

MIDLAND MAIL



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



President: Elizabeth Lewis

Chairman:
Chris Jackson

Treasurer:
Elizabeth Lewis

Secretary:
Eric Lewis

Number 110, June 1999

NEW MEMBER

We extend a cordial welcome to Mr Gilbert Smith of Peakirk, Peterborough who collects material from Peterborough and Wansford.

POST OFFICES CLOSED

Please add to the listing on MM109/4:

OXFORDSHIRE Over Norton, Chipping Norton closed 17/12/97.

THE SOCIETY PROJECT

Most members will be aware that the Society is currently working on a project with the eventual aim of producing a new publication provisionally titled 'Mileage Marks and Mail Routes of the Midland Counties'. The project has three related components:

- (a) to identify and record the usage of every mileage stamp (including 'mileage erased') employed in the Midlands;
- (b) to provide the best available illustration of a strike of each stamp;
- (c) to research the mail routes employed to carry letters from each Midland town (using a mileage stamp) to London between 1784 and c1840 and thereby to justify or contradict the mileage figures used on the stamps.

Inevitably, the bulk of the work is falling on the County Editors, particularly in respect of the third component. However there are a number of ways in which the wider membership can help. If you have fine strikes of any of our mileage marks, make sure that the County (or Co-ordinating) Editor is aware of them. If you have examples of any Midland mileage stamps struck in the earliest or latest years currently recorded in the British County Catalogue - and especially if you have a stamp struck in a year that has not been recorded - please advise us of the FULL date (day, month and year). If you think there are differences between strikes of what are currently listed as the same stamp, tell us about them and, if you do not have a copy of your county's BCC list, speak to Eric Lewis, our librarian, who will try to help you.

The addresses of the County Editors are to be found in the back of our publications but, if you have any doubt or problem, please contact the Co-ordinating Editor, John Calladine, at 5 Skillins, Kington St Michael, Chippenham SN14 6RL, e-mail: john.calladine@ukgateway.net and phone : 01249 758148. There is an ansaphone for messages.

This is an important project using information never published before. We would like every member to feel personally involved. The outcome will be well worth it.

MIDPEX

I hope that this edition will reach you before the date of Midpex - 3rd July. Do come along and don't forget to visit the Society's stand.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

After apologies for absence had been noted and the minutes of the last meeting taken as read, our Chairman, Chris Jackson began his report by saying that his first year in the chair had gone very quickly. He then went on to outline the events of the year, saying what a varied and interesting programme it had been. He ended by thanking all the Officers and especially Eric and Elizabeth for their work in organising the Society and keeping it in good order. Our Treasurer, Elizabeth Lewis, then distributed copies of the balance sheet for the year ending 31st March 1999 and commented on each item. The financial position of the Society was sound as income was up because of increased subscriptions coupled with an increase in membership and increased auction commission.

The Editor said that the usual five copies of Midland Mail had been distributed in the year. He said that he intended to continue the series 'The Surveyors' Journals' despite the fact that the addenda was becoming larger than the main article as a number of journals are missing. He thanked all those who had contributed in any way to the production of Midland Mail.

John Calladine reported that very few publications remain in stock but there are a few copies of the map of c. 1770.

Our M.P.F. and A.B.P.S. representative, Tom Poynton gave an account of the activities of those two bodies and mentioned that Midpex will be on 3rd July when the new Specialist Societies Handbook will be available. Tom also drew attention to the fact that for Glasgow 2000 individual competitors need to submit a pre-entry form by 1st August.

We then proceeded to the election of a new President, John Soer's term of office having come to an end. Elizabeth Lewis was elected to the post. The rest of the Officers were re-elected en-bloc. David Hardwick was reappointed as Accounts Examiner.

The next matter on the agenda was the subscription for 1999-2000. As the financial position of the Society is good, it was proposed to leave the annual subscription unchanged at £8. All those present were in favour.

Our Coordinating Editor, John Calladine, then spoke about the state of the 'Mail Routes and Mileage Marks' project. He again appealed to members to send details of the mileage marks in their collections either to him or the appropriate County Editor.

Eric Lewis then gave details of the programme for 1999-2000. This will be sent out with the next Midland Mail but in the meantime, please note the following dates of meetings: 11th September (Cranham - a joint meeting with the Somerset & Dorset and Bristol Postal History Groups), 16th October (Warwick), 13th November and 11th December (Burton-on-Trent), 15th January, 19th February, 11th March, and 29th April. On 16th September 2000, a whole day meeting will be held at Northampton. Our 25th Anniversary Meeting will be held on 9th December 2000 at Burton-on-Trent. Please make a note of these dates in your diary.

The meeting ended with the presentation of the trophies to the winners of our annual competitions. These were:

pre-1840 competition	Eric Lewis
post-1840 competition	Chris Jackson
Jon Baker Rose Bowl	Alan Marshall

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THE ANNUAL AUCTION

A list of realisations is given below.

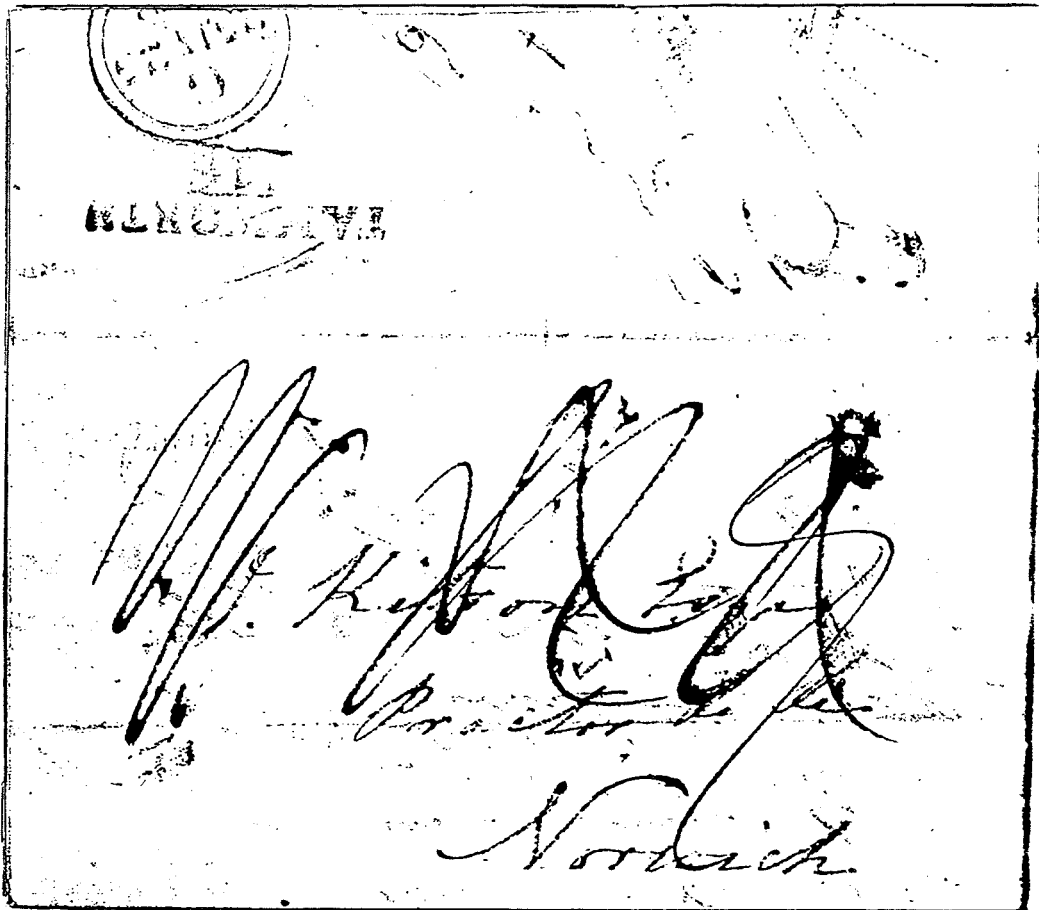
A	2.50	B	1.00	C	0.75	D	0.75	E	1.00
F	1.00	G	0.50	H	-	J	3.25	K	5.25
L	2.75	M	2.00	N	3.75	O	9.50	P	6.50
Q	1.25	R	1.75	S	5.00	T	4.75	U	1.75
V	4.00	W	3.25	X	7.50	Y	10.50	Z	17.00
1	6.00	2	10.00	3	9.00	4	7.00	5	7.50
6	-	7	26.00	8	1.00	9	12.00	10	-
11	7.00	12	19.00	13	5.00	14	1.75	15	10.50
16	20.00	17	5.00	18	-	19	-	20	-
21	-	22	12.00	23	7.50	24	5.75	25	1.00
26	1.75	27	3.75	28	-	29	3.75	30	-
31	2.75	32	34.00	33	6.50	34	7.00	35	17.00
36	1.25	37	17.00	38	1.25	39	8.00	40	1.00
41	1.00	42	3.50	43	-	44	3.50	45	1.25
46	3.50	47	3.50	48	1.00	49	1.00	50	2.00
51	2.25	52	1.00	53	-	54	1.00	55	5.50
56	6.25	57	2.25	58	1.00	59	0.50	60	3.75
61	1.00	62	3.50	63	15.00	64	7.00	65	7.00
66	2.00	67	12.00	68	18.00	69	17.00	70	11.00
71	15.00	72	-	73	20.00	74	41.00	75	1.75
76	8.00	77	4.50	78	7.50	79	3.75	80	75.00
81	3.50	82	9.50	83	14.00	84	11.00	85	7.25
86	2.75	87	4.50	88	-	89	-	90	7.50
91	9.50	92	8.00	93	6.50	94	9.00	95	10.00
96	16.00	97	5.50	98	5.00	99	6.50	100	18.00
101	11.00	102	17.00	103	3.75	104	18.00	105	11.00
106	3.25	107	-	108	6.50	109	3.25	110	11.00
111	16.00	112	12.00	113	8.00	114	11.00	115	10.00
116	6.00	117	5.50	118	5.50	119	15.00	120	5.50
121	9.00	122	6.00	123	2.50	124	0.75	125	-
126	24.00	127	5.50	128	14.00	129	130.00	130	30.00
131	10.50	132	5.50	133	6.50	134	13.00	135	2.25
136	5.00	137	10.00	138	12.00	139	11.00	140	5.25
141	3.50	142	15.00	143	8.00	144	-	145	-
146	5.50	147	7.50	148	14.00	149	8.50	150	7.00
151	3.00	152	7.00	153	5.25	154	10.00	155	-
156	-	157	4.00	158	37.00	159	4.00	160	2.75
161	5.00	162	-	163	-	164	17.00	165	2.00
166	3.25	167	3.50	168	10.50	169	8.50	170	-
171	2.25	172	-	173	-	174	3.00	175	25.00
176	12.50	177	6.00	178	8.50	179	7.00	180	32.00
181	92.00	182	36.00	183	75.00	184	60.00	185	65.00

