

MIDLAND MAIL



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



President: Rev. C.M. Beaver

Chairman:
Mike Young

Treasurer:
Trevor Clewley

Secretary:
Eric Lewis

Number 83, January 1994

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following who have joined the Society since the last publication:

Gerald Marriner of Solihull whose interests include Channel Islands, the 1982 Falklands war, Andorra and who is now also studying the postal history of Solihull and Knowle;

Alan Starkey whose interest in Midland Postal History is the sub-offices of Ledbury and district, and whose other interests include the Scandinavian countries;

Tom Poynton who has recently taken up an interest in the postal history of Sutton Coldfield, Streetly and the surrounding area, his main interest being Portugal and Portugese colonies.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held at St. Michael's Parish Rooms, Moat Road, Langley, Warley on 23rd April, commencing at 1 p.m. It will be preceded by a committee meeting at 11 a.m. Directions on how to find the venue will be sent out nearer the time.

MATERIAL FOR THE ANNUAL AUCTION

In order that catalogues can be sent to our overseas members in good time for them to submit bids it is necessary that details of auction lots should be submitted by 12th March, the date of our March meeting.

It would however be appreciated if you could submit lots prior to this date, either at the February meeting or by post to:
Mrs E. Lewis, 27 Rathbone Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B67 5JG.

Please include brief but full descriptions together with estimated market values and your reserve prices or state no reserve. If you wish, the actual lots can be brought along on the day of the auction but in this case please also state the condition of each item based on 'Poor', 'Good', 'Fine', or 'Superb', and also clearly indicate the number of items in each lot.

JON BAKER TROPHY

Members are asked to nominate what they feel was the best article to appear in Midland Mail during 1993. Nominations should be sent to the Editor as soon as possible. (N.B. Unattributed articles are not eligible for nomination.)

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Our Annual Competitions will be held on 12th February at Carrs Lane Church Centre, starting at 1.30 p.m. A reminder that there are three competitions: pre-1840, 1840 - 1938, and post-1938.

On 12th March, Dave Tarry will give displays on 'Mauritius Postal History' and 'Newport, Shropshire.' The venue and starting time are as for the February meeting.

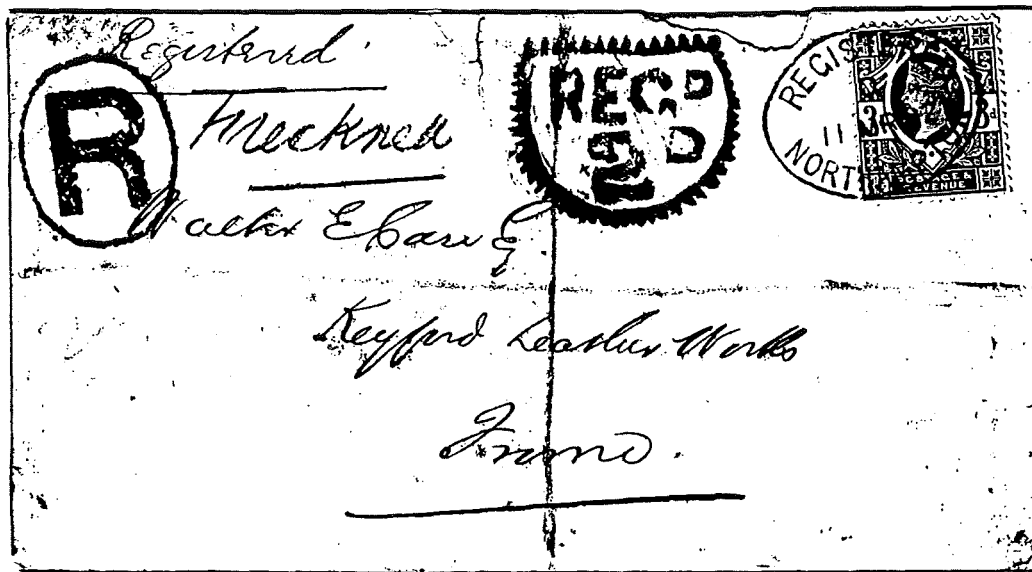
THE NOVEMBER MEETING

'After the Penny Post' was the theme of our meeting on 20th November. Elizabeth Lewis began the proceedings with a design for a Mulready Caricature, drawn by Leech. This was followed by three different Spooners and a Southgate. After he had shown a Lincoln album from the 1890s, the latter third of which was a catalogue of stamps - the G.B. section taking up 1½ pages, Eric continued with the theme of illustrated envelopes. Roger Broomfield's nine sheets traced the development of postage rates; items ranged from a "Paid 1d" Skeleton of Ledbury to a 29½p. registered stationery envelope which had twice been uprated to a final value of 53½p., so quickly had the rates increased. Skeleton postmarks of the 1840s from the counties of Gloucester and Worcester were shown by Guy Bridges.

It was the contents of the letters rather than the postal markings that was of interest in Denis Salt's display. This consisted of nine sheets from a correspondence between a son, an officer in the 53rd Regiment raised in Shropshire for the 1801 campaign in Egypt, and his father. One of the letters was about the transfer to this country of Cleopatra's Needle. Unfortunately the monument sank. Richard Farman's interpretation of the day's theme was to show penny post items which he had acquired since the publication of the Society's book. These included a Thrapstone handstamp struck on blue and the No 2 of Matlock on a letter sent to Alfreton. Harold Wilson continued where he had left off the previous month with nine sheets of station postmarks. These included duplexes, single circles and squared circles but of particular note were the missent marks of Bristol and Crewe stations plus that of Derby R.O.

Most of David Hardwick's display was devoted to the postbus from Lutterworth to Peatling Parva which was introduced on 18th October. As well as the publicity leaflets and tickets, David showed the photographs he had taken on a round trip on the bus. Amongst these was one of a Victorian wallbox at Kimcote. There was a fascinating range of marks to be seen in John Calladine's display on the London Twopenny Post from 1801 onwards. The difficulties of transfer between the General Post and the London local posts were lucidly explained. Peter Sharp traced the ever increasing postage rates after 1918.

Derek Smeathers also showed a variety of rates. In this case the rates were from the Victorian period and ranged from 2d. to 10d. The unusual handstamp used on registered items at Northampton is shown on the next page. A veritable miscellany of Birmingham marks, from barred numerals to spoons, was shown by Trevor Clewley. The afternoon was rounded off by our President with nine (or was it more?) sheets devoted to the North Staffordshire Railway. We were shown various postmarks from the stations at Stoke and Stafford as well as railway stamps of that company. This rounded off a truly entertaining afternoon, with a wide variety of material on display.



