

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Number 139, April 2005

OTHER CLOSURES IN 2004

Please add the following closures, news of which arrived after the last issue had gone to press, to the Derbyshire list:

Dove Holes, Buxton	closed 31/12/2004	
Eggington, Derby	closed 21/12/2004	(had only reopened on 30/11/2004)

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

Richard Farman's three year spell ends at the AGM. Any nominations should be sent to the Secretary before the AGM.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on **Saturday, 16th April** at St Germain's Church Hall, Portland Road, Birmingham. Full details of the day are to be found in the auction catalogue.

On **14th May** we will hold a meeting in conjunction with the Worcester Society's Annual Fair at **Oldbury Park, Primary School, Oldbury Road, Worcester** which opens at 10.00 a.m. The meeting begins at 1.30 p.m. when Richard Farman and John Soer will display 'Leicestershire'.

Finally, remember that on **15th June, Midpex 2005** will be held at The Midlands Sports Centre for the Disabled, Tile Hill, Coventry from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

SKELETON POSTMARKS

Members may be aware that the British Postmark Society intend to publish a third edition of "Skeleton Postmarks of England & Wales". Members are asked to send details of any unrecorded skeletons that they may have in their collections to Patrick Awcock whose address appears at the end of an article that he has written for this edition.

NIGHT MAIL DVD

The British Postal Museum & Archive have released a DVD featuring the famous Travelling Post Office documentary *Night Mail*, along with three other films (*The Midnight Hours*, *Post Haste* and *Mail Rail*) made by the General Post Office Film Unit. Since its original release in 1936, *Night Mail*, with music by Benjamin Britten and verse by WH Auden, has been celebrated as an outstanding documentary. *The Midnight Hours* (1987, colour, 13 minutes) shows each phase of the operation of collecting, sorting and distribution of the nation's mail by road, rail and air. The structure of the film updates *Night Mail* some fifty years on. *Post Haste* (1988, colour, 19 minutes) celebrates 150 years of the Travelling Post Office train service. *Mail Rail* (1987, colour, 10 minutes) was made to mark 60 years of the Royal Mail Underground Railway - 'Mail Rail'. This unique railway sits 22 metres below the streets of London and at its peak carried more than one third of the capital's mail.

The DVD which is packaged in the style of a 1930s GPO parcel comes with a set of four black and white postcards. It costs £17.50 plus £2.50 post and packing. To order a copy call BPMA on 020 72392570 or write to The Royal Mail Archive, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL.

CORRESPONDENCE

John Hine writes in connection with the article written by Ian May in the last edition:

"Well done Ian, I read with pleasure your notes on the 1744 letters in Midland Mail under the title 'A Recent Find.'

I will add some information concerning the 'P' endorsements on two of the letters illustrated. The 'P' stands for Privilege and may be regarded as the precursor of the FREE stamps in use from 1764 to 1840. James Lovegrove describes 'P for Privilege' in chapter three of his book 'Herewith My Frank' (2nd edition 1989). The P was written over the address by the Franking Inspector in London to confirm validation of the free postage privilege accorded to legitimate users. The writer's signature at the bottom left of the address panel provided the basis for this validation.

The signature in fig.1 is I think 'H Mackworth', Herbert Mackworth (1687 - 1765), M.P. for Cardiff from 1739 to 1765. The E. Digby franking signature in Figs. 2 & 7 is that of Edward Digby, M.P. for Warwickshire from 1726 to 1746. Both of the above gentlemen would have qualified for the privilege of free franking letters.

My last point is to remark on the unusual division of the two-line namestamp COLE / SHILL not as expected COLES / HILL (also used in error in the article text)."

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THE JANUARY MEETING

Our meeting on 15th January was on the theme of '*Wartime Mail*'. Bob Viney began the proceedings with some Rutland items relating to the Boer War. Letters sent from Natal showed the skeleton postmarks used at Uppingham on 23rd and 30th December 1901. From the WWII period we saw a cover from October 1939 which was endorsed "Collect 1d. No Postage Due Labels on hand" as well as a variety of economy labels. Among the items from South Staffordshire that Mike Cox produced were postcards of Rugeley camp and of the German Prisoner of War Camp at Brocton. We were also shown items of mail from Germany sent to the camp. In a further frame Mike turned his attention to WWII mail. This included mail from the Italian POW camp at Codsall, the camp of the Royal Dutch Brigade on the outskirts of Wolverhampton and POW camp 194 at Penkridge.

Of particular note among the items of mail sent to Bewdley from various locations by a soldier in the Worcestershire Regiment shown by John Bradnock was a machine cancel 'RECEIVED FROM H.M. SHIP/NO CHARGE TO BE RAISED/MAY 16 1916'. John also showed us cards sent from India and Mesopotamia. David Scott displayed a letter sent from Birmingham on 31st December 1941 which stated "Hope your city [Exeter] has escaped damage. A good bit of Birmingham has been wrecked.... We are not downhearted." Also of note was a letter sent to Moseley. Not only had the envelope been used twice but it had been made from a Tate & Lyle sugar bag. A true wartime economy measure.

Derek Smeathers began his display with a number of items from WWI among which were a postcard showing the post women who delivered mail between 1914 and 1918, a card of the FPO at Weedon, and a card sent from Salonica. In a further frame Derek produced a wide range of Northamptonshire material from WWII. This included an illuminated circular sent by Queen Elizabeth to those who had organised evacuation placements, along with its envelope which carried a postmark of Buckingham Palace that was used only on that particular mailing. A letter sent from Kettering to Malaya on 21st November 1941 cost 5/- to send and was routed via Lisbon and the USA. However, as war broke out between the USA and Japan on 7th December, the item was sent back with the instruction that 3/9 was to be refunded as the letter had only travelled as far as the USA.

Paul Bradshaw began with material from a number of different POW camps which included an envelope made from the inside of Red Cross parcels. Later, he showed us material relating to the sub-camps around each main camp before going on to display a fascinating range of material from concentration camps such as Auschwitz, Dachau and Mathausen. Material relating to Brocton Camp was also shown by Richard Farman. This included a letter sent to a German POW who had been transferred to Switzerland. Brocton controlled a number of camps in Lincolnshire as was demonstrated by the label on a 4kg parcel sent from Germany to "The Workhouse, Sleaford, Brocton, England." Other material shown by Richard included a Red Cross parcel label addressed to the POW camp at Kegworth, and a postcard showing German POWs being escorted through the streets of Castle Donington on their way to the WWI camp at Donington Hall.

Chris Jackson started with a number of items of POW mail and a letter sent from Barnards Green to the Caroline Islands. However the highlight of his display was surely a wide range of regimental silk postcards. Tom Poynton stepped outside the Midlands to tell us about the role of Portugal in WWI. Portugal entered the war in 1916 when Germany declared war, Portugal having confiscated German ships in the harbours of Portugese colonies around the world. Tom showed us mail from training camps in various parts of England, postal stationery items, a whole range of censor marks and active service envelopes.

It is amazing what material comes out at these "one board" displays by members. Certainly the January meeting saw a wide range of fascinating material that would not normally be shown at our meetings.

