated letter to Taunton with a letter B, having DE in the top loop and 4 in the bottom one, the mark being known between 1697 and 1725. He claimed that the stamps were made of boxwood, which immediately made one wonder how they changed the date, the answer being that, in Nick's opinion, they didn't as he claimed that there were 365 (or even 366) different stamps, one for each day of the year – an astonishing claim backed up by the fact that the marks show individual differences. The B with day / month was used to date stamp cross post letters and 58 such date stamps have been identified (see below).

"B" WITH DATE IN LOOPS, "AP/22" 1697-1725



Entire from "Bristoll" (address inside) to Taunton with Bristol "B/AP/22" handstamp (10x13 mm, BS 2, in use 1697-1725). Manuscript "2" for postage. Manuscript date inside of 22nd April 1700.

The two horizontal lines indicate that the letter should go direct via the Cross Post. Bristol to Taunton is just less than 50 miles so from 1657 would have been 2^d in the General Post (for up to 80 miles).

The 18th century marks continued with a straight-line BRISTOL (known 1705-1712), a two-line BRIS-/TOLL (known 1721 to 1723) and a different BRIS / TOLL (known 1722 to 1734). We then came to the B / ris / tol (ris in the top loop, tol in the lower) marks also made of boxwood and known from 1736 to 1746. There were two different letters with a large B (1746) and three examples of the B / RIS / TOL with RIS and TOL inside the loops but upper case. A superb 1773 example of the very scarce (even rare?) BRISTOL bulls-eye held our attention. This was followed by what seemed an almost mundane first-type mileage (122 BRISTOL, known 1784 to 1785), an astonishing SHIP-LRE / BRISTOL 123 on a letter from Jamaica to Kelso NB (known 1784 to 1788, and, yes, it was a ship letter stamp with a mileage. Have you ever seen one?!), a serpentine BRISTOLL (1792 to 1794), inverted horseshoes, more two-line marks with dates (1799-1804), a three-line mark with date & mileage (1802) and at the end of frame two a circular mark with fleurons (1804-1805)!

As if this wasn't enough the next frame had Messenger marks, where the postmarks went with the early messengers, a precursor to Receiving House stamps! The marks were numbered 1 to 7 with 1 and 2 very scarce and 7 common, the numbers representing walks (see below).

"1 / P P / U" and "1 / P P / P" Messenger Handstamps

The Messenger charged 1^d for delivery of mail, with circular handstamps
There were two sorts of Messenger handstamp, "P P / P" for paid mail and "P P / U" for unpaid.

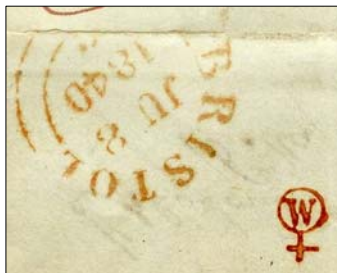


Entire to Wine Street with a red "1 / P P / U" messenger handstamp. Date inside of 17th July 1810.

The contents are printed accounts for the Kennet and Avon Canal Company, Marlborough for the year from 30th May 1809. The local delivery charge "1 / P P / U" was imposed by the Wine Street Head Office. This is currently the only known example of this handstamp in red.

Frames 4 and 5 were of the penny post. Bristol had 70 receiving houses, not all of which have been recorded. Some pages had excellent maps to help guide us through the maze of penny post walks and each type of Bristol Penny Post mark was in evidence, one of which included a date. It was about this time that I realised that Bristol was way ahead of its time by dating some of its hand stamps, so the receiver could know when it was received / despatched by the office.

Frame 6 contained early Gloucester serifed undated circular marks from ALMONDSBURY to WILLSBRIDGE and including HENBURY, HORFIELD and STAPLETON. To end the first part Nick had a frame of Bristol Inspector's marks including an 1839 and 1840 W in circle, the latter the only known use in red, with small + attached to the base of the circle plus examples of a CH in circle of different sizes. This ended the first part of a quite remarkable display.



An interval was needed for us to draw breath. Like Michael Lockton before him (Burton display of Exeter, see MM 189 / 5), Nick had done little talking, he pointed out what was on each frame and then let the displayed items do the talking for him ensuring plenty of time for viewers to absorb all the information available.

The second half began with Ship Letters. Nick explained that the port of Bristol played a key part in the slave trade triangle – goods to East Africa, slaves to the West Indies and sugar back to Bristol. The slave trade was abolished in 1807 but the slave traders of Bristol became very rich as they were compensated for their

loss of trade! Bristol was also famous for tobacco (W.D. & H.O. Wills) but the influence of Bristol died as ships increased in size with Bristol docks difficult to get into and the very large tidal reach. Liverpool docks took over.

The full variety of marks was exhibited. Of note were a 1767 cover from Jamaica to London, an 1814 letter from Bristol to *Mefs Newton, Gordon, Murdoch & Scott* in Madeira containing an order for Madeira wine '1 Butt, 1 Pipe, 5 Hhds (Hogsheads) Fine Old Particular Madeira wine and 1 Pipe finest quality Sercial wine (dry Madeira made from the white Sercial grape-Ed) plus an additional 1 Hogshead of Old Particular Madeira wine' (see entire below).

"BRISTOL / crown / SHIP LETTER" Handstamp Red 1812-1814



Entire from Bristol (address inside) to Madeira with a red "BRISTOL / crown / SHIP LETTER" handstamp (39x31 mm, BS 328, Robertson S6a, in use 1812-1814 in red).

Manuscript date inside of 21st December 1814.

Manuscript "P Ship / Sir George Osborn".

Red manuscript "Pd 1/3" for prepaid postage and black manuscript "40".

In 1813 the Packet rate for Falmouth to Madeira was reduced from 1/8^d to 1/6^d. Mail by a private ship was charged at half the packet rate, in this case 9^d, plus 6^d as a ship letter fee, making a total of 1/3^d. The black manuscript "40" relates to a landing charge of 40 Reiss.

At this point Nick digressed to explain that a Hogshead was a large barrel of varied size depending on the contents, a hogshead of sugar, molasses or tobacco could be from 100 to 140 gallons, though molasses was standardised to 100 gallons by a statute of 22GeoII. Rather oddly, a hogshead of beer had a different capacity to a hogshead of ale!

Also in evidence were letters carried by the *Great Western* in 1838 (4th journey) and 1839 (8th journey) respectively, an 1839 Rebate Ship Letter Office (*Great Western* 11th voyage); 1839 and 1841 Ship letter and Paid Ship Letter / Sydney; 1838 PAID / AT / BRISTOL from a sailor on *HMS President* from Valparaíso to Ferrybridge, Yorkshire with stitch marks for a penny for the postage; INDIA LETTER / BRISTOL (known 1830 to 1838); 1857 CAPE PACKET / BRISTOL on a letter to Chichester. As Bristol declined there were later examples of Avonmouth ship letters. Into the 20th century there were Bristol paquebot Krag machine cancels; an apparently rare BRISTOL / RECEIVED FROM HM SHIPS machine cancel (one known?) and a Ship Letter Telegram.

A frame of Registered covers included an 1847 cover with 1/- registration paid in cash plus 1d postage, an 1863 cover to Chippenham with 4d registration fee and 1d postage, an 1865 cover to the US with 6d registration and 1/- postage, an 1875 cover to Devon with five 1d reds paying 4d registration and 1d postage and an 1893 cover to Leipzig with 2d registration and 5d for double the ½oz UPU single rate of postage.

The final two frames were of Charge Marks and Meter Marks. The Charge Marks included examples from 1d/134 to 6d/134 with 2d/134 in green and 3d/134 in red being particularly noticeable. The Meter Marks included advertising for the Midget Postal Franker (1926), Puritan, the Olive Oil Soap (1930) and You Can Be Sure of Shell (1937).

Once again we were given ample time to inspect these superb covers before Chris thanked Nick for his excellent and wonderfully presented display presenting him with a Certificate of Thanks to show our appreciation.

THE 2nd DECEMBER MEETING at BURTON-on-TRENT - ROBERT DANZIG'S DISPLAY of 'ROYALTY on the ISLE OF WIGHT'.

Our day began with member's standing displays, which, briefly, were as follows:

Richard Farman brought four frames of parcel post labels and other parcel related items

Chris Jackson brought two frames, the first of Shipston-on-Stour postal history to 1931, which, remarkably, included an 1851 cover with two different skeletons, one of SHIPSTON and a framed one of CHIPPING NORTON. His second frame showed items related to the needle makers John English & Co, who had a factory at Feckenham and an 1819 entree to Bewdley had a FECKENHAM mileage and STRATFORD Penny Post marks. Also noticeable were two entrees from Philadelphia to the company, one of 1837 with a boxed LIVERPOOL / SHIP LETTER and one of 1843 with a BRISTOL / SHIP LETTER.

