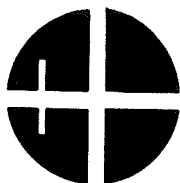


MIDLAND MAIL



THE BULLETIN OF THE MIDLAND (G.B.) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY



President: John Soer

Chairman:
Roger Broomfield

Treasurer:
Elizabeth Lewis

Secretary:
Eric Lewis

Number 103, February 1998

NEW MEMBER

We extend a warm welcome to Colin Hammersley of King's Norton whose collecting interests include Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

JON BAKER TROPHY

Nominations are now required for the winner of the above trophy which is awarded for the best article appearing in Midland Mail in the previous calendar year - in this case 1997. Please send or hand your nominations to the editor by the end of March.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Our meeting on **7th February** will be in conjunction with the Worcester Society's Annual Fair. There will be a number of dealers in attendance with a range of postal history, postcards and stamps. The fair opens at 10 a.m. and is situated in the main pedestrianised street a few minutes walk from Foregate Street railway station.

Our meeting starts at 2 p.m., and members are asked to bring nine sheets on the subject 'Turn Again Dick Whittington, it's --- miles to London Town'. This cryptic clue should prompt you to dig out your mileage marks for members to view.

On **14th March** we meet at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham for our Annual Competitions. There are three classes - mainly pre-1840, mainly post-1840 and Modern. So please start to work on your entries now. The meeting will start promptly at 1.30 p.m.

VISIT TO COVENTRY PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Three of our members - Alan Godfrey, Chris Jackson and David Hardwick are representing the Society on a visit to Coventry on 21st April.

MATERIAL FOR THE ANNUAL AUCTION

Members are reminded of the appeal made in the last issue for material to be sent to Elizabeth Lewis for inclusion in the Annual Auction. The money raised by this event helps to keep subscription costs down.

A NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER

Please note that the Editor's telephone number is now 0118 9782671. Strange to think that when we moved here the number was Wokingham 2671 and one had to contact the operator to make a trunk call.

THE DECEMBER MEETING

On 13th December we assembled at the Bass Museum, Burton-on-Trent for our traditional Christmas meeting. After an excellent lunch we were treated to an absolute feast of postal history by Michael Jackson whose display was entitled "Early British Postal History to 1663". It was a display such that a chapter could be devoted to every single sheet, each one of which was superbly presented and must have taken hours to write up.

The first half of Michael's display was devoted to material from before 1635. He began with a letter of 1423 from London to Venice, one of 1459 showing an early Merchant's Mark, and one sent from London to Antwerp in 1513. We then saw a number of items from the Corsini correspondence with varying guild marks of which Michael explained the significance.

After he had shown early Ship Letters - one was endorsed "con la Nave Falcon bianes", and letters sent by named carriers, Michael turned his attention to the Merchant Strangers Post with covers illustrating a variety of charges. There then followed four sheets on the early forwarding agents - one for each of the known agents. The next section was devoted to material from the the Dequester period. Matthew Dequester being the first Postmaster for Foreign Parts.

The Royal Post was illustrated by, amongst a wealth of material, a letter sent to the Warden of the Cinque Ports in 1560 by Elizabeth I, a letter from the Court at Richmond to the High Sheriff of Norfolk, a 1598 cover from Robert Cecil to the Mayor of Chester to be forwarded to Ireland and which had been endorsed at each stage by the postmaster. A letter sent from Dover to beyond Reading (Oxford?) and signed at each stage was unusual in that it had passed along two post roads.

Also, in the first half we saw a letter sent from Margate to London endorsed "pay the post a groat", as well as items of 1579 and 1587 both showing charges. Michael concluded the first half of his display with two letters entrusted to private carriers - 1594 to Leek and 1599 to Blithfield (also in Staffs).

The second part began with a copy of the 1635 proclamation placing Witherings in charge of the posts. During Withering's tenure, letters did not carry postal charges or endorsements as Witherings insisted that both letters sent to London and those posted there be paid for in the capital. However there is one known endorsement - on a letter of 1635 sent to Nottingham, carrying the endorsement "From Chippenham". Slightly later, were two letters of 1641 and 1642, the first endorsed "Post is Payd" and the second showing a charge of 4d had been paid - the only known letter from the period before the Civil War to show a charge. Another letter of 1641 sent from Dover to Sittingbourne and showing the endorsement "for ye Postmaster" was from the footpost of Dover. A letter of 1639 from John Coke with the Court at Berwick instructed the postmaster at Stamford to collect horses for the King who was riding post.

Next, we saw material from the Civil War period, including Royalist, Parliamentary and private letters. There was a private letter sent from Birmingham to Walsall. A letter sent from Bridgewater to Prince Rupert was marked "These Hast Post Hast For His Majst". A letter signed by Charles I was written at Newbury the day before the second battle of the Civil War that took place there. The endorsement "Leave this with Mr Hutchings Postmaster at the White Hart at Charing Cross" was to be seen on a letter sent in 1649 from Exeter to London.

The Interregnum was represented by a letter sent by Robert Blake from near Portsmouth post haste to the Admiralty on which the postmaster of each place had had to sign his name as well as the place and time.

From the Midlands we saw a letter sent in 1647 from Birmingham to Walsall as well as one sent from London to Walsall via Birmingham showing a 4d rate. Of later dates were covers sent from Coventry to Walsall (1651), London to Derby (1661) and London to Coventry (1662).

A letter from London to Norwich, charged 2d, had been carried Jason Grover who undercut the Post Office by one penny and who was sent to prison for his pains.

Michael ended his display with a cover showing the earliest known example of a Foreign Branch Bishopmark - 14th March 1663 - on a letter sent from Livorgno on 5th March.

We had in the course of the afternoon be treated to a display of postal history of the highest order, not only in the quality of the material and the way in which it was written up but also in the explanation of the historical background to many of the covers that Michael provided. A display which must surely provoke interest in the early posts.

Our thanks are due once more to Richard Farman for arranging yet another enjoyable day in Burton-on-Trent and I for one look forward to our next meeting there. Also to David Hardwick for transporting our speaker.

THE JANUARY MEETING

Our meeting in Birmingham on 10th January was the best attended meeting for a long time with more members there than at the Burton meeting. The event itself was a double-headed affair, starring Martin Scroggs and Guy Bridges.