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

On 12th February at the Collingwood Centre, Ian May presented his display entitled '*Warwickshire*' which covered an area mainly in the eastern half of the county.

The display began with a selection of material from Coleshill which included the recent find of entires from the period 1743-44 which is described in full in MM138. This consisted of letters sent from Coleshill via London to Wardington, near Banbury, and was comprised of free mail, paid mail and mail sent by a carrier. Other items of particular note were a late usage of the first-type mileage mark in 1799 and a traveller handstamp used in Coleshill in 1848.

Nuneaton was the next town to be visited, beginning with an entire sent in July 1630, by the Earl of Down from Ansley, Nuneaton to the Baron Chaworth, and carried privately. Mail to and from Nuneaton was carried by various routes. In the mid-1700s it went via Coventry, but on the opening of an established office at Hinckley it went through that town as a 1797 cover with a HINKLEY mark demonstrated. Later mail again went through Coventry, being carried in the Coventry Penny Post. Other items from Nuneaton included the "contentious" 957 4VOD cancellers and a postage due cover from India.

The display then moved to Kenilworth and it was explained that the material had originally been part of Peter Sharpe's collection and much of it was still as he had written it up. Included was the unusual undated circle of Lower Kenilworth R H.

The section on Leamington covered the period from 1811 until early in the 20th century. Leamington was initially a receiving office of the Warwick Penny Post but in 1830 it became a post town, but the disadvantage for the inhabitants was the increase in rate from Leamington to Warwick from 1d to 4d; the latter rate was shown on an 1831 redirected cover. An 1837 cover from Leamington to Warwick illustrated the 2d rate for mail between post towns less than eight miles apart introduced in 1837. Other items included the use of the 'REGISTERED' mark on two 1842 registered covers, the distinctive Maltese Cross of Leamington and a '@MISSENT TO LEAMINGTON' in an oval frame. An unusual item was a free letter of 1837 to Shifnal endorsed "supposed money" as the sender had not informed the Post Office as was required for items containing jewellery, money, etc. The final part of this section consisted of covers to overseas destinations including France, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, USA, Canada, India and South Africa.

Warwick was represented by mainly pre-stamp covers from 1660 onwards; of special note were the early 'WARWICK' handstamps used in 1706 and the very late use in 1811 of the first-type mileage mark - thought to be the latest use of a first-type mileage mark.

A copy of the London Gazette of 1691 gave details of the opening of a post office at Southam. Also from this town was a 1727 entire addressed to Kidderminster - endorsed 'by way of London' - and showing the handstamp with 'SOUTHAM' between lines, and a cover with the italic 'Southam' which was used in the 1830s.

The final two sections were taken from the Coventry collection and consisted of items to and from Coventry in the period 1577 to 1754 and, secondly, the local post system based on Coventry from 1779 to about 1860.

The former included a Corsini letter of 1583 endorsed "Deliver with this letter the new cloathes", a 1642 civil war period letter which was probably sent by a military messenger, and a 1663 Commonwealth period letter sent through Manley's General Post and charged 4d, i.e. a double rate. A 1701 'COVENTRY' or possibly 'COUENTRY' handstamp - one of the first provincial handstamps was seen together with a manuscript 'Couentry' of a similar date. The next handstamp was a 'COUENTRY', used from 1705, which by 1708 had broken and become 'COUENT'. This remained in use until at least 1710.

The final section traced the use of local posts in the Coventry area commencing with the unofficial post operated by the postmaster to Hinckley, Nuneaton and the surrounding areas from 1779 to 1784, and for which a charge of 2d was made. The Coventry Penny Post was established in 1810 examples were shown of the numeral handstamps used at eight of the offices together with examples of the manuscript 'No 9' used at Fillongley both pre- and post-1840. Nuneaton was also a receiving office for the Hinckley and Atherstone Penny posts and items sent from Nuneaton through both these penny posts were shown. These included an intaglio '1' used in Nuneaton for the Atherstone Penny Post. This section continued with examples of undated circular marks used post-1840 and showed how the number of offices increased after the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage. Of special note were the straight-line marks used in the town offices, the Cresswell-type undated circular marks of Allesley and Withybrook, the mark with a horizontal 'WOLSTON' and finally the recently discovered, and as yet unrecorded, udc 'ERLSDON' - a mis-spelling of Earlsdon.

Editor's Note: I am greatly indebted to Ian May for providing a report of his display and the following photocopies of some of the items that he showed. His report makes me regret even more that I was not able to get to the meeting.

A manuscript Coventry

Coventry.

For ye Hon^d Edward
Bagot Esq^r member
of Parliament at Blithfield
neer Lichfield in
p^r Stafford shire

