

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Number 183, August 2014

Thank you for entrusting me with the editorship of Midland Mail. I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to make a contribution to the Society in this way, and only hope I can do as good a job as my predecessor, John Soer. Whether I am able to make similar pithy observations about the location of Post Office Archives or our postal system in general remains to be seen. I would like to thank John for all his help with the transition. I shall certainly do my best and I welcome any hints, comments or words of advice and, of course, plenty of articles, small or (preferably!) large, unless you want lengthy and infinitely detailed accounts of obscure Shropshire postal history! I have a remit to include colour, so please send colour copies of your covers with your hand-written articles; especially if they have those colourful labels we call stamps. It would be helpful if you are e-mailing to have a WORD document; I can open all versions I have tried to open, so far. It would be even better if the document had top and bottom margins of 2.54cm, which I think is the default, and the side margins of 2.2cm as well as being written in Times New Roman 10pt. If they are not in the body of the article, send any scans as a separate e-mail attachment. Tell me where to place them in the article; scans at 300dpi are best. My contact details are as follows.

E-mail: sniktab@gmail.com Brian Atkins, 1, Mount Pleasant, Ruabon, Wrexham, LL14 6DT, 01978 821 488

THE SOCIETY'S 40th ANNIVERSARY

The Midland (GB) Postal History Society was founded in 1975 and 2015 will therefore be the Society's 40th anniversary. It seems there are only three current members who joined in 1975; by the end of 1976 the Society had 30 members. If we wait until the 50th anniversary to celebrate the occasion, a couple of the founders may be a little long in the tooth for partying. It is suggested that the Society celebrate the anniversary with a social event in the early summer of 2015. One proposal is to hire our own launch on the river at Stratford on Avon for an hour and a half cruise up river (including transit of a lock) and, on our return to the town centre, to enjoy an informal lunch at a bistro overlooking the river. The overall cost would be about £25 a head and certainly not more than £30. (This assumes, of course, it is unsubsidised in any way by the Society.) The advantage of such an arrangement is that it would enable members and partners / guests to mix freely. Is there wide support for a celebration? Please advise John Calladine, our newly-elected president, by e-mail or phone (john.calladine@mac.com or 01249-758148) and indicate whether you approve of the idea and whether you would wish to make any suggestions for an alternative form of celebration. Would your preference be for a mid-week event or should it be on a Saturday?

NEW MEMBER

We welcome Miss Marion Turner of Zuidhorn, Netherlands, who collects Loughborough and east Leicestershire.

THE MARCH MEETING

Our March meeting, as in February, attracted 20 members and guests. Held at Sharp's Pottery Museum in Swadlincote, Derbyshire, on Saturday 1st March, the meeting was billed simply as a display of "*Shropshire Postal History*" by Brian Atkins. What we were given, in fact, was an exemplary use of Power Point to tell the story of "*Mail between Shropshire and the Far East, to include India, Ceylon and China, c1801 to 1936*". This is only the third Power Point display one can recall at the Society and it emphasised just how effectively the program

may be used to ensure that the audience can see and appreciate every detail of the items shown. The use of relevant photographs added further interest.

Brian began by telling us that most of his presentation would be of mail to and from India, with Bombay the Indian port through which most of the covers shown had passed. There were four main routes from England to Bombay. There was the long sea route from Falmouth via West Africa and round The Cape (later Mauritius) first travelled in 1579, albeit not for mail! From 1843, ships used Southampton rather than Falmouth and sailed to the Mediterranean, calling at Malta and Alexandria, from whence letters travelled overland across Egypt to the Red Sea before resuming a sea journey to Bombay. The third and quicker route was overland to Marseilles, initially from August 1837 and regularly from August 1839, before crossing the Med to Alexandria and, finally, from October 1869 overland to Brindisi in Southern Italy and from that port to Alexandria. The use of steam ships, rather than sailing ships, began in the 1820s.

Early letters were carried as Ship Letters or by the East India Company, with the first Packet Rate established in January 1835. We saw an early cover dated c1801 coming from Madras to Shropshire charged 5/- (to be collected), five times the combined 4d Ship Letter Rate of 1799 and 8d inland charge to Shropshire. An 1806 cover from Madras was rated at 2/2d, also to be collected, and was carried by HMS *Thalia*, a ship that only two years later was patrolling the Greenland fisheries. A March 1827 letter from Mhow to Shrewsbury had an INDIA LETTER SOUTHAMPTON mark and took a passage time of 169 days, whereas outgoing letters of 1827 from Shrewsbury to Madras and 1838 from Ludlow to Bombay took 110 and 116 days respectively.

We were now in the steamship era and we saw two covers of 1845 from Southampton, one to Kolapore of 20th July 1845 carried on the first twice-monthly sailing of the *Great Liverpool* to Alexandria and thence overland via Egypt to the Red Sea. Notable was an 1847 cover to Wem, which was not only MISSENT TO BIRMINGHAM but twice forwarded into Lincolnshire. All items we had seen so far had been unpaid or paid in cash and the first with a postage stamp was in 1850 from the village of Munslow to Bombay, forwarded to Baroda, with a 1/- embossed adhesive paying the packet rate. An 1857 cover was in transit during the beginning of the Indian Mutiny of May of that year, with the addressee being “murdered by mutineers” at Muttragur a day after the cover arrived at Bombay. Three covers were shown at the reduced rate of 6d, via Southampton, and an incoming cover of 1869 charged ‘11d to pay’, having lost its 2 anna stamp somewhere on its journey. It became noticeable that the sea transit route was now hovering around a time of 35 days, a remarkable reduction from the 100+ days of the sailing ships around The Cape. The pioneer of the overland routes to India across Europe and Egypt was Thomas Waghorn. He offered to carry letters for 5/-. He clashed with Francis Freeling, Secretary to the Post Office, in that he wanted to carry letters overland to Trieste, while Freeling preferred Marseilles. The Marseilles section of Brian’s display began with an 1841 letter from Shrewsbury to Calcutta, written by Thomas Farmer Dukes to his daughter, Mrs Panting. Mr Dukes headed his letter with a drawing of his residence, Windsor Place, Shrewsbury. (Brian showed us a recent photograph of the house, which had changed very little.) The 2/8d rate on the letter arose from a British rate of 1/10d per half ounce and a French rate of 10d per quarter ounce, written on the outside. This practice was to continue with the Anglo-French Convention of 1843, reducing the rates to 1/5d British and 5d French on an 1848 cover. Rates came to the fore with an 1853 cover bearing two 1/- embossed stamps paying either 2d too much for the quarter ounce rate or 3d too little for the half ounce rate! An 1859 cover showed the reduced rate of 9d per quarter ounce and two items of 1860 and 1861 were sent at 1/6d, a rate that did not exist. (It is surmised the sender assumed the half ounce rate was double the quarter ounce rate, which it was not.) The later covers via Marseilles were now taking around 25 days to reach Bombay. Sailings were twice monthly and it was very apparent to anyone unfamiliar with this subject that, as the transit speed increased, the rates reduced.

Mail was first transported overland to Brindisi on 6th October 1869, by the ‘Fell Railway’, crossing the Alps between Modane (France) and Susa (Italy). By 1872, the Mont Cenis railway tunnel was open, which further reduced the time taken to reach Brindisi. The first cover we saw carried via Brindisi dated from 1873 and took only 19 days from Shrewsbury to Simla. Outstanding was a cover to Martin Sandbach at the 8d rate with four pairs of 1d reds and one to Sohagpore (now Sohagpur) franked with the 8d orange, plate 1. By January 1880, all mail to India was going via Brindisi and a letter of 1883, using the Suez Canal, took 16 days in transit. From 1888, when a Post Office contract was awarded, full use was made of the Canal. The highlight of this section of the display was the chance to see different stamps paying the 5d rate and an incoming letter from Murree was franked with a single 4 anna 6 pie stamp. The section ended with Soldiers’ Letters, a first day cover of the Imperial Penny Post, possibly sent by Sir John Henniker Heaton from Ellesmere (with 14 days sea transit), and a variety of 1d and 1 anna covers.

We were now taken further east beyond Bombay and were treated to an 1859 cover to Colombo (the 6d lilac cancelled by an Oswestry ‘spoon’); an 1868 cover rated 1/4d to Singapore and a double rate 5d cover of 1892 to Bangkok. A 9d rate cover of 1858 from Wellington to Shanghai, a 1911 postcard franked with a Hong Kong 4¢ red

but cancelled SHANGHAI BR(ITISH) P.O. sent via the Trans Siberian Railway to Wem and two early 19th century letters from Ludlow, sent to Shanghai via Vancouver, Canada, finished a memorable display.

All the items seen in the display (and more) were available for inspection on the display boards around the room. In his vote of thanks, the Chairman, Chris Jackson, referred to the computer skills that had made this display exceptional. He also commented on the difficulty of accumulating so many items to and from a county such as Shropshire and how superb many of the items had been. The reception the display received was proof enough of its enjoyment by the members. (*Thanks to John Calladine for this report*)

THE APRIL MEETING – AGM and AUCTION

The 2014 Annual General Meeting was held on 26 April 2014 at St Germain's Church Hall, Birmingham with 20 members and one visitor present. Apologies were received from Ian Baker, Richard Farman, Trevor Radway and Jan Young. The minutes of the 2013 AGM as published in Midland Mail No 179 were accepted as a correct record with no matters arising.

The chairman said the year had passed very quickly; it did not seem eleven months since the Society held its first 'open' display afternoon with no fixed topic. This had worked very well and he looked forward to everyone bringing a display for the 'open' meeting to be held at WORPEX in two weeks. There had been three main speakers during the year. The talk at Kington St Michael by Alan Holyoake on "*Secured delivery leading to the introduction of Registration 1450 to 1862*" had been exceptional and quite easily the best display of postal history he had ever seen. Those unable to attend had missed a truly superb display. Richard Farman's "*Napoleonic Prisoners of War in the Midlands*" was also special and included much material he didn't know existed and lots of new facts. Brian Atkins' "*The story of mail between Shropshire and the Far East to include India, Ceylon and China*" had broken new ground with a large screen computerised presentation (a Power Point) and also the superb material on display. Members' displays at the other meetings had all produced varied material and it remained true that it is amazing just what members have in their collections. The common theme was that all meetings were enjoyable and, although venues and subjects changed, there was always a wealth of material and erudite speakers with friendship clearly in evidence.

He wished to thank all the officers, managers and committee members for their support during the year, especially Mick Gill for his work as Secretary and Mel Matthews with the difficult job of Programme Secretary. Three long-serving officers were standing down: Eric Lewis who retired last year but, due to circumstances had continued as Treasurer; John Soer who was retiring for the second time after stepping back into the role of editor of Midland Mail when Sadie Cole died; and John Calladine who was retiring as Co-ordinating editor. He thanked all three for their dedication and support to the Society over many years.

Alan Godfrey distributed accounts for the year ending 31st March. Although there had been an overall deficit of £657.46, that after allowing for the publication, launch and sales of the Midland County Catalogue, income and expenditure had been much the same as in previous years. Subscriptions were lower as seven members had died or resigned and others had not paid by the end of the year. The chairman thanked Alan and accepted the meeting's formal agreement to the accounts. He also announced the subscriptions would remain at £10 a year.

On behalf of the editor of Midland Mail, the chairman said there had been four issues during the year each of about 24 pages. However, the gremlins had struck at two issues, once when the editor's printer broke down and a file became corrupted when transferred to disc for printing, and the other when a page went missing out of an issue during printing. He wished to thank all who had written articles and Eric and Sharon for arranging the printing and distribution, not an easy task with over 100 copies involved. He also thanked Mick Gill and John Calladine for collating reports of meetings he had been unable to attend. Finally, he recorded his heartfelt thanks to all members who had submitted summaries of their displays and asked that members support Brian Atkins, the editor-elect, by inundating him with so many articles that he is spoilt for choice!