Martin went first with a display on "Banbury". He began with some lovely early maps of Oxfordshire including those by Bowen, Badeslade and Cary, the last of which showed the mailcoach routes. He then turned his attention to the straight line marks of Banbury the first of which was from c 1705, through the two line mark of 1750 up to the curved handstamp used in 1799.

The next section of Martin's display was unusual in that he showed handstamps of places on the route that Banbury's mail was carried by the mailcoach via Woodstock, and further illustrated by Cartes de Visite. He started with a print of the Bull and Mouth in Holborn followed by mileage marks of Colnbrook, Maidenhead (a lovely strike, but then they all were), Henley and on through Nettlebed, Benson, Woodstock, Deddington and ending with the Banbury mark showing a distance of 86 miles.

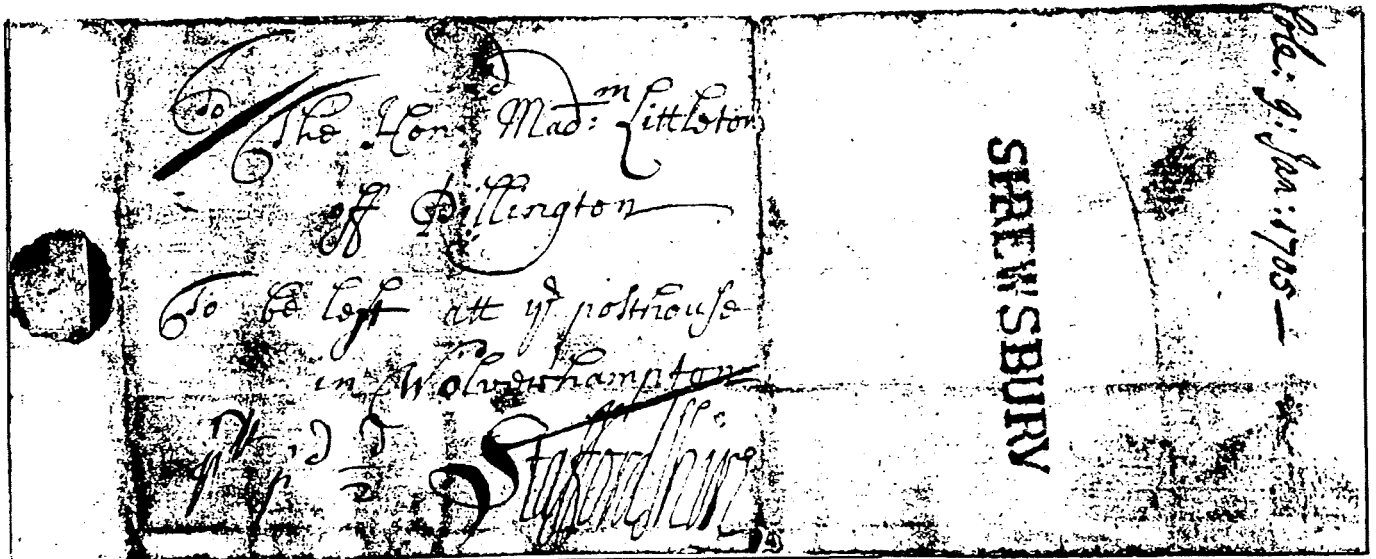
The period of the early 1820's was represented by three items from the Banbury Penny Post including one dated 1st March 1822, shortly after the formation of that penny post.

Martin then showed handstamps on the route of the mailcoach from London after 1819, that through Aylesbury, ending with the Banbury 77 mark.

This was followed by a comprehensive display of the numeral cancellation and duplex marks during which a discussion of the nature of the construction of latter handstamps took place.

Martin rounded off his display with a look at the postmarks of King's Sutton, starting with the UDC and taking in the cds as well as the duplexes and the K. 85 obliterator.

"By-ways of Shropshire" was the title of Guy Bridges' display. He too began with early maps - from 1643, 1741 and 1760, before going on to Crosspost marks such as "SHREWSBURY X" and "OXON X" (both on the same letter as well as a "WHITCHURCH X" of 1713. Then there was a superb cover of 1706 showing the first straight line mark used at Shrewsbury which is illustrated below. (My thanks to Guy for providing the photocopy.)



Guy then went on to show a whole range of missent items, starting with a letter sent from Worcester to Whitchurch in 1773 but which acquired a manuscript "Missent to" in conjunction with a two line Shrewsbury mark, and ending with the boxed missent mark of Shrewsbury struck in blue in 1852.

The local posts of Shrewsbury extended into Montgomeryshire and one letter travelled was carried twenty-five miles for a charge of 1d. Guy then showed us material from the Oswestry Penny Post, particularly from Llanfyllin. This place was issued with a cds showing an extra 'L' at the beginning and two 'N's at the end. These were obviously filed out before the handstamp was used.

The final section of Guy's display was devoted to railway material. First of all from offices such as Bow Street on the railway line to Aberystwyth, and then material from the Shrewsbury and Tamworth T.P.O.

Both displays had in the course of the afternoon showed how fascinating provincial postal history can be.

BOOK REVIEW

'The Royal Mail in Leicestershire and Rutland' was available without advance publicity at our December meeting. It becomes number 4 in this Society's list of publications.

Whatever help others may have given, wittingly or otherwise, who else but John Soer could have accumulated so much source material and presented it so lucidly? On this subject at least, no one.

It is fifteen years since John's booklet, sixty pages concerning 'The Postal History of Ashby-de-la-Zouch' was published, similar in scope to several produced by members of the Yorkshire P.H. Group and a fine model for several members of our own Society who have since completed work on other Midland towns. It has taken all of those years for John to achieve his much larger ambition, now triumphantly fulfilled, to do likewise for what meanwhile has again become recognised as two counties. Potential sources have been searched relentlessly in pursuit of details concerning each office, each postmaster, each postmark.

Those whose interest is a particular town or village will find a succinct summary of such evidence - fifty pages on Leicester and its 100-plus town sub-offices, the Ashby and its offices being covered by six pages, other Ashbys, Magna and Parva, half-a-page each. Most illustrations other than postmarks are of post offices and their staff, usually as shown on Edwardian postcards.

Those of us whose interest is the evolution of postal services and the carriage of mail will admire John's ability to explain coherently the evidence he has unearthed and wonder that his knowledge apparently embraces every aspect and period. There are gaps and uncertainties, and John is not one to pretend otherwise, but the opening chapters succeed in putting the particular details which follow into a comprehensible context.