EXHIBITION AT CARRS LANE, BIRMINGHAM

An eight day exhibition was recently held at Carrs Lane Church Centre where we meet for about 50% of our meetings. The exhibition illustrated the activities of the various organisations that meet in the building and mainly because of the recent publication of our local post book, the opportunity was taken to include a contribution from our Society.

This comprised a display of pages from the Birmingham section of the publication with appropriate sheets from a member's collection and an introductory sheet outlining the aims and activities of the Society.

Our members had the opportunity to view part of the exhibition which was being mounted on the same day as our November meeting. The exhibition closed eight days later with a "Users" service which was attended by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress.

At the close of the service our display boards were seen to be viewed with some interest, a 1724 letter from Perry Hall drawing particular attention, probably because the contents were displayed rather than the address panel.

E.L.

THE DECEMBER MEETING

The Bass Museum was again the venue for our December meeting. A number of static displays formed a focus for the morning's activity, though I am not sure if it was coincidence that the bar ran out of the special ale on the day that we were there. Whatever, an excellent Christmas lunch followed before we moved on to the main part of the day's proceedings - a talk by Richard Nichols of the Staffordshire Record Office. I am not going to attempt to summarise Richard's talk which dealt with the various methods of repairing and conserving paper documents. It did emerge that whereas we often wish to make our covers clean and attractive, the archivist is more interested in preventing further deterioration, and may be content with an appearance which we might seek to improve.

Our thanks are due to Richard Farman for arranging a very convivial meeting.

THE JANUARY MEETING

The meeting at Birmingham on 8th January was one of the best attended at Carrs Lane for some time. The topic for the nine sheet displays was "You cannot be serious" and fourteen members took up either this challenge or some other that took their fancy. Your reporter's task was not made easy by the need to sell 'local posts' books, surveyors' maps, postcards, airline tickets and haberdashery (or so it seemed) whenever there was likely to be a moment to view the displays. Inevitably, some of the outstandingly visual 'funnies' may not receive even a passing mention.

CHRIS BEAVER opened with a proposed epitaph for a tomb, banal beyond belief, in what was intended as a 'free' letter but which ended up costing no less than 3/2d; some joke if it represented your weekly wage or more. A vandalised burnt letter, delicately described by the Post Office as having sustained "an accident", might be seen as serious misrepresentation of the truth. A letter from abroad to George Bernard Shaw at "Stafford, England" eventually found him at Ayot St Lawrence via Stratford-on-Avon where the sender clearly intended it to go, assuming that all English bards from Piers Plowman onwards lived there. Finally, Chris reminded us of dear Jon Baker's valiant efforts at lampooning the (then) new Second Class Post.

HAROLD WILSON abandoned Derby, TPOs and the like to offer stamps (yes, those licky, sticky things) of Christmas Island. Admittedly, most were decently affixed to envelopes and we saw what a responsible postal administration can produce to seduce even a hardened postal historian.

ROGER BROOMFIELD showed that the Post Office sometimes took its own regulations rather lightly. Two tinsel-bedecked postcards from Chicago of 1904 vintage attracted no surcharge at all but a similar card sent less than a year later had 3d. slapped on it. If tinsel wasn't sufficiently kinky, then a leather postcard from North Dakota undoubtedly was.

GUY BRIDGES had a few items that had "just turned up" but proving to be of more serious interest than might have appeared. How about a first day cover of the Uniform Fourpenny Post found in a "junk lot" or an 1829 mileage-erased stamp re-used in 1850, both from Shrewsbury? We saw three entertaining hand-drawn illustrated envelopes, all to the same lucky lady, with what he attempted to justify as Christmas themes.

MARTIN SCROGGS brought a splendid mixture of appropriate offerings. If fifteen handstamps on a letter weren't enough for us, would we be happy with twenty-seven? There was literal advice to be had in one letter - "pray wash your teeth with a few drops of Eau de Cologne" - and less-literal reportage in another - "... a lot of people with cholera. Tomorrow shooting begins..." Martin advised us that you can't be too serious about the price you have to pay for items you really want and made his point with a bargain from a famous Strand emporium and a ghastly rubber that cost an arm and a leg (plus VAT extra).

RICHARD FARMAN tried to convince us that an 'object' posted in October 1854 was a picture postcard. Other (genuine) postcards were almost totally obliterated in an alarming manner, probably because they could not be delivered. We saw a ppc of the Titanic's anchor which went down about as well as the mischievous revelation of a 'Cresswell type' UDC, not from Birmingham or Coventry but from the Wolverhampton area. If this means he wants the introduction to the UDC book re-written, indeed he can't be serious.

DAVID CORNELIUS, although not with us in person, provided a most beautifully prepared display that explored the day's theme in all its diversity. A traveller's bill of 1820 included "1/- for nutts" (which you probably burned in a grate), a cover damaged by snails proved that they must have had teeth like sabre-toothed tigers and what must be a unique cover was endorsed "Not known at Buckingham Palace". Your reporter's favourite was the OHMS envelope from Somerset House to Germany posted two days after WWI had been declared, an event which must have escaped the staff's notice.

ERIC LEWIS produced some fascinating predictions of the future from the Post Office Savings Bank of 1908. The POSB of 1928 was to be entirely staffed by women and, worse still (I think), that of 1958 by robots. We had the inevitable Lewis offering of weird and wonderful postmarks and some interesting detail of 'Post Office Tea', recently discussed by PHS. A 15/- receipt for the use of a loo at the York cattle show remains totally beyond comprehension. Where does Eric buy these things?

ELIZABETH LEWIS followed and produced what she said was an airmail item of 1775. We saw a Punch cartoon of someone wanting their stamp licked at a post office and another asking for 5/- worth of 1½d. stamps - at 7/6d., of course. The piece de resistance was surely the telegram (yes, a telegram) sent to the fire station at Loughborough by a farmer informing them that his haystack was on fire!

It is difficult to know what to say about TREVOR CLEWLEY's contribution. Having threatened us with 'single rings of Oxfordshire' but mercifully having thought better of it, he decided to offer a small (very small) candy bar to the first person who could tell him which of the items he displayed cost "a substantial sum" i.e. more than 10p. one would think. What we saw were items sent abroad at the 2½d. rate to such esoteric destinations as Peru, Pernambuco and Kings Norton - no, I think the cover must have come from there. He even attempted to convince us that one had been "carried on a Zeppelin" or even on a seaplane. Anyway, why should a letter to Pernambuco be charged 3/6d in 1937 and not 2½d?