As Co-ordinating editor, John Calladine said that the launch of the Midland County Catalogue at the Botanical Gardens, Birmingham had been a great success with the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress in attendance. The cost of the launch had been covered partly by those attending and partly by the Cavendish Auctions advertisement in the catalogue. It had been agreed that a deficit of up to £750 could be absorbed but in the end the figure had been around £500. To date 166 copies have been sold, overall costs had been recouped and the Society was £200 in profit. No Society publication, to date, had ever incurred a loss. He wished to thank Martin Scroggs for his computer skills and sterling work on the catalogue and all members who had provided information for inclusion.

There was no Publicity Manager's report.

Alan Godfrey explained that membership of the ABPS comprised 264 local and specialist societies with a combined total of 16,000 individual members. A new leaflet 'Open Philately' had been issued to increase interest and data was currently being collected for a 2015 handbook. A revised draft constitution had been sent to member societies and an EGM convened for 26th July 2014 to vote on it. He would attend and represent the society.

The Chairman outlined the changes in the Officers and Managers of the Society that were proposed. He thanked Alan Marshall for serving as President for the last three years and nominated John Calladine for election as his replacement. This was agreed. Agreement was also given for the election of Alan Godfrey as Treasurer, Brian Atkins as Editor, Midland Mail and Martin Scroggs as the Co-ordinating editor. There were no changes to the Manager and County Editor appointments and all incumbents were re-elected. Gordon Hardy was elected Examiner of Accounts.

The Chairman said that the current year's programme was the last prepared by Richard Farman, who stepped down as Programme Secretary at last year's AGM. He wished to record thanks to Richard for his commitment to the role over his five years in office. Mel Matthews gave details of the programme for 2014 / 15, viz:

6 SEP 2014	Ladybird Pub, Bromsgrove	1.30pm	Redditch Society member's displays
11 OCT	Warwick and Warwick	11.00am	Committee meeting
		1.30pm	Colin Such, 30 years on the Rostrum
8 NOV	St. Germain's, Birmingham	1.30pm	Ian May, Warwickshire Postal History
6 DEC	Brewery Museum, Burton-on-Trent		Christmas meeting with lunch
10 JAN 2015	St. Germaine's, Birmingham	1.30pm	Maps
14 FEB	Black Country Museum	1.30pm	Censored Mail
7 MAR	Pottery Museum, Swadlincote	1.30pm	The Railways Cometh
25 APR	St. Germaine's, Birmingham	1.00pm	AGM
		1.30	Annual Auction
10 MAY	WORPEX, Worcester	1.30pm	Member's Choice of Topic.

The Chairman announced the winner of the Jon Baker Trophy as Alan Marshall for his article "Bingham – Nottinghamshire". The trophy was presented to Alan by Derek Smeathers, last year's winner.

John Calladine reminded members that 2015 would see the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the Society and suggested that a summer event could be held to mark the occasion. He would put something in Midland Mail to stimulate ideas. The Chairman agreed with the suggestion and pointed out that some of the founder members of the Society were still active.

The meeting closed at 1.30pm and, after a short break, the annual auction commenced.

THE AUCTION

Alan Godfrey reports that total sales were £3391.00 with the percentage of lots sold at 55.2%. The commission and lotting fees earned by the society was £406.70 with the lots sold for club funds realising £38.00. There were 10 sellers and a grand total of 36 buyers.

Prices Realised – Please see page 11

THE MAY MEETING

Our meeting in Worcester on 10th May again took the format of short talks and a board display on any topic of interest. The enthusiastic response of the group resulted in a wide, and very interesting range of talks with some excellent displays. This provided an opportunity for members to share aspects of their own particular collections, some of which had not previously been exhibited. There were 24 members present and 20 presentations. The time available for each talk was limited, but the variety held the attention of everyone and, remarkably, the whole business was completed within just the right timescale. Thanks to everyone who contributed, and to those who supported. Further details of the talks can be found below (not in any particular order – I will be better prepared to take notes in future!) and many thanks to all those who sent me a synopsis of their display either in long hand or by e-mail.

John Soer, who gave the first display, took for his theme 'Two for the Price of One'. The C4 type undated circles are not easy to find but his first cover show two different examples of this type – Tilton-on-the-Hill and Billesdon. Next came a cover showing on the reverse the D1 UDC of Waltham (-on-the-Wolds), but the adhesive on the front had been cancelled with the rare '073' hand stamp. So, to avoid cutting the envelope to show both marks, it was

necessary to find another cover showing the '073' which this time cancelled an 1854 2d blue. Unfortunately, the reverse showed a superb strike of the Waltham C2 UDC. Clearly, another cover with a strike of the Waltham C2 was necessary. This John duly produced, but the reverse showed a strike of the UDC of Harby. No other cover showing the UDC of Harby appeared so John would be delighted to hear from anyone who has one to spare. The ½d vermilion cancelled by a double circle of Leicester on the envelope containing John's final item may have appeared mundane, but inside the envelope was a superbly illustrated bill from the Midland Gun Works in Leicester.



Illustrated bill from the Midland Gun Works in Leicester

Roy Summers delighted us with two 1d Mulreadys, one with a TETTENHALL udc and the other with a BREWOOD straight-line. The late use of a scarce 2d Mulready was cancelled with the 905 of Wolverhampton. A Staffordshire cover had udc's of LONGDON and WOLSTANTON and his final item was sent from LICHFIELD RAF post office 2 years after the office closed. The first day cover was dated 3rd May 1951 and the office closed on 4th January 1949! So, what's the explanation? Any ideas anyone?

Paul Bradshaw showed Northampton town marks of 1730 from Brixworth, 1739 from the Earl of Home giving instructions for the sending of Boots by the first coach, 1743, 1749 in longhand from Dr Doddridge, who usually wrote in shorthand so nobody would know what he had written (unless you could read his shorthand, of course!), two from 1761 one of which was the earliest recorded, 1773, 1774, 1777 and 1787.

Mick Gill took us to the small village of Newton-on-Trent in Lincolnshire, 15 miles north of Newark on the Gainsborough road. By 1780 the village had a 3-day a week post and its own handstamp, with examples of 1796 (the auction item which inspired the display) and 1799 shown. A May 1817 cover to Weymouth, redirected to Brighton and the PO in Southampton had charges of 10d, 1/-, 1/8, 2/3 and 2/4. Mick asked for help but I don't know whether he received any! A map of the route of the six-day penny post service together with a prepaid 1836 example was displayed. He finished with udc's of 1844 (with serif), 1850 (sans-serif) and single circles of 1870, 1907 and 1908.

Alan Marshall showed 'Bunny' including a facsimile of the BUNNY udc. A parcel post label from the Looe Rabbitories, Cornwall and German postcards showing hares, classed as rabbits in Germany, boggled the mind. There were Beatrix Potter issues with Bunny cancels, first day covers of the RSPCA rabbit stamp, covers of the 2008 rabbit issue, one addressed to Dennis Rabbit of Wm. Hare & Co., Bolton (honestly?). A wonderfully fun display ended with a Player's Weights advertising card displaying hares and rabbits cigarette cards.

Talking of fun, **Eric Winter's** 'Indian Junk Mail' was just that. The postal stationery postcard was introduced in India in June 1879 and within a couple of years businesses had realised that they could be used to advertise their services and their wares - without being aware of names and addresses. The cards were simply addressed to "The Residents" or "The Principal Residents" of the town. Serious "Junk Mail" but with postal markings! There were cards from opticians, department stores and breweries.



A card sent in 1887 from AGRA to Cawnpore from Mr Lazarus the oculist, who announces he will be at the Empress Hotel, Cawnpore (now Kanpur) from the 25th inst! I hope he hurried as his card only arrived on that day!

Only the *PRINCIPAL* EUROPEAN RESIDENTS! Who didn't qualify, how many were sent out?

The e-mail of the day.

John Calladine chose to display some of the more unusual penny post items from Gloucestershire's post towns. They included the scarce Campden Penny Post handstamp on a letter redirected to Northwick Park, a twice-turned Chalford item struck with both a type 2 and a type 4 Chalford penny post stamp on the same day, unique recorded use of a penny post handstamp at Painswick (a sub-office effectively acting as a post town), pre-1840 and post 1840 use of the Stroud Penny Post stamp at the Nailsworth sub-office and the rare TEWKSBURY stamp of the 1790s, with 'Py Post' added in manuscript, struck in the mid-1830s between use of two official penny post stamps.

Clive Jones displayed some 'Odd balls' (Clive's description, not mine!) as they didn't *fit* into any of his collections. A London & Exeter RPO with late fee as there was no 5d rate in 1856. Last day 4d registered on the Shrewsbury & York TPO, which was posted the day after the last day but the train had started ON the last day! Four Sheffield items, two 'More to Pay', a MISSENT / TO / SHEFFIELD with late fee and a Sheffield skeleton in use 5 days.

The Derbyshire shown by **Gordon Hardy** had udc's of ALVASTON and QUORNDON, a BROOK ST straight-line and udc, a HATHERSAGE straight-line as a receiving mark and GREEN LANE, a sub-office of Derby. Two examples of the Matlock Bath cds with date inverted followed used 12 July and 3 August 1840 – see also page 24.

Mel Matthews educated us about self-adhesive stamps, which were first used in Sierra Leone in 1964 and Tonga in 1969 in an attempt to avoid the tendency of traditional water-activated stamps to stick together in humid conditions. Most were manufactured at Walsall in the Midlands and designed by Machin. By the end of 1993 the Post Office experimented with self-adhesives in Tyne and Tees using landscape booklets and a portrait format in 1998. Now you can have them made with your own photo (does the Queen object and what is the world coming to – Ed?).

Bob Viney showed items related to 1st Battalion, Royal Newfoundland Regiment during the First World War. A Field Service card from the Dardanelles campaign dated 26th September 1915 together with a lovely page with a poem about Thomas Ricketts VC (April 15, 1901 – February 10, 1967) who was a Newfoundlander and recipient of the Victoria Cross being the youngest army recipient in a combatant role.

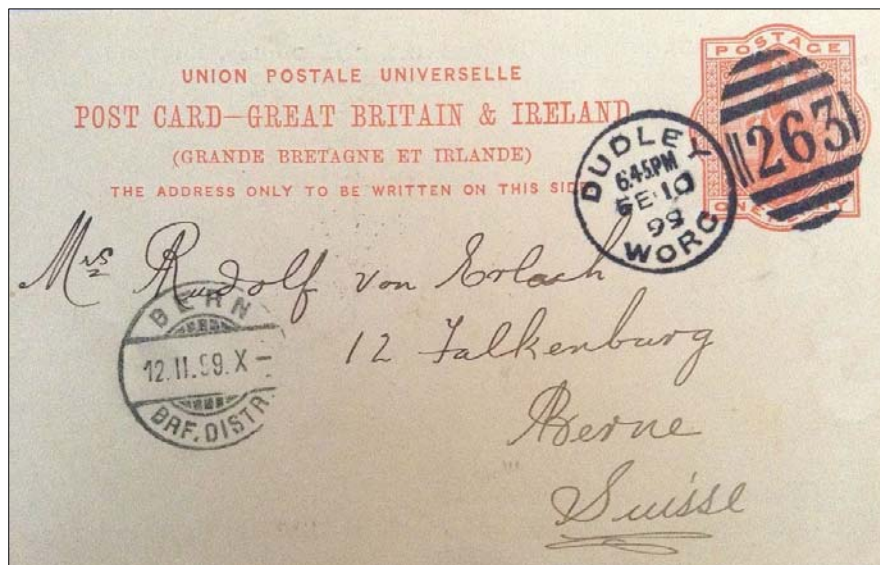
Jan Young spun us a merry yarn, saying she hadn't brought Bishop marks, 1d reds or 2d blues but postcards of the southern end of Bromsgrove, especially the Market and a lamp post which marked the position of the Market Cross! There were lovely post cards of the Market Square, Town Hall (demolished 1928) and the Roundabout House, around which only a horse could pass. Is it still like that and where can I hail a horse to get by?