Yet again we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Elizabeth and Eric for their hard work, not only on the day but for preparing and distributing a catalogue that seems to get better each year. Thanks are also due to Chris Jackson for his excellent work as the auctioneer.

UNCORRECTED MILEAGE → INCORRECT POSTAGE

by Christopher Beaver

The route taken by this letter looks obvious - by the Chester Mail from Tamworth to London (where it received the datestamp on the morning of Tuesday, 23rd July 1822), then on to Norwich, the destination of two London mailcoaches, via Newmarket and via Ipswich. What distance did it travel, that is the interesting question, up to or over 230 miles.



In Norwich they would know well enough such mail did not go by the shortest possible route since, only six weeks before, the start of the Leicester to Yarmouth mailcoach on 3rd June 1822 now provided a direct link for mail between the Midlands and East Anglia, passing through their city. Links from Tamworth to Leicester existed, most directly by utilising the Hinckley to Leicester ride, or entirely by mailcoaches with transfers at Lichfield and Derby. The postage would have amounted to 10d by the former route, 11d by the latter. Either way it would surely have been quicker than by London, at least over the weekend? Probably, but not otherwise. In this instance it would have made little difference.

As was normal (unless the sender chose to pay the postage), this letter was taxed at Tamworth only as far as London - 9. Next morning a clerk in the Inland Office of the G.P.O. crossed out that figure and wrote another for the total postage from Tamworth to Norwich - 11. Then, so it would appear, he changed his mind, crossed through that figure as well, and scrawled what I take to represent one shilling. (Please tell me if you know better.) It is this second alteration which is unusual and requires some explanation. The obvious one is that his mental arithmetic had been at fault - that the total distance in the General Post did exceed 230 miles. The Tamworth mileage stamp reads 116, adding the figure on the contemporary Norwich stamp - 117 gives a total of 233 miles. One theory to explain the original calculation is that Norwich's down mail generally or sometimes was carried on the mailcoach via Ipswich, only 113 miles according to the 1827 timebill and confirmed by payments to horsing contractors to be found in Post 6 - 116 plus 113 = 229 miles, so 11d to pay.

Mileage figures on town stamps were not always correct of course. Tamworth's was among those deemed to be wrong when the list was compiled in February 1829 of 'Post Towns which vary in their distances from the stamps now in use' (cf. MM58/15, 59/5). 117 would have been correct, not 116. If that error was already one in 1822 and taken into account by the Inland Office, then the total distance via London and Ipswich would be 230 miles presumably, 117 + 113 and still only 11d to pay provided any additional furlongs were ignored, but strictly 1/- if a furlong over.

The same list of 1829 includes Norwich as well; 117 is given as the actual distance to and from the G.P.O., whereas the stamp in use showed 111. The County Catalogue records one such stamp (NK310) from 1826 to 1828. Previously stamps showing 110 are recorded in 1784-88 and 1801-08 (NK297, 302, 303, 304) and a series of 117 stamps from 1808-26 (NK305 to 309).

On neither the Ipswich nor the Newmarket routes were the payments to the horsing contractors ever for the same distance as the mileage stamp in use showed, nor do the distances printed on timebills coincide. By presenting these routes in the same way as the mailcoaches of the Midlands were tabulated in MM101/4ff, we can see the variations. Notice in particular that a 111 stamp would have appropriately been issued to Norwich between 1821 and 1824, and that all the mileage stamp figures relate to distances by the Newmarket route:

LONDON-YARMOUTH via Newmarket and Norwich (not Bury St. Edmund's),	
1789 - 138; 4.1794 - 135;/No timebills beyond Norwich	5.4.33-11.7.37
LONDON-NORWICH via Newmarket, 5.1.05 - 112 (not via Bury),	5.1.05-5.4.18
5.4.05 - 118 (via Bury), 17.12.21 - 111 (not via Bury),	
5.4.24 - 119 (via Bury)	17.12.21-5.1.46
5.7.28 - 120, 5.1.29 - 118, 5.4.36 - 118.2, 5.7.39 - 116.7, 5.7.43 - 115.6/	
112, 112, 1st, 118.2, 4(4), Rtn 25.7.36 - 117.3, Rtn 4.4.38 - 118.2	
LONDON-NORWICH via Ipswich 1789 - 117.4, 4.1794 - 113, 5.4.36 - 113.5	
/115, 114.4, 1st, 113.0, 4(3)	28.3.85-5.7.43

So we come back at last to the letter of July 1822 on which the total postage to be paid was altered from 11d to 1/-. If the accepted distance (according to the Inland Office) from Tamworth to London was 116 or 117 miles and from London to Norwich was 117 or 118, the correction was justified. On the other hand if the actual distances conveyed were 116 or 117 plus 111 (as I suppose), then 11d was perfectly correct. Only if the Tamworth mileage stamp was already known to be incorrect and the letter went on the Ipswich mailcoach will the total distance have reached 230 miles, but not over that distance it seems, and therefore 11d should have been charged anyway.

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PARCEL POST LABELS

Bill Toye writes that he is carrying out a major research project that will - if sufficient support from other collectors is forthcoming - completely outstrip any previous works in this field. He has already obtained records of over 7000 labels from post offices in the British Isles and has so far identified 25 different styles of layout just for England. The research being carried out includes the following factors:

Which post offices were issued with parcel post labels;

Which of the 25 differing types were issued to each post office;

The earliest and latest date known for each type for each post office;

Recording the many varieties of type-setting such as full stops that appear in certain cases and not in others, only a few of which were recorded by Mackay;

Recording the many flaws due to damage caused by repeated usage of printing plates and the constant insertion and removal of blocks for the individual post office names.