Alan Godfrey in his own admission brought a frame of 'various random items', mostly modern and philatelic.

Terry Harrison showed a frame depicting the *Development of the Post in Leamington*. There was a print of the first but unofficial post office in Mill Lane (New Street), with Leamington given No1 in the Warwick penny post, there were four such letters including Leamington fleurons of 1825 and 1828, as well as entrees with two different undated LEAMINGTONs of 1828 and 1832.

In anticipation of the main event, **Clive Jones** showed a selection of covers carried on the South Western T.P.O. and the Portsmouth Sorting Carriage. Three of the covers were written at Osborne House, including examples from The Queen, Lady Ely (QV Lady in Waiting) & Hugh Ponsonby (QV Private Secretary). This included several rare T.P.O. marks, including one thought to be unique – a claim that remained intact after Mr. Danzig's fabulous display!

Brian Atkins presented *Mail between Shropshire and New Zealand, 1862 to 1878*. The correspondence to Frederick Wayne (ex-Much Wenlock via Wellington, Salop not NZ!) to Otago revealed an 1862 cover via Suez and three 1872 covers travelling different routes via San Francisco, Southampton / Suez and Brindisi / Suez. Two 1876 incoming covers were from Christchurch via Suez to Bridgnorth and 1878 Waimate to Whitchurch via San Francisco.

Mick Gill showed Nottingham postal history with a Christmas theme, which include an 1885 official Post Office Christmas card, an 1852 undated MATTERSEA, 1920s Christmas parcel post labels and a 1938 Calpurnia 'wreck cover' to Wellington, New Zealand

Steve Ellis produced two frames of *Cross Channel Rail Mail*. This included covers carried on the London & Brighton Railway and the later London, Brighton & South Coast Railway. A 1911 card with an EdVII 1d scarlet, LBSCR perfin and cancelled DIEPPE was addressed to Paris.

At 12.20pm 41 members and guests began assembling for our Christmas lunch, the quality of which surpassed that of previous years, apart, perhaps, from some dubious sprouts, and 34 were afterwards present for **Robert Danzig's** talk. We have been privileged in the last two years to have fine talks at Burton from Michael Lockton (Exeter postal history) and Nick Wraith (parcel posts) but Robert Danzig's talk and display of *Royalty on the Isle of Wight* (title not as advertised) surpassed them for the social history on display as well as some remarkable postal history items. It was commented to me on a number of occasions that I would have my work cut out to write an account of all we saw such was the quality of everything on view and as you will see that was the case!

Robert began by stating he started collecting the postal history of the Isle of Wight 25 years ago and found it provided unique opportunities because of its rich range which included railways, prisoners of war, prison ships in the Solent, towns / villages, sailing but most of all because of its royal connections. His display began with a cover written and sent free by the young Queen Victoria in March 1838. On 7th January 1840 a request was made by a Mrs Lane through Queen Victoria's governess, Lady Lehzen for a free frank. The surprising reply came 'Her Majesty cannot frank any letter herself – Sir Frank Wheatley will frank the letter', now apparently a rare frank. As Robert stated, why was the Queen paying for her own mail? Queen Victoria came to the throne as the postal reforms were in the offing and she said she would pay for her postage, there would be no free franks! Though this letter wasn't franked by the Queen, an 1846 cover addressed to Her Majesty Queen Adelaide was signed *The Queen* in the bottom left corner; the 1d red was cancelled by the 225 of COWES (see front page).

To escape the pressures of London and Windsor, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert wanted to find a retreat and thought of Norris Castle but couldn't afford it. The Osborne estate was then owned by Lady Isabella Blachford and was rented out. The Queen offered £28,000, amazingly Lady Blachford tried to renege on the contract, saying that it

wasn't enough, so the Queen and Prince Albert came back with an offer of £26,000 but the deal eventually went through in 1845 at the original price. They then bought the Barton estate next door. Robert explained that most mail went through East Cowes, then to Portsmouth and from 1865 was put into a Royal Pouch and put onto the TPO to London, largely reserved for the royal mail, as evidenced by an 1865 cover with a 1d red cancelled by the 5-pointed P.O.R.S.C. star of the Portsmouth TPO, a later cover (1877) with the adhesive cancelled Portsmouth Sorting Carriage and an 1883 cover with a 2½d blue addressed to Venice (see Fig 2). A telegraph was opened at Osborne House in 1870 and an Osborne Isle of Wight circular date stamp was introduced when the post office opened in January 1897. The post office was in the basement and only open when the Queen was in residence. At this point Robert explained that although there was a lot of postal history there was also a lot of social history and many of the items on display were letters without envelopes but he would rather show letters from important people than not at all.

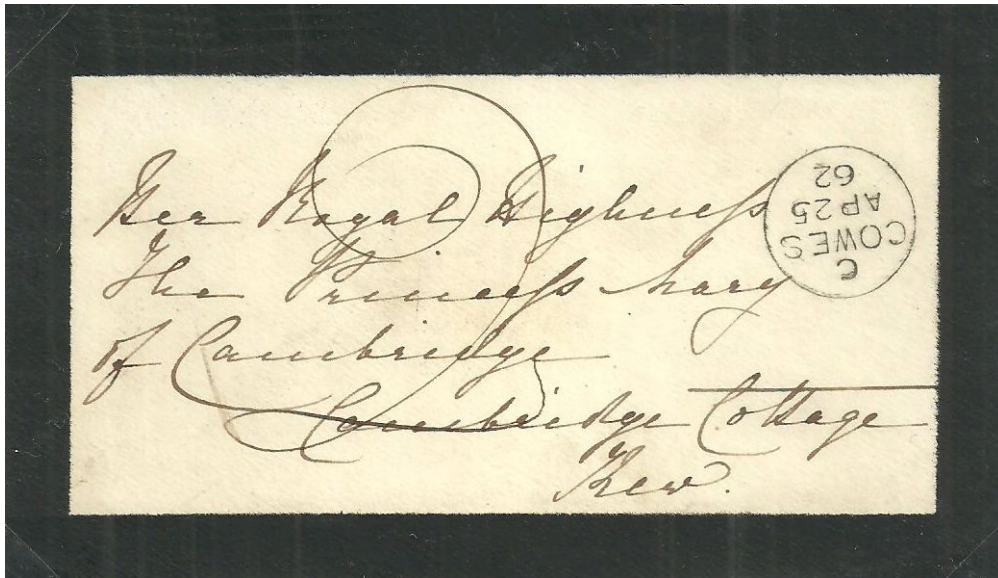


Fig 1, April 1862 unpaid mourning cover from Cowes to Kew in Queen Victoria's handwriting with 2d postage due

Letters dated 1849 and various letters with envelopes from her mother, the Duchess of Kent and Prince Albert were displayed but an 1862 letter written by the Queen to Princess Mary of Cambridge at Kew was not franked, so had a manuscript 2, showing that even the Queen's mail was surcharged if underpaid (see Fig 1 above).

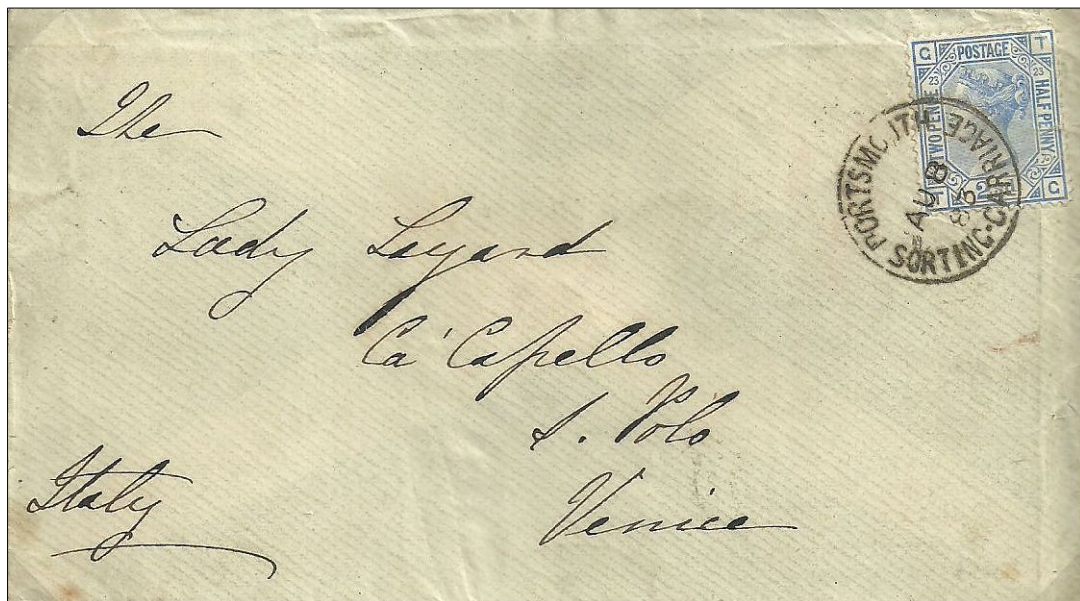


Fig 2, 8 Aug 1883 cover from Jane Ely, Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen, 2½d blue, plate 23 and cancelled PORTSMOUTH SORTING CARRIAGE