The broken COUENT, 1708-10

To Mr. Onelye Esq^r
at his Chambers in the Lincoln
Inn new square

2 London

COUENT

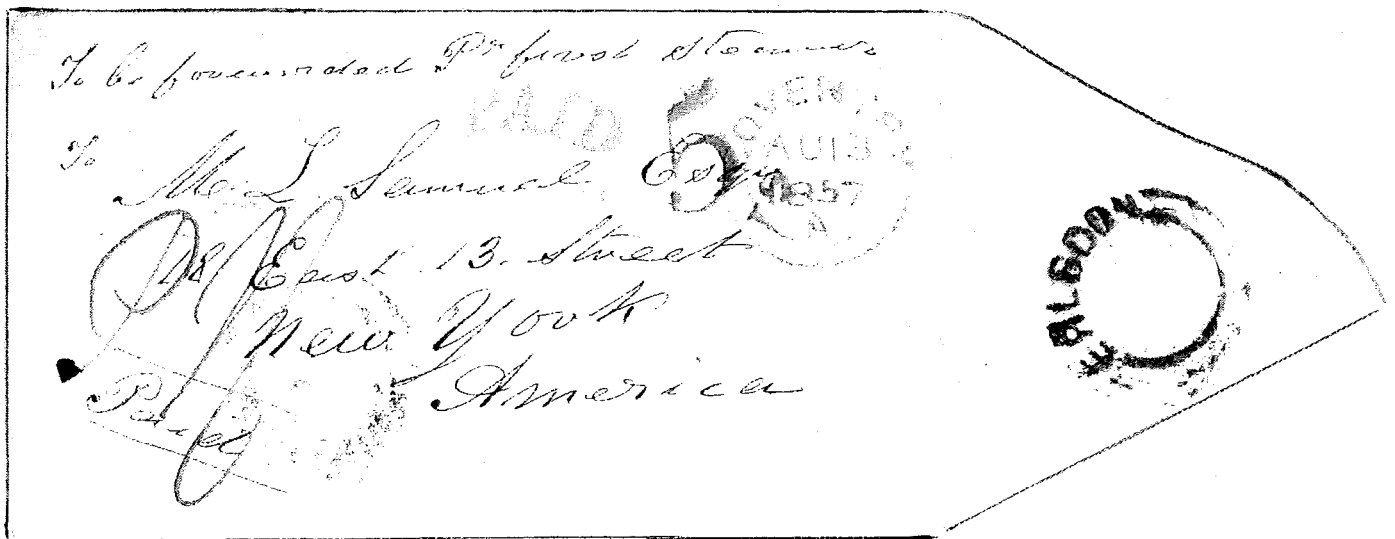
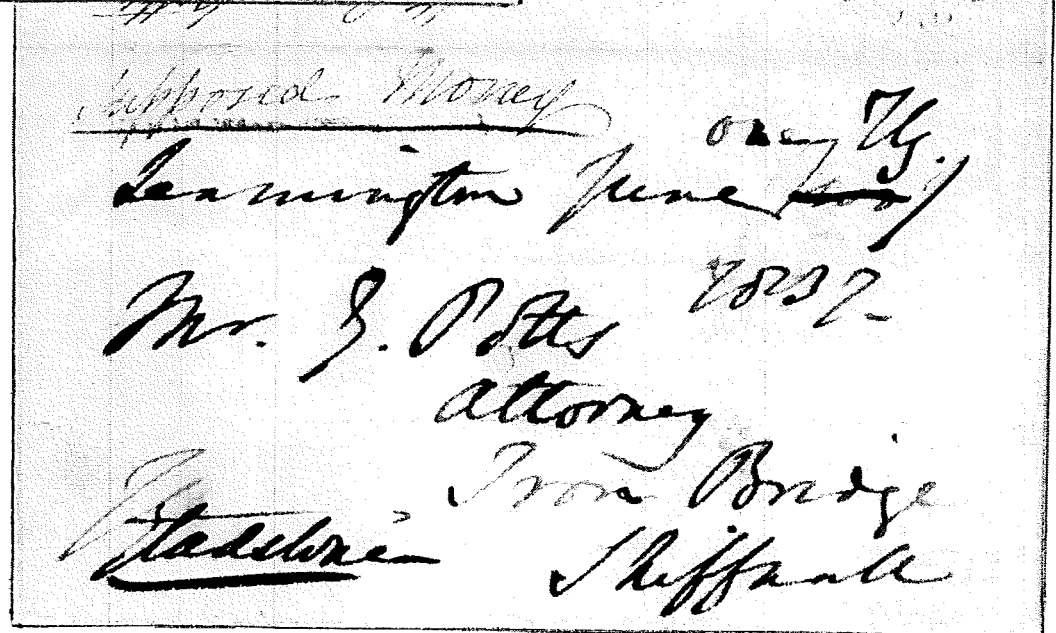
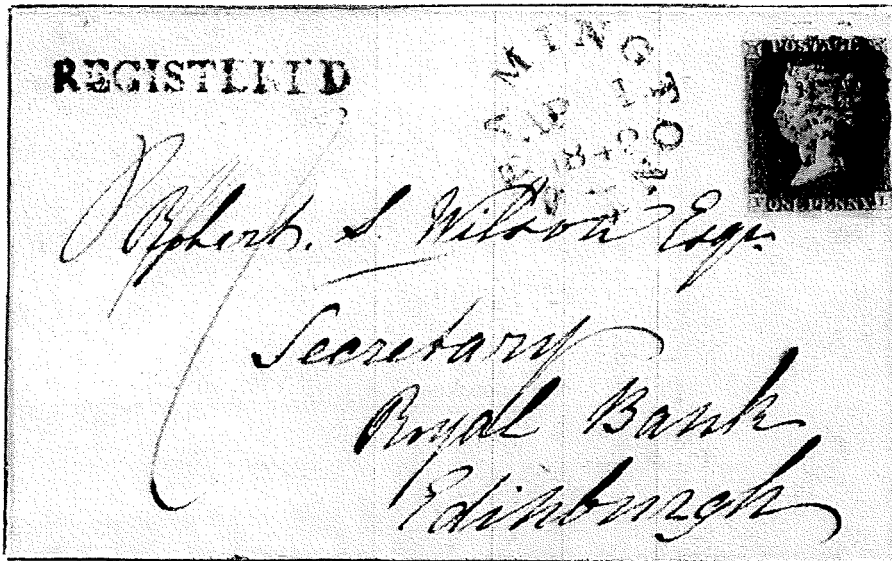
For ye Hon^d Edward Bagot
Esq^r member of
Parliament at his
House in the Portico
at London

COUENTRY



COUENTRY used in 1705

A one shilling rate registered letter from Leamington Spa



THE MARCH MEETING

It was a new venue when we met at the Black Country Museum on 12th March. Before we turned to postal history, Stephen Howard, the curator of The Black Country Living Museum, gave us an illustrated talk on the project of the museum to erect in one of their buildings a post office of the period of WWI. If any members have any relevant material that they would be prepared to allow the museum to copy, would they please contact Stephen on 0121 5579643 or write to Stephen at the museum the address of which is Tipton Road, Dudley DY1 4SQ.

The afternoon was to be devoted to member's displays on *'Early Covers and Dates'*. John Calladine began the proceedings with some items from the Corsini correspondence. These included a letter from Venice to London with a guild symbol, a letter of 1574 which came via Calais but was only paid as far as there so was marked with two lines, and a letter of 1583 sent from Lyon to London. Other items of note in John's display were: a letter sent in 1716 sent from Coventry to Kingswinford and endorsed "To be left at the posthouse at Stourbridge; a cover showing the first two line mark of Stourbridge as 'TOWER/BRIDGE'; and a 1713 straight-line 'COVEN/TRY'. David Scott showed us material from the London Local Posts, beginning with a 1755 Dockwra-type triangular mark of the Temple office for a Tuesday. Of particular note were a number of covers from both the penny and the twopenny post showing a wide range of receiving house marks.

I am not sure if lumps of pottery count as covers but Richard Farman certainly produced an item which can only be described as early - a Sumerian clay tablet of 2094 BC which was apparently a receipt for barley. (No doubt issued by Bass & Co.) Rather more contemporary was a 1324 document dealing with the Manor of Longnor, Staffordshire which would have been carried from London. Also of note was a letter sent in 1657 from London to York and showing a postal charge of '3' - a very early date for a postal charge.

Alan Marshall concentrated on material from Loughborough beginning with the 'LOUG /BOROW' mark used in 1710. This was followed by a 1748 'LOUGH/BOROUGH'. Among other items of note were a 1794 manuscript 'Missent to Loughborough', the first-type mileage mark and the 476 numeral handstamp of Mountsorrel used in November 1844.

When Eric Lewis stands up and says that he has no early stuff, then one knows that he will probably show nothing later than 1400. He, too, began with a lump of pottery supposedly from c3000BC. Then came three letters carried in a Merchants' Post to Venice from Candia (1403), Reggio (1458) and Bologna (1459). All carried guild symbols. Also of note was a letter with 'Cito' (meaning haste) written six times along with a gallows to indicate to the postboy his likely fate if he dallied.