Denis Salt restored some gravitas by discussing the conveyance of letters to a Welsh village, that one can neither spell nor pronounce, from a string of other places of equal orthographic obscurity. I believe the village to have been Llanfyllin (pronounced "Thanrufflin") which, as long ago as 1768, seemed able to receive letters in an unofficial local post. About twenty-five years later, letters were being carried 24½ miles from Shrewsbury for just 1d. We saw further letters to Llanfyllin from Machynlleth, Llanidloes, Woore and Newtown, some carried in another unofficial post from Welshpool which had, by then, usurped Montgomery's postal pre-eminence. Denis claimed it was the Postmaster General who wasn't thinking seriously when, in 1808, the mailcoach was extended to Holyhead and he instructed Shrewsbury not to send any more mail to Llanfyllin, thus leaving the village stranded for eighteen months until the 'Fifth Clause' rescued them.

DEREK SMEATHERS specifically interpreted the theme as applying to items that showed people treating letters less than seriously. An obvious candidate was coin sent to Gamages without registration and equally thoughtless were those who had their letters endorsed "Gone - no address". What could one make of the person who had refused a registered letter - it might have been the coin coming back from Gamages - and how careless it was to address a letter from abroad to "Northampton" without bothering to mention the country it might be in.

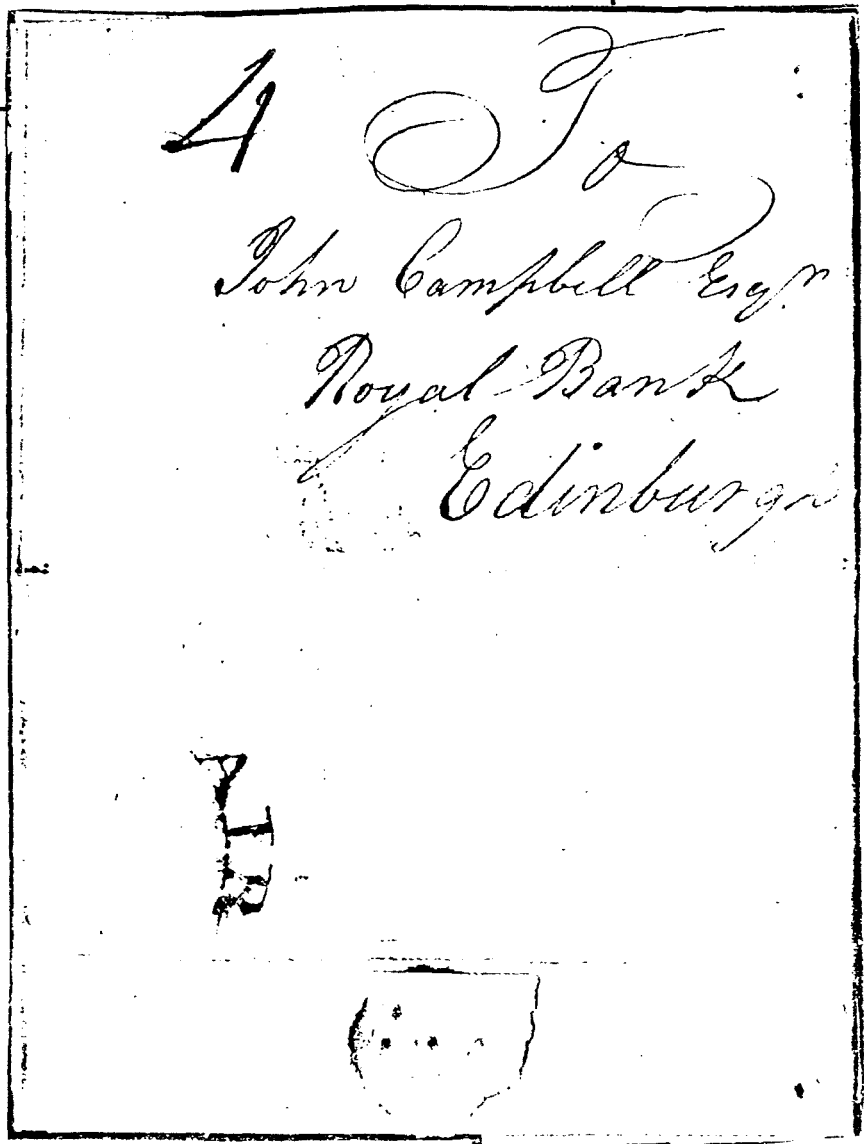
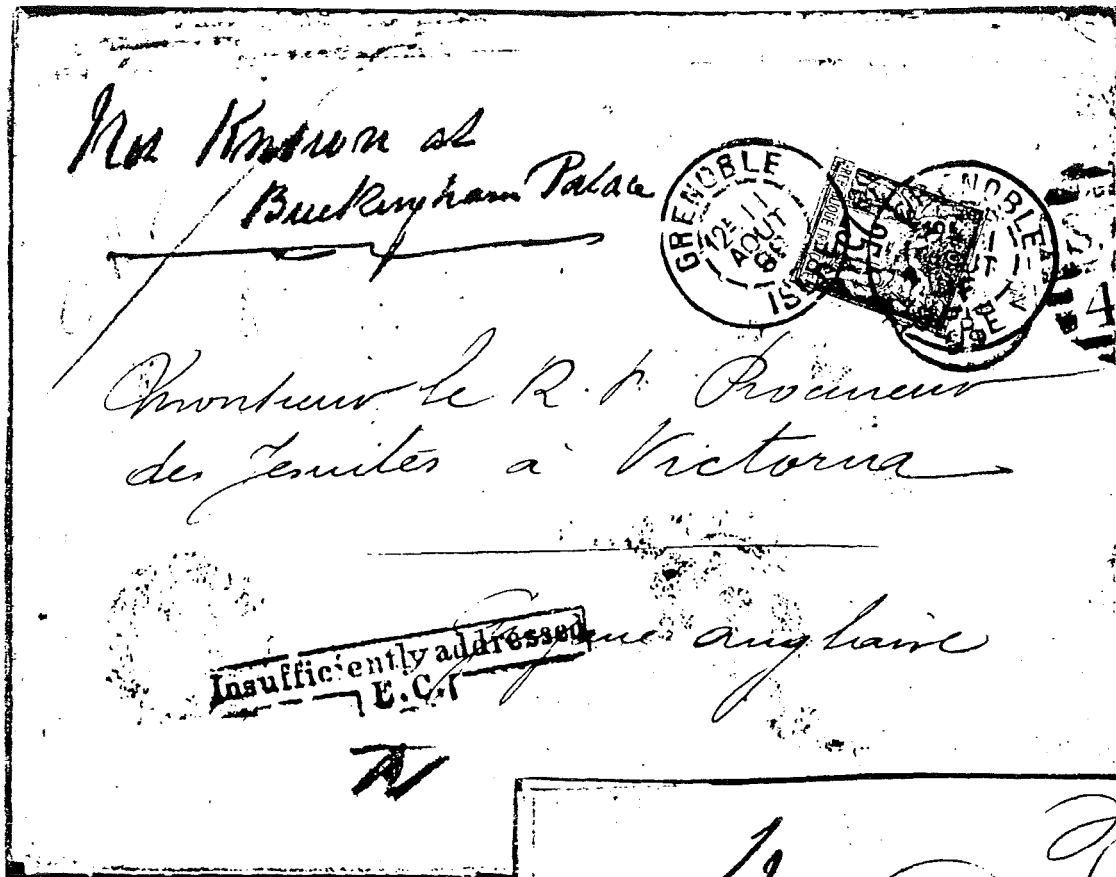
SHEILA HART promised us no serious postal history but an exploration, by means of picture postcards, of the Ellesmere & Chester Canal. This canal was started in 1772 but built piecemeal and with no outlet to the sea. Its famous aqueduct was built like a large iron cattle trough and railway-like signals were used at one point to control boats. Who needs postal history?