Two 1861 covers sent by the Queen were shown addressed to Major General the Honorable Robert Bruce, The Curragh, Kildare, Ireland, one with a 2d blue and the other franked with a 1d red and 4d carmine, probably as a late

fee. During his visit to the Curragh, Prince Edward, 19 years and 7 months old, smuggled in an 'actress' by name Nellie Clifton who stayed the night – a scandal ensued! Prince Albert caught a chill and died 14 days after he went to Cambridge on a cold and frosty day in November to confront the Prince of Wales about his visit to the Curragh. Towards the end of the first part of his display Robert showed a selection of Cowes postmarks including the correct use of a 10/- high value on 12/8 cover to Berlin, COWES square circles, a 1900 cover to Emil Fuchs, the designer of the KEdVII 1d scarlet stamp (see Fig 3) and parcel post labels of OSBORNE and COWES. After the death of Queen Victoria on the 22nd January 1901 Edward VII gifted the house to the nation. In 1903 Osborne House became a Royal Naval College until 1921 and the first public OSBORNE B.O. / COWES date stamp was introduced in early 1904. During WW1 Osborne became a convalescent home for officers. At this point the assembled audience drew breath and rose to get a first hand view of the wonderful items on display.



Fig 3, Mourning cover dated 27 DEC 1900 to Emil Fuchs, 1d lilac cancelled OSBORNE / 1. OF WIGHT



Fig 4, Cover to London with the Royal Yacht crest on letterhead.

Part two related to the Royal Yachts, which were crucial in bringing the Queen, her court, family and visitors to the Island as well as act as Mail Boats; many different letterheads and envelopes were displayed including an 1859 entire containing the Royal Yacht Club list from Ryde to Paris, 1872 & 1900 covers (see Fig 4) with the Royal Yacht crest, 1899 2½d blue to Paris with 1d Wallace Brothers Commemorative Diamond Jubilee stamp and 1891 entire with 1d lilac cancelled COWES square circle to London headed ROYAL YACHT 'OSBORNE' and signed Albert Edward.

As the sun slipped well below the yardarm, **Malcolm Allinson** thanked Robert for his amazing display leaving us to wonder on what we had seen as we sailed off into a drizzly night.

THE 13th JANUARY MEETING at THE LADYBIRD INN, BROMSGROVE – The theme being *Post Offices*

19 members and 1 guest gathered in a comfortable room at the refurbished Ladybird Inn and were brought to order by our chairman, **Malcolm Allinson**, at 1.30pm with the topic *Post Offices*.

Colin Fountain began proceedings by showing offices from Gloucestershire beginning with the letter O. Included were Oakridge Lynch, Oddington, Oldbury, Old Sodbury and Oxstalls (open 1957 – 2004)

Guy Bridges began with a photo of Shrewsbury Head Office, built in 1875. He followed with photographs of various locations of Abbey Foregate sub-office, including the building in which it first opened in 1846 (now demolished). He ended with postcards of Frankwell sub-office and a photo of Meole Brace sub-office with postman.

Malcolm Allinson brought postcards in which Cumberland post offices appeared. They included Alston, Bassenthwaite, Buttermere, Colbeck, Drigg, Eskdale Green, Glenridding, Lawton, Rossthwaite, Tirril and Winster.

Gordon Hardy showed postcards of Buxton office in a snow scene, Calver, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derwent, Coal Aston, Duffield and a wonderful photograph of two women being trained to deliver mail!!!!

Alan Godfrey produced photographs of Nuneaton area offices in the late 1970s including Ansley, Ansley Road, Bramcote, Burton Hastings, Bulkington and town sub-offices of Cedar Road, Chilvers Coton and Long Shoot.

Stuart Geddes brought a large sheet with comic postcards of 'Addresses', another large sheet with views of Victoria Square, Birmingham, the Head Post Office at Stoke-on-Trent and postcards of Newport (Monmouth) offices.

Richard Farman had a c1815 print showing a rural post office receiving the mail and a Rural Postman's Book No 136 c1910 detailing his round from Rugeley to Gentleshaw listing all the big houses & sub-post offices with arrival times. Question what is the earliest known date of a Post Office print? He also put up two covers to Portugal during the Peninsular War, one charged 5/4, the other a Free signed by the PMG Sandwich to the same address.

Alan Marshall showed a print of the Royal Mail coach leaving London, followed by engravings of Albert St. and Victoria St post offices. Also an advert of Albert St. in Streets of Nottingham and a library exhibit of it. Present day cards of Queen St. PO as well as a court size card to France.

Mick Gill contributed south Notts offices with postcards of Ruddington (three locations from c1871 to date), Plumtree, Keyworth (1937 to date, two locations, plus a card celebrating 50 years of service of the Soar / Eggleston families) and Wysall (1921 – 1984)

Clive Jones showed a selection of POs on wheels, i.e. Midland TPOs, including a local item from Bromsgrove, and a Railway Letter + TPO Late Fee item from Redmire in Wensleydale in 1908. With this evening despatch a payment of 3/5 had got it to Nottingham by 2am the next morning! In addition, some items were shown from the Bristol & Penzance TPO, and a selection of North Yorkshire Post Office buildings (no wheels, only bicycle wheels!).

Alan Godfrey, for seconds, continued with Nuneaton town sub-offices, notably Ridge Lane and Manor Court.

Richard Farman brought Post Office Notices, especially one of Ashby-de-la-Zouch with an advertisement. There were also bill heads of Fletcher's George & Family Hotel, Walsall, a 1786 one of The Three Queens, Leicester and one of 1828 of the Beddgelert Hotel with Aber Galslyn Bridge on the front and a delightful engraving of the Menai Bridge on the reverse.

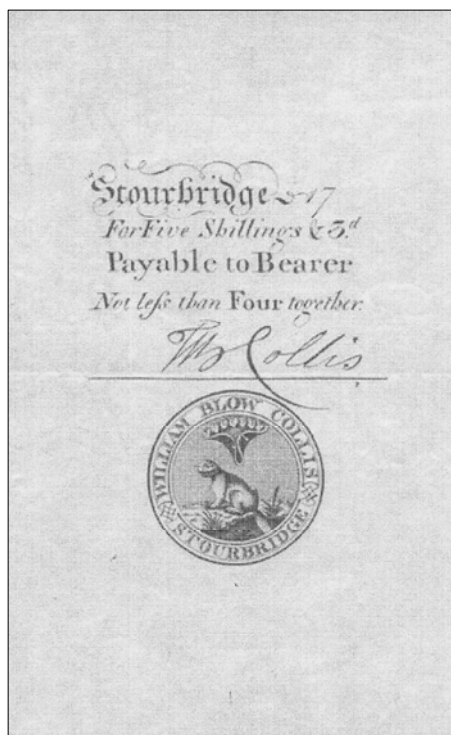
Alan Marshall produced four postcards showing what were 5 of the earlier 7 post offices at Bunny, a copy of a letter about the appointment of a postmaster, a postcard to the wife of the postmaster and a postcard to the daughter of the postmaster who later became postmistress. He finished with the Bunny post office bag stamp / wax seal, along with the actual stamp, a 1924 postcard of Gotham PO and a recent card of Rempstone office.

Mick Gill showed cards of Thrumpton (3 locations), Gotham, Malt St. and Nottingham Rd for which finding moving dates was proving a problem; Kingston-on-Soar, four locations between 1847 and 1988 and Normanton-on-Soar, two locations in adjacent buildings with moving dates again a problem. Two locations of East Leake (1930 & 1929), Sutton Bonnington (1975 to date), Rempstone (1893 - 1929) and Stanford-on-Soar (1899 – 1961 and c1980- 1988, two locations on one card). He followed with two recently acquired Aslockton cards showing all the offices from 1882 to 1997. The 1857 Eastwood Times, published by the postmaster, illustrated the post office with adverts for stationery, details of mail arrival and despatch and an advert for an apprentice bookbinder and the sale of a tin bath!