The numeral handstamps of Dudley formed **Chris Jackson's** display. Dudley was issued with the numeral 263 in the 1844 lists and both black and bright blue copies were displayed. When the Post Office issued the 3HOS in August

1850 they first sent Dudley a 293 handstamp which should have been Faringdon and later made a further error when they sent 392 which should have gone to Lambourn. Chris showed copies of both these errors with clear Dudley backstamps. The rest of the display covered examples of all the remaining 263 numerals of Dudley.



Cover from Dudley dated 27th February 1850 with the unplated 1d red cancelled by the 263 in blue. The date stamp was issued in April 1844 and is known used from 17th July 1849 to 30th October 1850.



1d UPU postcard to Switzerland dated 10th February 1899. The duplex was issued on 7th April 1887 and is known in use from 31st December 1888 until 26th May 1903.

Alan Godfrey gave us Express and Special Delivery items with a letter of 1901 from Nuneaton to Leicester charged 1d postage and 3d for express delivery, it being 1 mile from the delivery office. A 1928 cover to California was franked 1/4½d for no apparent reason. In 1938 the Post Office changed the name of the express service to 'Special Delivery'. The red-brown labels were changed to green and white 'Post Office Special Delivery' labels in the 1960s. On 28th July 1980 three of the four express delivery services were discontinued and the special delivery service was rebranded with new purple and white labels in a variety of styles until this service was discontinued on 27th June 1993 when the system was merged with registration and became part of 'priority services'.

Eric Lewis confirmed that Birmingham sorters had to work until at least 9.20pm on the eve of the New Millennium 1899 by showing us a 31st Dec 1899 card with that time code. His sense of humour came to the fore with a 1916

letter card with a machine cancel from LONDON E.C. on which LONDO had not printed so that it looked like NE.C. Eric wondered how the NEC, which opened in 1976, had got its own postmark 50 years earlier!!!

Pete Elms began with a 1767 BIRMING / HAM, a BIRMINGHAM straight line for 1795 endorsed post paid 1/5 and a convex 1798 horseshoe. Mileage marks of 120 and 109 miles, an 1830 Too Late on a cover to Stourbridge and an 1835 Paid at Birmingham together with a udc of EDGBASTON, an 1855 spoon and an 1858 'Scottish type' followed. Finally a penny post with a faint straight line Handsworth plus P^x P / N^o 15 used between 28th January 1830 and 17th April 1838.



The 1798 horseshoe on an entire letter to Rochdale, charged 6d for 60 to 100 miles (Act of 1796).

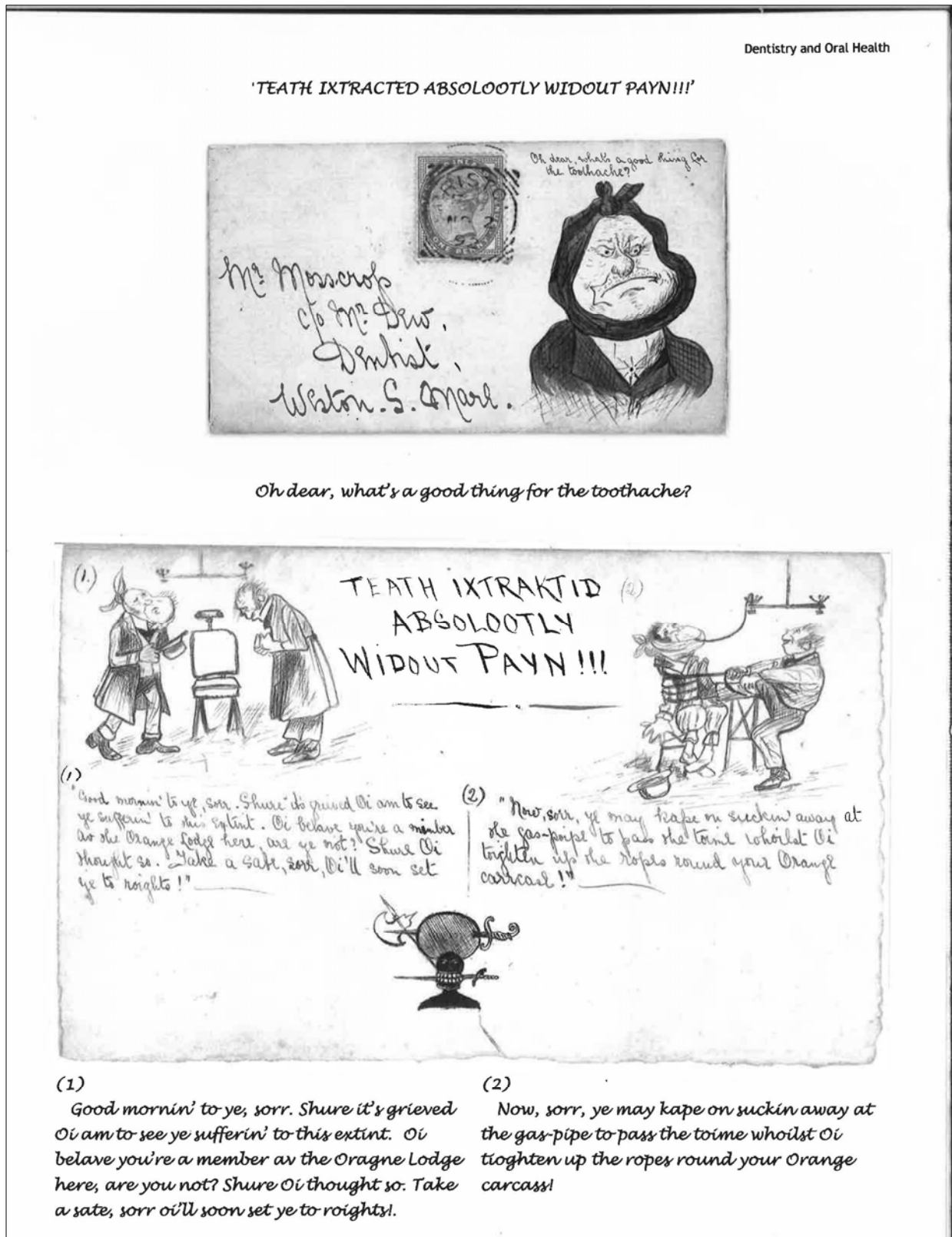
My very poor notes will not do justice to **Richard Farman**'s display of "To be Delivered Free or was it used for overcharged mail?" I am sorry, Richard, but I will be better organised next time. Send me an e-mail!

Brian Atkins' display was of covers between Shropshire and Canada. An entire letter carried privately from Shrewsbury to New York entered the mails there on 17th August 1833. The 25cents to the Canadian border was changed to 1N3 Canadian currency and five stages and five charges later the letter reached Sydney Mines, Nova Scotia for 4/2 collect. A 3rd July 1881 cover from Victoria, BC to Wrockwardine, near Wellington, forwarded to Birmingham had the 5 cent UPU rate paid by two 2¢ green and a 1¢ yellow small queens. It was carried on the Inman Line City of Chester from New York on 16th July, arriving at Liverpool on 26th July 1881.



July 1881 cover from Victoria, BC, Canada to Wrockwardine, Wellington, Salop.

Stuart Geddes pages of 'Dentistry and Oral Health' were worthy of the first page being produced in its entirety; the others would have taken up the rest of the issue. But *health*? Never! Reminds me of Mr Metcalfe Bond, my first dentist growing up in Wem, who had some sort of foot operated drill but I was too scared to look down to see how it worked. His attractive assistant would take your hand to help take the pain away! A visit to Mr Metcalfe Bond was a double edged sword to a young lad growing up in rural Shropshire!



Malcolm Allinson completed the twenty displays with Edinburgh Bishop Marks. Edinburgh first had a Bishop Mark in the 1690's, thirty years after their introduction in London. The marks were originally oval in shape and constructed in two halves; there being twelve top halves for each month and thirty one lower halves for the date. Malcolm showed two pre-Bishop mark items of 1682 going to Rotterdam; and 1684 from London into Edinburgh. These were followed by two early Edinburgh marks struck in black of AP/27 [1695] – again from Edinburgh to Rotterdam; and DE/20 [1700] from Thurso to London. Similar oval marks for SE/20 [1716], AP/23 [1717] and JA/30 [1722], all struck in red which was then the colour of Edinburgh marks. Malcolm's display moved forward to 1784 as the period between 1720 and 1770 held little or no material. Like London Bishop Marks, the size increased over time and we now saw marks at 19mm diameter and increasing. Malcolm concluded with a newer type of Edinburgh Bishop Mark of OC/23/1802 which now also contained the year in addition to the day and month.

In a press release, the **Worcester Philatelic Society** stated that over 320 visitors attended WORPEX, their highest ever number; they ran out of food, milk, coffee and cups! Having the dealers in one hall was a great success. Your correspondent came in from Kidderminster and had no problem following the signs but some of our members were spitting fire at the lack of signs from the motorway. As for the lack of parking space, we feel we cannot repeat the stinging comment from one of our southern members (the last two statements weren't in the press release!).

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From the Birmingham Philatelic Society - On 2nd August they are commemorating the start of World War 1 with a one day exhibition in the Club Room at the Old Joint Stock Pub opposite St. Philips' Cathedral in the centre of Birmingham. There will be a rolling programme during the day with the exhibits changing about every hour showing a range of material leading up to, during and immediately following the war.



Bill Pipe
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Prices Realised for the Midland (GB) PHS Auction held on 26th April 2014 at St Germain's, Birmingham

Items provided to the Society for Society funds

A	2	C	4	E	6	F	4	G	4	H	15
J	3										

Auction items (Lot number, followed by price in pounds; a missing lot number means no sale))

1	19	2	3	3	7	5	9	7	11	10	7
12	11	14	4	16	5	18	10	19	10	22	2
23	15	25	4	26	15	27	40	29	24	30	30
31	30	32	20	33	44	36	20	39	32	40	36
41	30	42	20	44	4	45	20	46	40	48	46
49	20	51	16	52	11	53	15	55	6	57	22
58	55	59	15	61	24	62	26	63	34	67	10
70	30	72	18	73	18	76	8	78	10	79	4
80	5	81	17	82	17	85	6	86	6	88	24
89	30	91	16	92	4	97	10	98	8	99	6
101	13	103	10	105	3	106	10	122	8	129	4
130	4	131	11	134	4	136	19	139	5	140	20
141	5	142	20	145	8	146	20	147	26	148	6
150	4	154	12	159	4	160	4	161	120	162	24
163	40	165	2	166	22	169	2	170	10	172	4
173	28	174	3	175	19	178	4	179	4	180	6
181	40	182	8	183	26	184	3	185	18	189	6
190	8	201	9	203	10	212	12	215	10	216	4
220	4	222	12	223	10	226	8	228	10	232	13
235	8	239	26	241	14	243	36	245	46	246	18
247	5	248	17	252	13	255	17	256	28	258	16
262	14	263	4	264	4	265	20	266	17	267	20
268	13	269	7	270	8	271	11	272	4	273	13
274	18	275	16	276	7	277	4	278	4	279	9
280	9	281	10	282	26	283	9	288	70	289	36
290	10	294	3	295	3	297	3	298	3	299	26
300	65	303	19	304	19	306	9	307	4	308	30
309	17	310	32	311	10	312	13	314	70	316	22
317	5	318	12	319	6	320	48	321	26	323	22
324	18	326	4	329	34	330	16	333	15	334	6
335	8	337	4	338	5	339	8	340	18	341	5
342	17	343	8	344	12	345	32	346	26	347	8
348	12	352	5	353	8	354	5	356	19	357	220

The general impression from the auction is that mundane county material is not selling well at the moment, whereas anything unusual fetches a good price but isn't this the case with most auctions? Those of us who have been collecting for a long time have all the basic marks and are looking for the unusual in social postal history or destinations. Where are the new collectors who will buy the 'basics'? One also does wonder if the mundane doesn't sell easily, why many dealers have it at such relatively high prices? There are bargains to be had at our auction; I bought a 1909 postcard from LUDLOW to Western Australia which had a fairly scarce LUDLOW skeleton cancel for a very reasonable price. See also Derek Smeathers' article on page 13.