As usual, our chairman MIKE YOUNG waited patiently to the end to offer his contribution which one guessed might be a mite esoteric. Three sheets of a letter of 1904 were written, not on paper, but on the 'inner bark' of a birch tree. Surely only Canadians or some lesser breed without the law would do that?

From those who felt unable to contribute, grateful thanks to those who did. Who won the candy bar? trevor claims that no one did. He, at least, cannot be serious!

The editor would like to thank John Calladine for providing the above report of what appears to have been a very entertaining meeting.

The following items are taken from the displays, at the January meeting, of David Cornelius and Elizabeth and Eric Lewis. The first was sent in August 1899 from France to "Guyane Anglaise", not recognised in London and, on the basis of "Victoria" in the address, delivered at Buckingham Palace.



Was this the first airmail ?

N.B.—This Form must accompany any inquiry respecting this Telegram.



POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

P.O. FORM 113, 1904.

If the Receiver of an Inland Telegram doubts its accuracy, he may have it repeated on payment of half the amount originally paid for its transmission, any fraction of 1d. less than 1d. being reckoned as 1d.; and if it be found that there was any error, the amount paid for repetition will be refunded. Special conditions are applicable to the repetition of Foreign Telegrams.

of Origin and Service Instructions.

Office Stamp.



Rearranging

Charges
to pay

s. d.

Handed
in at

5.48p

Received
here at

6.31

of Fire Station
one at once back on
fire
Sadder Six-hills

7652	Received ON ACCOUNT OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF YORK.		This is the only Form of Receipt used in the City Accounting Office.
	FROM	<i>M. J. Grey</i>	
	THE SUM OF	<i>Fifteen</i> POUNDS	
	AS PER ACCOUNT	Date <i>14 December 1908</i>	
	Received by	<i>J. J. Roberts</i> CITY FUND.	<i>15/-</i>
<i>Use of Lavatory during Cattle Show</i>			

G.B. COVERS

Do you see my lists of GB cover material? If you don't and are a member of The Midland (GB) Postal History Society, you should! They contain a wide selection of interesting and unusual items - county material, difficult values and rates- from 1840 to date. Send for a copy of my latest list today. All 'Wants Lists' for specific items or county material will receive my personal attention.

ROGER HUDSON

P.O. Box 172,
COVENTRY CV6 6NF

Phone: 0203 686613

THE ROYAL MAIL IN 1660

by Denis Salt

By a Proclamation made at Bagshot on 31st July 1635, the Royal Mail, which had until then been the King's private communication with his Court and those concerned with the rule of this country, became a public service. Thomas Witherings, the King's Postmaster, continued as Postmaster of the new Royal Mail, and the Proclamation laid down the postal charges for Single Letters, namely 2d. up to 80 miles, 4d. up to 140 miles, and 6d. above 140 miles. The Proclamation also outlined the regular services which would be operated between London and Edinburgh, London to Holyhead and Dublin, London and Plymouth, London to Oxford and Bristol, and London to Colchester and Norwich, with certain By-posts from Post Towns on the Main Roads. The Civil War which followed, ending with the execution of Charles I in 1649, followed by the Commonwealth lasting till 1660, obviously resulted in a very difficult period for the Post Office. With the restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, the Royal Mail was firmly established, and this article deals with the organisation set up in the ten years or so immediately following the Restoration.

It is interesting to consider how it developed in those early days from 1660 onwards. There were of course no postage stamps as we know them, but fixed charges were laid down, based on the distance the letter was to be carried, and the number of sheets of paper in the letter. A single sheet of paper, however large, attracted only a single charge; envelopes were not used as they would have counted as an additional sheet. Two sheets of paper were charged double postage, three sheets treble postage; but thereafter by the ounce, one ounce being four times the single postage. The postage on a single letter was 2d. up to 80 miles within England and Wales, and 3d. above 80 miles. Scotland had its own separate postal charges.

The country was divided into six sections by the main Post Roads radiating from London, as shown on the accompanying map. Some (but not all) of the posttowns served by each road are shown on the map. There were branches on each Road to serve the towns off the road itself; but most of the villages had no service, and the villagers had to collect their mail from, and post their letters at, the nearest posttown. Places in Wales were served by the most convenient posttown nearest to the border. Any letter going to a posttown on one of the other Roads or their branches, had to pass through London, and was charged twice, once for the distance to London, and secondly for the distance from London to the posttown of destination. Only in this way could the Post Office ensure that it received all the postage that was due to it, as many of the postmasters received little or no supervision and were not to be trusted. But letters to another posttown on the same Road did not have to pass through London, so there was nobody to check the postage paid on such letters.

Postboys on horseback left London with the Mail on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. They rode a fixed number of stages, riding day and night, and horses were changed at certain stages, where the stable owners were bound to keep a certain number of horses always available at their stables. The postboys also changed, but not necessarily at each stage.