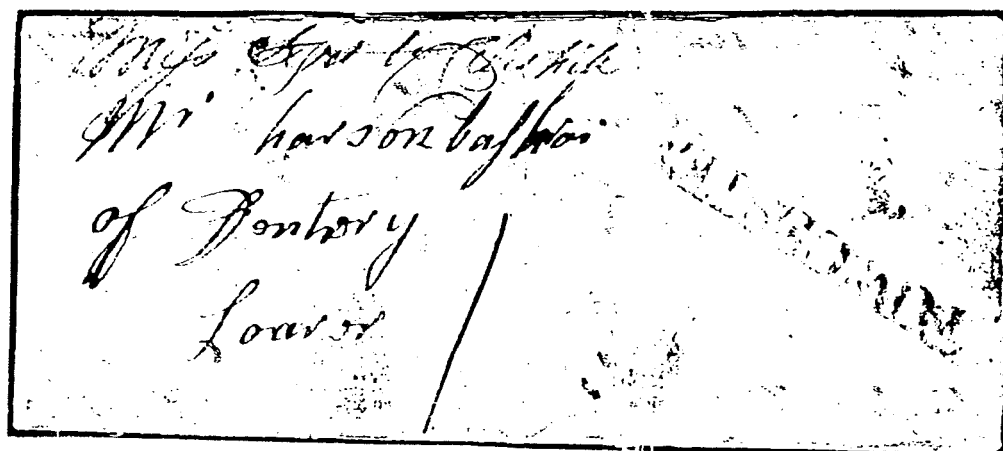
In due course, we might hope, a similar book will be published for each county. If it happens (by the end of the next century perhaps), 'Leicestershire and Rutland' will be seen to have demonstrated what was possible.

The book (300 A4 pages, paperback) is available from the author at a special price for members of £15 plus £4 p & p.

C.M.B.

ANOTHER EARLY MISSENT

In response to Richard Farman's article in the last issue, Derek Smeathers has kindly sent the photocopy shown below. The letter was written on 2nd March 1773 by Joseph Lepper at Blisworth and put into the post at Towcester. The letter was rated at 1d. - for one post-stage only (to Daventry), and was taken on the Chester Road. It was probably put into the wrong bag, as above the address is written "Miss Sent to Coleshill".



MIDLAND MAILCOACHES: OBSERVATIONS AND AMENDMENTS

by Christopher Beaver

The list in MM101 is not to be regarded as a last word on the subject of mailcoach routes in the Midlands! The hope is that the details will be questioned and corrections made. The dates in the columns to the right are generally those for which contractors were paid and there were certainly instances of payments to the end of a quarter though the mail had already been transferred to a railway.

The primary object in producing the list has been to assist with our attempts to explain mileage marks and General Post rates charged between 1784 and 1840. Routes introduced in and after 1840 have been excluded since distance ceased to be a factor in determining postage. In due course a further lengthy list may attempt to cover the later period to 1846 when the last London service ceased, and on through the ensuing decades for which no Post 6 evidence exists. Most mailcoach alterations after 1840 were determined by the opening of additional sections of railroad. Where the train did not yet go more frequent services by coach, cart or omnibus were often required to carry the increasing volume and weight of mail. After 1846 long distance mailcoaches were confined more or less to the 'Celtic fringes' of Britain, but stage coaches were used by the Post Office on feeder routes between main railway stations and towns 'off the track' or until reasonable terms were agreed with the railway companies.

A check over the list produced in MM101 has already brought to light a few errors and omissions. The corrections to nos. 80 and 81 merit an explanation because the mistakes were due to a wrong mileage figure printed on the circulation map of July 1823. Payments for route 82 - Birmingham to Bewdley were for 25 miles at that date. The map shows correctly 10 miles from Birmingham to Dudley, but 12 plus 10 between Dudley and Bewdley, probably 12 for Dudley to Kidderminster and 10, incorrectly, for Stourbridge to Bewdley. (10 may have been correct for Stourbridge to Stourport via Kidderminster and Bewdley.) The Birmingham to Stourport timebill of 1827, route 83, shows Birmingham to Dudley as 10 miles, Dudley to Kidderminster 12, Kidderminster to Bewdley 3, Bewdley to Stourport 3½. However it is an entry in the Times of 12th October 1822 which convinces me that the map and my list were in error, that all of routes 80 to 83 were via Dudley, and that the Post Office in fact paid for 8 miles between Dudley and Stourbridge, 4 between Stourbridge and Kidderminster, and 3 between Kidderminster and Bewdley, totalling 15 not 22 miles. Quoting a Birmingham paper to the effect that from the following Monday the Holyhead Mail would arrive there from London at 9 instead of 10 a.m. and depart for London at 5 instead of 4 p.m., The Times reported specifically: "Mr. Hart, one of the contractors, has also in consequence made arrangements with the Postmaster General for the establishment of a new mail from hence to Kidderminster through Dudley and Stourbridge ...". In Post 6 the relevant payment is recorded as "Mr John Hart for conveying the Birmingham Mail from October 17th 1822 to January 5th 1823 £22-5-6", that is for a 22 mile route at 3d a double mile for 81 days. Clearly there was a delay of three days in its commencement since the 17th of October was a Thursday.

These are the amendments to be made to the list please :-

14.	LONDON-CHELTENHAM	Royal Mail	12.7.88-23.8.88	
63A.	WARWICK-BIRMINGHAM	No payment	1813-26.5.21	64
69.	LEAMINGTON-BIRMINGHAM	1832 no payment; 25.7.36 return - 22.0; 5.7.1837 - 24.1;/2(4)	1832-28.2.39	
79.	BIRMINGHAM-DUDLEY	End date 10.10.22		
80.	BIRMINGHAM-STOURBRIDGE	via Dudley ...		
81.	BIRMINGHAM-KIDDERMINSTER	via Dudley ...		
85.	BIRMINGHAM-WALSALL	Start 21.10.96		
133A	LONDON-DERBY	1837 - 126.0/4(4)	5.7.37-28.8.40	
135.	CARLISLE-EDINBURGH	 6.7.1837 twice a day/...		
141.	MANCHESTER-SHEFFIELD	See 142, 144		
156.	LONDON-LEEDS	via Leicester 1789 - 195; 1794 - 196;		
165.	LONDON-HALIFAX	End date 4.4.39		
168.	SHEFFIELD-GAINSBOROUGH	... 5.4.1836 - 33.0/...		
171.	CARLISLE-GLASGOW	... c 10.7.1837 twice a day/...		
175.	LONDON-CARLISLE	End date 5.4.39	See 164	
192.	(London)-HODDESDON (?) -BARTON	via Hertford 1813 - 150;	5.7.13-5.4.16	
192A	LONDON-BARTON	1822 - 173; 5.1.1827 - 170/170.2; 4(3)	5.4.22-5.4.36	193

MIDAND POST OFFICES OPENED OR CLOSED DURING 1997

by Ken Smith

BIRMINGHAM

Colmore Circus B.O. replaced by Corporation Street 20/1/1997.
Newtown closed 14/2/1997; reopened 17/4/1997.