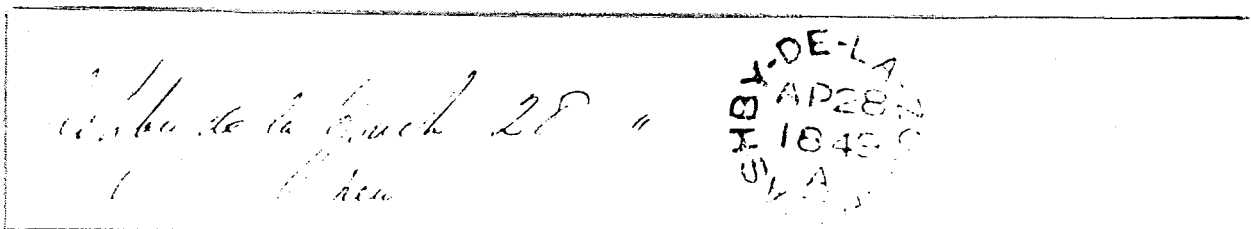
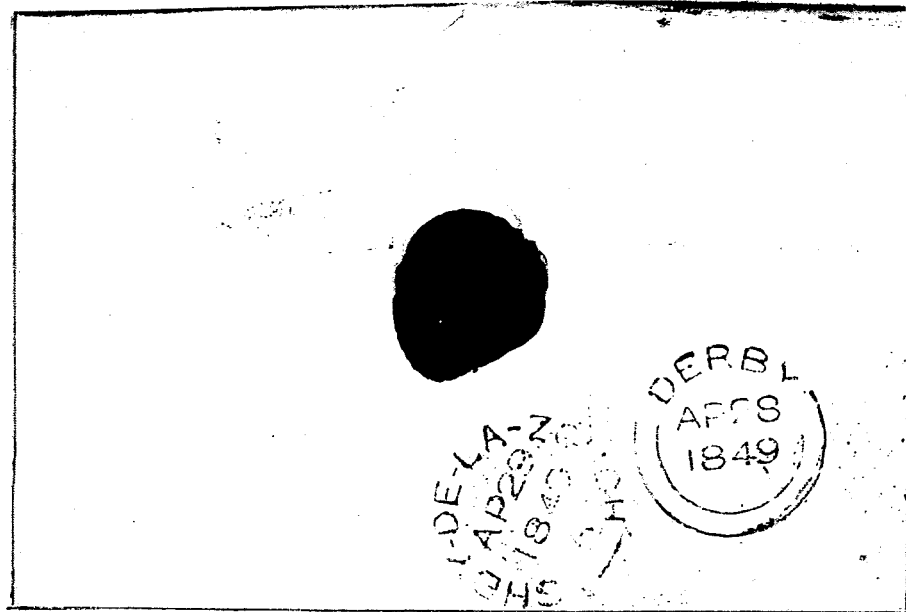
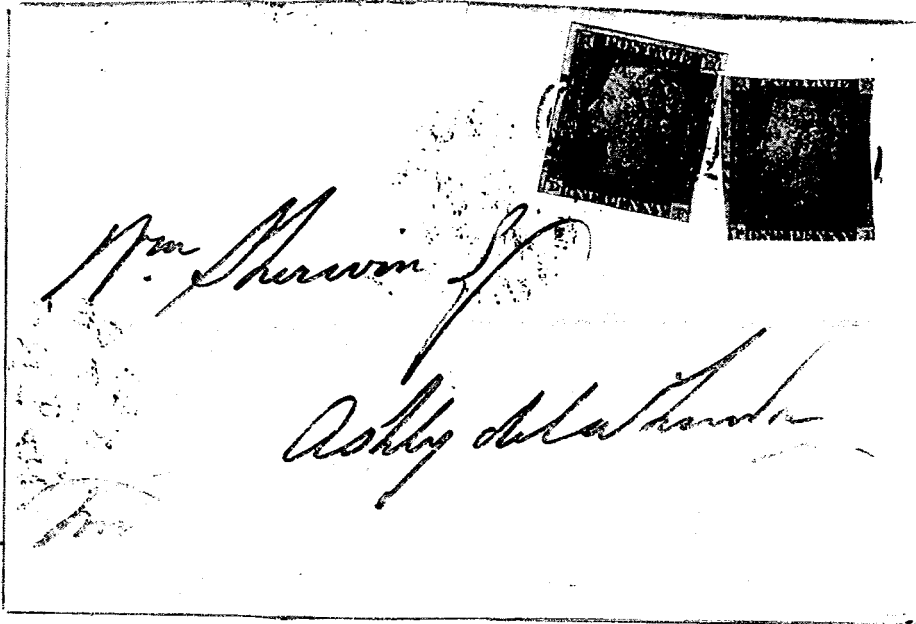
A letter sent from Stourport in 1617 was Chris Jackson's earliest letter. This was followed by a 1665 letter from near Tenbury to London showing a Bishopmark. A letter sent in 1702 from Bewdley to Monmouth was endorsed "via London", it having been posted on the wrong day for the crosspost. We also saw a 1713 'EVER/SHAM and the unusual circular mark of Stourbridge (STOW/ER BR/IDGE) used in 1751. The latter item was included no doubt to annoy the Coordinating Editor.

No other members had brought material with them but fortunately four had brought a second display. Chris Jackson showed us the earliest marks from a number of Worcestershire towns including Evesham (1705), Worcester - a letter to the "Cocoa Chocolate House" in London (1720), Bewdley - 'BEWDLY' (1725), Ships ton -on-Stour (1736) and Droitwich (1786). Also worthy of mention was a Mulready used on 20th May 1840 and showing a Droitwich traveller. Eric Lewis showed us material relating to the bellmen in London. A letter ended "... and cannot add further the bell being at the door. A letter of March 1720 showed clearly a Bishopmark with seriffed letters, yet normally sans-serif letters were used after 1673. Alan Marshall produced a number of letters from Nottingham - 1666, 1669, 1674 and 1684. All of these showed a charge of three pence. Of particular note was a letter sent from Nottingham to New York on 23rd June 1848. This letter was in the first shipment subject to the retaliatory rate of 1/- levied on all mail carried in British Packets. Richard Farman began his second offering with a very early 'Free Letter'. It was sent in 1652 from aboard the Tryumph at Norhead to the Commissioners of the Navy. A letter sent in 1669 from Yarmouth to Exeter was only paid as far as London where it was endorsed 'Forward 3d'. Richard also showed us the earliest town cancels of Bolton (1701) and Wrexham (1707).

Although the attendance was lower than usual, we were shown some truly outstanding postal history in an excellent venue. A connoisseur in these matters tells me that the fish and chips sold in the museum are superb. So, if we meet there again, I hope the attendance will be greater.