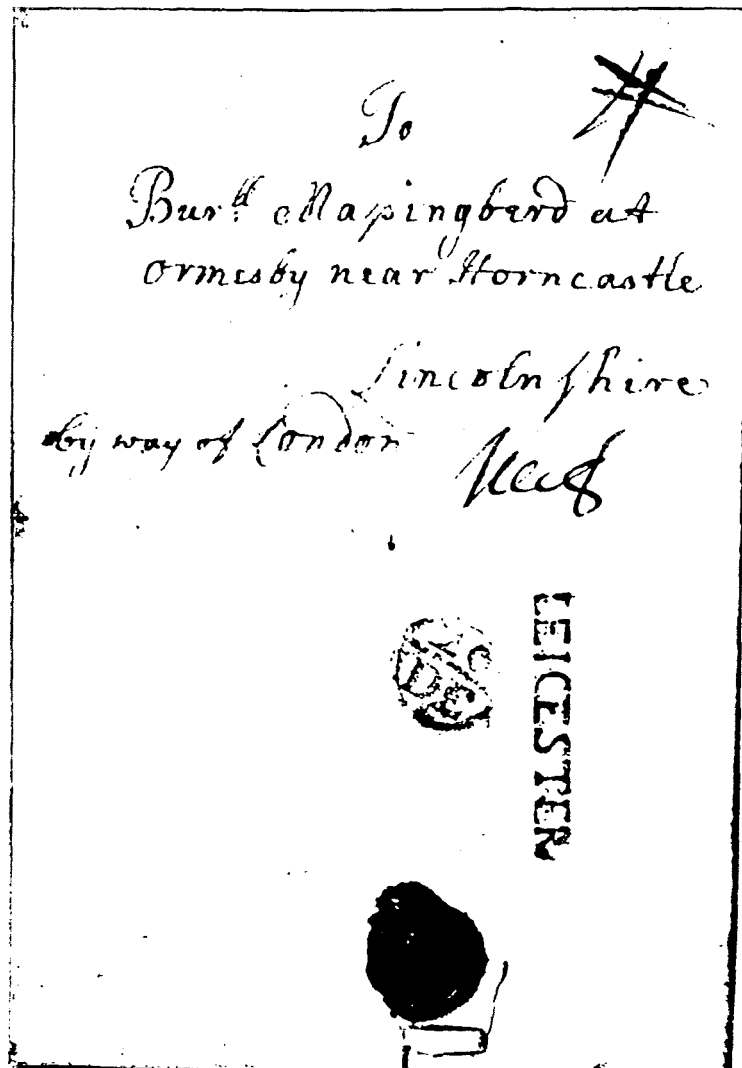
The postage on letters could be prepaid when they were put into the post, but the normal practice was for the postage to be marked on the letter when it was put into the post, but if the letter was going to pass through London, the charge to London only would be marked. In London this would be struck out, and a new charge mark written on the letter, including the original charge (unless this had been prepaid) and the charge to destination, the whole being collected on delivery.

At first hand-struck stamps were used in London, and were called Bishopmarks, after Henry Bishop, the first Postmaster General. They were introduced in 1661, and showed the month in the top half and the day in the lower half. From 1713 onwards they showed the day in the top half and the month below. A few town stamps, at first

just the name of the town, came into use at posttowns in or about the year 1700, but a general issue was made to all posttowns from about 1705 onwards.

The charging on letters passing through London of two separate charges continued until 5th January 1797, after which a single charge was made on the whole distance from the place of origin to destination; but the office at which a letter was put into the Post continued to write the charge to London, where it was amended to show the charge for the whole distance. However a G.P.O. Notice issued in June 1761 announced a number of new Cross Posts which meant that many of the letters which previously went via London, were now able to avoid the capital city and so save both time and postage.

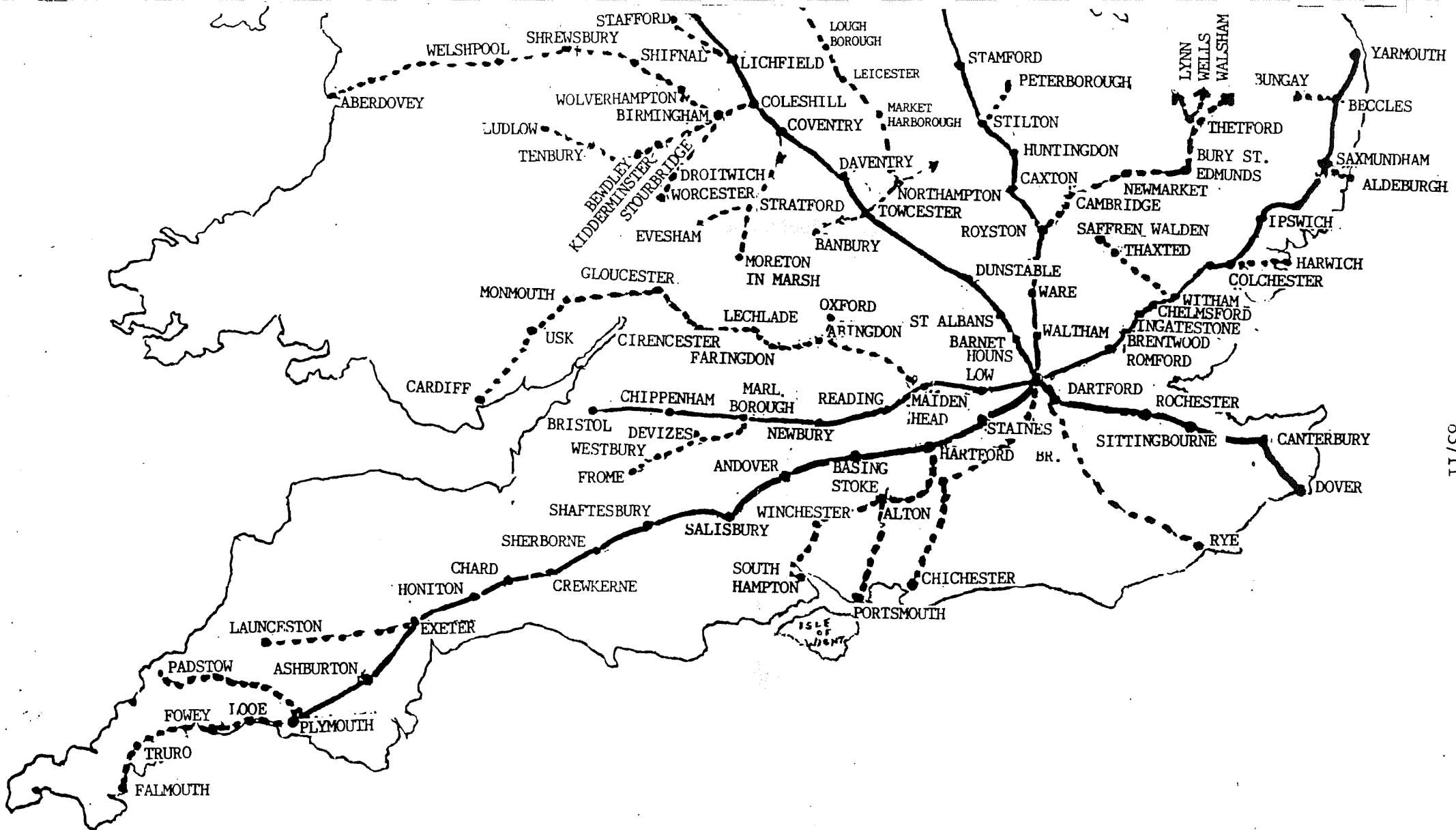
A letter dated 18th December 1717 from Leicester on a branch of the Chester Road to Horncastle on a branch of the North Road is shown here and is a good example of a letter which passed through London, and incurred separate charges to London, and from London to its destination. The first charge of 4d was crossed out and replaced by "In all 8".