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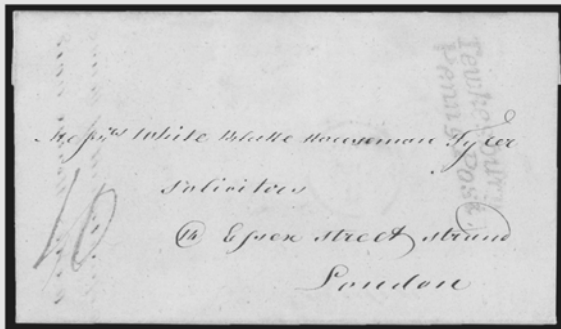
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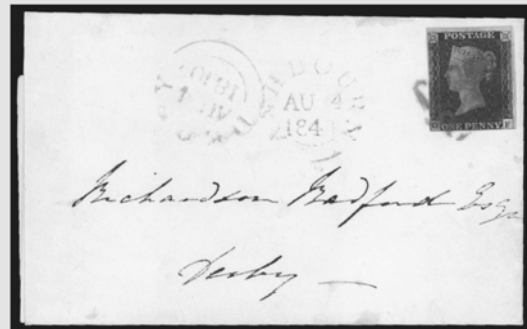
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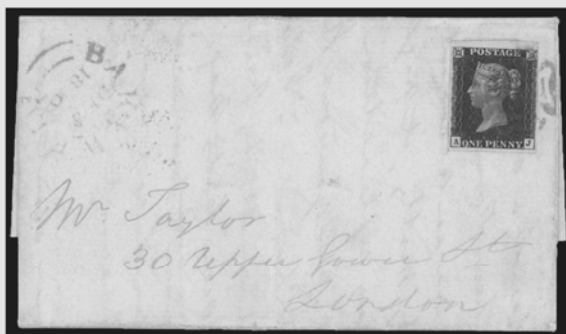
Did you see our June catalogue? Our auctions always feature fine collections of GB Postal History, and we have clients eager to purchase such material. We are now accepting consignments for our September and later auctions.



Tewkesbury Penny Post, 1837



Ashbourne to Derby, 1840



Bakewell to London 1840 with 'Pink' Maltese Cross



Leek "448" numeral in blue

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Dr. TERRY OF NORTHAMPTON GENERAL – SUCH A NICE MAN

by Derek Smeathers

At the recent Society auction, I made a note of the lots which looked particularly interesting but as is usual at my great age, concentration is not a strong point! I bid on Lot 115 but there was quite a gap between it and Lot 135 and my attention wandered before I heard "...135" and I groped for my card, which had slipped to the floor. As I grabbed it I heard ".....**unsold**" and I thrust my card in the air giving an artificial cough as I did so. The auctioneer (a real gentleman!) looked across at me (rather drily I thought) and said "**Sorry I must have missed your card; I have a bid of £4. Anyone else? No? Sold to number 5 at £4.**" Only when he went on "**We go on to number 135**" did I realise I had bought the wrong lot. Number 135 started above my price anyway, so I comforted myself with the thought that number 134 could go back into the next auction! When I got home and looked at my purchases, I ignored number 134 at first but when I picked it up the address immediately caught my attention,

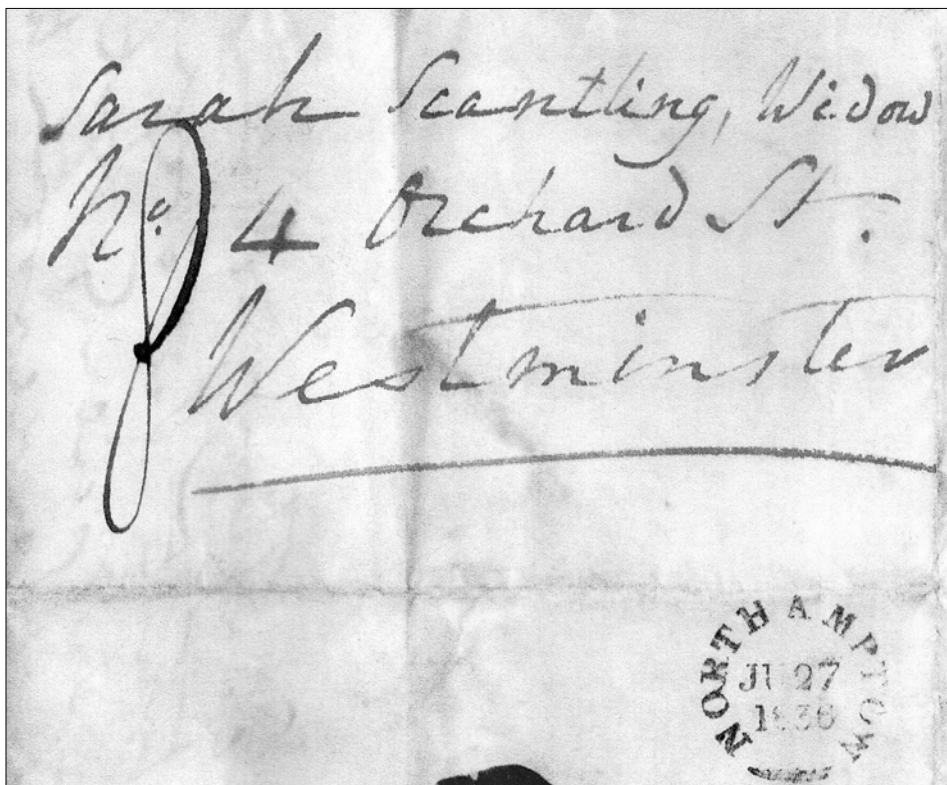
Sarah Scantling, Widow, N^o 4 Orchard St. Westminster.

On opening the letter my interest became 100% after reading the first few lines,

"27 June 1837, I hereby certify that I visited the wife of ---Scantling, Private soldier of the 48th Regiment of Foot on or about the month of May 1829 on Account of Illness and Poverty, subsequent to Lying in ---. Her husband had been employed recruiting in Northampton but at the time alluded to he was at Fort Pitt, Chatham."

Details of their children follow and then, "The duty of attending to the Recruiting Parties in this town (in the absence of a Regimental Medical officer) falls upon me and this poor woman being in great distress.....etc.....etc."

The letter is signed "H. Terry, Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, London and late Assistant Surgeon 14 Foot to the Northampton Regiment of Militia, to the General Infirmary,....etc....etc". A note at the bottom of page 3 addressed to Mrs Scantling offers more help from Mr Terry if she requires it. Henry Terry was appointed Surgeon to Northampton General Hospital in 1827 and served to 1859 or 60, according to the History of the Hospital by F. F. Waddy published in 1974. He is credited with carrying out the first operation in Northampton using ether on 21st January 1847, a few weeks after the operation was carried out in London. He sounds like a really nice man if this letter is anything to go by! One thing puzzles me. He sent the letter to "a poor distressed woman" with postage unpaid; she had to pay 8d to receive it. Shall we put that down to a lapse in concentration – I know all about that! I know also that Lot 134 will NOT be going into any auction soon!



The cover of the letter from Northampton to Westminster, London dated 27th June 1836, charged 8d for 50 to 80 miles under the Act of 1812.

NN140 recorded in black from 16 APR 1829 to 7 MAY 1839.

WORCESTERSHIRE REGISTRATION – 1st March 1848 to 31st May 1850

by Chris Jackson

At Kington St Michael last September we were treated to an absolutely superb display of '*Postal History leading to Registration*' by Alan Holyoake which covered a far wider period than we county collectors normally cover. It was only in the second half of his display that Alan got to the post 1840 period that we all collect.

The fact that he produced multiple examples of all the various rates was pretty daunting when some counties have very few examples of the early rates. Some counties are more fortunate than others to have a number of examples of the first rate of '1/- paid in cash' and I am grateful that Worcestershire is one of these.

It is the second rate of registration the '6d paid in cash' rate which ran from 1st March 1848 until the 31st May 1850 which I have found most elusive. The following rate of '6d paid in stamps' can be easily found.

I eventually found an example of the 6d paid in cash rate (fig 1). An entire letter posted from Worcester to Wellington in Somerset on 6th April 1848. The letter was Registered because it contained a draft for £21.17.0d in payment for blankets bought by Worcester Infirmary.

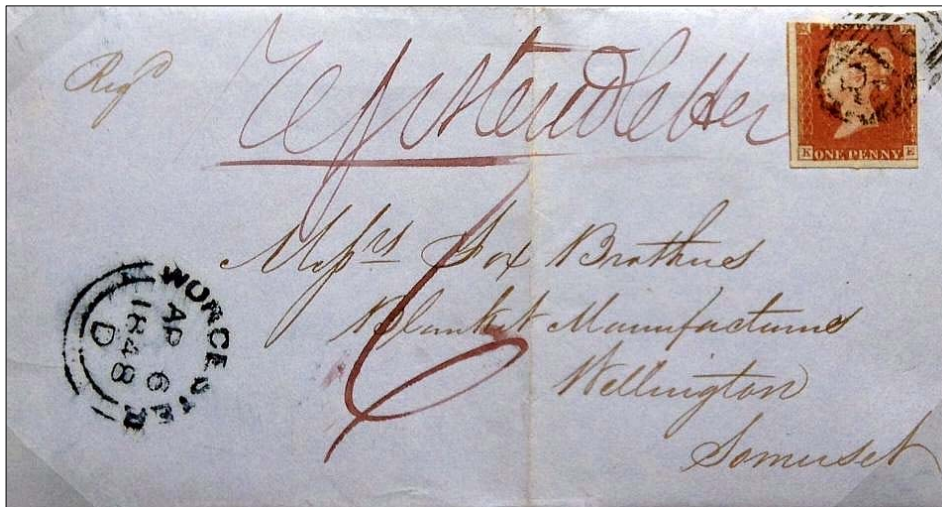


Fig 1, Registered cover from Worcester to Wellington, Somerset, 6th April 1848

Just as with Birmingham outer circle buses, you wait ages and then two come along together. So it was no real surprise when at the very next fair I visited I found an envelope (fig 2) sent from Bromyard to Macclesfield on 3rd October 1849 under the '6d paid in cash' rate. As there were no contents I can only assume that it contained a bank draft as it was addressed to Bankers in Macclesfield.