THE POSTAL HISTORY OF A PRIVATE BANK

by John Calladine

Bate and Robins was a private bank in Stourbridge, founded in or before 1770. In common with almost all private banks, it had just one branch, known in the 19th century as “Stourbridge Old Bank”, probably to distinguish it from the upstart “Stourbridge Bank” of Rufford and Wragge founded in 1792. There were basically two types of bank in the 18th and 19th century, the joint stock bank and the private bank. The joint stock bank was one with more than six directors and very few existed, particularly outside London, before 1826. This was because the Bank of England, created in 1694 with a Royal Charter primarily to raise money for war with France, had its charter renewed in 1708 and the charter specifically forbade any group of people exceeding six in number from issuing bank notes, seen at the time as essential to the financial viability of a bank. The need for private country banks, usually with just one or two directors, often arose from the need for local industry to have a means of raising capital, making payments and securely depositing cash. As early as 1762, a mercer and draper of Worcester, William Blow Collis, began to issue low denomination notes and it is believed it was he who founded Bate & Robins Bank. One of his Stourbridge bank notes, dating from the 1770s, is illustrated. His will is dated July 1789 and it is unclear how and when his bank passed into the hands of Thomas Bate and William Robins but it is noted that the mother of a succeeding William Blow Collis - a name adopted by at least three generations – and born in 1779 was Ann Robins, wife of George Collis. (Perhaps the nationally best-known William Blow Collis, was the academically talented Reverend W.B.Collis, born a year earlier in 1778 (died 1855), who was, inter alia, the vicar of Oldswinford church, Stourbridge, and Clerk of Cannock.) Collis was ahead of his time because it was in 1797, at a time of Napoleonic War panic, that the Bank of England suspended cash payments and Parliament encouraged country bankers to issue low denomination bank notes of their own, thereby giving a great impetus to the creation of more such banks.



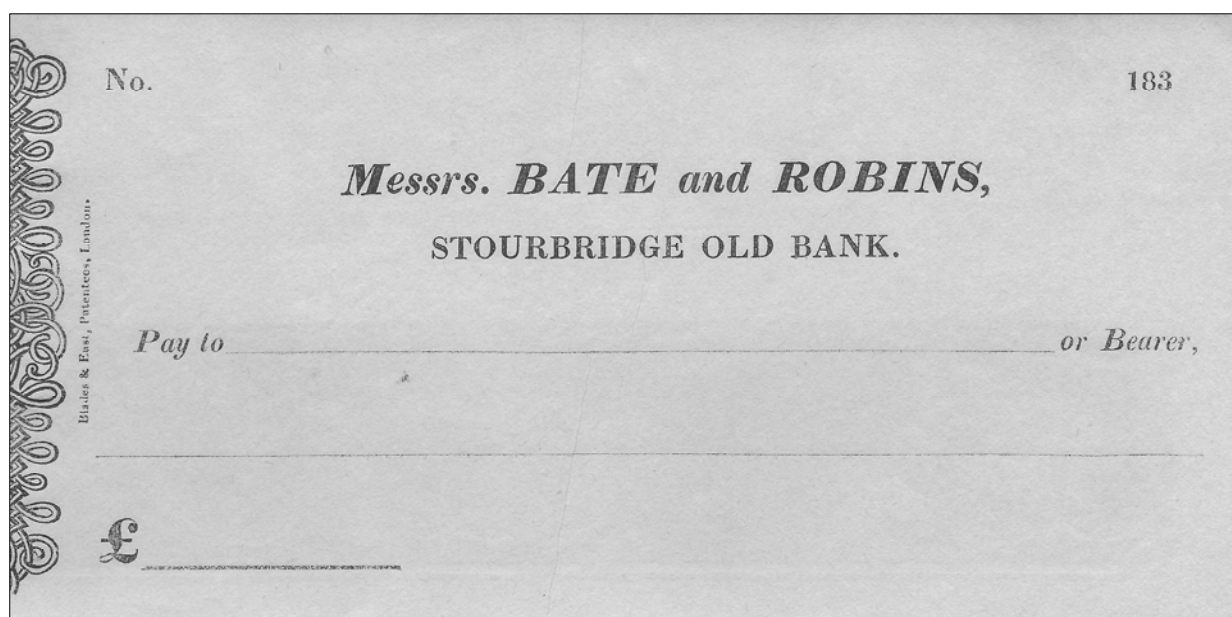
A William Collis Stourbridge bank note for 5 shillings and threepence. (Four = 1 Guinea.)

A financial crisis in 1825 led to 73 English private country banks stopping all payments. Scottish banks, largely joint stock banks, were not similarly affected. A major problem of the time was their lack of adequate working capital. The Bank of England's charter was subsequently modified so that joint stock banks could thereafter be established and permitted to issue their own bank notes, provided they were beyond a 65 miles radius of London. There were four significant joint stock banks in Birmingham, the last to be established, in 1836, being the Birmingham and Midland Bank, always known informally as the “Midland Bank” to differentiate it from the Birmingham Banking Company. It did plan to issue its own notes but quickly abandoned the idea, a move which later proved to be one of its great strengths. It was established with a capital of 250,000 in £10 shares, only £2 of which had to be paid immediately (with shareholders remaining responsible to pay promptly a further part or all of the balance if the Bank needed extra funds). From the previous century and still commonplace in the 1830s, when cheques were rare, the

method of payment from one business to another, such as a manufacturer of metal components to the company supplying the iron, was most usually a Bill of Exchange. This was effectively a promissory note by means of which the buyer promised to pay the seller the agreed sale sum in, say, four months' time. It gave the buyer time to sell some of his own products and raise money but he was, at the same time, effectively borrowing money from the seller. The seller now had two choices. He could wait for four months to claim all his money or he could take the Bill of Exchange to a bank for immediate payment, less the bank's commission of perhaps 5%. In turn, the bank could wait for payment or it could re-discount the trade bills with a larger bank, in the case of the Midland Bank, the Bank of England's Birmingham branch. Because the Midland only issued Bank of England notes, it looked for a preferential discount rate. It initially negotiated a re-discount rate of 3% and it was the difference between the two rates that provided the Midland Bank with its substantial profits.

The advantage of this approach became apparent in 1844 when the Bank Charter Act prevented banks from issuing any further notes of their own, thus cutting off their ability to lend money they had "created". They were also required to have a minimum capital of 100,000 in £100 shares, all of which had to have been issued and half fully paid. By that time, the Midland already had capital in excess of the requirement (half paid) and, with no involvement in the issue of its own bank notes, took little interest in the committees and meetings that, from 1836, preceded the new banking regulations. In fact, the official history of the Midland Bank tells us the directors were otherwise preoccupied with the proposals of one of their customers, a certain Mr Rowland Hill, whose reforms of the postal system they saw as very likely to lead to improved methods of payment. We shall shortly see one obvious instance of how postal reform assisted the work of Bate & Robins bank.

It is apparent that the very nature of a private country bank was such that its links were essentially with local businesses and local landowners. There was an obvious need to link into the national system, particularly so that payments could be exchanged between banks and a broader base employed for lending any surplus funds the private bank might hold. Cheques had initially been returned to their issuing bank for payment but, as cheque usage grew, customers brought cheques to their own bank for payment. It therefore became necessary for banks to exchange cheques and to keep a tally of the balances. The obvious place to do this was in London, the heart of the English banking system, and the private banks therefore appointed a London bank as their agent. The London agent for Bate & Robins bank was Masterman & Co. of Lombard Street. In 1770, clerks from the London banks had met at a tavern in Lombard Street, where they exchanged cheques and settled outstanding balances in cash. However, by the early 19th century, Lubbock's Bank, also in Lombard Street, provided a room for the same purpose. In that room about 30 clerks from the London banks sat at desks in alphabetical order, each with a prominent name above him and an open box into which visiting clerks from every banking house dropped cheques for which payment was due. Beginning at 5pm, a reckoning was made and each debtor bank paid cash to the Inspector of the Clearing House and clerks from the creditor banks collected what was due to them. Thus began the London clearing house.



A Bate & Robins bank cheque of the 1830s.

It is perhaps surprising that the Birmingham banks had no ambition to open branches, the conventional method of extending a joint stock bank's business and they therefore resembled the private banks, which rarely had more than one office. There was however significant interaction between the Birmingham & Midland Bank and Bate & Robins bank simply because they were only a few miles apart and the industries in Stourbridge had much in common with industries in Birmingham. It would be the 1850s before that link progressed.

One of the well-known facts of postal history, notwithstanding an understandable caution of "well-known facts", is that Rowland Hill expected the new postal stationery, the letter sheets and envelopes bearing a design by the eminent artist William Mulready, to be more popular with the public than the stamps with the "glutinous wash", when both were introduced in 1840. Was it the inconvenience of keeping postal stationery at hand or was it the pretensions of the Mulready design, famously mocked by Punch magazine, that led to the rapid demise of the Mulready? The stationery trade had obvious objections to the letter sheets because it was believed they had the potential seriously to damage its sales of writing paper. When they became a fait accompli, it set out to make the best of a bad job. There was a significant difference in the way the envelopes and letter sheets were sold. The envelopes were only available as uncut sheets of twelve, sold at 15d. The letter sheets could be bought individually at three-halfpence each and it was here that a commercial opportunity was seen. A stationer could buy the sheets, sell space on them to multiple advertisers, who paid for each advert, and then overprint and sell them to the public for less than a penny each but still make a good profit. What good was a letter sheet to a buyer, even when bought at a discount, if the space available for writing was covered in advertisement? The answer was that the one penny letter sheet could contain enclosures provided the overall weight did not exceed half an ounce (roughly 15 grams). In this manner, the stationers were still able to sell sheets of writing paper (as enclosures) and the buyer was able to send a letter for less than a penny. Everyone was a winner.