To further this research, Bill needs photocopies of every possible example from collectors etc. He is willing to purchase items from those who no longer want them. He intends to publish the results in two or three years time. If you are able to help Bill he can be contacted at:

Y Grithig, Pen-y-Cae, Upper Swansea Valley, South Wales SA9 1GD. Tel: 01639 730283

THE BRITISH POST OFFICE IN CONSTANTINOPLE

Chris Grimshaw writes:

I am currently engaged in a major study of The British Post Office in Constantinople, 1919-21 when un-overprinted British stamps were in use.

The post office was first administered by the army and then reverted to civilian control prior to the introduction of the over-printed issues in August 1921. I am looking for information on the dates of issue of the various values from 1/2d up to the 10/- which appear to have been placed on sale piecemeal as required.

Also I have been able to identify 11 different types of censor tape in use between February 1919 and October 1919 when censorship finished and draw up a sequence of use of the different tapes. I have also looked at the different codes used in the various cancellations with a view to identifying more closely the date of change of the various cancels used.

I would like to make a request for information asking members who may have material from this period to get in touch with me. If any members are interested I can supply a copy of my research to date.

Chris Grimshaw can be contacted at:

6 Greenwood Park, Hednesford WS12 4DQ. Tel: 01543 878855. E-mail: ericgrim@btinternet.com

If they are able to help, I hope that members will respond to the above requests for information.

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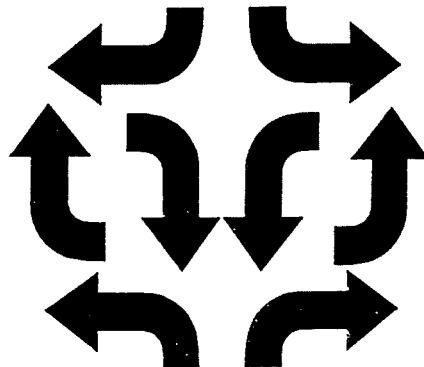
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**THE MIDLAND COUNTIES
IN THE INLAND OFFICE ORDER BOOKS, 1841-42**

As so many of the entries which follow involve more than one county I have not sorted them into counties but have put them in chronological order.

- 25 JAN1841 Letters for Clun to be sent in the Ludlow bag instead of Bishop's Castle.
- 5FEB1841 The 'Coleshill & Chesterfield' sack discontinued, and the Coventry sack is to contain the following bags: Coleshill, Atherstone, Hinckley, Warwick, Leamington (Southam), Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Burton-on-Trent. The Coventry bag is to be sent single. The Tamworth bag (containing that for Lichfield is to be enclosed in the Birmingham bag.
- A sack, 'Belper and Chesterfield' is to contain bags for Belper, Alferton (Mansfield), Chesterfield (Worksop and Retford).
- The 'Leicester & Derby' sack will in future contain only two bags: Leicester and Loughborough. The Derby bag and enclosures is to be sent single as is the Nottingham bag.
- Letters for Southwell to be sent to Mansfield instead of Newark.
- 25FEB1841 Letters for Fazeley and delivery to be sent to Birmingham instead of Tamworth.
- Ludlow bag to be sent separate in the 'Stourport & Birmingham' sack and not enclosed in the Bewdley bag.
- 1MAR1841 Bags for Wirksworth and Matlock to be enclosed in that for Belper instead of the Derby bag.
- 5APR1841 Upton-on-Severn and its delivery to be sent to Worcester instead of Tewkesbury.
- 6APR1841 The Burton-on-Trent bag to be sent in the 'Leicester & Derby' sack instead of the Coventry.
- 6APR1841 The York mailcoach discontinued. The 'Wansford & Grantham' sack is to be labelled 'Wansford & Tuxford' and is to contain the bags of Wansford, Stamford, Coltersworth, Grantham and Tuxford. This sack is to be dispatched by the Louth mailcoach.
- The 'Newark & Bawtry' sack is to be labelled 'Nottingham & Lincoln' to contain bags for Nottingham, Newark (Ollerton) and Lincoln. This sack is to be taken to the Railroad Room.
- 10APR1841 Letters for the Duke of Devonshire, Chatsworth to be sent to Chesterfield instead of Bakewell.
- 28JUN1841 The Stroud mailcoach discontinued. Bags carried by the mail are to be made up as follows and sent by the Bristol mail: Faringdon (Highworth, Fairford and Lechlade and 'Cirencester & Stroud' sack containing bags for Cirencester, Chalford and Stroud (Dursley and Wotton-under-Edge).
- 5JUL1841 Letters for Southwell are to be sent to Newark instead of Mansfield.
- Letters for Hathersage and Stoney Middleton are to be sent to Bakewell instead of Sheffield. The Bakewell and Buxton bags to be enclosed in that for Chesterfield instead of Sheffield and Leek.
- 15JUL1841 The day bags for Witney, Burford and Northleach discontinued. Day bags for Faringdon (Lechlade Fairford and Highworth), Swindon, Cirencester and Stroud are to be made up. They are to go into the 'Uxbridge & Cheltenham' sack along with bags for Abingdon, Oxford, Gloucester and Cheltenham.
- 16JUL1841 The Gloucester mail is discontinued. Bags for Andoversford, Northleach, Burford and Witney are to be enclosed in a sack labelled 'Oxford Sack'. The Gloucester and Cheltenham are to be sent single. All these are to be given to the Bristol guard along with all other sacks at the Gloucester Division which include, among others 'Gloucester & Carmarthen', 'Cheltenham & Hereford' and Maidenhead & Abingdon'.
- Also, at the Worcester Division, the Oxford (Bicester) bag is to be given to the Bristol guard.
- 17JUL1841 Day bags to and from Faringdon, Lechlade, Fairford, Highworth and Swindon to be discontinued.
- 26JUL1841 Letters for Willenhall and delivery to be sent to Walsall instead of Bilstone.
- 30JUL1841 Day bags to be made up for Faringdon, Lechlade, Fairford and Highworth.
- 23SEP1841 The Cheltenham day mail is to be dispatched at 9.30 a.m.

- 5OCT1841 Letters for Painswick to be sent to Gloucester by night mail but to Stroud by day mail.
- 11OCT1841 Letters for Deddington and Adderbury to be sent to Banbury by day mail but to Woodstock by night mail as at present.
- 12OCT1841 Details of the Painswick delivery.
- 18DEC1841 From Monday next a morning bag to be made up for Wallingford.
- 22DEC1841 The Tipton bag is to go in the 'Stourport & Birmingham' sack instead of the Birmingham bag.
- 25JAN1842 Fazeley to be a posttown. [Details of the delivery]
- 25JAN1842 Letters for Winchcombe to go to Cheltenham instead of Moreton-in-Marsh.
- 5MAR1842 On and from Monday morning the Bishop's Castle bag will arrive via Welshpool.
- 19MAR1842 On and from Monday morning a bag for Stone is to be sent in the 'Walsall & Wigan' sack.
- 21MAR1842 Letters for Church Stretton are to be sent to Ludlow instead of Shrewsbury.
- 5APR1842 Letters for Dunkirk and delivery are to be sent to Tetbury instead of Cirencester.
- 6JUL1842 On and from this evening the Worcester mail will be discontinued. Bags are to be made up as listed and sent by the Great Western Rail Road:
Oxford and Birmingham Sack containing bags for Stratford-on-Avon (Kington), Shipstone, Chipping Norton (Moreton in Marsh [Chipping Campden]), Enstone and Banbury (Woodstock).
Oxford and High Wycombe Sack containing bags for High Wycombe (Amersham), Tetsworth (Thame), Wheatley and Stokenchurch.
The Evesham bag to be enclosed in that for Cheltenham. The Pershore bag to be enclosed in the Worcester and Birmingham Sack and sent by the Northern Rail Road. The Tenbury bag to be sent in the same way enclosed in the Worcester bag.
- 7JUL1842 The Market Harborough bag is to be sent in the Rugby bag and not in that for Welford.
- 23JUL1842 Letters for Henley-in-Arden and Hockley are to go to Birmingham instead of Stratford by the morning mail only.
- 26JUL1842 Letters for Whitwell near Worksop are to go to Chesterfield.
- 23AUG1842 On and after this evening the Melton Mowbray mail will be discontinued. Bags for Melton Mowbray, Uppingham, Oakham and Rockingham are to be enclosed in a sack labelled 'Leicester & Melton Mowbray'. The Higham Ferrers bag is to be enclosed in that for Wellingborough. The Kettering bag (with Thrapstone enclosed) is to be enclosed in that for Northampton.
- 22NOV1842 The Tenbury bag is to go in the Stourport and Birmingham Sack instead of the Worcester bag.