AN EARLY DATE OR A FIRST DAY COVER

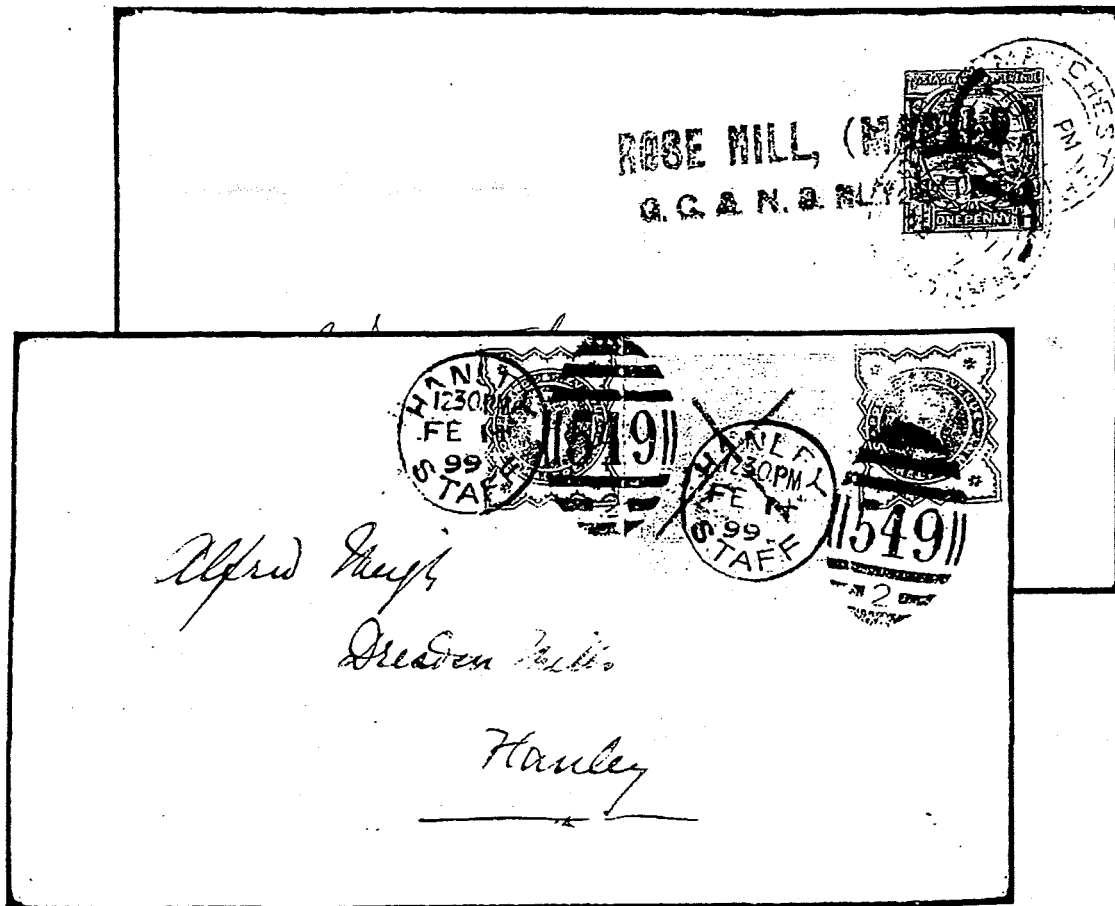
The item below is a letter sent from Derby on 28th April 1849 to Ashby-de-la-Zouch where it arrived on the following day and was backstamped with a circular datestamp with double arcs. At a first glance it is a very ordinary cover with common markings and adhesives. However, not only was the Ashby-de-la-Zouch datestamp the first of that type to be issued to that town but also it was issued from London on the previous day, as can be seen from the cutting from the Steel Impression Books. Obviously it arrived in Ashby on the day after it was issued and was put into use immediately.



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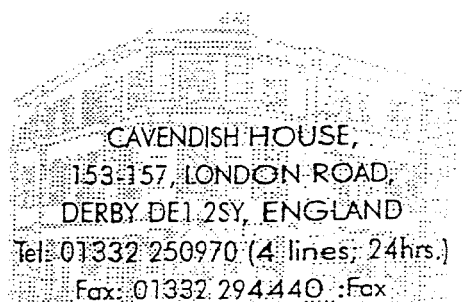
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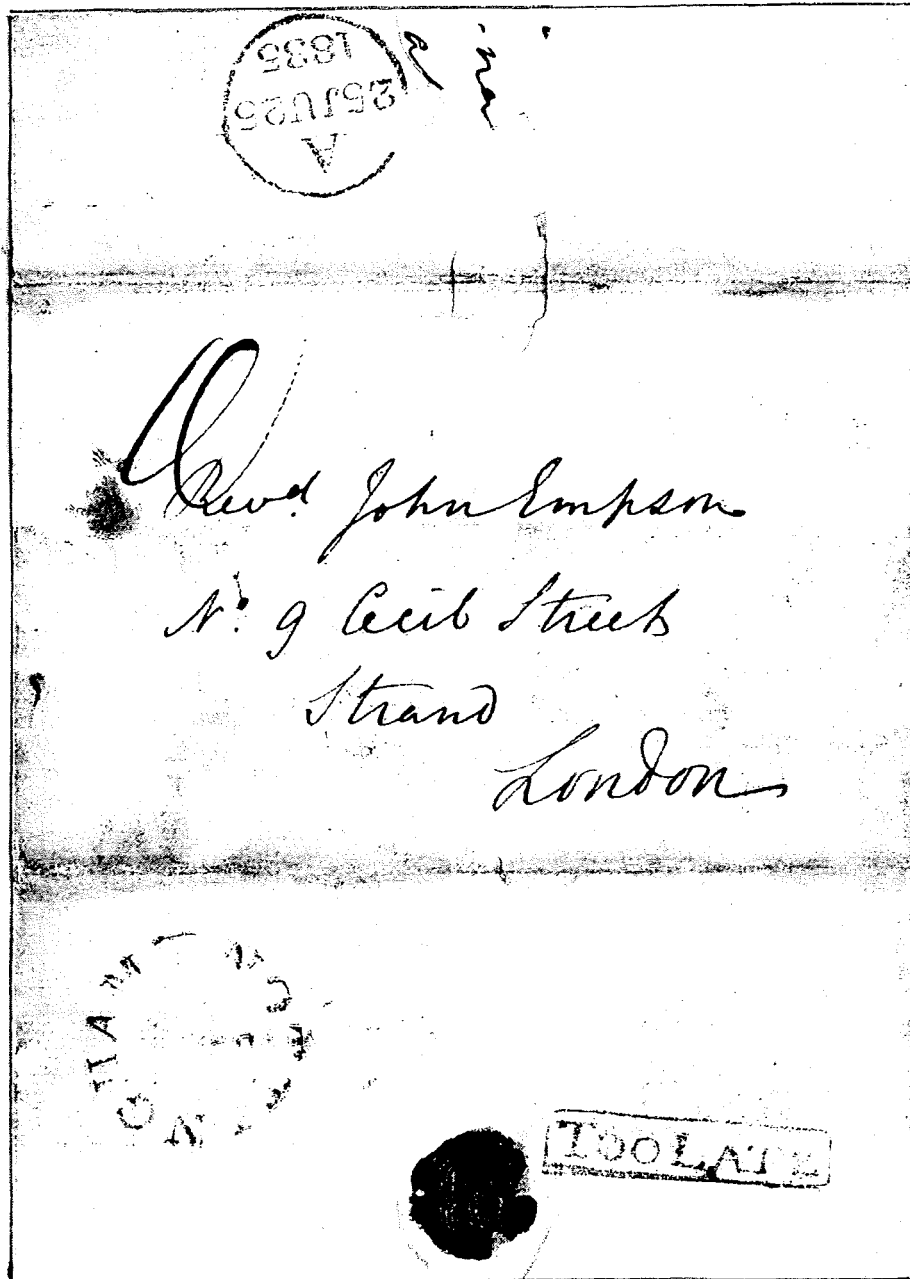