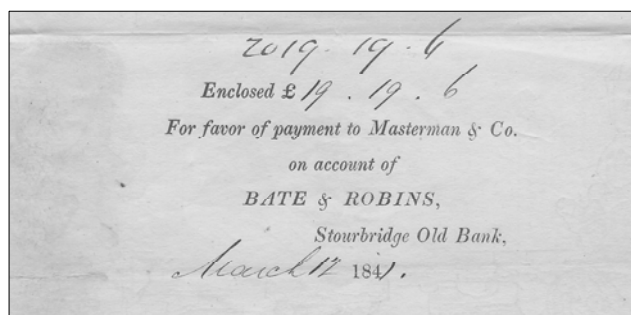
However, what are termed Mulready "advertisements" are more than that. Over thirty different Mulready letter sheets are recorded, generally sold by printers or booksellers, with multiple solicited advertisements. These are outnumbered by almost a hundred recorded letter sheets advertising an individual firm's own products. To that can be added more than fifty Stamp or Tax Offices making use of the letter sheets, principally in Scotland, and about forty insurance companies using them for promotions. Finally and significantly, thirteen banks made use of letter sheets and among them was, of course, Bate and Robins.

Before the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage, Bate & Robins had to return increasing numbers of cheques they had honoured on behalf of other banks, either to them or to their London agent, probably by carrier because the Post Office charged for each sheet of paper in a letter and postage was expensive. Now they saw an opportunity to send multiple cheques quickly, cheaply and efficiently. They had one penny Mulready letter sheets printed inside with the following text:

Enclosed £

For favour of payment to Masterman & Co.
on account of
BATE & ROBINS
Stourbridge Old Bank
184

These were sent to other banks in the Midlands, several to Nichols and Baker of Bewdley (a bank that a few years later became Nichols, Baker and Crane) and the enclosures would have been cheques drawn on that bank, which Bate & Robins had honoured. The addressee bank would then instruct their London agent to settle with Masterman & Co, who would credit the sum to the Bate & Robins account they were holding on the Stourbridge bank's behalf. It was thus unnecessary for the addressee bank to attempt to move cash to Bate & Robins. Other banks that appear to have used Mulready letter sheets for the same purpose include the Ipswich Bank, the Stowmarket Bank, the Sheffield & Rotherham Bank and the Guildford Bank.



Fortunately, a number of the Bate & Robins Mulready letter sheets have survived. Before commenting on the points of interest to postal historians and philatelists, it may be useful to say a little about the printing of Mulready letter sheets and envelopes. 19th century letterpress printing involved a frame, known as a “forme”, into which were locked a number of small printing plates, known as “stereos”. In this instance, a stereo printed a single Mulready letter sheet or envelope. A forme held twelve stereos in three rows of four. Six formes were used to print the penny letter sheets and a single forme was used for twopenny letter sheets. (Four formes were used for penny envelopes and one for twopenny envelopes.) Each stereo within a forme was individually numbered. For the penny letter sheets, there was a first series of four formes holding stereos identified by an upper case letter ‘A’ followed by two numerals, e.g. A17. For the two formes in the second series, the letter A was retained but the stereos have a three-figure number, always beginning with “2”, e.g. A247. (Twpenny letter sheets have a lower case “a”.) A fascination (or complexity) for the philatelist is that some of the stereos were replaced by others when they became worn or damaged and their positions in the formes have yet to be established. From the available record of the Bate and Robins letter sheets, it seems they were originally printed from stereo A23 but, probably from mid/late 1841, from stereo A66, both stereos from the first series.

The earliest recorded usage of a Bate & Robins letter sheet is from 3rd December 1840, addressed to Wolverhampton, with Britannia cancelled by a red Maltese Cross. The centre of the Stourbridge circular datestamp is inverted. Other letter sheets are from 1841, the latest dated 9th December 1841. All are cancelled by a black Maltese Cross. The Stourbridge inverted datestamp is still evident on an example from 6th March 1841 but had been corrected by 15th March. How and why inversion of the centre of the datestamp occurred is a mystery because there is no evidence in the Steel Impression Books of the datestamp having been returned for repair. Perhaps it was no more than a quirk of the local postmistress? Mulready letter sheets are known used at Stourbridge until May 1842 but no 1842 example of the Bate & Robins Mulready has yet been recorded.



A Bate & Robins Mulready letter sheet of 1840 with red Maltese Cross and inverted CDS.

It would be remiss not to complete the story without mentioning what became of the Bate & Robins bank. Thomas Bate died in 1847 and the bank was put up for sale. Notwithstanding the vision of Charles Geach, the inspirational chairman of the Birmingham & Midland Bank, it was not until 1851 that he decided the acquisition of an appropriate local private bank would strengthen, not dilute, the Birmingham business interests of his own bank. Only ten miles distant, Stourbridge had ironfounding, nailmaking and glass businesses, industries closely integrated with a number of Birmingham businesses. Bate & Robins was a strong bank with substantial assets. There had been no effective competition in the town until, in 1834, when it made the mistake of asking James Foster, the great ironmaster, to reduce his overdraft. Taking offence, he wheeled a barrow load of sovereigns into Bate & Robins' premises, tipped them on the floor and left to establish the Stourbridge and Kidderminster Banking Company, a joint stock bank, as a competitor! Nevertheless, in 1851 deposits with Bate & Robins were comparable with those of the Birmingham & Midland Bank and, following its purchase of the goodwill for £16,000 (plus £1850 for the "Old Bank" premises), it became the very first branch of the "Midland Bank", a name not officially adopted until 1923. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the Bank's second acquisition, in May 1862, was of Nichols, Baker and Crane of Bewdley, mentioned previously, whose business was said to be entirely of an agricultural nature. Both banks proved to be excellent acquisitions and made substantial profits for the Birmingham & Midland Bank.

The premises of the "Old Bank" in Stourbridge are one of its architectural gems. However, they date from 1905 and are not the original premises of Bate & Robins. The bank eventually closed its doors in 2006 and stood empty for six years. It has now been revived as an elegantly converted real ale bar.



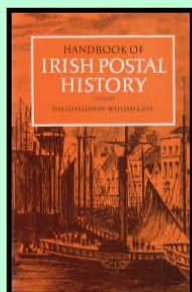
The premises of Bate & Robins Stourbridge Old Bank c1900, before they were rebuilt. Note that by that time the Birmingham and Midland Bank had become the London City and Midland Bank.

Principal references:

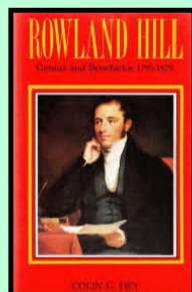
Stanley Gibbons Specialised Catalogue, Great Britain Volume 1, 15th Edition.
 The Mulready Postal Stationery, Huggins and Holyoake
 Midland, 150 years of Banking Business, Holmes and Green
 A History of English Clearing Banks, The British Banking History Society
 Clearing House (Finance), Wikipedia

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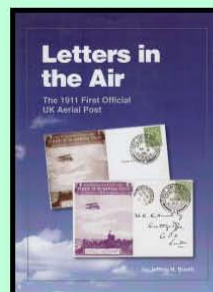
Irish Postal
History - Kane.
£17.50



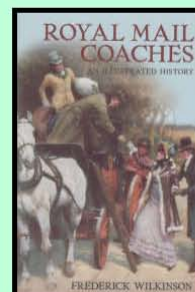
Rowland Hill -
Hey. £17.50



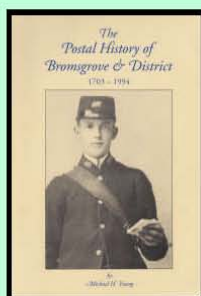
Adhesive Wafer
Seals. £55.00



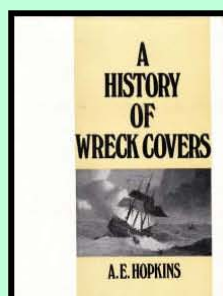
Letters in the Air -
Booth. £35.00



Royal Mail
Coaches -
Wilkinson. £10.00



Postal History of
Bromsgrove -
Young. £30.00



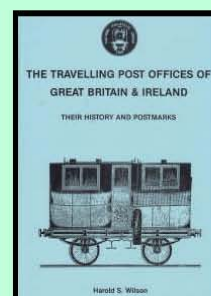
A History of Wreck
Covers - Hopkins.
£30.00