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THE SURVEYORS' JOURNALS (Part 36)

Not all of the journals for 1827 are to be found. As we have seen in the previous issue the officials of the Post Office were busy at that time collecting information for the Commissioners of Enquiry. Freeling commented in March 1827 that it was with great difficulty that the duties of the Office had been performed.

The 1st January 1827 found Mr Rideout at Cirencester investigating the possibility of a penny post to Cross Hands. He then visited a number of offices in Wiltshire on his way to Eynsham and Oxford where he considered an application from the person who took charge of the letters at the former place for an official allowance. Mr Rideout then used Oxford as a base while carrying out business in a number of nearby towns. At Woodstock he attended the examination before a magistrate of two men who had stopped the Oxford and Banbury mailcart. At Brackley and Towcester he looked for a contractor for the ride to the latter place. At Abingdon and Newbury he investigated the possibility of introducing a ride between those towns. At Chipping Norton he considered an application from the letter carrier for an allowance and fixed the limits of the free delivery. Finally, at Northampton he arranged for the extension to Northampton of the Oxford and Towcester ride. Mr Rideout then went on to Moreton in Marsh and Blockley to consider an application for a post to Blockley. The last three days of the month were spent at Pershore investigating the high extra charge made on letters delivered at Eckington.

We next find Mr Rideout in the Midlands towards the end of April when he was putting on rides between Hay and Hereford, and Worcester and Malvern as a consequence of the withdrawal of the Worcester and Hay mailcoach.

For the first three days of May, Mr Rideout was in Cheltenham supervising the introduction of a mailcoach to Hereford.

Mr Rideout's journal for June records only two visits - both to Oxfordshire. The matter of a detained Money Letter took him to Banbury. At Oxford he arranged with the contractor of the Wantage ride a later departure from Wantage so as to give the inhabitants longer to answer their letters.

The next journal that is extant is that for October which records two items - an application for Thornbury to be made a post-town and a request for a post to Stonehouse from Easington. Mr Rideout spent the remainder of the year in South Wales.

Mr Churchill was occupied during the first week of 1827 by the introduction of a mailcoach between Birmingham and Tamworth. He then went to West Bromwich to install a new receiver and regulate the delivery of the letters. As the contractor for the Wolverhampton and Bridgnorth ride had given notice to quit, Mr Churchill spent three days fruitlessly trying to find another person to take on the work. So, he arranged for the present contractor to continue at a higher rate of pay.

We next find Mr Churchill in the Midlands at the start of April when he was already instructing a new postmaster at Wellington, fixing a boundary for the free delivery and arranging for a delivery in the surrounding country every afternoon.

In the latter half of May, Mr Churchill spent a week instructing a new deputy at Stone and regulating the ride between there and Cheadle so that it arrived in time for the Liverpool mailcoach at midnight. He then inspected the office at Newcastle and put in a new penny post receiver at Betley.

When Mr Churchill visited Whitchurch and Shrewsbury in June as complaints had been made about the ride between those places he found that the rider had been very negligent so he arranged for the contractor to employ a more reliable person.

The next extant journal is that for the October when Mr Churchill altered the ride between Rugeley and Uttoxeter so that the London letters arrived four hours earlier at Uttoxeter. Much of that month was taken up by an investigation in Birmingham of several cases of lost letters. This involved inquiring into the character and connections of all the clerks and letter carriers employed there and trying to trace a woman who had negotiated some of the stolen bank notes.

Mr Churchill spent the whole of November in North Wales but at the beginning of December he arrived in Bilston to see if there was likely to be any objection to that place being made a penny post under Birmingham. Later in the month, he went to Shifnal to see if more time could be given to Wenlock and Coalbrookdale to answer their letters. Then he went on to Wem to put that town "under official regulations with Shrewsbury and Whitchurch" and to arrange a free delivery. The deputy at Whitchurch was shown how to keep a Short Letter Account with Wem. Mr Churchill finished the year at Oswestry in consequence of the postmaster being in arrears with his payments to London.

Of those journals that exist only three record Mr Karstadt spending time in the Midlands during 1827. At the start of the year he was making preparations for the acceleration of the Hull mailcoach. This involved changes at Peterborough. At Newark and Mansfield he regulated the new ride between those towns and made the necessary arrangements to connect the Leeds and Lincoln roads.

At the start of November, Mr Karstadt was able to reduce the terms for three rides: Lincoln & Newark, Newark & Nottingham, and Mansfield and Newark. Later that month he went to Nottingham to investigate complaints that the contractor for the ride to Loughborough had carried passengers in the mailcart. However, a magistrate refused to commit the contractor for trial. Mr Karstadt then made a temporary arrangement for the ride. At the end of November, Mr Karstadt went to Cavendish Bridge, Shardlow to look into an application for a better service.

Mr Karstadt spent the last week of 1827 in London attending the Commission of Enquiry.

ADDENDA

THE NEWARK TO WORKSOP RIDE

As a consequence of the acceleration of the mailcoach from London through Lincoln to Hull which took place on 6th January 1827, it was necessary that the crosspost from Nottingham and Newark should arrive in Lincoln two hours earlier than it had done before. Thus the mailcart from Worksop and Ollerton to Newark had to be dispatched two hours earlier if the mail for the whole of Lincolnshire was not to be delayed for twenty-four hours. As the ride already left Worksop at 6 a.m. and Ollerton at 7.30 a.m., with the result that most letters were posted on the previous evening, Mr Karstadt felt there could be no objection to the earlier departure.

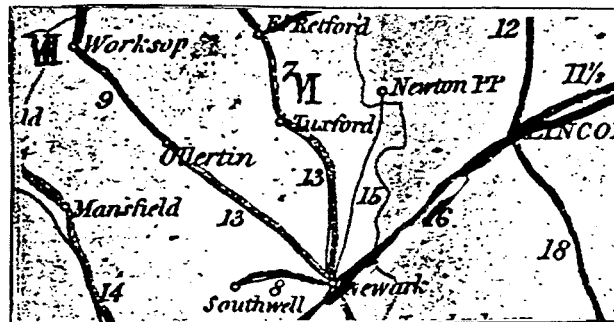
However Lord Manners objected in such a manner that Freeling commented to the P.M.G., "... as if it were expected that the decision in these Cases must be influenced solely by the views and opinions of the Persons of Consideration who may be individually interested." He went on to say that he presumed his Lordship would consider the general advantages and approve the departure times proposed by the surveyor.

Then, in May 1827, alterations were made to the mailcoaches on the Great North Road [See 173, 174, 179, 182 and 183 in MM101/10]. Prior to these changes the ride from Newark had carried the letters from London, Nottingham, Lincoln and those from the North brought by the mailcoach from York. Afterwards, the last of these did not arrive at Newark until the afternoon and so were delayed by a day. Mr Karstadt proposed to remedy this by terminating the ride from Newark at Ollerton and serving Worksop by a ride from Retford. The advantage of this was that the up and down mailcoaches arrived at Retford within about ninety minutes. The two down mails were there shortly after noon. The mailcoach from Edinburgh arrived at about 1.10 p.m. and that from Glasgow at about 1.35 p.m. Thus a ride leaving Worksop at about 10 a.m. would be in time for all four mailcoaches and could be back in Worksop by about 3 p.m., almost half an hour earlier than by Newark. The departure at 10 a.m. instead of 4 a.m. would mean that letters could be posted the same day rather than remaining in the office overnight. Although Worksop would lose a day in its letters to Lincoln and Nottingham, this inconvenience was outweighed by the advantage of receiving mail from "the North, Yorkshire & Lancashire etc." a day earlier. [Freeling did point out that a proposed alteration between Bawtry and Sheffield would enable a letter leaving Worksop at 10 a.m. to arrive in Nottingham at 6 a.m. the next day.]