DERBYSHIRE

Arkwright Town, Chesterfield reopened 13/11/1997.
Barrow-on-Trent, Derby closed 22/7/1997.
Cresswell Road, Clowne renamed Ashlea Green, Clowne "by March 1997".
Denby, Ripley closed 7/5/1997.
Kniveton, Ashbourne closed 27/3/1997.
Litton, Buxton closed 26/3/1997; reopened 9/6/1997.
Longford, Ashbourne closed 21/11/1997.
Lower Pilsley, Chesterfield closed 30/5/1997.
Newtown, New Mills, Stockport closed 2/7/1997.
Quarndon, Derby closed 12/3/1997.
Spinkhill, Chesterfield closed 30/5/1997.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Bristol Road (TSO), Gloucester closed 5/11/1997.
Forest Green, Stroud closed 2/7/1997.
Iron Acton, Bristol closed 3/5/1997.
Laverton, Broadway closed 2/8/1997.
Sandhurst, Gloucester closed 8/5/1997.
The Thrupp (TSO), Stroud closed 12/9/1997.
Worrall Hill, Lydbrook closed 23/7/1997.

HEREFORDSHIRE

Bartestree, Hereford closed 21/5/1997; reopened 2/10/1997.
Little Marcle, Ledbury closed 22/3/1997.
Whitchurch, Ross-on-Wye closed 15/1/1997.
Wilton, Ross-on-Wye closed 25/7/1997.

LEICESTERSHIRE

Burton-on-the-Wolds, Loughborough closed 29/3/1997.
Hoby, Melton Mowbray closed 11/11/1997.
Hose, Melton Mowbray closed 10/4/1997; reopened 7/5/1997; closed 25/6/1997.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Cranford, Kettering: closed 26/2/1997; reopened 1/5/1997.
Fulford Drive (TSO), Northampton replaced by St. David's (TSO) 19/9/1997.
Great Houghton, Northampton closed 17/12/97
Harringworth, Corby closed 28/11/1997.
Hood Road (TSO), Daventry closed 12/3/1997; reopened 26/6/1997.
Pitsford, Northampton closed 23/12/97
Titchmarsh, Kettering closed 26/3/1997.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Aslockton, Nottingham closed 15/1/1997; reopened 13/2/1997.
Caunton, Newark closed 2/4/1997.
Daybrook (TSO), Nottingham closed 10/1/1998.
East Markham, Newark closed 2/4/1997; reopened 29/8/1997.
Hoveringham, Nottingham closed 17/12/1997.
Misson, Doncaster reopened 1/10/1997 (had closed 23/10/1995).
North Wheatley, Retford reopened 13/2/1997 (had closed 7/9/1994).
South Clifton, Newark closed 5/2/1997.
Stanford-on-Soar, Loughborough closed 16/6/1997.

OXFORDSHIRE

Bladon, Woodstock closed 26/1/1997.
 Buckland, Faringdon closed 30/4/1997.
 Deddington, Banbury closed 6/12/1997; reopened 19/12/1997.
 Eden Drive (TSO), Headington, Oxford closed 3/9/1997.
 Hambleden, Henley-on-Thames (in Bucks) reopened 10/4/1997 (had closed 19/12/1996).
 Iffley, Oxford closed 6/8/1997; reopened 8/9/1997.
 North Newington, Banbury closed 25/6/1997.
 Over Norton, Chipping Norton closed 17/12/97
 Peppard Common, Henley-on-Thames closed 26/3/1997.

RUTLAND

Braunston, Oakham closed 13/2/1997.
 Lyddington, Oakham closed "by July 1997"; reopened 17/1/1998.
 Whissendine, Oakham closed 26/2/1997; reopened 16/6/1997.

SHROPSHIRE

Llynclys, Oswestry closed 31/7/1997.
 Myddle, Shrewsbury closed 14/1/1997.
 Norton-in-Hales, Market Drayton closed 12/2/1997.
 Penybont, Oswestry (in Denbighshire) closed 8/4/1997.
 Tern Hill, Market Drayton closed 11/9/1997.
 Waters Upton, Telford reopened 13/3/1997 (had closed 23/8/1996).

STAFFORDSHIRE

Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent closed 22/10/1997.
 Rangemore, Burton-on-trent closed 22/10/1997.
 Rudyard, Leek closed 26/3/1997.
 Stramshall, Uttoxeter closed 11/11/1997.
 Trysull, Wolverhampton closed 27/8/1997.
 Walton (TSO), Stafford closed 27/3/1997.

WARWICKSHIRE

Alvecote, Tamworth closed 5/2/1997.
 Bourton, Rugby closed 3/10/1997.
 Burton Hastings, Nuneaton closed 31/12/1997.
 Grandborough, Rugby closed 4/4/1997.
 Henry Street, Kenilworth replaced by Albion Street 26/3/1997.
 Lighthorne Heath, Leamington Spa closed 18/12/1997.
 Ridge Lane, Nuneaton reopened 19/6/1997; (had closed 13/11/1996).
 Shottery (TSO), Stratford-on-Avon closed 19/3/1997; reopened 6/11/1997.

WEST MIDLANDS

Silver End (TSO), Brierley Hill closed 6/8/1997.

WORCESTERSHIRE

Charlton, Pershore closed 22/8/1997.
 Fladbury, Pershore closed 28/8/1997.
 Hopwood, Birmingham closed 23/5/1997.
 Leigh, Worcester closed 5/3/1997.
 Upper Wyche (TSO), Malvern reopened 17/3/1997 (had closed 27/12/1995).

P.O. Counters describe all closures nowadays as "temporary", hoping that somebody will come forward to take over. So some of the offices on the list may reopen. If any members know of any closures that have not been announced, I would like to hear of these.