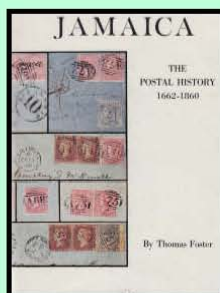
Port & Carriage of
Letters - Robinson.
£35.00



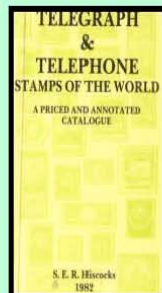
British Postal Rates
- Sanford and Salt.
£17.50



Travelling Post
Offices - Wilson.
£40.00



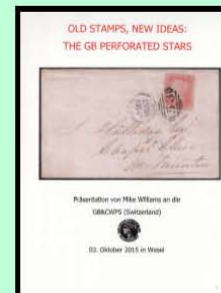
Jamaica/The Postal
History - Foster.
£30.00



Telegraph &
Telephone
Stamps -
Hiscocks. £35.00



May Dates - Jackson.
£65.00



Old Stamps, New
Ideas - Williams.
£40.00



Three Centuries
of Scottish Posts -
Haldane. £17.50

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POSTS WITH PURPOSE A Glorious Conclusion

John Calladine and Martin Scroggs

Have you ever wondered why our mail is known as post? Apparently in olden days the mail coaches would hasten deliveries by hanging sacks of mail on posts outside villages which would then be collected by the 'post' man. Between Long Compton and Stratford on Avon there are seven of these posts by the roadside.

"The Antique Collector"

1998

This utterly remarkable statement by a respected magazine began our quest to determine the true purpose of the surviving posts on the road now known as the A3400. In particular, we wanted to know if they had a postal connection, albeit not the one suggested in the magazine. At the time we pondered aloud why Sir Brian Tuke, the first "Master of the Posts" (knighted by Henry VIII in 1516), had never advised king or country of the existence of mail coaches more than 250 years before the inaugural run of the Bath Mail?

In the next few years, several of our members commented on the existence of these posts and we learned that guides on some Stratford on Avon tourist buses were also pointing them out to their passengers. The first article, "Posts with Purpose", appeared in Midland Mail No.129/7 in March 2003. At the time, we could only find five of the posts, which we photographed and described. They were unusually ornate for any practical purpose and appeared most suitable as posts for hanging flower baskets. We considered the possibility that they might have had a connection with the early horse-drawn Stratford–Moreton in Marsh tramway, which followed the A3400 for part of its route but then took a different route to Moreton. More seriously we looked at any possible connection with penny post deliveries, but the A3400 posts were clearly in the wrong places to be convenient to the villages and why was one needed in the middle of Shipston on Stour?

It was Martin, with his collection of Ordnance Survey maps, ancient and modern, who deduced they were mileposts. If account was taken of the surviving posts and those marked on a 1972 OS map, we could account for twelve such posts, spaced exactly one mile apart. We surmised there could once have been as many as twenty, although that now seems improbable. If, as seemed certain, these posts were indeed mileposts, how were the boards carrying the mileage information suspended? The ornate arms of the posts appeared badly designed for the purpose.

At the time of this article we were both also members of the Milestone Society, a society dedicated to the recording, listing and restoration of surviving milestones, mileposts and way-markers throughout the country, and we therefore drew the attention of the Society to the purpose of the posts and the need to conserve them. Both the Warwickshire and Worcestershire branches took an immediate interest, appreciating they were probably unique. The breakthrough was their discovery of a 1913 photograph of the old 'picture house' in Shipston on Stour which happened to include, at one side, the milepost in the centre of Shipston, still complete with its indicator boards. This disclosed, what we had never deduced, that the boards were mounted above the cast iron arms, not suspended below them. (If we had been able to see the slot in the top of the (very tall) posts, we might have fared better.)

The photograph was very indistinct and a section of it was included in a further piece in Midland Mail No.167/16, titled "Posts with a (real) Purpose". Subsequently the Milestone Society was able to have the image of the Shipston milepost enlarged and digitally enhanced. It is to their immense credit that they now involved the local council and the local history society at Long Compton and inspired them to agree that restoration of one or more of these posts was highly desirable. An initial application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding was unsuccessful but the Society persevered and a second application, highlighting the value of the project to the local community, was successful. Not only was one post to be restored but six surviving posts, regardless of condition, were to be included in the project. (Since then, a seventh post has been discovered in a private garden at Kenilworth.)



The posts were taken up, no mean feat in some cases where the base of the posts had become buried much deeper than intended, and they were shipped to the Leander company in Derbyshire, a company that has made signposts and fingerposts for a hundred years. Here the posts were stripped of their paint, not sand-blasted, and the

original green colour confirmed. Using one of the best of the surviving iron arms as a template, new arms were cast for posts with their ornate arms broken or missing. As we had suspected, the posts bore no indication of their place or date of manufacture. Helpfully, the Victoria and Albert Museum has dated the acanthus leaf design of the decorative arms to between 1810 and 1840.

From the information on the old Shipston board, it was possible to deduce the information the other five mileposts would have carried and reproduction boards, suitably protected against British weather, were drawn up and manufactured. Finally, in July 2017, the six posts were restored to their original positions or as near to them as practical in modern road conditions. Local enquiries suggest they have been greeted with widespread acclaim and that they are considered a glorious addition to the A3400. The Milestone Society has produced an eight-page folded leaflet called "Finding the Way", suggesting walks that include one or more of the restored mileposts and other local features of interest.



The restored milepost at Long Compton.
(Courtesy of the Milestone Society)

There remains the question of who built and paid for these unique mileposts and when? The Stratford on Avon to Long Compton Turnpike Trust was set up in 1729 and was one of the first. The last relevant Act of Parliament in 1818 extended it from Long Compton to Chapel House, a point just south of the Banbury-Chipping Norton crossroads. The new road south of Long Compton was completed in 1825 by the contractor, John Roe, who was also the contractor for the Stratford-Moreton in Marsh tramway, mentioned earlier. He received large payments from the Turnpike Trust, of which we have no details. Did his work include the provision and erection of new mileposts and was he given a free hand? Perhaps the mileposts were paid for by Sir George Philips who rebuilt Weston Hall in about 1830 and who allegedly persuaded the Trust to divert the turnpike route away from Weston Park to its present line in order to stop the public viewing his home? Might the fancy mileposts have been a sop to local opinion? We may never know the answer but we can only be grateful that someone transformed the mundane into the magnificent markers we can see restored today.

RESPONSE TO: FURTHER THOUGHTS ON A 1796 BOSTON, MA TO LUDLOW COVER

by Ian M May

I am responding to Ian Baker's article 'Further thoughts on a 1796 Boston, Ma to Ludlow Cover'^[1], in which two possible areas of confusion regarding internal English and Welsh rates between 1784 and 1797 are mentioned. The first is how the additional charges described in the 1784 Act^[2] should be applied to letters passing through London. The second is about the introduction of charging of letters by total mileage, which is discussed later in this article.

In order to appreciate why the confusion occurred it is necessary to recap on what applied prior to the 1784 Act to letters passing through London. Letters were charged for two separate journeys, i.e. to London from the office of posting and from London to the destination Office. The 1784 Act brought forward two changes. The first change was that for all rates for letters carried below 150 miles an additional 1d should be charged. The second change was that for a letter carried above 150 miles an additional 2d should be charged, effectively adding an additional rate for letters travelling more than 150 miles. It is important to appreciate that the Act does not give details of the rate but states the additional charge to the previous rate to be made. David Robinson^[3], states "*Taken literally, the Act said just one extra charge of a 1d or 2d should have been added according to whether the total was below or above 150 miles: thus the combined charges should have been a penny or two less than the combined new rates to and from London*", (I have replaced above or below with below or above as I consider this is what was intended). This implies that the charge to London would be at the rate given in the 1784 Act and the charge from London to the letters destination would be at the rate given in the 1765 Act, the previous act. For comprehensive details of the rates see, for example, references 3 and 4. It is possible to see how confusion could occur! In order to examine the effect of this confusion in practice I have looked at a number of covers. The comments I make are based on a relatively small number of covers, details in the Appendix, as the criteria a cover has to satisfy is that it is from the period 1784 to 1797 and it has to have passed through London.

For the covers detailed in the Appendix the total rate and the make up of the rate and relevant Act for each cover is given.

What conclusions can be drawn from the covers described in the Appendix? The first is that there was, as expected, confusion! The second is that from the small number of covers described there is no pattern, and the confusion lasted until 1797, when the next rate change became effective. If the cover described in reference 1 is included then there are 4 covers rated using both the 1784 and 1765 Acts and 4 with only the 1784 Act, so either method of calculation of the rates is equally as likely, but the sample is very small. It is only letters passing through London, and the rate from London, which would be applied in London, to the destination office that is affected, so it is rather surprising that at some time after 1784 the system was not regularised.