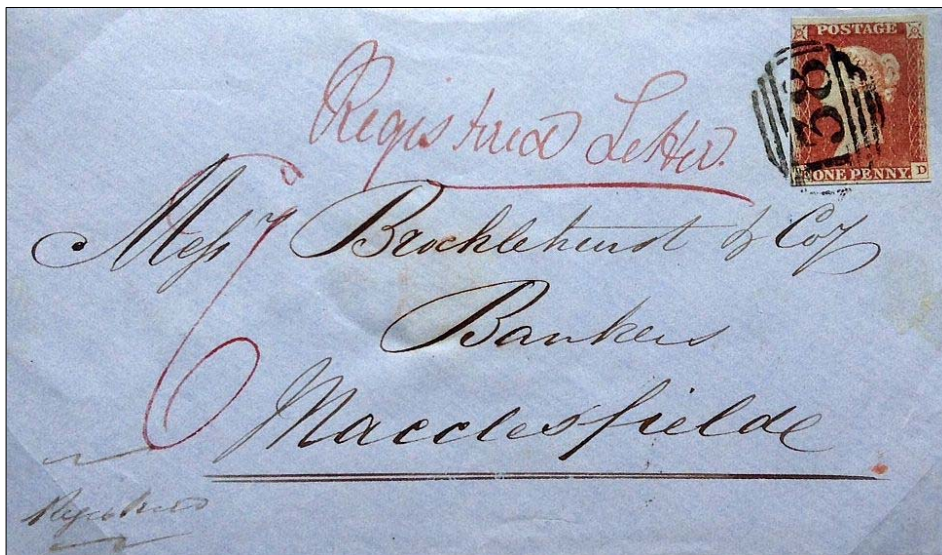


Fig 2, Registered cover from Bromyard to Macclesfield, 3rd October 1849

MAIL ON THE MIDLAND RAILWAY AND ITS CONSTITUENTS, 1840-1875

PART 3

AND THE ACCELERATION OF MAIL TO THE NORTH IN 1855

by John Soer

My original intention had been to continue this series of articles as far as 1860, dealing with the acceleration of the mails to the North in 1855 only as far as they affected the Midland Railway, and possibly returning to this topic in a series of similar articles on the LNWR at some point in the future. However, I then decided that I would cover the effect of this acceleration on the circulation of mail in the whole of the Midlands while the material was fresh in my mind. This acceleration, which took place on 1st June 1855, affected the circulation of mail and the riding work throughout a large part of the country from Watford (the Hertfordshire one) northwards. It led to the introduction of at least two new TPOs, and it was even necessary to alter the times of the Holyhead – Kingstown Packet. The complexity can be judged from the thickness of the file¹⁷ and the fact that the final report of Mr Beaufort, the surveyor for the North Wales District, runs to over forty pages.

When the acceleration of the mail to Scotland was first raised in 1853, Rowland Hill realised that it would cause the loss of the junction at Tamworth which served two purposes: to connect the up night mail on the LNWR with the down night mail to Derby, York and Newcastle, and vice-versa; and to connect both of these lines with the West of England.

On 4th October 1853 at a meeting in London with all of the surveyors and Mr Page, the Inspector General of Mails, Hill showed that the connection between towns north of Normanton with those north of Crewe could be maintained by the introduction of a mail train between Normanton and Crewe. This train was to leave Crewe on the arrival of the up mails from the North and Ireland, and to reach Normanton in time to connect with the down mail from Derby to Newcastle. In the other direction the train was to leave Normanton after the arrival of the up mail from Newcastle and reach Crewe in time for the down mails to Ireland and the North. Hill went on to describe ways of linking towns on the Midland lines between Normanton and Derby with those places on the LNWR between Tamworth and Crewe. The following day the surveyors said that the train between Normanton and Crewe would have to be a TPO and that it should travel through to Chester. He also outlined possible ways of maintaining connections between places on the Midland line south of Normanton with those on the LNWR between Tamworth and Crewe.

On 18th May 1855 Mr Beaufort reported that a TPO between Crewe and Bangor had already started and he was prepared for the introduction of that between Crewe and Normanton on 1st June. This adds to the information given by Harold Wilson¹⁸.

The connection of the mails at Tamworth with the West of England was maintained by an acceleration of the TPO running between Tamworth and Gloucester. Mr McLean quashed the idea that the sorting at the Bristol post office could be carried out on the TPO. He pointed out that at Bristol there were on average about 4700 letters a day going west and 3173 letters a day going north most of which went on the TPO in direct bags. The increase in the work could not be done without further clerks. However, he drew up a plan that was supported by Mr Page, and which showed that, with a rearrangement of the duties, the same number of clerks (fourteen) could carry out the work provided that the TPO worked through from Bristol to Newcastle both ways instead of turning at Tamworth. Mr Page supported this change. A note initialled by Mr Page, said that the alteration was to start on 9th May 1855. Thus, the Midland TPO came into being. Previously, the sorting coach had run through to Bristol but the clerks had stopped work at Gloucester.

This train left Bristol at 7.05pm as before but arrived in Birmingham twelve minutes earlier at 10.48pm. It went on after a stop of ten minutes, rather than twenty as previously, arriving in Tamworth at 11.33pm.

On the journey from Birmingham the lineside apparatus was used at Droitwich, Defford, Stonehouse and Charfield. Ashchurch was added to this list in November 1855, a spare set of apparatus having been obtained from Blisworth.

At first it was not necessary to use the apparatus on the journey from Bristol, but in November 1856 a set was used at Droitwich to give an arrival in Birmingham five minutes earlier, to avoid being too late for the train to Stafford.

Although as mentioned above, Rowland Hill had outlined the means by which places south of Normanton could still be connected with towns on the LNWR. However by 1855, some of the trains that he had proposed to use no longer ran, and the arrangement of the goods and passenger trains was far less convenient than had been anticipated.

Mr Godby, the surveyor for the Midland District, in a report, dated 12th March 1855, said that the effect of the acceleration on the towns in his district would be ‘decidedly injurious’. He added, *“The existing junction at Tamworth, if properly maintained, is by far the most convenient and useful for the Kingdom generally. Communications which are now expeditious and direct will become inconveniently tardy.”*

Messrs Page, Godby and Beaufort, at a meeting in Birmingham in March 1855, pointed out that special measures were necessary as otherwise the districts which would suffer most – the Midland counties - would gain absolutely nothing from the acceleration, leading to “*ceaseless complaints on the part of the public*”. They proposed the introduction of two mail trains, one both ways between Stafford and Tamworth, the other between Derby and Tamworth in both directions.

The train from Stafford was to leave there on the arrival of the branch mail train from Shrewsbury and to reach Tamworth before the departure of the mail train to Derby and Newcastle. On its return, it was to leave Tamworth after the arrival of the mail train from Newcastle and Derby and reach Stafford before the departure to Shrewsbury. This would prevent delays of between twelve and twenty-four hours on letters between Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and much of Staffordshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire and Central Wales.

The train between Derby and Tamworth would need to leave Derby after the arrival of the mail from Lincoln and Nottingham and reach Tamworth before the departure of the down LNWR mail train. The return from Tamworth was to be after the arrival of the up LNWR train and was to reach Derby before the dispatch of the mail train to Lincoln. Mr Godby suggested that the Lincoln – Derby mail train should run through to Tamworth so as to avoid any delays. It is clear that in fact the train did run between Lincoln and Tamworth, though I can find no mention of an actual decision to that effect. This train was to prevent delays of letters between large parts of Lincolnshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and most of Scotland, Ireland and Northwest England.

When the Post Office asked the Midland to run the Lincoln-Tamworth train through to Birmingham to take the London bags for that place, the Company refused to do so without further payment. When asked by Mr Page to say what sum he required, Mr Allport replied, “*With regard to the extension of the Lincoln train from Tamworth to Birmingham, I may remark that it is probably unnecessary for me to name a price as from the discourse I have had with Mr Hill his views and mine as regards the cost of working trains are so widely different that should it be desirable to continue the train to Birmingham, the payment would have to be settled according to the terms of the Contract.*” The last part of the statement meant that the matter would be decided by arbitration which, as we shall see in the next instalment, was how the prices paid for the Bristol – Gloucester and Derby – Tamworth trains were determined. Whatever the reason for Mr Allport’s refusal, the Company did offer the use of a coal train which would leave Tamworth at 12.15 a.m. The bags were to be taken from Camp Hill to New Street Station by the engine and a guard’s van. The suggestion was dropped when Mr Allport pointed out that the coal train did not run every night, particularly in the summer.

To provide a connection for the towns between Derby and Normanton with the line to the northwest via Tamworth, the latest passenger train preceding the mail train was used to carry mail from Sheffield, Rotherham (6.01pm), Chesterfield (6.55pm) and Alfreton (through Wingfield [7.25pm.] to Derby). A train to Normanton gave Sheffield (d 7.50pm), Rotherham and Barnsley a “tolerably late dispatch to Ireland”.

A minute of 14th March 1855 recorded that Normanton Station was to be made a posttown as a means of improving the posts at Mirfield, Dewsbury and neighbouring places, as well being of great advantage in the forthcoming acceleration of the night mails to the North and the use of a TPO between Crewe and Normanton. The Midland Railway were willing to make the necessary alterations as well as providing a suitable office for the same rent as they did for the station office at Derby - £27.10.0 p.a. including gas and fire. The stationmaster was said to be a proper person to act as the postmaster.

The notice that took effect from 31st May 1855 issued by the Post Office to the Midland is shown in Appendix D. Mr Sanders, in a letter of 20th June, put back by twenty minutes on Sundays the time of the 7pm departure from Skipton as well as amending the times at intermediate stations by a few minutes on six of the accompanying timebills. He also asked for a stop at Fiskerton, between Lincoln and Nottingham, to be reinstated. Consequently, the P.M.G. ordered fresh notices to be drawn up and dated 7th August, but I have not been able to find them in this file.

It will be seen that the acceleration on the LNWR enabled the mail train for Derby to leave Rugby with the mail from London at 11.15pm – 50 minutes earlier than before. Along with the acceleration of the train from Bristol, this enabled the mails from London and Bristol to reach Normanton a little over one hour earlier than before.

The observant will notice that the train from Newcastle (via Normanton) appears to reach Derby after the departure of the mail for Rugby and London. Also, the train from Rugby reaches Derby after the departure of that to Newcastle.

Inspection of the timebills for 1859¹⁹ and the Midland Railway Working Timetable for June 1855²⁰ shows that some form of connection was made at either Derby North Junction or Derby South Junction, probably to transfer “a letter bag carriage”. The times extracted from these sources are shown below. The January 1857 passenger timetable suggests that some passenger coaches were also transferred.

Train from Rugby

Derby North Junction a 12.50 a.m.
d 12.52
Derby Station a 12.54 a.m.