The eighty yearold postmistress at Charlton, Pershore, Mrs Kathleen Guise, ran the post office for forty-nine years. Ten days after retiring, she died suddenly and unexpectedly. The postmistress at Fladbury said that the free bus service run by Tesco at Evesham had put her village store and post office out of business. P.O. Counters advertised for replacements at both Charlton and Fladbury but no-one came forward.

I visited Trysull on the last day of business. The postmistress ran the post office in her garage at the side of her house, but the roof needed expensive repairs, and it was not economic to continue.

AN OXFORD AND NORTHAMPTON TIMEBILL

When I wanted a copy of such a timebill to illustrate the article in MM100/26 I could not find one. No sooner had the article been published than I came across that shown below. The endorsement reads: "Not In time for the Mails. In consequence of two persons on a Gig driving against the Horse on the Mail Cart near Somers Town. The shaft of the Gig being forced into the Chest of the Horse which was left in the Road & the Driver obliged to return to Oxford to procure another Horse."

 GENERAL POST-OFFICE Duke of MANCHESTER, Postmaster-General.		
Oxford and Northampton (Through BRACKLEY and TOWCESTER,)		
TIME BILL. DAILY.		
Miles.	Time allowed H. M.	The <u>21st</u> day of <u>March</u> 18 <u>90</u> , Dispatched from Oxford, at P.M.
		8
32	4 30	<i>Postmr.</i> Arrived at Towcester, at Dispatched at <i>Not in time for the Mails</i> <i>Postmr.</i>
		4 15 4 20
9	1 20	Arrived at Northampton, at In time for the Mail. <i>In consequence of</i>
		5 40
41	5 50	<i>Persons on a Gig driving against the Horse on the mail cart near Somers Town, the shaft of the Gig being forced into the Chest of the Horse which was left in the Road & the Driver obliged to return to Oxford to procure another Horse.</i> <i>Postmr.</i>
		7
RETURNED. The <u>23</u> day of <u>March</u> 18 <u>90</u> Dispatched from Northampton, at A.M.		
		12 10
9	1 20	<i>Postmr.</i> Arrived at Towcester, at Dispatched at
		1 40 1 45
32	4 30	<i>Postmr.</i> Arrived at Oxford, at
		7
41	5 50	<i>Postmr.</i>
		7

When any material Loss of Time occurs, the Deputy is to write the Cause of it upon the Time-Bill.

The Time must be punctually observed, and the Bills correctly dated. On any particular irregularity happening the Bill to be sent by the first Post, to me, the others by every Monday's Post, and One Month before they are expended notice to be given and one enclosed to me. If these Bills are misapplied, and it should be necessary to re-print them before Twelve Months, it will be done at the Postmaster's Expence.

Feb. 1829. — 384.

C. RIDEOUT,

THE SURVEYORS' JOURNALS (Part 29)

Mr Godby recorded two visits on official business in January 1820. The first was to Birmingham to look into the possibility of establishing a receiving house to serve Deritend and Bordesley. The second was to Lichfield to "ascertain the time necessarily required for the dispatch of the Chester Up Mail from that Office." Mr Godby was again in Birmingham in mid-February as a consequence of the death of the proprietor of the Walsall and Birmingham mailcoach. He investigated the the best method of carrying the bags to and from Walsall and drew up a new contract.

In mid-March, Mr Godby met Mr Johnson in Chester to discuss the alterations to the London-Chester and Chester-Holyhead mailcoaches. [Unfortunately I have not been able to find the full details of these changes.] Mr Godby next appeared in the Midlands at Lichfield for five days in early April in order to find out what further assistance was needed there on the alteration of the Chester mailcoach. He then went on to Atherstone and Measham to ascertain what alteration could be made to give Ashby and Burton "the benefit of the increased rate of travelling of the Chester Mail." [Again I have not been able to track down the full details of this but a comparison of the Riding Work forms for January 1820 and January 1821 shows that in the former year the ride arrived in Atherstone from Burton at 10 a.m., whereas in the latter year it arrived at 3 p.m.] Mr Godby's next call was at Hinckley where he "regulated" the arrival and departure of the penny post messenger to Nuneaton. He then met Mr Hart in Leicester to discuss the best way of preventing the delay of some letters from Mr Hart's district at Lichfield. This particular tour ended at Coventry and Leamington where Mr Godby investigated the loss of a £5 note out of a letter sent to the latter place.

Early May found Mr Godby in Welshpool renewing or drawing up contracts as appropriate for the carriage of the mails to Shrewsbury, Cann Office and Llanidloes to take effect on the 10th of the month. He then went on to Chester and then Holyhead, inspecting the offices and obtaining the signatures of the contractors to a new timebill to correspond with "the intended alterations on the Shrewsbury Road." At the very end of May, Mr Godby arrived in Solihull and Knowle, "to open Penny Post Letter Boxes and make those Offices conformable to other Penny Post establishments."

Gloucester was the city in which Mr Godby and Mr Woodcock met in mid-June to prepare instructions for the postmasters prior to the acceleration of the mailcoaches from Gloucester to Carmarthen, and from Bristol to Milford. The possibility of opening a penny post to Goodrich and Whitchurch from Ross then took Mr Godby to that posttown. This seems to have been an instance of a surveyor helping a colleague for we shall see Mr Woodcock completed this business.

After spending some time in South Wales, Mr Godby arrived in Daventry in mid-July to install a new deputy in place of the late Mrs Ashworth. His next calls were at Atherstone and Overseal where he opened a penny post and drew up a new contract for the ride between Atherstone and Burton-on-Trent to give the latter town five more hours to answer by return of post. [See 'The Postal History of Ashby-de-la-Zouch' p. 14.]

Mr Godby's next business in the Midlands was at the beginning of August and concerned the establishment of a direct bag between Birmingham and Dublin. The second half of the month was taken up in arranging a post between Oswestry and Welshpool.

Towards the end of September Mr Godby arrived in Worcester to "regulate the performance of the Office duty in consequence of an acceleration of the Mail Coaches, & to put the Postmaster in the best and most expeditious method of preparing for the London delivery, & for the dispatch of the branch mails." The only business in the Midlands recorded in October was four days spent in charge of the Ludlow office as the postmaster was in arrears to the Revenue. Only one piece of business is recorded for November - a visit to Lichfield to look into the possibility of forwarding without delay the letters from the Tamworth and Stafford Roads for Birmingham and the West of England, and to open a voucher between Rugeley and Uttoxeter.