The second confusion is about the date when charging letters based on the total distance began. Sandford and Salt^[4], following details of the rates in the 1784 Act, add the following: "*[NOTE: From the earliest days the majority of letters passed through London & were charged for two separate journeys – ie from the place of origin to London and again to the destination. Under this Act letters were no longer charged for two separate journeys. A single charge was raised on the distance a letter was carried from the place of origin to the destination]*". My assumption is that what it was intended to say is "*From the earliest days the majority of letters passing through London were charged for two separate journeys*".

However, Sandford and Salt, appear to have interpreted the 1784 Act incorrectly. The reason may be because of the wording in the Act. For each of the rate changes the Act states that, for example the increase in rate for letters carried between eighty and one hundred and fifty miles, "*For the Port and Conveyance of every single letter conveyed or carried above eighty English miles and not exceeding one hundred and fifty English miles distant from the office where such letters may be put in within that said part of the Kingdom of Great Britain called England the sum of one penny*". No mention is made in the Act about separate charges for letter passing through London. But the Act details the increases in the rates and does not change the method of charging. My conclusion is that Sandford and Salt assumed, incorrectly, that the act changed the method of charging to total mileage.

The 1797 Act^[5] is clear in that it gives the actual rates based on total mileage, for example the rate for letters carried between thirty and sixty miles is stated as "*For the Port and Conveyance of every single letter conveyed or carried by the Post above thirty measured miles and not exceeding sixty measured miles distant from the office where such letters may be put in to the office where such letters may be delivered within that part of Great Britain afore mentioned the sum of 5d*". This is clearly a change in the method of charging for the carrying of letters and no mention is made of separate charges for letter passing through London. As an aside, is it possible there was a notice to postal staff in London explaining the change in policy?

It seems likely that in writing the Midlands Mileage Mark^[6] book, that states 1784 as the year at which letters were charged on total mileage, that Sandford and Salt was used as the reference. This is an error.

In order to add further evidence to the fact that letters were not charged on total mileage prior to 1797 I have included for the items in the Appendix the charge based on total mileage using the 1784 rates. It can be seen that they are somewhat different to the rates that were applied to the letters.

References

- 1 Baker I., Further thoughts on a 1796 Boston Ma to Ludlow cover, Midland Mail, p21, No. 196, October 2017.
- 2 Act of Parliament. 1784 24 George III Cap 37, enacted 31 August 1784.
- 3 Robinson D., For the Port and Carriage of Letters, Privately published, 1990.
- 4 Sandford O. R. and Salt D., British Postal Rates, 1635 to 1839, The Postal History Society, London, 1990
- 5 Act of Parliament. 1796 37 George III Cap 18, enacted 5 January 1797.
- 6 The Midland Counties Mileage Marks and Mail Routes to London 1784 – 1840, The Midland (GB) Postal History Society, 2005.

Appendix

7 th January 1785	Warwick – Aylesbury	Charged 8d
	Warwick – London	96 miles 1784 rate 5d
	London – Aylesbury	39 miles 1765 rate 3d
	Total mileage	135 miles Rate based on total mileage, 5d
5 th March 1787	Windsor – Coventry	Charged 7d
	Windsor – London	20 miles – 1784 rate 3d, 2 post stages
	London – Coventry	92 miles – 1765 rate 4d
	The item initially rated in London at 8d and then revised to 7d	
	Total mileage	112 miles Rate based on total mileage, 5d
8 th August 1789	Coventry – Ryde	Charged 9d
	Coventry – London	92 miles – 1784 rate 5d
	London – Ryde	63 miles – 1784 rate 4d
	Total mileage	155 miles Rate based on total mileage, 6d
2 nd December 1791	Coventry – Lincoln	Charged 2/6d
	Coventry – London	92 miles – 1784 triple rate 1/3d
	London – Lincoln	132 miles – 1784 rate 4d triple rate 1/3d
	Total mileage	224 miles Rate based on total mileage, 6d
11 th May 1792	Cambridge – Rugby	Charged 9d
	Cambridge – London	51 miles – 1784 rate 4d
	London – Rugby	85 miles – 1784 rate 5d
	Total mileage	136 miles Rate based on total mileage, 5d
18 th March 1793	Windsor – Kidderminster	Charged 7d
	Windsor – London	20 miles – 1784 rate 3d – 2 post stages
	London – Kidderminster	26 miles – 1784 rate 4d triple rate 1/3d
	Total mileage	146 miles Rate based on total mileage, 5d
	Re-directed to Coventry.	
6 th December 1794	Hertfordshire – Southam	Charged 6d
	Hertfordshire – London	10 miles 1 post stage – 1784 rate 2d
	London – Southam	83 miles – 1765 rate 4d
	Total mileage	93 miles Rate based on total mileage, 5d

I feel guilty just showing that cover at Loughborough, never mind trying to explain the rate – Ed!!!!

A SLOW EXPRESS LETTER

by John Soer

The illustration below shows an express letter sent through the Railway Letter Service from Buxton to Bristol in August 1916. The 4d adhesive prepaid the Express Letter fee of 3d a mile, for carriage from the post office to the station, plus 1d postage. The addressee would be liable for an extra fee for an express letter if the total distance covered by messengers was over one mile. The sender had to telegraph the postmaster of the express delivery office nearest to the station of arrival, asking him to send a messenger to meet the train. The sender was responsible for the time of arrival being correctly stated in the telegram.



Fig 1, 1916 MIDLAND RAILWAY letter from Buxton to Bristol

The envelope was endorsed by the sender, 'per 9.50 train', and, presumably by the Post Office messenger in Bristol, or possibly the addressee on making a complaint was added, 'met 2 trains – no letter. Later Rly Co: telephoned that letter was there'.

The Midland timetable of July 1916 has a train leaving Buxton at 9.50 a.m. from which passengers for 'London, Birmingham and beyond Birmingham' would be picked up at Miller's Dale by the 9.20 a.m. from Manchester to London which contained a through carriage for Bristol where it arrived at 1.52 p.m. Subsequent arrivals in Bristol from Derby were at 3.52 p.m. and 5.25 p.m., so it seems probable that the letter did not arrive in Bristol until 5.25 p.m. Where did it go between leaving Buxton and arriving in Bristol over three hours later than expected? Did the guard of the train from Manchester forget to hand it to the guard of the train for Bristol when the through coach was removed from the London train?

Had there been a missed connection at Miller's Dale, then surely the letter should have arrived at 3.52 p.m. I imagine that the guard of the London train forgot about the letter until the London train was some way south of Derby, and then had to send it Back to Derby from somewhere like Leicester.

Editor – May I suggest that there are many other gems of railway postal history out there involving TPOs or Railway Letters from some of the more obscure lines. Many of the latter are philatelic but, let's face it, if it wasn't for enthusiasts like Mr A. Wilson and others we wouldn't have examples of these covers. Any offers for other articles?

THE 8d RATE TO INDIA via BRINDISI PAID BY THE 8d ORANGE (SG 156)



Fig 1, 1879 cover from HIGH FERRERS to Jhelum, Punjab, showing SEA POST OFFICE on the reverse.

Derek Smeathers has reported the fine cover above, which shows an 8d orange cancelled by a scarce 363 3VOS of Higham Ferrers together with a HIGHAM FERRERS date stamp for JA 23 79. It was carried on the P&O *Venetia* from Suez on 31 January, Aden 6 February, arriving at Bombay on 14 February, delivered to Jhelum on 17 February.

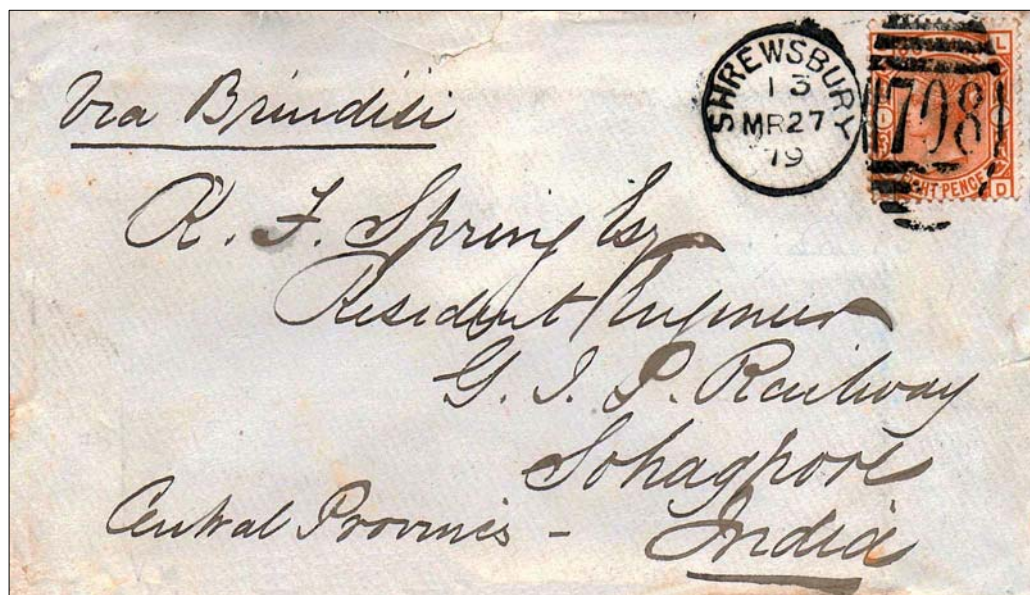
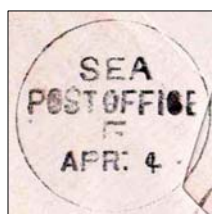


Fig 2, shows another example of the use of the 8d orange to pay the 8d rate first announced in GPO Notice 20 / 76 dated 1 July 1876. The cover, dated 27 May 1879 from Shrewsbury to Sohagpore (now Sohagpur), was carried on the P&O *Pera* from Brindisi on 31 March, arriving Alexandria 3 April, then overland to Suez and taken on from Suez by the P&O *Bangalore*, which arrived at Bombay on 15 April 1879.