Ollerton had to continue to be served from Newark as it could not receive its London letters so early from any other place, nor could it receive both its North and London letters together from Retford or Tuxford without considerable delay to the latter. But, Ollerton did keep the same day's post to Nottingham and Lincoln.

Although Earl Manners and other "distinguished Personages" living between Worksop and Ollerton now had the chance to use either office according to the destination of their letters and a later dispatch from Worksop to London, the earl still objected to the 5.30 a.m. departure. As the only letters delayed, those to Lincolnshire, amounted to only about one a day, Mr Karstadt recommended that the request for a 7.30 a.m. departure be granted.

[Refs: Post 40/11/1827, 40/353/1827] See also MM93/11 and MM108/17.



MANSFIELD-SOUTHWELL-NEWARK

A ride from Mansfield to Newark was authorised in November 1826. (See MM84/20 para 6.) Soon after its introduction, some businessmen in Southwell complained in April 1827 that Southwell did not gain much benefit from the ride. Mr Karstadt said that the ride had not been set up with that intent but to connect the mail on three principal roads - those to Leeds, York and Hull.

The main cause of complaint was that the ride passed through Southwell early in the morning on its way to Newark but did not drop off any letters until 12.30 p.m. on its return from Newark. Mr Karstadt said that there was not enough time at Mansfield to sort the letters for Southwell which was a sub-office. In fact, in order to save time he had established bags from towns on the Leeds road to Newark so that the ride could start immediately after the arrival of the mailcoach from Leeds. As the mailcoach from London arrived in Newark at about 10.45 a.m., Mr Karstadt felt that there was little to complain about in an arrival of the letters in Southwell at 12.30 p.m.

[Ref: Post 40/189/1827]

THE WORCESTER TO WOLVERHAMPTON POST

Readers might wish to refer to the pieces in MM107/19 and MM108/18 before reading this article.

Towards the end of 1826, Mr Rideout wrote that he had intended to propose a considerable alteration in the posts between Worcester and Wolverhampton some time back but having heard that Mr Johnson intended to extend the Birmingham-Bewdley mailcoach to Stourport he had decided to hold back. He went on to give a short account of the posts. The ride left Worcester at 2.30 a.m. and passed through Stourport, Kidderminster, Stourbridge and Dudley, arriving in Wolverhampton at 7 a.m. It returned from Wolverhampton at 8.30 a.m. as far as Stourport where it arrived at 1 p.m. and remained until 5 p.m. before proceeding to Worcester.

Mr Rideout then said that the various alterations to the mails passing through Wolverhampton had been of great benefit to the towns in that part of his district, giving them much more time to answer their letters from the North. However, the disadvantage was that they had less time to answer letters which circulated through Worcester. While Stourport had nine hours and Bewdley had eight hours to answer such letters, Kidderminster had four hours and Stourbridge only three hours. To remedy this, he proposed; to do away with the rides between Bewdley and Kidderminster and between Bewdley and Stourport; to establish a foot messenger from Bewdley to Kidderminster to meet the ride from Worcester and return with the Western bags; to start the return ride from Wolverhampton at 8 a.m. to reach Dudley at 9 a.m. where all the bags would be handed to the mailcoach guard who would then take them to Stourbridge, Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport; the ride then to continue to Stourbridge where it would wait until 3 p.m. when it would go on to Kidderminster (4 p.m.), Bewdley (4.30 p.m.), Stourport (5 p.m.) and on to Worcester. These changes meant that Bewdley gained a further thirty minutes to answer letters for Worcester and beyond while both Kidderminster and Stourbridge gained four hours, putting all the towns on a roughly equal footing. Mr Rideout added that the reason for not holding back the return ride at Dudley was that letters for the South and West from there were sent through Birmingham by the London mailcoach which left Dudley much later than the ride could possibly leave Dudley.

[Ref: Post 40/5/1827]

On this and the next page are shown, by permission of P.O. Archives, three different timebills used in this ride.

GENERAL POST-OFFICE.

Earl of CHICHESTER and Marquis of SALISBURY,
Postmaster-General.

WORCESTER AND WOLVERHAMPTON

TIME BILL.

DAILY.

Contractors.	Miles.	Time allowed.	Hours.	Minutes.	
			3	30	Dispatched from the Post-office, Worcester, the 13 of Nov 1823 in the Morning, at 2.30 after the arrival of the Mail from Bristol.
Walters...	15	2 0			Postnr.
					Arrived at Bewdley, at 3.30
					Postnr.
					Arrived at Stourbridge, at 4.00
					Eight minutes allowed for sorting letters.
					Sent away at 4.14
					Postnr.
					Arrived at Wolverhampton, at 5.00
					In time for the Manchester Mail
					Postnr.
					Returned same Day.
					From the Post-office, Wolverhampton, at 6.00
					Postnr.
					Arrived at Stourbridge, at 7.00
					Eight minutes allowed for sorting Letters.
					Sent away at 7.10
					Postnr.
					Arrived at Bewdley, at 8.00
					Postnr.
					Arrived at Worcester, at 9.00
					In time for the Bristol Mail Coach.
					Postnr.
					36 5 18

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 the Surveyor of the District, the others by every Monday's Post, and One Month before they are expended, notice to be given and one enclosed to him. 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 expense.—April, 1823.—380.

S. WOODCOCK,

Surveyor of the General Post-Office.

W571-6



GENERAL POST-OFFICE.

The Right Hon. the EARL of CHICHESTER, Postmaster-General.

Worcester and Wolverhampton

TIME BILL.

DAILY.

Miles.	Time allowed. H. M.	The 27 of June 1825	Hours.	Minutes after.
		Mail from Bristol arrived at	2	19
		Dispatched from the Post-Office, Worcester, at	3	•
		Postmaster.		
		Arrived at Stourport, at	4	48
		Postmaster.		
16	2 15	Arrived at Kidderminster, at	5	30
		Postmaster.		
7	1 0	Arrived at Stourbridge, at	6	30
	0 3	Allowed for sorting	6	33
		Postmaster.		
11	1 40	Arrived at Wolverhampton, at	8	10
		Manchester Mail arrived at		
34	4 58	Postmaster.		
		Returned.		
		Dispatched from Wolverhampton, at, (A.M.)		
		Postmaster.		
11	1 40	Arrived at Stourbridge, at	11	40
	0 3	Allowed for Sorting	11	45
		Postmaster.		
7	1 0	Arrived at Kidderminster, at	12	45
		Postmaster.		
4	0 35	Arrived at Stourport, at	1	29
		Dispatched at	3	•
		Postmaster.		
12	1 40	Arrived at Worcester, at	6	•
		Postmaster.		
34	4 58			

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 the Surveyor of the District, the others by every Monday's Post, and one Month before they are expended, notice to be given, and one enclosed to him. 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.—April, 1825.—380.

C. RIDEOUT,

Surveyor, General Post-Office.

Walker and Sons, Printers.



GENERAL POST-OFFICE.

Earl of CHICHESTER, Postmaster-General.

Worcester & Wolverhampton

TIME BILL.

DAILY.

Contractor.	Miles.	Time allowed. H. M.	The 5th of December 1824	Hours.	Minutes after.
Walters	15	2 5	Dispatched from the Post-Office, Worcester, at... A.M.	4	30
			Minutes after the arrival of the Mail from Bristol		
			Postmr.		
			Arrived at Stourport, at	6	50
			Postmr.		
Lewis	10	1 30	Arrived at Baudley, at	7	20
			Postmr.		
Jones	11	1 40	Arrived at Stourbridge, at	8	45
		3	Minutes allowed for Office Duty.	8	40
			Dispatched at	8	40
			Postmr.		
			Arrived at Wolverhampton, at	9	25
			In time for the Manchester Mail		
	36	5 18	Postmr.		
			RETURNED.		
Jones	11	1 40	Dispatched from Wolverhampton, at	11	25
			A.M.		
Lewis	10	1 30	Postmr.		
			Arrived at Dobeross, at	12	55
			Minutes allowed for Office Duty.		
			Dispatched at	1	2
			Postmr.		
Walters	15	2 5	Arrived at Baudley, at	2	30
			Postmr.		
			Arrived at Stourport, at	3	34
			Dispatched at	3	34
			Postmr.		
	36	5 18	Arrived at Worcester, at	6	50
			P.M.		
			Postmr.		