The map accompanying this article shows the distribution of the mail throughout the country, as given by Gardiner's Survey dated 1677, and reproduced by Robertson in his book "Great Britain - Post Roads, Post Towns and Postal Rates, 1635-1839." The six main Post Roads are shown by solid black lines, on which are shown all the posttowns appearing in the Survey. However all the main Roads have one or more Branches serving posttowns lying off them. All these branches are shown by dotted lines, but only a selection of the posttowns is shown because of lack of space to include them all.

A map of the North of England showing the railway network. Major cities and towns are labeled, including Edinburgh, Haddington, Cockburnspath, Berwick, Belford, Alnwick, Morpeth, Newcastle, Durham, Darlington, Whitby, Scarborough, Northallerton, Richmond, Greta Bridge, Brough, Penrith, Carlisle, Kendal, Lancaster, Sipton, Bradford, Leeds, Wakefield, Preston, Manchester, Stockport, Macclesfield, Congleton, Stone, Warrington, Chester, Northwich, Wrexham, Whitchurch, Northop, Weymouth, Bournemouth, Exeter, Plymouth, and London. The map shows the main trunk lines and connecting branches, with a scale bar indicating 1 inch equals 10 miles.

~~_____~~ The SIX MAIN ROADS:
~~_____~~ Branch ROADS.



DUPLICATING IN THE 1870s

In response to the item about duplicating in the 1890s in MM81, Eric Grimshaw has sent copies of two items which predate that illustrated in that article. One, dated 10th March 1880, is an extensive list of world-wide freight prices on offer by Enright & Fisher, shipbrokers of Swansea. The other, reproduced below, was sent to R.C. Hill, Solicitor, Foregate Street, Worcester in 1874.

Notice of Removal.

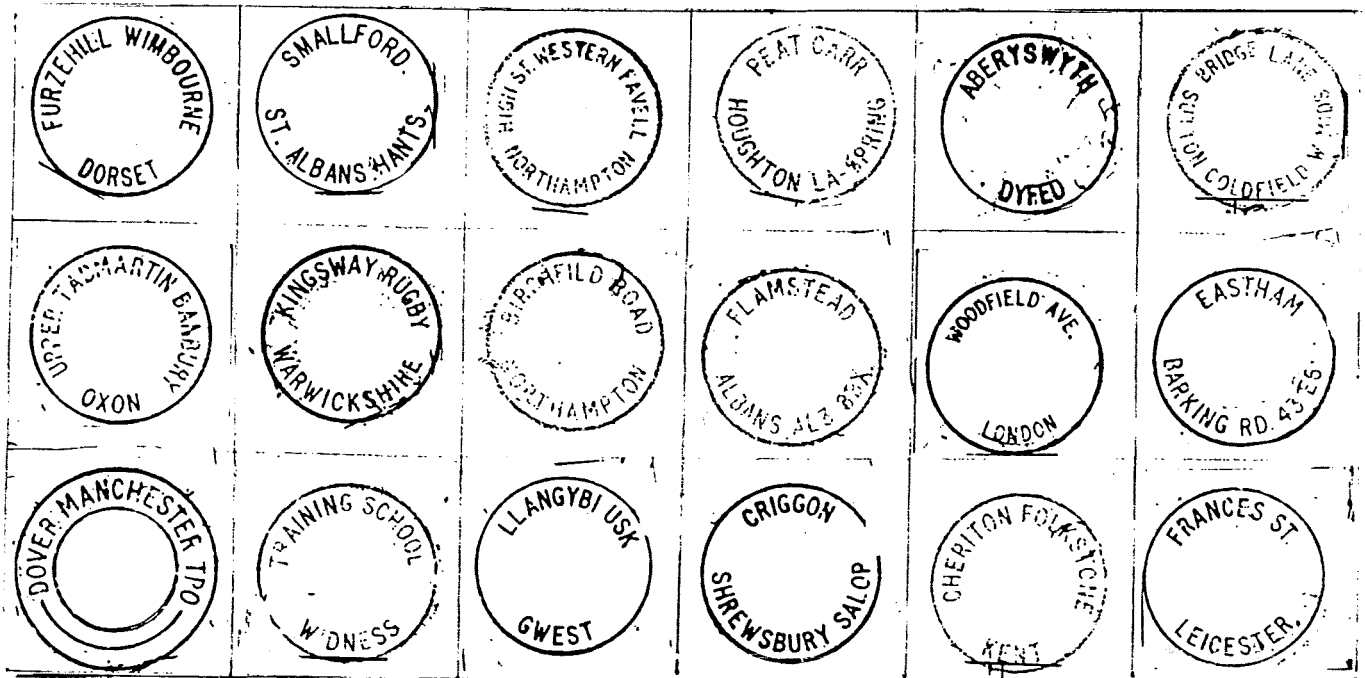
J. Burgess & Son, Estate & House Agents, having removed from 50 Broad Street, to more commodious and central Offices in Saint Nicholas Street; beg to thank their numerous Patrons, for the support they have received in the past, and hope by a strict attention to business, with punctual rendering of accounts, and prompt settlements, to merit, a continuance of the same.