If there is a railway enthusiast reading this please let the editor know if any connection can be established between R. F. Spring, the addressee and described as Resident Engineer, and the Great Indian Peninsula railway for he has not been able to find one, reference appreciated!

CORRECT USE OF A HALFPENNY POSTAGE DUE

by Chris Jackson

The Postage Due system normally applies a double charge for the missing postage, consequently the amount due is usually a minimum of a penny for a halfpenny shortage. There are very few situations when a halfpenny Postage Due is the correct charge. One of them occurs with the treatment of 'On Active Service' mail from soldiers. Forces on active service had free postage whilst in the field but not when in the UK. When in the UK if posted unpaid Forces mail only attracted a single postage due rate charge not the usual double rate.

This card was posted in Shooters Hill London on 22nd January 1915, the writer has written ON ACTIVE / SERVICE where the stamp should be placed and it has been sent unpaid but charged the single rate for a postcard, a halfpenny. Shooters Hill have placed the ½^D / 73 handstamp and manuscript 'Single Rate' in blue crayon, and Bromsgrove have attached a halfpenny Postage Due stamp and cancelled it with a cds for the day following posting.



JANE AUSTEN AND THE POST OFFICE

by John Calladine

Jane Austen (1775-1817) wrote six of arguably the greatest novels ever written in the English language. 2017 was the bicentenary of her death. She often made reference to a post office in her novels but in "Emma", the last novel published in her lifetime in 1815, she says more about the Post Office in general. Putting words into the mouths of Jane Fairfax and Mr John Knightly, she writes;

"The Post Office is a wonderful institution" says Jane Fairfax, "the regularity and dispatch of it! If one thinks of all that it has to do, and all that it does so well. It is really astonishing!" "It is certainly very well regulated" replies John Knightly. "So seldom that any negligence or blunder appears!" continues Jane. "So seldom that a letter, among the thousands that are passing about the kingdom, is even carried wrong – and not one in a million, I suppose, actually lost! And when one considers the variety of hands, and of bad hands too, that are to be deciphered, it increases the wonder"

"The clerks grow expert from habit – They must begin with some quickness of hand, and exercise improves them." responds John Knightly. "If you want any further explanation, they are paid for it. That is the key to a great deal of capacity. The public pays and must be served well."

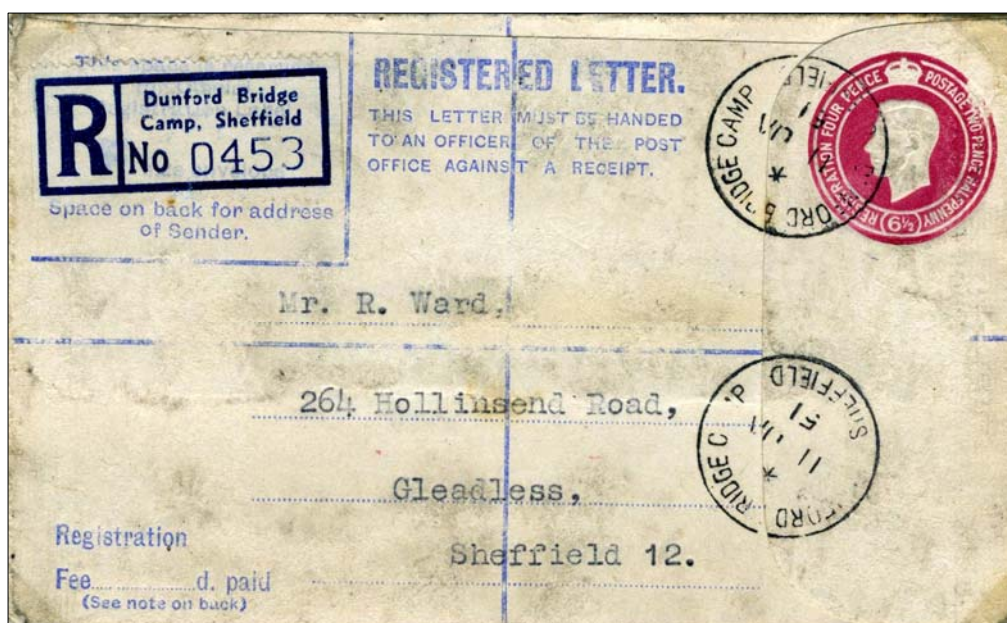
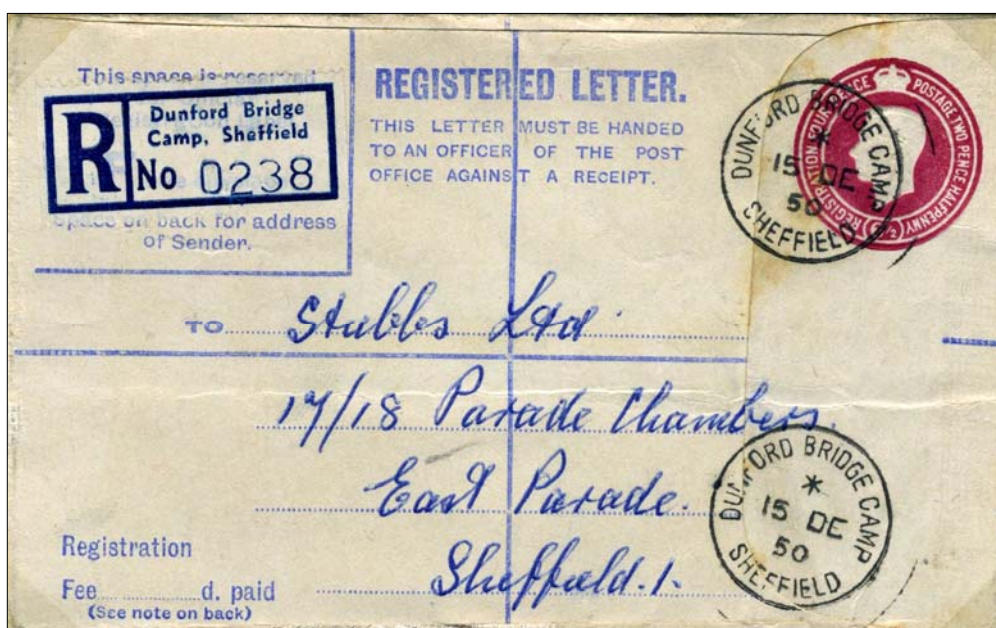
Would the same be written today?

DUNFORD BRIDGE CAMP

by Frank Walton RDP FRPSL

In *Midland Mail* in 2011 (Number 171, page 10, August 2011) John Soer wrote about the somewhat elusive post office known as Dunford Bridge Camp. To recap, this sub-office to Sheffield was temporarily established in the workers' camp at the eastern end of the Woodhead tunnel development. The tunnel went from Derbyshire in the west and into Yorkshire in the east. As far as I can ascertain, the camp was situated a few hundred metres inside Yorkshire, and is believed to have opened in 1949 and closed on 28 October 1953.

For the past few years I have been researching and writing a book on *The Postmarks of Sheffield*. This work covers over 300 sub-offices, several dozen of which are in Derbyshire. I have now had a wonderful opportunity to record the magnificent collection of this material formed by the late Ron Ward. This collection is still intact as written up by Ron, and the present owner was delighted to allow me to take 2,000 scans! He is also happy for *Midland Mail* to publish images of the two covers shown below – quite possible the only two that exist today.



Two DUNFORD BRIDGE CAMP, SHEFFIELD Registered items: Top 15 DEC 1950, Bottom 11 JAN 1951



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