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 the Surveyor of the District, the others by every Monday's Post, and One Month before they are expended, notice to be given and one enclosed to him. If these Bills are misapplied, and it should be necessary to reprint them before Twelve Months, it will be done at the Postmaster's expence.—

June, 1824.—380.

C. RIDEOUT,

Surveyor to the General Post-Office.

Post 40 1824

LAWLESS REDDITCH

In May 1827, a Mr Joseph Cresswell of Redditch wrote to Freeling:

"In consequence of the numerous and almost nightly Burglaries committed upon the property & premises of the Inhabitants of this place, it has been agreed to employ Watchmen to be paid by weekly subscription & as Mr Nence [?] the Post Office keeper cannot subscribe without authority from you, I am directed to apply to you soliciting you to have the goodness to authorise Mr Nence to pay 1s/6d weekly for a few months until the Inhabitants think it prudent to dismiss the Watchmen. As the Post Office is a place demanding protection more than any House in our manufacturing Village, I trust you will see no impropriety in acceding to the wishes of, & assisting in equal proportions to the Housedwellers for the purpose of protecting property. ..."

Freeling reported to the P.M.G. that this application was "so perfectly novel" that he had of necessity to submit it to his Lordship. He said that he imagined that they could not apply public money in that way. Every person employed by the Post Office had premises and property of their own to protect and to comply with such a request would create an "inconvenient precedent."

[Ref: Post 40/266/1827]

THE LONDON - STROUD MAILCOACH

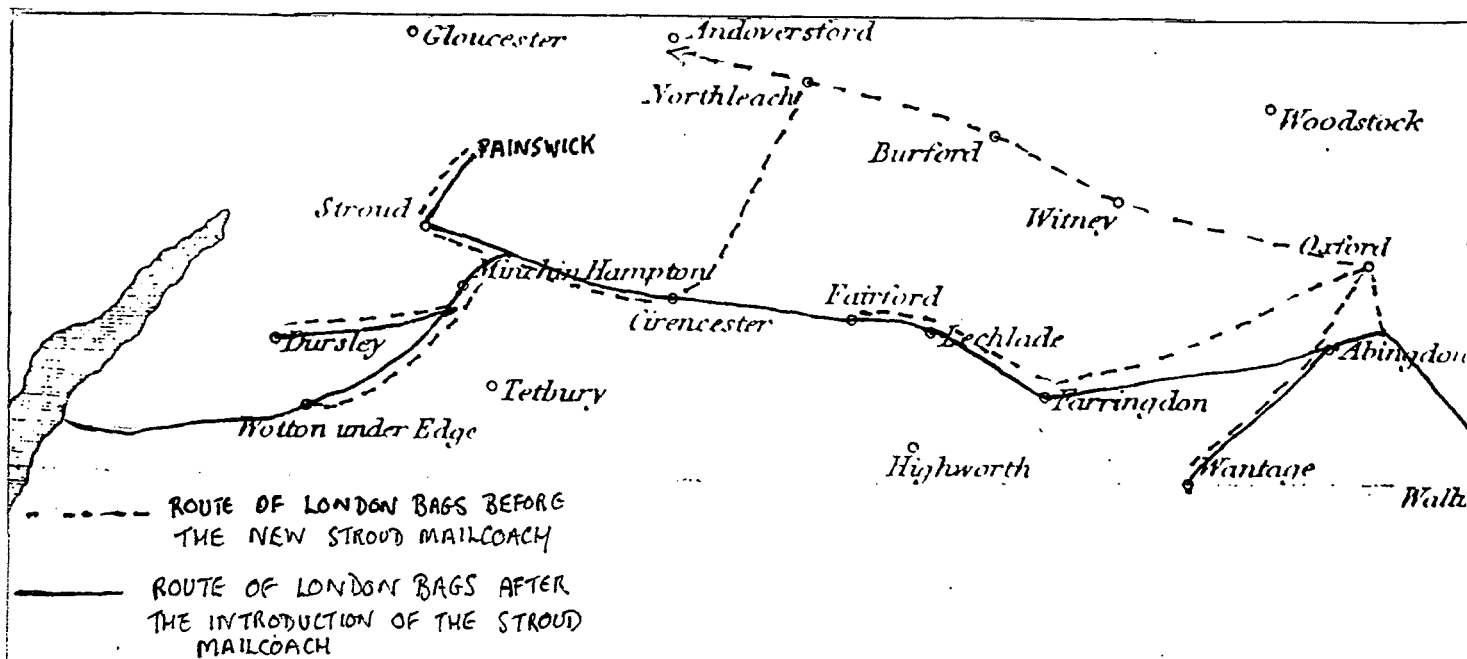
In a report written dated 1st August 1827 Mr Rideout gave details of the changes he intended to make on the introduction of a new London - Stroud mailcoach and of the advantages that would accrue to the posttowns on the route of the mailcoach. Many of these details were repeated with slight differences and further information added in a report written a month later, after the starting of the coach on 26th August. What follows is based largely on the second of these reports.

At **Abingdon** the mail from London had arrived, by way of Oxford, at 7 a.m. and left at 9.10 p.m. After the introduction of the mailcoach, the delivery was at 7 a.m. and the letter box closed at 10 p.m. A ride from Abingdon to Wantage replaced that from Oxford through Abingdon to Wantage.

Faringdon had received its London mail at 8 a.m. and dispatched it at 7.45 a.m. Although the new mailcoach arrived there at 4.19 a.m., the only benefit to be gained was a delivery from the office window as the letter carrier had to await the arrival of the Oxford and Bath mailcoach at about 8 a.m. (A note in the margin, presumably made by Freeling reads, "I hope this Coach will be discontinued & some other arrangement made.") The up mailcoach left Faringdon at 10.47 p.m., the box remaining open until 10 p.m.

Although the Oxford and Bath mailcoach delayed the morning delivery at **Lechlade**, that town gained five hours in which to answer the London letters. The down mail arrived at about 5 a.m. and the up mail left at about 10 p.m.; the previous times were 8.30 a.m. and 7.10 p.m. respectively. The new down mail arrived at **Fairford** at 5.26 a.m. and the up mail left at 9.30 p.m., giving an extra five hours to answer the London letters.

Cirencester, where the mail had arrived at 8 a.m. via Northleach and had left at 5 p.m. on the Bath and Oxford mailcoach, also gained five hours, the respective times of the new mailcoach being 6.19 a.m. and 8.30 p.m. Mr Rideout proposed that the Northleach and Cirencester ride which had been put on to carry the London bags for the "Clothing Country" [See MM104/8.] be withdrawn.



Stroud benefited significantly from the new mailcoach. Whereas the ride from Cirencester to Stroud had arrived at 10 a.m. and had left at 2.30 p.m., the down mailcoach arrived at 10 a.m. and the up coach left at 2.30 p.m. The ride from Cirencester to Stroud and on to Painswick was withdrawn and **Painswick** served by a footpost from Stroud, arriving at 9.30 a.m. and leaving at 5.30 p.m.

A branch mailcoach from Chalford to Chepstow was introduced at the same time as the London to Stroud. Although the times of arrival and departure of the London mailcoach at Chalford are not given, a barely legible note in the margin seems to say that Chalford gains an extra four hours so the people cannot complain they do not have a regular post office. What is clear is that the branch mailcoach arrived in **Minchinhampton** at 8 a.m. and left on its return at 6.15 p.m., giving an extra four hours to answer letters.

It was necessary to retain the ride from Minchinhampton to Kingscote, Uley and Dursley as the branch mailcoach ran to Wotton-under-Edge. However it was possible to retime the ride so that **Dursley** had six more hours to answer London letters, and **Uley** and **Kingscote** four hours. The ride from Kingscote to Wotton was withdrawn as the mailcoach travelled on that road, arriving at 9.21 a.m. and leaving on its return at 4.45 p.m. Before, that place had only ninety minutes in which to answer letters.