E-mail: stamps@cavendishphilauc.demon.co.uk
www.Cavendish-Auctions.com

NOTTINGHAM 'TOO LATE'

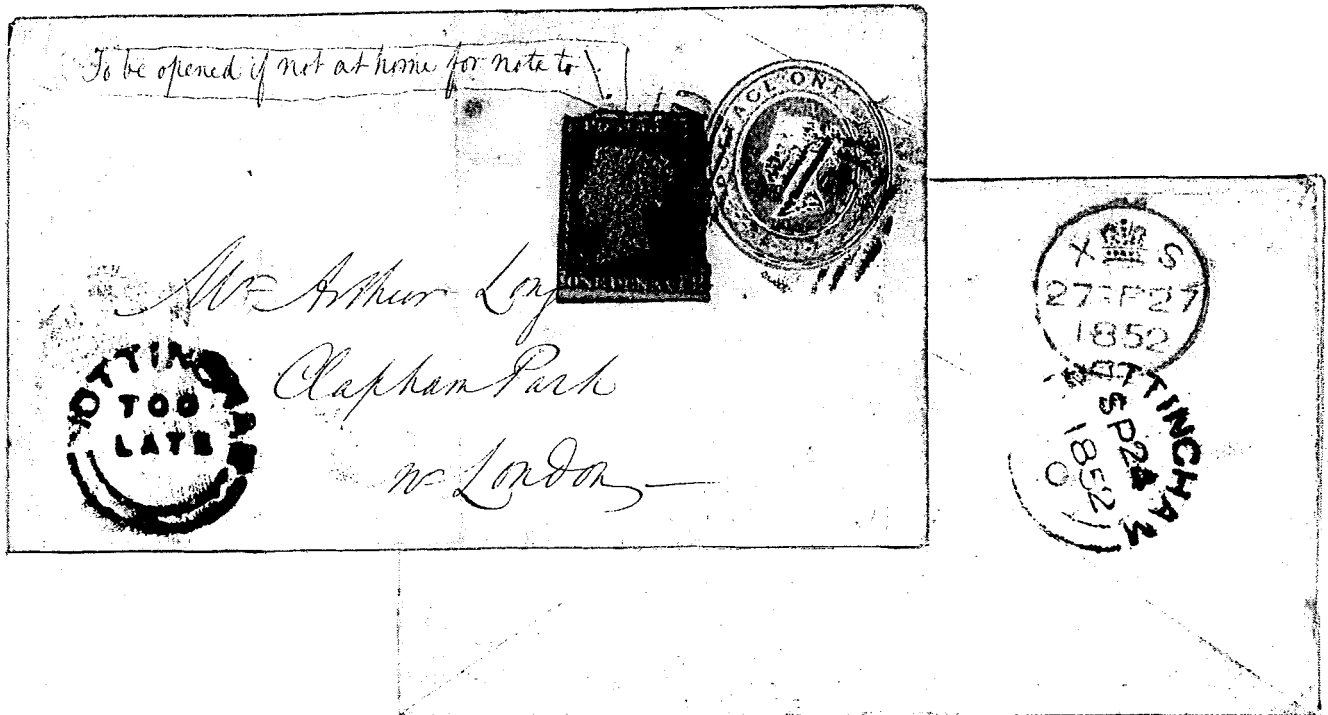
by Alan Marshall

The County Catalogue (Vols 1 & 2; 2nd edition, p 164) lists the 38 x 8 mm boxed 'TOO LATE' as used in the period 1835 to 1841. From twelve examples, these dates may be given more specifically as 23rd June 1835 to 5th June 1841. The earliest recorded is on an interesting letter from a son at Radcliffe on Trent to his father in London (see below).



Another 'TOO LATE' does exist, although it is likely that provenance of its official status and use will never be obtained. It consists of a two line 'TOO LATE' in 2.5mm sans-serif capitals within a 24.5mm diameter double arc undated stamp in blue ink. The mark was applied on 24th September 1852 to the front of an embossed one penny postal stationary envelope which was uprated for late posting with a penny red-brown on blued paper (SG 8). Both stamps were cancelled by the 1844-type 583 barred numeral of Nottingham of which the earliest recorded use is 23rd August 1852, only one month earlier.

On the reverse of the envelope are strikes of a 25mm double arc cds of Nottingham in the same blue ink as the 'Too Late' stamp and dated 24th September 1852 (a Friday), and a morning duty receiving cds of London in red ink dated 27th September which was a Monday. Clearly the Nottingham cds and the 'Too Late' stamp are of the same basic design. Hall records the use of this 25mm cds from 11th August 1847 to 5th July 1858 in blue and in black from 28th September 1847 to 16th July 1857. If the dates of usage of different coloured inks are omitted until a later exercise (green is now also listed), the recorded usage of this design in now 19th July 1847 to 5th July 1858.



However, I have identified by accurate measurement and the superimposing of tracings seven different stamps that were used during that period. The features used for comparison are the length of arc of the word 'Nottingham' and the overall diameter of the stamp. The diameter in fact varies from 23mm to 25mm as follows: 23mm (1 handstamp), 24mm (1), 24.5mm (3) and 25mm (2). These are illustrated below. The cds on this envelope is the second of those of 25mm diameter, while the 'Too Late' mark is considered to be derived from the reuse of the use of the third of those of 24.5mm diameter. This was in use pre-1850.

The uprating of an item posted late on a Friday evening makes sense but the meaning of the manuscript note pointing to the adhesive is open to conjecture. It is considered that this 'Too Late' mark is a one-off philatelic creation by someone working in the post office at the time and not a trial of a new type of 'Too Late' mark.



23mm



24mm



24.5mm (1)



24.5mm (2)



24.5mm(3)



25mm (1)



25mm(2).

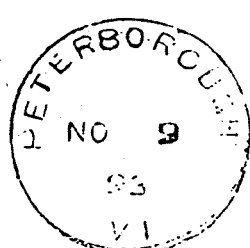
PETERBOROUGH SKELETON HANDSTAMPS, 1893-1903

by Patrick G. Awcock

In connection with the planned 3rd edition of "Skeleton Postmarks of England & Wales", I have received a large number of photocopies of the skeleton handstamps of Peterborough with code letters at the base from Derek Smeathers, both from his own collection and copies that he has received from other collectors over the years. Without Derek's work in the past this article would not have been possible. Various theories have been put forward as to the significance of the letters at the base of these skeleton stamps.

I have analysed these examples by size of datestamp, number of slots and the position of the letters of Peterborough. It should be noted that most skeleton handstamps of this period have a single letter at the top (and bottom) and thus a town name such as Peterborough, with an even number of letters, must be off-centre. All the later datestamps with the date in one line (types 14, 15 and 16) have a pair of letters at the top and bottom, but some of the earlier ones with twenty-six slots are similar and three of these are involved. It seems clear to me that there is only one datestamp for any particular year with the exception of 1903 (and possibly 1901) when two were used. In 1903, two skeletons appear to have been used, with the second one bearing the normal code letter Z (to distinguish the handstamps?). When the first one dropped out of use this second handstamp appears to have continued in use, but with the Z removed.