J. Burgess & Son beg respectfully to call attention to the facilities they have of letting houses &c, having a large and extensive connection in the City and neighbourhood.

Saint Nicholas Street, Worcester.
October 20th 1874.

WHAT IS WRONG

The Steel Impression Books, in Post Office Archives, contain impressions of a number of handstamps which were rejected for a variety of reasons. I do not know if it reflects the care taken by the manufacturers of today but there appears to be many more of these in the later volumes, from the late 1980s, than any other period. Those shown below are a few taken from pages I copied for the Leicestershire postmarks. Can you spot why they were rejected?



G.B. POSTAL HISTORY

ALSO: Some Foreign, Ephemera, Post Boxes - etc.

Wants Lists - for specific items or for general interests - will receive my personal attention

JIM HAMMOND

5 Staverton Rd, Daventry
Northants. NN11 4HL.
Tel. Daventry (0327) 71842

EXPOSING "A ROTTEN SYSTEM"

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

It was my continuing researches into the story of the Surveyors that took me, after a day at P.O. Archives last summer, to the British Library for a fleeting visit to an exhibition concerning Anthony Trollope. Unfortunately there was no booklet. A few items were from Archives, many from the Library itself, and some that belong to members of the Trollope Society.

What particularly caught my attention was an article entitled 'The Farewell Dinner to Mr. Anthony Trollope', or rather the first column and a half of it, on a page headed 'The Postman' and dated Nov. 16, 1867. Hoping the next page might give unfamiliar details or a transcript of his witty speech, I made appropriate enquiries at Archives and the Library. After correspondence between them, for Jean Farrugia had not previously heard of 'The Postman', I obtained photocopies of the whole of No. 9. Published in Fleet Street and selling at 2d. for twelve large pages, it has the sub-heading 'A Journal Devoted to the Interests of Post Office Clerks, Sorters, Charge Takers, Messengers, Letter Carriers, Mail Guards, Auxiliaries, Supernumeraries, Mail Drivers, etc, etc.' As No. 8 had been dated Nov. 2, this enterprise is likely to have begun in the summer of 1867.

The writers and correspondents without exception use noms de plume to hide their identities (recognition of a Union of Post Office Workers being well in the future), yet the editor is confident a large proportion of readers will dare to attend a public meeting being planned. The chairman of a meeting had been dismissed the previous year for airing the grievances of letters carriers in public; and others disciplined. Unnamed public figures are to be briefed to speak on behalf of the men. Subscriptions are acknowledged towards the cost of a large hall and publicity, assessed at between £50 and £60, and detailed facts concerning pay and conditions are sought as well as published.

Most articles and letters printed are clear, forthright and convincing. One who calls himself Trepolland Penn makes a well reasoned and original contribution which I found particularly interesting, and not just because he recognised the influence surveyors could have. I supposed he must be a surveyor's clerk. At that period each of them had begun in one of the offices at St Martin le Grand, as had Trollope back in 1834. That guess has survived consideration of the nom de plume. Penned by a ready writer, could this letter be A.T's 'Farewell' to the rank and file? Nothing in it conflicts with views expressed in 'An Autobiography' (1883). He even stood for Parliament in 1868, describing himself as an independent conservative Liberal.

Intriguingly 'The Postman' No. 9 contains not one but two lengthy accounts of that Farewell Dinner which the editor had attended on 31st October 1867. There is not a whisper of criticism of Trollope in either. Though he had certainly wielded power he was a prisoner of the system. As you read the advice of 'Trepolland Penn' bear in mind it was printed just sixteen days after Anthony Trollope had opted out of the Civil Service, voluntarily and without pension, because he calculated his pen could earn better rewards and be of greater influence if he became a full-time author. But you too may feel bound to conclude that one who had himself been a surveyor since 1854 could not have so denigrated his colleagues, however ready he was to condemn the rotten system that left most of the employees and their families in poverty.

SIR,—In anticipation of the forthcoming public meeting, I am exceedingly desirous to remove any misunderstanding that may exist as to the real state of the questions to be discussed. It would be suicidal to come before the public with statements founded upon vague rumours, or the special pleadings of parties smarting under individual grievances, whether real or imagined; any superstructure raised upon such a foundation would readily yield to the skillful onslaught of the supporters of the present system. Armed with facts and figures, they would openly enter the lists and challenge the aggrieved to the combat. No could not take up the gauntlet without courting certain destruction.

Complaints loud and bitter have reached you from various quarters, as to the cruel and inhuman conduct of "the powers that be," so that outsiders would almost believe that there are in all Post Offices of any magnitude two classes, one composed of slaves or serfs, the other of friends whose vocation and pleasure it is to scourge their victims with scorpions.

If my memory serves me right, "the powers that be" have not yet been defined by any of your correspondents. Perhaps each has his own notion on the subject; but there is one point at least on which all are agreed, and that is that the present rate of pay is not adequate remuneration for services rendered, nor sufficient to support decently men that need food and raiment and shelter, and who abhor to be under the necessity of resorting to the cowardly expedient of sneaking round the corner when they see the baker, the butcher, or the tailor, with his bill unpaid, coming in an opposite direction! "The powers that be," who are responsible for this state of matters, have local habitations, and a name, and are not ill to find. The question is a broad one, and may be freely discussed without fear of contradiction.

I do not believe that the Lords of the Treasury ever rejected a proposal for augmentation of salary made by the Postmaster-General, nor can it be supposed that any nobleman occupying that position takes pleasure in the slow torture, by starvation, of the thousands who work the great machines that are the pride of this nation and the admiration of the world.

Until very recently it was the fashion to bespatter with abuse Sir Rowland Hill, who, it was said, for the sake of verifying his own prophecy as to the expected increase of the Post Office revenue, insisted upon paying the employees with niggardly parsimony. Crowned with laurel, that great reformer has retired to enjoy his *otium cum dignitate*; but the niggardliness has remained, taken root, and increased.

The real culprit is a rotten system, upheld by men well paid themselves, who will not take the trouble nor responsibility of bringing forward a bold and comprehensive measure that would place the department on a sound and lasting foundation, but who cover themselves with the brightest varnish in the shape of an annual report, showing the increased facilities given to the public, the steady increase of revenue, while carefully concealing the lamentations of the starving bees that produce so much honey, and of whose real condition the gorgeous British public are ignorant.