Before concluding his report, Mr Rideout emphasised that that Faringdon, Lechlade and Fairford as well as some towns in Wiltshire did not obtain the full benefit of the new mailcoach as the Oxford to Bath coach delayed the deliveries. A note in the margin indicates that negotiations were taking place with the contractors of that coach about its withdrawal. However, Mr Rideout ended on a positive note saying that the benefits would not only be felt by the towns in the "Clothing Country" but also by the owners of factories at a distance from the posttown. On 3rd September 1827, Mr Rideout reported that the establishment of the London to Stroud mailcoach had made it necessary to alter the ride between Gloucester and Minchinhampton. That ride carried all the letters from the North and West as well as much crosspost correspondence. The ride left Gloucester at 7 a.m. and reached Minchinhampton (via Painswick and Stroud) at 9.20 about thirty minutes before the arrival of the London bags. It returned from Minchinhampton as soon as possible after the departure of the London post at 3.30 p.m., arriving in Gloucester at 6 p.m. As the London mail now arrived earlier and left later, it was necessary to alter this post so all the mail could be delivered at the same time and to avoid those firms with factories outside a posttown having to send to the office four times a day instead of twice.

To do this it was necessary that the ride should leave Gloucester at 5 a.m. and reach Minchinhampton at 7.20, forty minutes before the London mail. The return would leave at 6.30 p.m., thirty minutes after the London mail, and reach Gloucester at 9 p.m. The people of Gloucester had complained about this as it prevented the letters falling into the delivery at 6 p.m. The answer was that the ride was strictly for the accommodation of the Clothing Country and that Gloucester must suffer for its benefit.

The inhabitants of Chalford and Thornbury, towns on the routes of the new mailcoaches to Stroud and Chepstow complained in October 1827 that they did not benefit from that establishment. The main complaint from Chalford was that the letters were brought to Chalford by the down Stroud mailcoach and remained there for twenty minutes before being sent on to Minchinhampton to where the inhabitants had to send for them. The replies were sent from Chalford at 4 p.m. and returned there by the mailcoach from Chepstow at about 6.40 p.m. to await the up Stroud mailcoach at 7.30 p.m.

The suggested solution to this was to make Chalford a posttown. This would benefit not only Chalford but also Kingscote, Uley and Dursley. The ride to those places left Minchinhampton thirty minutes after the down mailcoach and returned thirty minutes before the arrival of the up coach. So, if the sorting at Minchinhampton were transferred to Chalford, those three places would gain an additional hour to answer their letters. However, despite approval being given, Chalford it appears that Chalford did not become a posttown (See Local Posts of Midland Counties p. 135).

[Refs: Post 40/476/1827, 40/533/1827, 40/535/1827, 40/591/1827]

UTTOXETER'S POST

In September 1827, some of the inhabitants of Uttoxeter and several noblemen with houses in the neighbourhood asked for a change in the time at which the post from Rugeley arrived there - 5 p.m. Mr Churchill reported that the letters from London, Birmingham, Lichfield and all parts except the Chester line of road were delayed at Rugeley from 11 a.m. until the arrival of the mail from Chester which by a recent alteration had been delayed nearly two hours to 3 p.m. He felt that it would be better to comply with the petition as the letters arriving by the morning mails in the last month had amounted to nearly £43 while those coming by the Chester mail amounted to only about £8, and the petitioners were willing that the latter be delayed by twenty-four hours in order to give an earlier arrival of the London letters.

Consequently, the P.M.G. authorised the dispatch of the ride from Rugeley on the arrival there of the mailcoach from London, giving an arrival in Uttoxeter at 1 p.m.

Ref: Post 40/574/1827]

THE POST TO THE MALVERNS

After the withdrawal on 14th May 1827 of the Worcester and Hereford mailcoach [See MM103/13], it was proposed to serve the Malverns from the Hollybush which was two miles south of Little Malvern and on the route of the newly introduced (1st May 1827) mailcoach from Cheltenham to Hereford. Mr Rideout reported that this was out of the question on two grounds. Firstly, the making up of the bag at Cheltenham would delay the mail to Hereford in the morning, and in the evening there would not be time to sort and make up the bags in time for the up Gloucester and London mailcoach. Secondly, the expense would be too great as a horse post would have to make the journey twice a day - in the morning to take the Hereford and Ledbury bags to the Hollybush and to return with those from Cheltenham, and in the evening with those to Cheltenham and to return with the Ledbury and Hereford bags.

Mr Rideout went on to say that "these penny post towns" could not be better supplied with their London letters than by a horsepost from Worcester, travelling at 8 m.p.h. The Malverns would have little cause for complaint as the ride could leave Worcester at about 10 a.m., reach Malvern Wells at 11.20 a.m., return at 2.15 p.m. and arrive in Worcester at 3.35 p.m. The Worcester and Hereford mailcoach had reached Malvern Wells at about 11.20 a.m. and returned at about 1.30 p.m.

Finally, Mr Rideout said that he was fully aware that this arrangement would cut the direct communication between the Malverns and Ledbury and Hereford. But this communication might be kept open if a foot messenger could be obtained for a reasonable allowance to go between the Malverns and the Hollybush for six months in the year. I have not been to ascertain if this did indeed happen, but I assume it did so if the Malverns remained penny posts under Ledbury as well as Worcester.

[Ref: Post 40/380/1827]

THE BIRMINGHAM - TAMWORTH MAILCOACH

In October 1827, Jacob Clarke, the contractor for the above mailcoach, wrote to Robert Peel at Drayton Manor asking for his support in seeking an alteration in the time of departure of the coach from Birmingham. Mr Clarke pointed out that before the introduction of the mailcoach a letter from Tamworth to Birmingham and reply back took 32 hours, whereas it now took 27 hours. The respective times for a letter from Birmingham to Tamworth and back were 36 and 24½ hours. However, if the mailcoach were to leave Birmingham at about 3 p.m., it would arrive at Tamworth in time for the last delivery, enabling a letter to be sent from Tamworth to Birmingham and back in about 12 hours, and one from Birmingham to Tamworth and back in about 18 hours.

This would not only allow letters to be answered more quickly but would also prevent letters being sent by "private Individuals, By Carriers or Gardeners' Carts or being wrapped up in small packets or parcels which is too frequently the case where Letters cannot be answered in time by mail".

Mr Churchill reported that the mailcoach left Birmingham at 6 p.m. and did not arrive in Tamworth until after 8 p.m. He felt that if the coach left at 3.30 p.m., it would arrive in time for the letters to be delivered with those arriving by the up Chester mail. If letters from the Sheffield mailcoach were turned at Lichfield and then carried on the up Chester mail, those from Walsall and Wolverhampton were also sent through Lichfield (by the Wolverhampton - Lichfield), and mail from Ireland sent through Chester, the only letters to be delayed would be those arriving by the mailcoaches from Holyhead and Stourport which amounted to no more than one or two a day. Mr Johnson did point out that those from Walsall and Wolverhampton would have to leave in the morning rather than the afternoon.

The P.M.G. gave permission for the dispatch to be at 3.30 p.m. instead of 6 p.m.

THE OXFORD - NEWBURY RIDE

In the autumn of 1826, Messrs Rideout and Louis sought means by which delays to the mail of Oxford, in particular that to the West, could be prevented. They came up with a plan which would have involved a major rearrangement of the rides in an area bounded by Bristol, Newbury, Oxford, Towcester and Tewkesbury. This certainly was not to Freeling's liking and he asked Mr Rideout to see if a ride from Oxford to the line of the "Western Mailcoaches" would provide a solution.

Mr Rideout reported on 9th January 1827. He said that the then present route from Oxford to the West was by the Oxford to Bath and Bristol mailcoach which left Oxford at 6 a.m. and arrived in Bath at 3.30 p.m. [and Bristol about 5 p.m.]. where the letters remained until the next morning when those for the Southwest were forwarded by the London and Exeter mailcoach or by the Bristol and Milford coach in the case of those for South Wales.