Train to Rugby

Derby Station d 12.15 a.m.
Derby South Jct a 12.22 a.m.
d 12.35 a.m.*

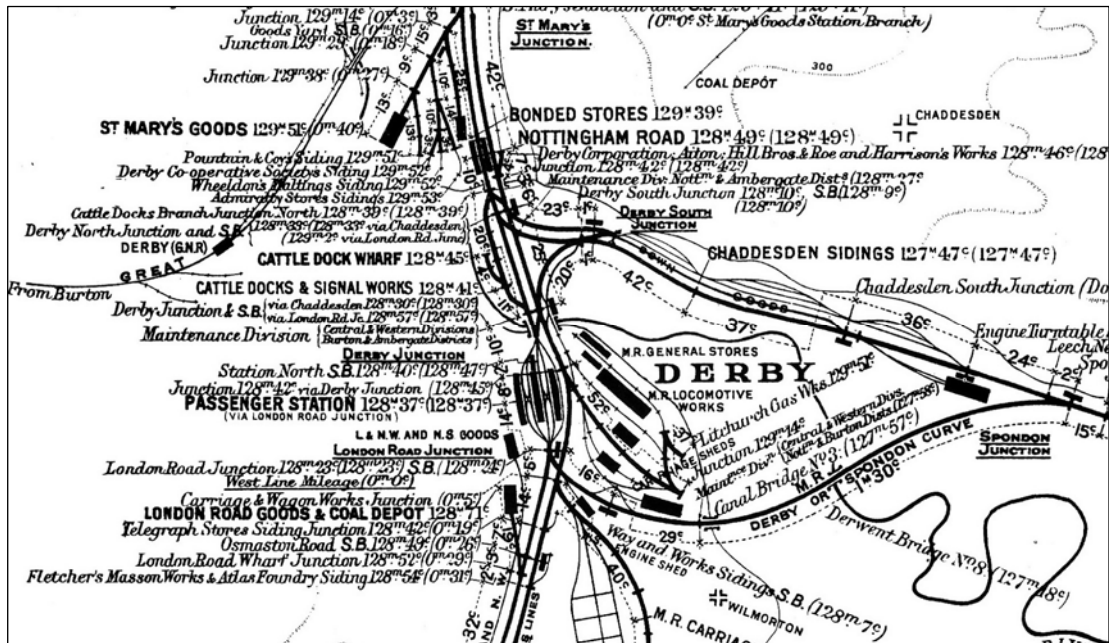
Train to Newcastle from Bristol

Derby Station d 12.50 a.m.
Derby North Jct a 12.54 a.m.
d 12.56 a.m.

Train from Newcastle

Derby South Jct a 12.18 a.m.
d 12.20 a.m.
Derby Station a 12.23 a.m.

* The Working Timetable has 12.23 a.m.



The lines in the region of Derby Station taken from the Midland Railway Distance Diagrams of 1917.
It should be borne in mind that the Derby or Spondon curve did not open until 1866.

We now turn our attention to matters on the London & North Western Railway. Capt Huish, the General Manager, wrote in February 1855 that they could not continue to run a separate train for the Midland bags as far as Rugby, since it was necessary to run a train for their own traffic, independently of the mail train. This was probably because as part of the acceleration the stops of the mail train at Weedon, Nuneaton, Atherstone and Whitmore were to be withdrawn. Since the train, which had left Euston at 9pm, arrived in Rugby at midnight and returned from there at 1.10am was not under notice, Hill commented that there was no alternative but to use the train under notice – i.e. that to Scotland. Mr Page informed the LNWR that it would be necessary to put back the dispatch of the mail train to allow for the loading of the bags. The LNWR timetable of January 1857²¹ shows the down mail leaving London at 8.45pm and calling at Bletchley (9.59), Blisworth (10.28), Rugby (11.04 – 11.09), Tamworth (11.49 - 11.54) and Stafford (12.38 – 12.34 a.m.)

The contract between the Post Office and LNWR²², dated 1st January 1851, lists a goods train which left Banbury at 7.30pm (7.45pm by 1855) and reached Bletchley at 10pm. In the opposite direction, a 'luggage train' left Bletchley at 4am, reaching Banbury at 6.10am. (The term 'luggage train' appears to have been used indiscriminately by the Post Office to denote a goods train.) This train carried mail which was taken up by the TPOs in both the up and down directions at Bletchley.

By 1855, a goods train left Oxford at 8pm for Bletchley where it arrived at 10pm., carrying Oxford's mail for the North and that from Bicester for both London and the North.

In order to maintain the connection with the down night mail from London after the acceleration on the LNWR an earlier dispatch from both Banbury and Oxford was necessary. Capt. Huish, the General Manager of the LNWR, said that it was not possible to run these trains any earlier. It is difficult to say whether this and other refusals were

for genuine operational reasons or in the hope that the trains would be placed 'under notice' and so attract a further payment.

For the mails to the North, Mr Rideout, the surveyor for the South Wales District, proposed to use a passenger train from Banbury and a goods train from Oxford both of which departed at 6.15pm.

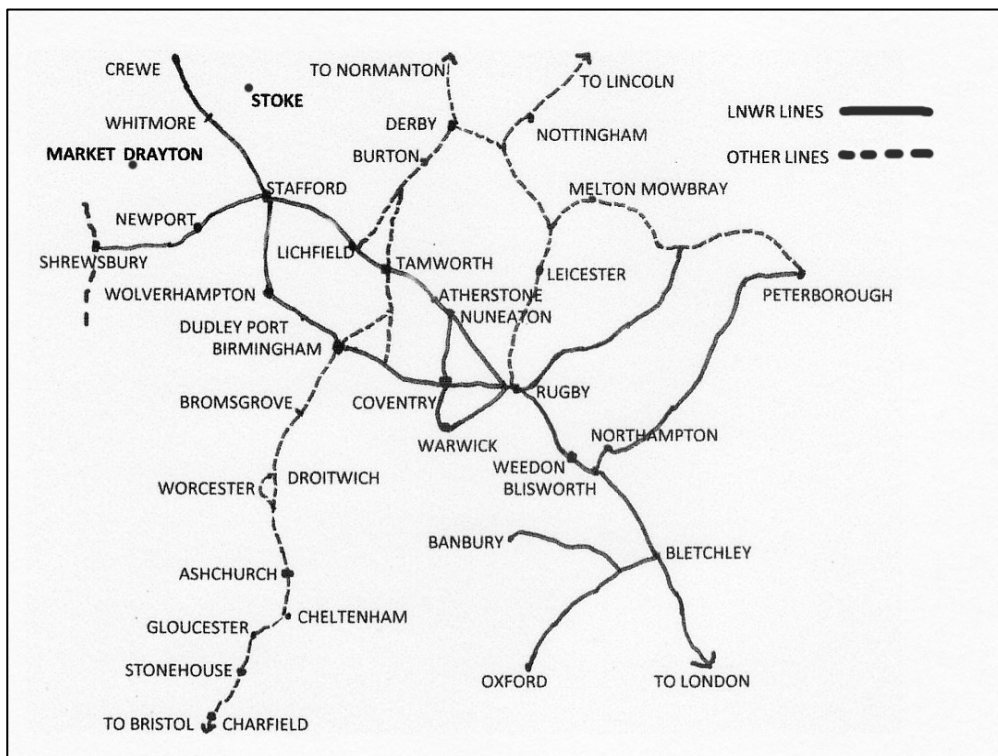
With two exceptions, the rural messengers reached Banbury at 5.30pm. This time was bought forward by thirty minutes to catch the post to the North. Mr Rideout added that the trade of the town was principally with the North, there being some 400 letters a day.

At Oxford, the earlier dispatch meant that the rural messengers who came into Oxford at 6.45pm arrived too late for the dispatch to the North. (It appears that 30 minutes was not long enough to sort the letters and take them to the station.) Mr Rideout suggested that the arrival of the rural messengers could be put back, giving the rural districts more time to write their letters for "London and the West" which still went on the goods train at 8pm. As regards Bicester, he felt that the earlier dispatch at 6.20pm to the North would not cause much inconvenience, but he was not prepared to alter the time at which the rural messengers reached Bicester – 7pm.

The use of the train at 7.45pm from Banbury was discontinued and a coal train at midnight was used to carry letters from Brackley, Buckingham and Winslow as well as Banbury to fall into the up night mail train. It is probable that this train was not used for long since it was not listed in the January 1857 timetable.

At Blisworth mail from Towcester, Northampton, Market Harborough, Peterborough, Thrapstone, Oundle, Higham Ferrers, Kettering and Wellingborough was taken up by both the up and down night mail trains. Apart from Towcester, the bags from these towns had been sent to Blisworth by a train from Northampton at 10.30pm. The LNWR was not able to alter the time of this train so as to connect with the accelerated down night mail, so a mail cart was used at a cost of £54.15.0 p.a. It was found that because of the altered times Market Harborough was better served through Rugby. Although Mr Newman, the Surveyor for the Home District, and Rowland Hill argued for the retention of the Northampton – Market Harborough mail cart, pointing out that it would have to go as far as Clipstone, two miles from Market Harborough, to serve the intermediate villages, the terminus was at Oxendon, even closer to Market Harborough than Clipstone, for the next four years. (See MM53/18)

A SKETCH MAP OF SOME OF THE LINES USED TO CARRY MAIL



Weedon received its mail by means of the line-side apparatus as the mail train no longer stopped there. The wage of the letter carrier, who made two deliveries a day, was increased from 14/- to 16/- per week in recognition of the fact that it was more difficult to operate the apparatus than merely meeting a train.

As the weight of the bags would have been too great to use the apparatus, Daventry received its night mail from Rugby instead of Weedon. The cart from Rugby to Daventry also served the sub-offices at Hillmorton, Kilsby, Crick, Barby and a new office at Ashby St Ledgers. This explains the transfers of Barby and Kilsby from Daventry to Rugby on 1st June 1855. Daventry continued to receive its day mail through Weedon.

As mentioned above, Market Harborough was to receive its mail by a ride from Rugby which replaced one from Rugby to Lutterworth and Welford. The mail cart passed through South Kilworth (a new office), North Kilworth, Husband's Bosworth (from where a footpost served Welford), Theddingworth and Lubbenham. The arrival and dispatch at Market Harborough were to be at 5.25am and 8pm respectively instead of 6.20am and 7pm.

Before the acceleration of 1855 and the withdrawal of the stop at Nuneaton, the weight of the bags exchanged there was considerable with mailcarts going to and from Coventry (with mail also from Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth), Atherstone and Leicester. The last of these also carried bags for Hinckley.

The mailcart between Nuneaton and Atherstone was no longer needed as the latter town was to receive its mail by the lineside apparatus. Mr Beaufort reported that the apparatus at Atherstone was "*at the bottom of a bank and there is not even a footpath by which it may be approached. A man cannot safely carry the bags up and down the bank at the bottom of which there is a wet ditch.*" He recommended that the apparatus be moved to the north of the station. One wonders why it was ever put in such an inaccessible position.

The ride from Leicester to Nuneaton which carried mail for the Northwest from Leicester was replaced by one from Leicester to Rugby that also served Lutterworth. As this required a departure from Leicester forty-five minutes earlier at 8.15pm, a bag was sent to Leicester from Melton Mowbray by a train at 5.55pm so as to maintain the communication between that town and the Northwest. The same facility appears to have been given to Oakham.

The combined weight of the Nuneaton and Hinckley bags would have been too great for the use of the apparatus, so a ride from Hinckley to a set of apparatus at Shilton station was introduced. Rowland Hill mentioned here as he did to all the surveyors that the Bill then before Parliament concerning the Stamp Tax on newspapers would, if passed, reduce the weight of the mail bags and that they should take that into account. The repeal of the stamp tax on newspapers on 1st July 1855 not only opened the way for cheap mass circulation newspapers, but also relieved the Post Office of the obligation to carry newspapers free of charge.

A further complication was that the LNWR withdrew the trains between Rugby and Birmingham that connected with the down mail train, taking bags from and to Coventry, Warwick, Leamington and Kenilworth. Rowland Hill was not prepared to recommend the expense of putting these trains under notice. Readers will remember the main reason for the introduction of the Gloucester & Tamworth TPO in 1850 was to avoid paying for the use of these trains and those between Birmingham & Stafford. However, the Post Office and the LNWR entered into a contract which came into effect on 1st January 1852 giving the Post Office the right to use any of the trains on the LNWR for a fixed sum. The Post Office immediately started to use these trains again.