After he had installed a new deputy in place of Mr Russell at Ludlow in early December, Mr Godby returned to Worcester to check that the measures he had proposed had been put into place. He then went on to Stone, Newcastle and Uttoxeter to open a voucher between those office so as to prevent the delay of letters from Uttoxeter to the North. Finally, there was another visit to Lichfield on the same matter as in November.

SHAW'S BUNTINGFORD AUCTION

G.B. & WORLD POSTAL HISTORY

Maritime & Naval, T.P.O., Railways, Air mail, Postal stationery,
Military & Censored, Mechanised mail, Cinderella

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Mr Hart's journal for January 1820 appears to be missing but on 1st February he was in Northampton arranging for the ride to Daventry to be replaced by one to Towcester [See MM100/28]. After he had spent a few days at home in Leicester Mr Hart inspected the offices at Nottingham and Newark on his way into Lincolnshire.

We next find Mr Hart in the Midlands on the 10th at April making arrangements for the Loughborough to Nottingham ride to carry the letters from Nottingham for London.

May was spent in Lincolnshire and June in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Towards the end of July he visited Melton Mowbray, Oakham and Uppingham to prepare for the alterations made necessary by the acceleration of the Leeds mailcoach. There is no journal for August and I imagine that Mr Hart was involved at other offices preparing for the changes to the times of the Leeds coach. On 1st September he left Northampton for London where he spent a fortnight consulting Freeling and others on the business of his district. On his way back to Leicester he called at Northampton to find a contractor for the ride to Kettering.

Mr Hart was in Northampton again in December to dismiss the contractor for the ride to Towcester and find a replacement.

Mr Woodcock's journal for January 1820 reads: "During this eventfull Month at home engaged in various Official Duties, particularly preparing for the new communication (and consequent regulations depending on it) between Chippenham and Tetbury. On the 31st set off for that part of my District." What Mr Woodcock meant by "eventfull" can be deduced from his reports on the riding work for that month. Most of the rides in the West Midlands had been affected by snow. For much of February he was occupied in opening a post between Chippenham, Tetbury, Uley, Dursley, Wotton-under-Edge and other parts "of the Clothing district in Gloucestershire" with Chippenham, Calne, Marlborough and other parts of the "Clothing district" in Wiltshire as well as arranging the circulation of Cirencester and its branches through this channel with towns up to Reading.

Mr Woodcock was away from home for virtually the whole of March during which he reported on: the Kington and Radnorshire posts; the post between Bewdley and Wolverhampton; the serving of Dudley and Stourbridge with their London correspondence "in a more expeditious way from Birmingham." In fact, the first two weeks of April were spent at Stourbridge, Dudley and Birmingham arranging "the Short Coaches between Birmingham and Dudley, and Birmingham & Stourbridge, and establishing an expeditious ride between Stourbridge and Wolverhampton (thro' Dudley). He then went on to Bromyard to put in a new deputy and to prepare for the new post between Leominster and Kington.

For the greater part of May, Mr Woodcock was in charge of the Banbury office settling the postmaster's accounts. The deputy was reinstated when all the arrears had been paid and he had found new sureties.

An investigation into complaints against the postmaster at Chipping Campden took up five days at the start of June. Then there were meetings with Mr Johnson and Mr Godby on the business of improvements to the posts in South Wales. Visiting the offices in Wales to arrange for "the new regulation of the Milford Mail Coach" occupied a fortnight up to 3rd July. Another twelve days were spent away from home in July. Firstly at Frogmill "settling the Bye or rather short bag" between there and Oxford. Then to Moreton-in-Marsh and Campden to install a deputy at the latter place.

From 3rd to 14th October Mr Woodcock was employed on the line of road through Stroud, Cirencester, Fairford and Abingdon arranging "to give the Publick the full benefit of the new regulations of the Oxford and Bristol Mail Coach."

For the whole of November Mr Woodcock was "confined to my chamber under medical advice." The journal for December reads: "Confined this month by Illness a violent Rheumatic Affection in my hip and loins. But, thank God, am now much better; employed in official duties at home, tho' not able at that time to travell."

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ADDENDA

THE MAILCOACHES FROM BIRMINGHAM TO DUDLEY AND STOURBRIDGE

On 3rd April 1820, Mr Woodcock sent to Freeling a statement of the alterations that were to take place in the riding allowances when "the short Mails" from Birmingham to Dudley, and from Birmingham to Stourbridge "(thro' Halesowen)" started on 6th inst. He said that the coaches could not deliver the bags at the post office at either Dudley or Halesowen, and it would be necessary to employ messengers to meet the coaches at their stopping points.

Although the post office at Dudley was some distance from the inn where the coach from Birmingham would stop, the post between Stourbridge and Wolverhampton passed right by the door. At Halesowen the office was very conveniently situated for the inhabitants being in the centre of the town, but the post road and the inn where the coach would stop were on one side of the town, some distance from the office.

He went on to propose the following alterations in payments.

TAKE OFF

From Birmingham

The allowance for the ride to Stourbridge (thro' Dudley)		£150
The allowance to Dudley for carrying the mail to and from Wolverhampton and duty on one horse	£70	£2.13.6
The allowance paid to the Halesowen messenger		£36.10.0
Total to be taken off		£259.3.6

PUT ON

To Stourbridge

To carry the mail daily to and from Wolverhampton (thro' Dudley)	£105
--	------

To Birmingham

To pay the sub-deputy at Dudley for meeting the mailcoach at the inn	£7.16.0	
To pay the sub-deputy at Halesowen for meeting the mailcoach at the inn	£5.4.0	
Total to be put on		£118.0.0

When reporting to the Postmasters General, Freeling added that the mailcoaches would cost £100.2.0 p.a., giving a saving of £41.1.6. However, he was of the opinion that the sub-deputy at Dudley lived in a most inconvenient position, "frequently complained of", and it would be wrong to burden the Revenue for his personal accommodation. Therefore the receiver was to be directed to provide, at his own expence, to "have a Person in readiness, so that the Town may enjoy the full benefit of the arrangement..."