He then illustrated this by considering letters for Taunton or Swansea. Such a letter would be put into the Oxford office on a Monday night to leave on Tuesday at 6 a.m., would reach Bath or Bristol that evening, be forwarded on Wednesday morning and reach Taunton or Swansea on Wednesday afternoon. A reply posted that evening would reach Bath or Bristol on Thursday afternoon, Oxford on Friday night and would be delivered on Saturday morning.

If a ride left Oxford at night and arrived at Newbury before the down London to Bath and Bristol mailcoaches and returned in time for the morning delivery, a letter could leave Oxford at 10 p.m., be in Bristol on Tuesday morning and Taunton or Swansea that afternoon. An answer posted on the Tuesday night would reach Newbury during Wednesday night and be in Oxford for the delivery on Thursday morning.

Mr Rideout went on to show that letters passing between Oxford, Bath and Bristol amounted to about £2200 a year.

By the end of 1827, a ride left Oxford at 9.30 p.m. and arrived in Newbury at 1.40 a.m.

[Ref: Post 40/16/1827]

THE OXFORD - TOWCESTER - NORTHAMPTON RIDE

Although I have already described the origins of this ride [MM100/26 ff.], I said on page 28 of that article that I had not been able to find a report authorising the ride. Such a report does exist, buried in the 150 or more pages of the previous reference.

In November 1826, Freeling reported to the P.M.G. that in conversation with Mr Johnson, the Superintendent of Mailcoaches, it had occurred to them that as the acceleration of the mailcoaches to Holyhead and Liverpool had made it necessary to dispatch the ride from Oxford to Towcester before the arrival of the mailcoaches from Gloucester and Worcester, it was possible for the ride to leave Oxford at a time which would allow it to be in Towcester before the departure of the ride from there to Northampton, so giving a direct communication between Oxford and Northampton. He had sought the opinions of the various surveyors all of whom were in favour of the change and their comments were enclosed.

Mr Karstadt recommended that the two rides should be combined into one so that it would fall under the supervision of one surveyor, enabling any irregularities to be dealt with more quickly.

The main purposes of the ride as outlined by the surveyors were as follows. The ride from Oxford to Northampton would take bags from Oxford for the down Holyhead and Liverpool mailcoaches which passed through Towcester at about 2.30 a.m., and for the down Manchester and Chester mails which passed through Northampton at about 3 a.m. Also, the ride would pick up at Towcester the bags for Northampton from the up Holyhead coach which was at Towcester at 11.20 p.m.

The ride from Northampton to Oxford would carry, in addition to the bags from Northampton to the down Holyhead and Liverpool coaches, bags for Oxford from the up Chester and Manchester coaches which were at Northampton at about 11.30 p.m. and from the up Holyhead at Towcester.

To achieve all of this the times for the ride as can be deduced from the timebill in MM103/8 were:

Oxford 8 p.m.	Towcester 12.30 a.m.	Northampton 1.50 a.m.
Northampton 12.10 a.m.	Towcester 1 a.m.	Oxford 6 a.m.

Mr Churchill said that as the present ride reached Towcester in time for the Liverpool and Holyhead mails, all of his district apart from Lutterworth, Hinckley, Atherstone and Tamworth had a good communication with Oxford. The proposed arrangement would now give those towns the same facility by the connection with the Chester mail at Northampton.

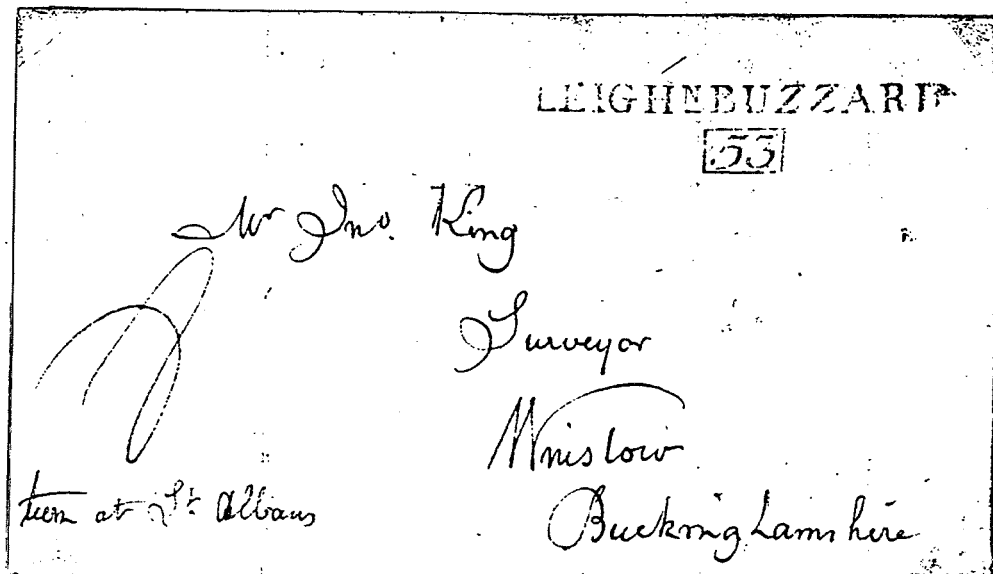
Mr Rideout pointed out that the connection with the Chester road would also save a day on letters between Oxford and towns in the "upper part" of North Wales. The connexion at Leicester between the Manchester mailcoach and the Birmingham - Stamford mailcoach would give a shorter route into Lincolnshire by way of Stamford and Stilton. The Manchester mail also met the Birmingham - Sheffield mailcoach at Derby so enabling a day to be saved on letters to Leeds and that line.

After he had stated the benefits that would be felt by Oxford, Mr Rideout showed that the towns whose Northern letters circulated through Oxford - Bicester, Banbury, Woodstock, Wantage and Abingdon - would be at a disadvantage. As the ride would have to be at Northampton by 2.30 a.m. at the latest, it would have to leave Oxford by 8.15 p.m., nearly an hour before the rides from the above places. In the opposite direction, the ride could not leave Northampton before midnight (thirty minutes after the arrival of the up Manchester mailcoach), giving an arrival in Oxford at about 6 a.m. so delaying the dispatch of the rides. The only alternative to these towns losing a day in their correspondence with the North would be to curtail by up to two hours the time given to answer the London letters.

[Ref: Post 40/507/1826 in 40/16/1827]

A REMINDER

The cover shown below, though not from the Midlands, is to remind readers of the appeal made by our Co-ordinating Editor for information on mileage marks. Though Leighton Buzzard and Winslow were only ten miles apart the letter was routed through Fenny Stratford, St. Albans and Aylesbury, so attracting a charge of eightpence.



THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

I hope that this will appear in the middle of August and that it will contain something from most areas of the Midlands. However there is room for much more, so all articles will be received gratefully by:

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

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CORRECTIONS TO MM/110

The gremlins were working hard in June! Though the errors were largely owing to the fact that the Editor went on holiday and then had to prepare Midland Mail in a hurry while trying to do a thousand other things.

Page 5, the tabulation for the mailcoach routes should read:

LONDON-YARMOUTH via Newmarket and Norwich (not Bury St. Edmund's), 1789 - 138; 4.1794 - 135;/No timebills beyond Norwich	28.3.85-5.1.05
LONDON-NORWICH via Newmarket, 5.1.05 - 112 (not via Bury), 5.4.05 - 118 (via Bury); 17.12.21 - 111 (not via Bury);5.4.24 - 119 (via Bury) 5.7.28 - 120, 5.1.29 - 118, 5.4.36 - 118.2, 5.7.39 - 116.7, 5.7.43 - 115.6, 10.10.44 - 116.4/ 112, 112, 1st, 118.2, 4(4), Rtn 25.7.36 - 117.3, Rtn 4.4.38 - 118.2	5.1.05-5.4.18 12.4.19-6.5.21 17.12.21-5.1.46
LONDON-NORWICH via Ipswich 1789 - 117; 4.1794 - 113; 5.4.36 - 113.5/115, 114.4, 1st, 113.0, 4(3).	28.3.85-5.7.43

Page 15, line 2 - the down mailcoach arrived at 8 a.m. and the up coach left at 7 p.m.