As there were no other suitable trains to carry the bags, the solution put forward by Mr Beaufort was to serve Coventry by a mail cart from Rugby which left there after the arrival of the up mail train taking all the bags for Coventry where it arrived at 4.02am. The down mail bags for Kenilworth were sent forward from Coventry at 4.10am by a mail cart which returned to Coventry in time for the down day mail. A train which left Leamington at 9.05pm for Birmingham carried the bags for both the North and South from Kenilworth (9.21pm) and the North bags from Coventry (9.35pm).

Another mail cart from Rugby took the mail for Leamington (arr. 4.39am) and Warwick (arr. 5am), returning from Warwick at 10.10pm and Leamington at 10.30pm, in time for the up night mail train at Rugby. The 9.05pm train from Leamington, mentioned above, also took bags for the North from Leamington and Warwick.

Unlike the trains between Birmingham and Rugby, the LNWR found that it was still financially viable to run the trains between Birmingham and Stafford in connection with the down night mail. Bags to and from Birmingham for the down night mail could have been routed either via Tamworth or Stafford, and although there would have been little difference in the times of dispatch from and arrival at Birmingham, Stafford had the advantage that the two lines were on the same level. The weight of the bags to be transferred was so great that Rowland Hill proposed that a van should run between London and Birmingham, but I can find no other evidence that this did happen.

The Birmingham letter box had closed at 10pm for letters to the Midland TPO, 10.45pm for the down mail and 11pm for London. It was now necessary to close for all three dispatches at 10pm with a late fee until 10.30pm.

The later arrival in Birmingham in the morning did not affect the town delivery but it did make it impossible to maintain the times of dispatch to the Stourbridge and Wolverhampton lines of road if the letters were sorted at Birmingham. The times of arrival at the various offices were maintained by arranging for Stourbridge, Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley as well as all the towns on the Wolverhampton road to vouch with the LNWR

and Midland TPOs, thus removing the need to sort the letters in the Birmingham post office. The mail carts ran to and from the station at Birmingham. By this change, Stourbridge and the other towns gained an extra thirty minutes in which to write letters.

After 1st June, the Birmingham office would not have been able to dispatch until one hour later than before, at 4.30am, the ride to Chipping Norton that passed through Stratford-on-Avon and Shipston-on-Stour. Also, the return would have to have been half-an-hour earlier. In order to maintain the previous times of arrival of their mail, Chipping Norton, Stratford and Shipston were served from Warwick by a mail cart which left there at 5.10am and returned at 8.15pm Henley-in-Arden became the terminus of the previous ride.

To the west of Birmingham, the posts to West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Walsall and Bilston were unaltered.

The mailcart which carried mail for Tipton, Dudley, Brierley Hill and the sub-offices at Smethwick and Oldbury would have needed a later dispatch from and an earlier return to Birmingham. Since complaints had already been made about the early time (7.30pm) at which the box at Dudley closed, Mr Beaufort proposed that since the Tipton post office was only 200 yards from Dudley Port station the letters from there as well as Dudley, a little over two miles away, should be taken to that station and go on the Birmingham-Stafford trains. By this means, the dispatch at Dudley of both up and down mails on the LNWR could be put back to 10.40pm. Letters for the Midland TPOs were taken to Birmingham for sorting by the two-horse mail van which ran between there and Wolverhampton. Although Wolverhampton was to send its mail for the LNWR by the Birmingham-Stafford trains, this mail van had to be retained to take the bags to and from the intermediate towns as well as Wolverhampton's letters for the Midland TPOs. The reduction in weight of the bags carried by this van was such that it was possible to use a single-horse van.

Before this acceleration, Market Drayton, Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Leek had received their night mail by rides from the station at Whitmore. However, as part of the acceleration the stop at Whitmore was withdrawn. Mr Beaufort had considered using the North Staffordshire Railway to carry the night mails from Crewe to Stoke as it would be much quicker, but pointed out that the year before the railway company had asked for 2/- a mile - £1095 p.a., whereas he had received an offer of £400 to provide a mail van from Crewe. He added, *"Employment of the railway would reopen the troublesome question of making Newcastle a sub-office to Stoke which was so strongly opposed by the inhabitants of the former place and pressed for by those of the Potteries."* In his comments on Mr Beaufort's report, Mr Page said that he did not want to revive *"the troublesome question"* of using the North Staffordshire Railway to carry night mails to and from the Potteries. He was supported in this by Rowland Hill who wrote. *"I do not propose at present to consider further the question of employing the North Staffordshire Railway for serving Stoke and Newcastle and those places may well be provided for by a mail van from Crewe."* [See MM 131/4ff.]

Although there had been a guard who was paid by the contractor on the Whitmore and Stoke van, the contract for the pair of horse-vans from Crewe Station did not make provision for one, so the Post Office had to pay separately for a guard who *"must be an honest and steady man that he may be competent to check the working of the new service."*

Market Drayton was now to receive its mail from the station at Newport on the line between Stafford and Shrewsbury. The arrival and dispatch were to be at 4.20am and 9pm respectively; previously the times had been 2.19am and 10.43pm.

At Shrewsbury the times of arrival and dispatch respectively were to be 3.5am and 10.8pm instead of the previous 2.19am and 10.43pm. This made it necessary to alter the times of the branch mails from Shrewsbury.

	"Present"		"Proposed"	
	arrive	dispatch	arrive	dispatch
Aberystwyth	9.1 p.m.	4 a.m.	9.6 p.m.	4.15 a.m.
Hereford	9.15 p.m.	5 a.m.	8.45 p.m.	5 a.m.
Ellesmere	8.24 p.m.	3.29 a.m.	8.24 p.m.	4.30 a.m.
Wem	9.5 p.m.	3.29 a.m.	8.35 p.m.	4.30 a.m.

Table to show the Present and Proposed Mail Times at Shrewsbury

Mr Beaufort made the cryptic comment that the earlier dispatch from Hereford would cause Mr Rideout some inconvenience. Yet, the only mention of Hereford that I have been able to find in this file is in a brief report of 28th May 1855 from Mr Rideout to Rowland Hill which led to the following entry in Post 14 dated 1st June 1855, "*On and from tomorrow (2nd inst) bags from Hereford, Hay, Kington, and Rhayader will reach London by the Great Western Railway instead of by the North Western.*"²³ He added that the bags were already sent from London by the GWR. This change in circulation may have been caused by the acceleration of the North mails, but the Hereford and Gloucester Railway opened on the 1st June. Was it used to carry the mails?

It appears that there had been some difficulty with the ride from Hereford to Shrewsbury for in the same Post 14 book there is an entry on 14th March 1855, "*In future when the bags from Hereford, Kington and Rhayader fail to reach London in due course at 5am, they will be dispatched by the train arriving in Euston Square at 1pm and due at this office at 1.30pm.*"

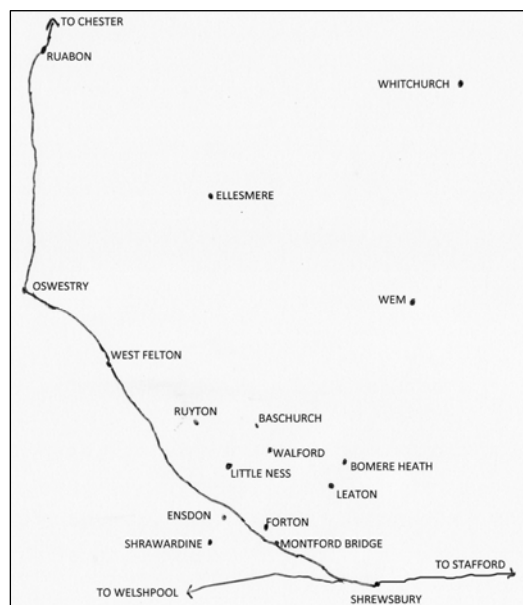
The alteration at Shrewsbury would have caused the arrival and dispatch at Oswestry to be 6.31am and 6.44pm respectively; the then present times were 5.45am and 7pm. Mr Beaufort said that the existing accommodation could be maintained by serving Oswestry from Ruabon, the bags going on the railway as far as Chester. This would give an arrival at 5.50am with a dispatch at 7.17pm. The large sums demanded for early mail trains from Chester to Ruabon (£1137 p.a.) or Oswestry (£1773 p.a.) put the use of the railway for the down mails totally out of the question. The contractor for the Shrewsbury-Oswestry ride, which was to be withdrawn, agreed to run a mailcart between Ruabon and Oswestry for £108 p.a.

The GWR informed Mr Page that there were no permanently available trains from Oswestry to Chester that would have been suitable to give Oswestry "*a very good dispatch*". However, there was a train at 9.2pm from Oswestry to Shrewsbury that could be used, for a second class fare, to carry the Oswestry bags to fall into the up mail from Shrewsbury. This would not only give a good post to the up night mail but also maintain a direct communication with Shrewsbury.

The withdrawal of the mailcart from between Oswestry and Shrewsbury would have left the sub-offices at Montford Bridge, Nesscliffe, (Ruyton) and West Felton without a post. Also, there was a footpost from Shrewsbury to Baschurch (300 letters a week) who covered nearly nine miles and carried thirteen private bags.

Mr Beaufort proposed to withdraw the Baschurch messenger and introduce a mailcart from Shrewsbury to Bomere Heath, Baschurch, Ruyton and West Felton. There were to be two branch posts: (i) from Bomere Heath to Yeaton, Forton, Montford Bridge and Shrawardine; and (ii) from Baschurch to Prescott, Walford, Little Ness, Nescliffe and Ensdon.

There was a delivery over a portion of the Oswestry Road south of Montford Bridge from the recently authorised sub-office at Bicton Heath but there was no collection, the "principal people" making use of the Oswestry mailcart to give them a dispatch to Shrewsbury by private bags. A collection in addition to the delivery was introduced with the Welshpool mailcoach taking the bags to and from Bicton Heath.



Sketch map of places in north-west Shropshire and north-east Wales (Ruabon), mentioned above

It is, I hope, clear from this article that the Post Office operated highly integrated system for the circulation of mail, and how one change in this system could have widespread repercussions. And that steps were taken to make sure that the standard of service enjoyed by the public was maintained.

APPENDIX D, Notices issued to take effect from 31st May 1855.