[Ref. Post 40/96/1820]

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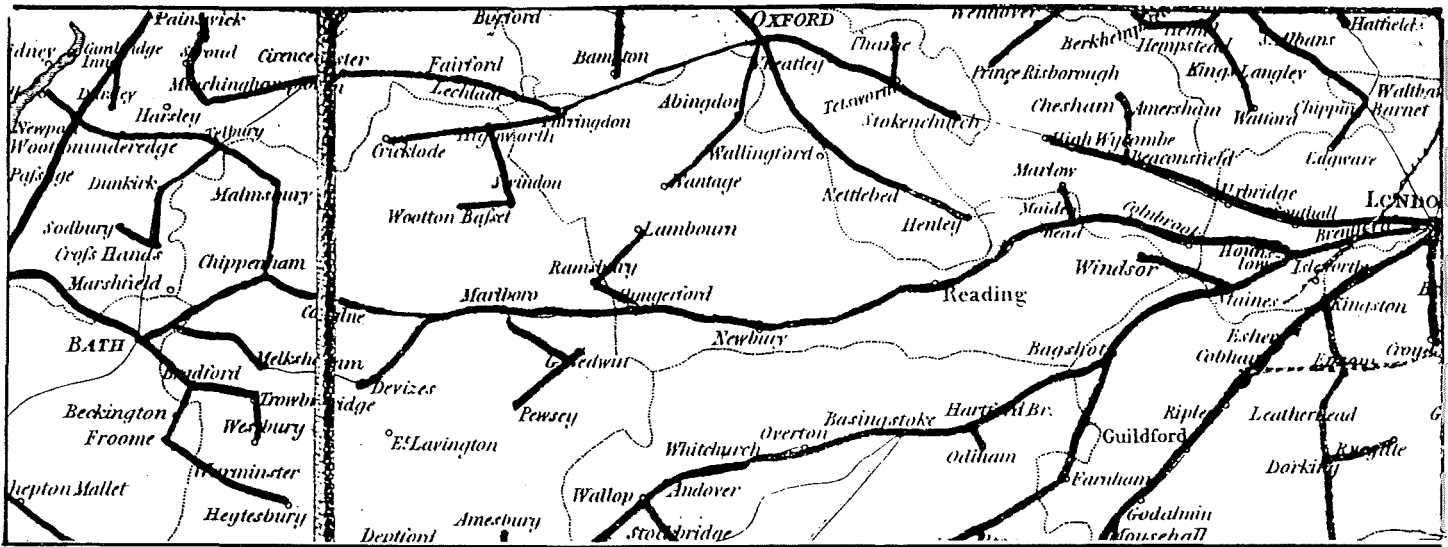
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THE TETBURY TO CHIPPENHAM POST

In February 1820, Mr Woodcock reported that the new post between Tetbury, Malmesbury and Chippenham had started on 6th inst. As a result of a post being opened between Tetbury and Malmesbury, the latter place would receive and return all their correspondence from the North through Tetbury. Also all the towns in the neighbourhood of Tetbury and on the road to Oxford would have a quicker correspondence with Chippenham and the towns on the road to Reading.

He went on to say that he had instructed Tetbury to keep the same penny account with Malmesbury that Chippenham did, and to make up a bye bag and open a daily voucher with Chippenham. The cost of the post, £95 p.a. was £35 more than that of the Chippenham to Malmesbury ride. The mailcart was due to arrive in Tetbury at about 11 a.m. and leave there at 4 p.m., though the inhabitants at Tetbury and Chippenham did not want the departure to be so late in winter and had asked that the driver be provided with a brace of pistols. [Ref. Post 40/41/1820]



THE KINGTON TO LEOMINSTER POST

Members might wish to refer to MM93/12 in conjunction with the following.

A voluminous correspondence was the result of the townspeople of Kington applying in 1820 for a direct post from Leominster. In their petition they said that Kington had upwards of two thousand inhabitants and the business of the place was great in proportion to its size, there being a bank, an iron foundry and the principal depot of the Hay and Kington Railway. A considerable wool trade was also centred on the town. A stage coach ran from London to Kington three times a week during the whole year, and in the summer months, two London coaches ran through Hereford and Leominster five times a week to Kington. They went on to point out that although Kington was only fourteen miles from Leominster, the down mail which arrived at Leominster at 6 p.m. was not delivered at Kington until 9 a.m. on the following day, having remained all night at Presteigne. Similarly the up mail which had to be posted by 6 p.m. remained all night at Presteigne from where it was forwarded at about 6 a.m. This could be rectified by sending the Welsh Post from Leominster through Kington to New Radnor. Presteigne and Knighton could be served by a branch post from Kington, saving the hire of one man.

Mr Woodcock reported that the amount of mail passing through the Kington office warranted a better service. However, since Presteigne was the county town of Radnorshire, objections would certainly be raised against discontinuing the direct post between there and Leominster. His first idea was to carry the Kington bag from Leominster to Shobden from where a ride to Kington could be established. But further investigation showed that the road was in a poor state, and for two thirds of the year the bags would be exchanged in the dark at the lonely village of Shobden. Consequently he proposed that Kington should be served by a direct ride from Leominster through Pembridge where a receiving office was to be opened and the messenger between Presteigne and Kington be withdrawn. There remained one problem - the village of Titley three miles from Kington on the route of the Presteigne messenger and the home of two of the magistrates for Herefordshire. The solution was to make an allowance of one shilling a day for a messenger between Kington and Titley on four days a week. [Ref. Post 40/114/1820]

THE MALVERN PENNY POST

On 2nd August 1820, Mr Woodcock reported that the Hereford and Worcester mailcoach would run daily on and after Monday 7th inst. Therefore the penny post bags between Worcester and Malvern could be carried by the Hereford guard, saving the £40 paid for the ride between Worcester and Malvern. He had directed Hereford, Ledbury and Worcester to make up daily bags with each other but the bag from London for Hereford was still to be sent through Gloucester as it would reach Hereford much sooner than if it were sent via Worcester. [Ref. Post 40/240/1820]

THE WORCESTER POST OFFICE

Mr Godby (deputising for Mr Woodcock) reported in October 1820 on a visit he had made to the Worcester office. Mr St. John had held the position of postmaster for about twenty-two years, and Mr Perry had been the clerk for about thirty-five years. As might be expected they had acquired "slow habits in business" and the latter had arrived at a time of life when it was most difficult to break him of them. Nevertheless, he had tried to impress upon them the need to do their utmost to keep pace with the acceleration in the travelling of the mailcoaches.

Mr St. John had lost one eye entirely and the sight of the other was very imperfect with the result that he was much slower in business than he would have been otherwise. His younger son had been helping in the office so making up for any deficiencies of his father but that assistance might shortly no longer be available. Mr Godby went on to say that although Mr St. John and his clerk were competent to carry out the duty in a reasonable time after the arrival of the mail, this might not be the case if further changes were introduced. However, he did not feel that it was appropriate to recommend any further allowance for help in the office.