In the table which appears on the next page, I have indicated the precise position of the letters in the slots by underlining the top/bottom letter(s). When the year is not present in the skeleton, but has been confirmed from the message or another datestamp, it is shown in brackets. Clearly, the letters at the bottom are being continually changed and not necessarily replaced in the same slot which would seem to rule out some explanations - I can only hazard a guess therefore that these must relate to collection times and/or the actual postman using it at the time.



1893



1899



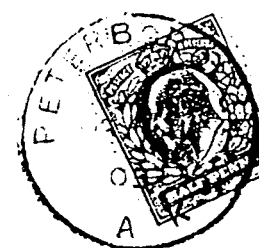
1901



1901



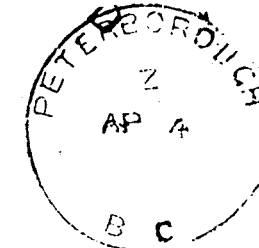
1902



1903/1



1903/2



1903/2Z

Further items which have been recorded previously, but which I have not seen are listed below:

10 OC 93	code K1	24 OC 93	code VI	25 OC 93	code S1
6 JY 98	code CO				
9 JA 00	code A K	10 JA 00	code U		
18 AP 01	code A I				
10 AP 02	code A L	18 AP 02	code A J	22 AP 02	code A J
21 AP 02	code A D	18 AP 02	normal code O		
23 FE 03	code A K	23 AP 03	code AK		

1903 - additional codes AG and BO are recorded in "Skeleton Postmarks of England & Wales".

Additional codes recorded by Derek Smeathers are S1 and ST (1893?); I (1899/00?) and AM (1903?).

I hope that the owners of these, or indeed any other examples not listed, will please let me have a photocopy to establish the precise position of the variable codes. Please send any such reports to:

Patrick G. Awcock, "Smallacre", Chelwood Gate, Haywards Heath RH17 7LY.

1893				
30mm	22 slots	PETERBOROUGH	VI	NO 9 93
1899				
32mm	26 slots	PETERBOROUGH	A_E	DE 4 99
		PETERBOROUGH	A_I	DE 19 99
		PETERBOROUGH	AD	DE 28 99
		PETERBOROUGH	P	JA 12 00
		PETERBOROUGH	Q	JA 26 00
1901				
32mm	26 slots	PETERBOROUGH	normal code 0	MR 7 01
32mm	26 slots	PETERBOROUGH	A_I	AP 10 01
1902				
32mm	26 slots	PETERBOROUGH	A_M	AP 10 02
		PETERBOROUGH	A_M 2nd copy	AP 10 02
		PETERBOROUGH	A_J	AP 22 02
1903/1				
31mm	22 slots	PETERBOROUGH	A_K	FE 13 03
		PETERBOROUGH	AH	FE 16 03
		PETERBOROUGH	AF	FE 27 03
		PETERBOROUGH	AK	MR 10?03
		PETERBOROUGH	A_K	MR 11 03
		PETERBOROUGH	C_D	MR 15 03
1903/22				
32mm	26 slots	PETERBOROUGH	A_H	code Z MR 11 03
		PETERBOROUGH	B_G	code Z MR 12 03
		PETERBOROUGH	C_F	code Z MR 12 03
		PETERBOROUGH	B_M	code Z MR 17 03
		PETERBOROUGH	B_M	code Z MR 20
		PETERBOROUGH	B_H	code Z MR 23 03
		PETERBOROUGH	B_G	code Z MR 25 03
		PETERBOROUGH	B_M	code Z MR 25 03
		PETERBOROUGH	AF	code Z MR 26 03
		PETERBOROUGH	B_C	code Z AP 4
1903/2				
32mm	26 slots	PETERBOROUGH	B_M	AP 7
		PETERBOROUGH	A_K	AP 11(03)
		PETERBOROUGH	A_L	AP 03
		PETERBOROUGH	B_M	AP 14(03)
		PETERBOROUGH	A_J	AP 18?
		PETERBOROUGH	B_J	AP 20

STUCK IN THE SNOW

I am indebted to John Calladine for the copies of the two documents shown below. Will we ever get winters like that again?

General Post-Office,
February 8, 1799.

SIR,

THE late heavy Fall of Snow having occasioned great Irregularity in the Mail Coach System,—I have the Commands of my Lords the Postmaster-General to direct, as the Roads are now open, that you do not delay longer in Towns than the Time allowed by the Time Bill; that you do not stop at Inn or Alehouses, but that you use all your Time on the Road to the End of *your* Journey,—and that you give Orders to Horsekeepers to have the Horses ready harnessed at the Time the Coach ought to arrive, and should they not, that you assist them as much as your other Duty will allow. And that you do every Thing in your Power to get your Coach regular. A proper Notice will be taken of your Conduct.

THOMAS HASKER,
Surveyor & Sup^t. of M. C.

General Post-Office,

April 27 - 1799

SIR,

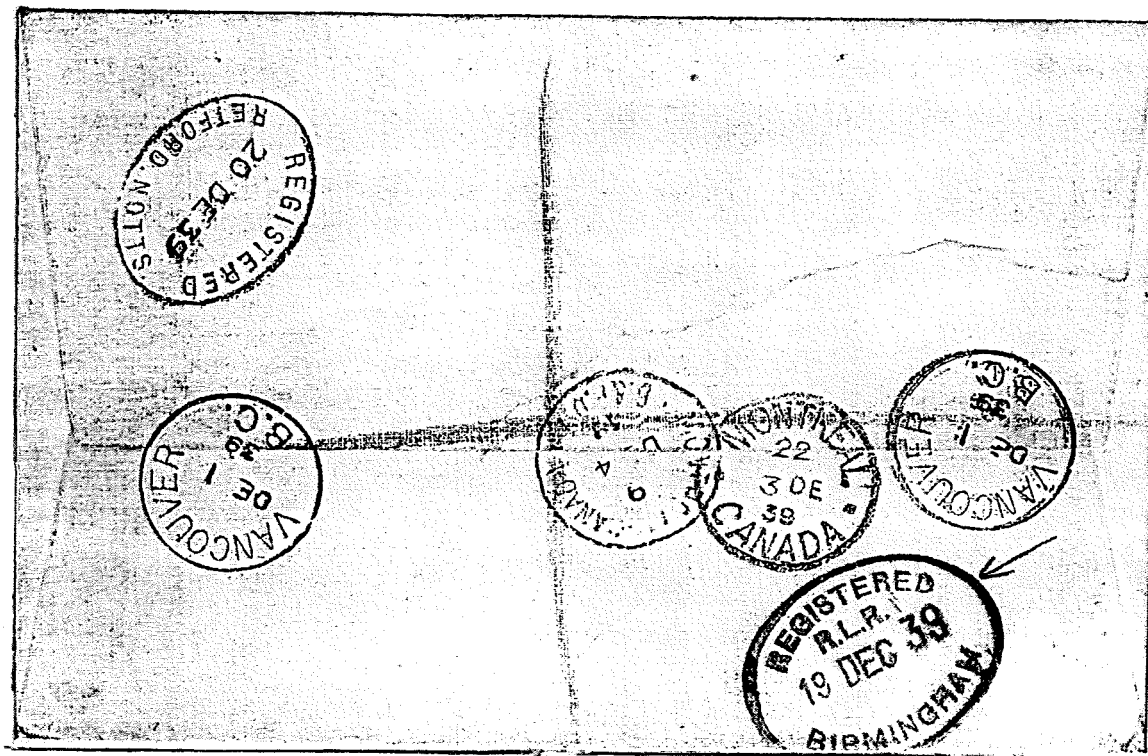
SEVERAL Mail Coaches being still missing that were obstructed in the Snow since the 1st of February last, this is to desire you will immediately represent to me an Account of all spare patent Mail Coaches that are in the Stage where you travel over, whether they are regular Stationed Mail Coaches, or Extra spare Coaches, and the exact Place where they are, either in *Barn, Field, Yard* or *Coach-house*, and the Condition they are in, and if they have Seats, Rugs, and Windows complete.