Service	Depart	Arrive	Accommodation to be provided by the Company
Rugby and Leeds Day Mail	Rugby 11.45 a.m.	Leeds 3.30 p.m.	A travelling post office with each of these dispatches fitted up in such a manner as the Postmaster General shall direct.
	Leeds 2.35 a.m.	Rugby 8.00 a.m.	
Ditto (Sundays)	Leeds 2.35 a.m.	Derby 5.20 a.m.	A compartment or as much as may be required of the inside of a second class carriage fitted up as the Postmaster General shall direct.
	Derby 7.10 a.m.	Rugby 9.30 a.m.	
Rugby and Derby Night Mail	Rugby 11.15 a.m.	Derby 12.55 a.m.	A letter bag carriage in charge of a mail guard with each of these dispatches.
	Derby 12.15 a.m.	Rugby 2.06 a.m.	
Normanton and Leeds Night Mail	Normanton 3.10 a.m.	Leeds 3.35 a.m.	A compartment of a second class carriage fitted up as aforesaid with each of these dispatches.
	Leeds 9.45 p.m.	Normanton 10.15 p.m.	
Bristol and Tamworth Night Mail	Bristol 7.05 p.m.	Birmingham 10.48 p.m.	A travelling post office fitted up as aforesaid with each of these dispatches.
	Birmingham 10.58 p.m.	Tamworth 11.33 p.m.	
	Tamworth 1.47 a.m.	Birmingham 2.25 a.m.	
	Birmingham 2.35 a.m.	Bristol 4.10 a.m.	
Tamworth and Normanton Night Mail	Tamworth 12.02 a.m.	Derby 12.44a.m.	A travelling post office fitted up as aforesaid with each of these dispatches; also a letter bag carriage between Derby and Normanton.
	Derby 12.50 a.m.	Normanton 2.39 a.m.	
	Normanton 10.38 p.m.	Derby 12.23 a.m.	
	Derby 12.33a.m.	Tamworth 1.19 a.m.	
Tamworth and Lincoln Night Mail	Tamworth 1.39 a.m.	Lincoln 5.09 a.m.	A compartment of a second class carriage fitted up as aforesaid with each of these dispatches.
	Lincoln 8.20 p.m.	Tamworth 11.36 p.m.	
Leeds and Skipton Night Mail	Leeds 6 a.m.	Skipton 7.15 a.m.	The bags forwarded by these trains are to be in charge of the Company's Guards.
	Skipton 7 p.m.	Leeds 8.20 p.m.	

REFERENCES

- 17 POST 30/100 Night Mails to and from the North, Acceleration
- 18 The Travelling Post Offices of Great Britain & Ireland by Harold Wilson, Railway Philatelic Group, 1996, p58.
- 19 POST 11/34 Railway Time Bills, 1859-1860
- 20 RAIL 963/1 Midland Railway Working Timetable 1855.
- 21 RAIL 946/1 LNWR Timetables, January 1857.
- 22 POST 11/4 Copies of Contracts for conveyance of mails by London & North Western Railway, 1856-1914
- 23 POST 14/309 Inland Office, President's Order Books

AN UNKNOWN MARK ON A REGISTERED PIECE FROM HEANOR, DERBYSHIRE

by Gordon Hardy

The final page of my display at WORPEX on 10th May was a registered item from Heanor to Loughborough with a FEE PAID 1/1 circular hand stamp in purple; the item appears to be a piece cut from a registered parcel (see picture at the bottom of the page). It has a compound meter mark of 3s/7d and is dated 1 June 1956, the first day of the new parcel and registration rates. From table 1 the postage works out at 2/6d for a parcel of over 7lb but less than 8lb and 1/1d registration fee for value up to £20. The FEE PAID 1/1 circular hand stamp in purple is new to me.

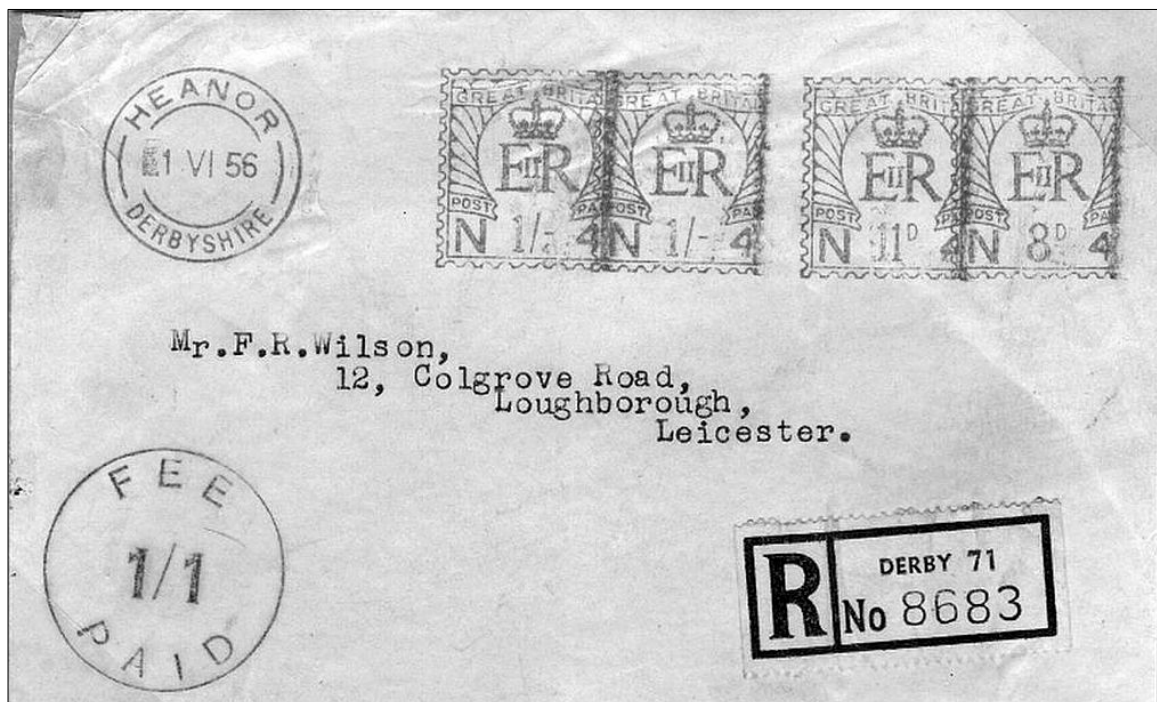
Table 1

Parcel rates 1 Jun 1956 to 1 Oct 1957		Registration rates 1 Jun 1956 to 1 Feb 1961	
1s 4d - 2lb 1s 6d - 3lb 1s 9d - 4lb 2s 0d - 5lb 2s 3d - 6lb 2s 6d - 7lb 2s 9d - 8lb 3s 0d - 15lb		1s - £10 1s 1d - £20 1s 2d - £40 1s 3d - £60 1s 4d - £80 1s 5d - £100 1s 6d - £120 1s 7d - £140 1s 8d - £160 1s 9d - £180 1s 10d - £200 1s 11d - £220 Each addl. £20 up to £400 - 1d	Max fee 2s 8d
Source: www.gbpa.org.uk/information/rates/inland/			

What I cannot answer is when and where was the Fee Paid mark was applied? There are, I think, two options:-

1. At the post office.
2. By the sender.

Has anyone seen this mark before and if anyone has any thoughts on where it was applied, please let me know?



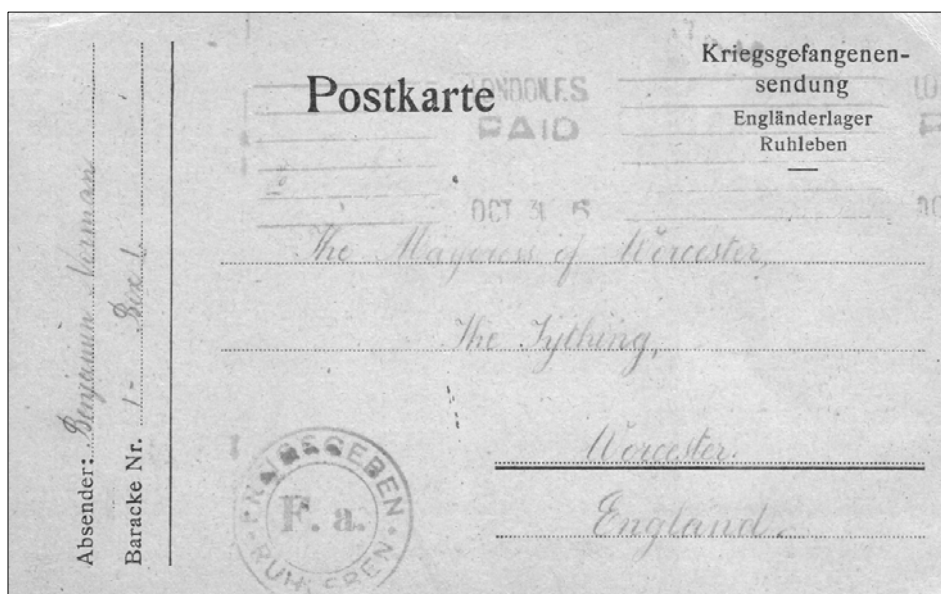
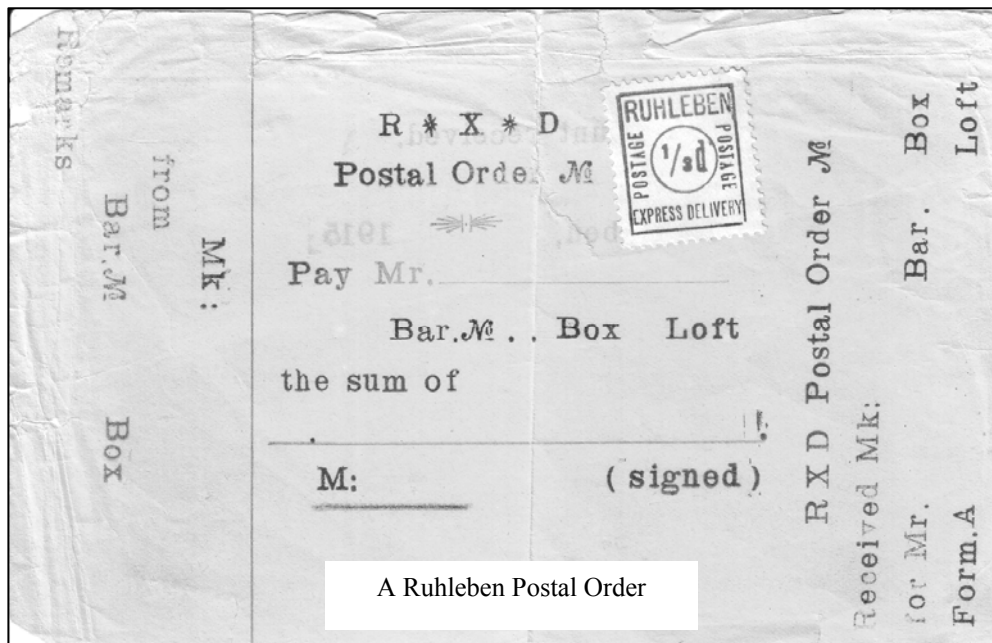
Registered parcel piece from Heanor, Derbyshire to Loughborough, 1st June 1956

RUHLEBEN CAMP

by Alan Godfrey

Ruhleben Camp 1914-18 was established after the outbreak of war at a race track outside Berlin at Spandau. At its peak it held 4,500 male civilians aged 17 to 55, who had been living or travelling in Germany when war was declared. Most prisoners were British, but there were also a few French and Italians as well as Indians, Jamaicans, West Africans and Zanzibarees, most of whom were crew members of British merchant ships docked in Bremen or Hamburg. There was also the crew of a South African warship that was visiting Germany. Prisoners were held in the stables intended for race horses with six men in each box. The internees established their own organisations, mail service, social and sports clubs, cultural and educational programmes, religious services and hygiene measures.

One of the enterprises was the Ruhleben Express Delivery (RXD), an internal postal service, started by Albert Kamps on 19th July 1915. Albert's brother was in charge of production of stamps and postal stationery. There were 25 letterboxes in the camp and around 6,000 pieces of mail were handled each month. Postal rates were ½p for letters up to 50g and ½p above 50g. In October 1915 a Berlin stamp magazine published an article about the camp post and German philatelists made complaints about the use of postage stamps to the authorities who, on 3rd April 1916, closed the RXD. Kamps was sentenced to solitary confinement, although the post had been approved by the commandant. The remaining stock of stamps and stationery was confiscated and most destroyed. RXD was replaced by a stampless service, which was not popular.



A Postcard sent from Ruhleben to the Mayoress of Worcester.

NB: Both items reduced in size