Mr Godby then turned his attention to the letter carriers of whom two were employed but at very inadequate salaries - £20 p.a. each, so they had to rely on fees and Christmas gifts for their support. In order to get the letter carriers dispatched forty-five minutes earlier than before he had to put a stop to a highly improper practice which had gone on for some years. The senior letter carrier lived within two or three doors of the post office and instead of the newspapers being sorted in the office and the carriers being ready as soon as the letters were turned over to them, they took the whole lot to the senior letter carrier's house where they sorted them into streets so that the townspeople might call there for their letters and papers, so giving the letter carriers some claim to a fee. Mr Godby ordered that the letter carriers were to be at the office on the arrival of the mailcoach from London, to sort the newspapers as soon as the bag was opened, to prepare the letters as soon as they had been examined, told and turned over to them by the clerk. As this would have deprived the letter carrier's of any perquisites, and their weekly wage of 7s 8d was hardly more than that of a labourer, Mr Godby recommended that the senior letter carrier receive 15/- a week while the other should have 12/-. Mr Godby pointed out that the letters from Hereford, Ledbury and Malvern arrived after the dispatch of the letter carriers so the delivery of the senior letter carrier was arranged so that he could pass the office about thirty minutes after his dispatch and call for those letters. If the letters had not arrived by then, the two letter carriers were to take it in turn to make an evening delivery of them.

The report ended with details of the arrival and dispatch of the mails over four days.

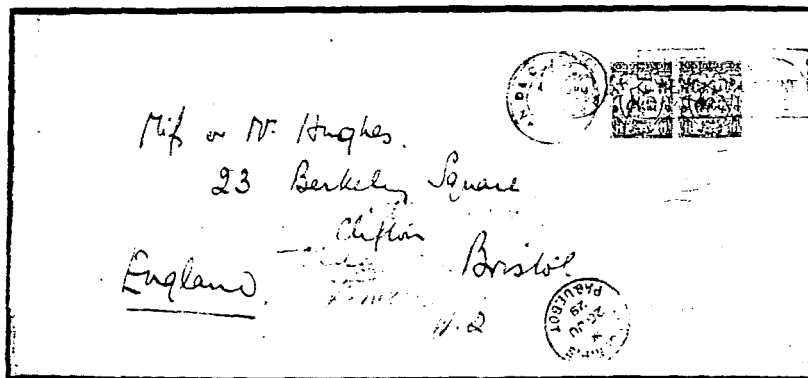
	Arrival	Dispatch
Sept 27	London 10.45 a.m. Ludlow 11 a.m. Leominster 11.03 a.m. Hereford 12.04 p.m.	Ludlow 11.30 a.m. off at 12 noon Leominster 11.30 a.m. off at 12 noon Hereford 12.10 p.m.
Sept 28	London 10.52 Ludlow 10.57 Leominster 11.08 Hereford 11.53	Ludlow 11.30 off at noon Leominster 11.30 off at noon Hereford 11.55 off at noon Letter Carriers 11.35
Sept 29	London 11 a.m. Ludlow 11.08 Leominster 11.12 Hereford 11.55	Ludlow 11.40 Leominster 11.38 Hereford 12 noon Letter Carriers 11.35
Sept 30	London 10.56 Ludlow 10.58 Leominster 11.02 Hereford 11.55	Ludlow 11.35 Leominster 11.31 Hereford 12 noon Letter Carriers 11.32

The reason for the delay in sending out the Ludlow and Leominster mails on the first two day was that the guards had been in the habit of not receiving their bags until noon and so did not arrive at the office until then.

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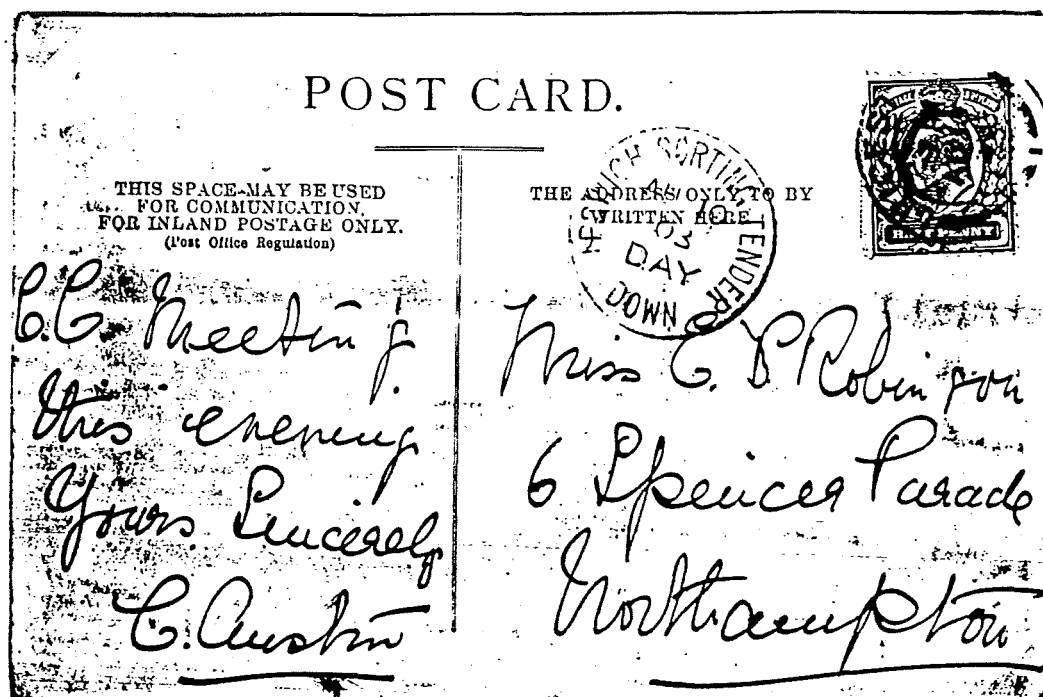


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AN UNLIKELY MISSENT

How on earth did a letter sent from Leicester (postmarked 7 a.m.) the short distance to Northampton end up later that day in the down Ipswich Sorting Tender? I cannot imagine that Leicester made up a bag for that Tender.



THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

This should appear at the end of March. If it is to contain anything other than more from the Surveyors' Journals articles, long or short, should be sent to:

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