THOMAS HASKER.

Surveyor & Superintendent of Mail Coaches.

R.L.R.

The illustration below is of Lot 358 in the forthcoming auction. Even our knowledgeable describer is baffled by this one so can anyone tell us the meaning of the letters 'R.L.R.'?



SHAW'S BUNTINGFORD AUCTION

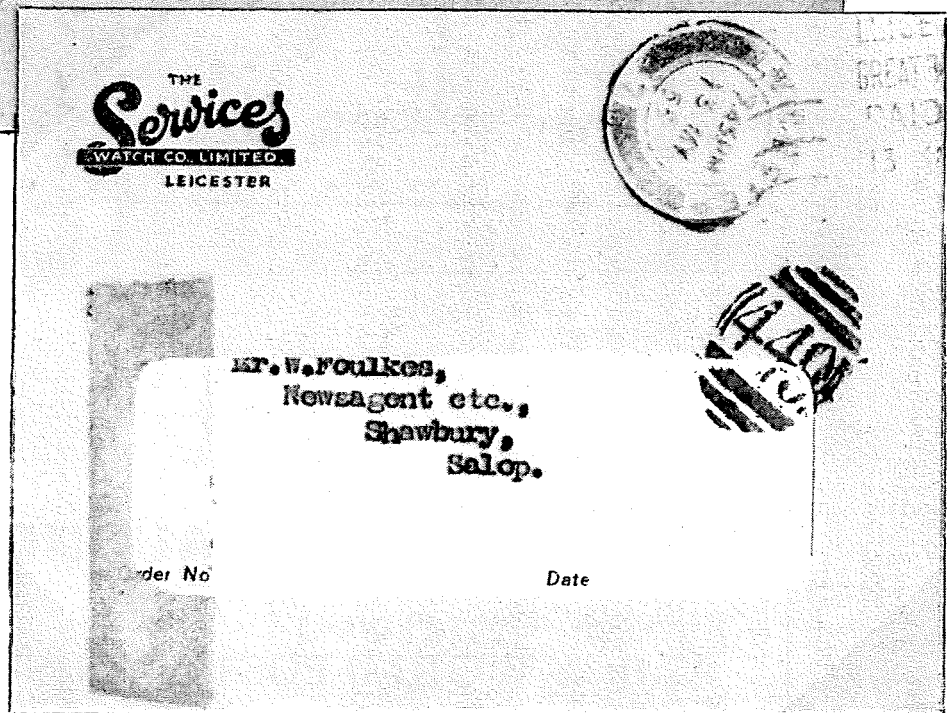
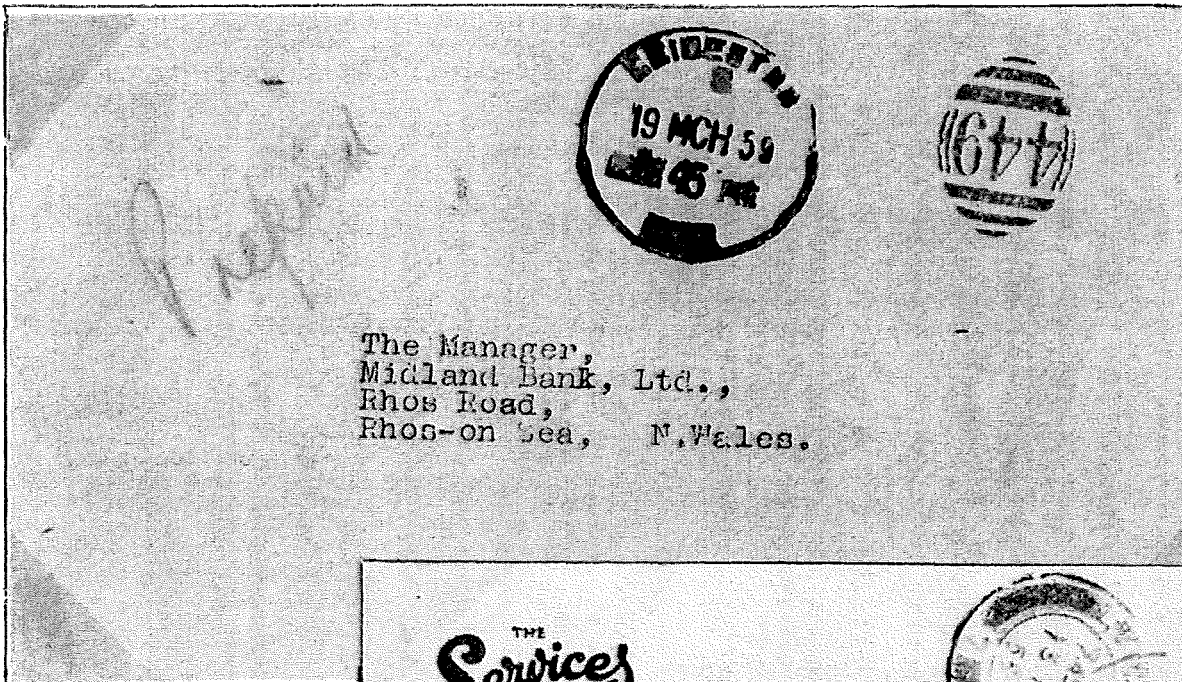
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MORE VOS HANDSTAMPS

The two prepaid items below were struck with what appears to be the 3VOS handstamp issued to Leicester in May 1884. I have no doubt that someone will come up with a later usage than this.



TAILPIECE

My thanks to Derek Smeathers for sending the following cutting from a recent philatelic sale catalogue:

"Fine 1828 cvr to Rye ex Ticehurst solely with vf framed "No 1" Relieving House mark of Lamberhurst ..."

It is to be presumed a penny was charged.

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

I am sorry that this issue is later than anticipated and shorter than usual but pressure of work did not allow me to complete the next article on "Mail by Rail in the Midlands". I hope to rectify that before the next issue which I hope will be distributed shortly before Midpex. In the meantime articles can be sent to:

John Soer, 51d, Barkham Road, Wokingham RG41 2RG