Under the secretary there is a class of out-door officers called surveyors, familiarly, in official nomenclature, "the eyes of the department." The country is divided into districts, and governed by the surveyors somewhat in the fashion of Turkish Pashalics.

With a salary of £700 per annum, the actual cost of locomotion, and a guinea per diem for maintenance when from home, these gentlemen, having "economy" as their Polar star, "the cheap and nasty" as their chart, succeed one another with wonderful celerity; each strains to surpass his predecessor in reducing the expenditure of the district! Those stages of excellence are a requisite qualification for the order of merit. To introduce improvements with little expenditure is good; to do it without expense is better; to do it accompanied with a saving to the Revenue is best. Accordingly, old arrangements quickly give way to new ones, which are in their turn superseded by newer ones still. One man builds up and another one pulls down! An unfortunate postman or messenger, who has no friends to plead his cause, and who dares not speak for himself, is, peradventure, relieved of a trifling duty, and loses a shilling or two per week of his already miserable pay; that is a saving of £2 12s. or £5 4s. per annum!

In another place, the work performed by four men is found to be manageable by three, who have only to begin an hour earlier, and continue for an hour or two later, and that is a saving of perhaps £30 per annum! In this manner the service has been brought to what it is. What it may yet arrive at, who can tell?

All memorials addressed to the Postmaster-General pass through the hands of these surveyors, as the authorised official channel; and, when it is stated that on a late occasion one of them (thank God, they are not all without bowels of compassion!) had not so much charity to spare as to consider 21s. per week too little for a skeleton of a Post Office clerk to support himself and family upon, though he, the surveyor, was allowed that sum per diem, when from home, for his hotel charges, and he looked like it—you may fancy how well supported any memorials for increase of pay reach the Postmaster-General, who is expected to be enlightened on such vulgar topics by the "eyes of the department."

Any independent member of Parliament could move for and obtain a return showing the scale of pay for the various grades in a selection of offices, the memorials, if any, that emanated from such Offices within a given number of years, the minutes upon such memorials, and all correspondence relating thereto, and the replies made to the memorialists. That return would be a valuable public document, to which reference might be made at all times, without compromising any one; and would throw more light upon this vexed question than any amount of writing can do.

Hoping to resume the subject on a future occasion,—I remain, &c.,
TREPOLAND PENN.



AUCTIONEERS OF
FINE STAMPS, COLLECTIONS, POSTAL HISTORY
AND ALL TYPES OF PHILATELIC MATERIAL

SITWELL STREET, DERBY DE1 2JP
TELEPHONE: (0332) 46753
FAX: (0332) 294440 : FAX

ESTABLISHED IN 1952

40 years
of Auctioneering

Members

B.P.F., P.T.S., A.P.S., &
AUSTRALIAN S.D.A.



Sir Geo. Williamson, BNA.; Kenneth Perrin, Hong Kong Treaty Ports; Harold Macmillan, West Africa, BWI. and General; Dr. Mathew Carstairs, World Postal History; Stanley Cohen, Canada; Sir John Fitzherbert, West Indies Postal History; Stephenson Stobbs, Boer War Postal History; John Dodd, Morocco Agencies and Crimean War Postal History; The 'Cymru' Collection of Wales; The 'Mermaid' Collection of Ireland; The 'Zurich' Collection of Newfoundland. — These are but some of the more celebrated collections entrusted to us in recent years — and one of the reasons why so many of the world's leading collectors and top buyers are subscribers to our Catalogues.

If you are thinking of selling, send for our brochure today.

Selling? — Think Cavendish

THE SURVEYORS' JOURNALS (Part 9)

Early in January 1800, Mr Western inspected the Leicester Road as complaints had been made about the delay in delivering letters on that road. He found that they had been detained at Loughborough. He was able to spend two weeks at home before he had to go to Ashbourne where the office was "much relaxed in its duty". From there he went on to Nottingham where a person had been detected in detaining the bag for Bingham and Newark which he claimed to have found. It was arranged for him to be taken before a magistrate. As so often in the winter months, Mr Western reported a number of instances of delays to the mails in the Peak District caused by bad weather. In one instance the post from Macclesfield was so late in arriving at Buxton that the rider refused to go on to Sheffield until the next morning. Mr Western commented on the dangers in the dark caused by drifting snow in an area where for many miles there were no houses.

There is very little in the February journal concerning the Midlands, other than a comment that on one day the rider from Wirksworth to Derby was so delayed that the London bags were only forwarded by the rider being able to overtake the coach.

The need to make enquiries about an application from Kegworth for a post office caused Mr Western to go to Loughborough in mid-March. He was then informed that a new deputy had been appointed at Worksop so he went there for ten days. He returned home via Mansfield so as to investigate why a letter from Nottingham for Mansfield had been secreted for six weeks. At the end the month he returned to Loughborough to establish a receiving house at Kegworth. However it was not until 7th May that he "settled the Kegworth sub office". Thus we seem to have at Kegworth and Mountsorrel "official unofficial" receiving houses. Official in that the surveyor was instrumental in their opening; unofficial in that no salary was paid by the Post Office. But the observant will notice that they appear on the 1813 map of Mr Hart's district.

From Kegworth he went on to Melton Mowbray and then Northampton where complaints had been made about the rides to Kettering and Higham Ferrers. He does not appear to have been able to improve matters for in August he received complaints about the late arrival of the ride at Higham Ferrers. After spending three weeks in London, his destination after Northampton, he returned home by way of Bristol so that he could "check the improper conveyance of Packets from several parts of my district to Falmouth covering the West India, American and Lisbon correspondence".

He arrived home on 4th May. Three days later he was on the move again. First of all to Kegworth and then to Alfreton and Peacock Inn where the sub-deputy who was in arrears refused to continue unless "he had arrears allowed him." Afterwards, he was on his way to Manchester when he was told that the deputy at Sheffield had died so he went there to take charge of the office. He remained there until 4th June, though during his stay he had to go over to Southwell where the sub-deputy had died.

FOR POSTAL HISTORY**ESPECIALLY G.B., TRANSATLANTIC, MARITIME, WESTERN EUROPE, PRE 1900****CONTACT MICHAEL JACKSON (PHILATELISTS) LTD****AT P.O. BOX 77, HUNTINGDON, CAMBS., PE18 6TZ****PHONE 0480 456254 (24 HRS.)****FAX 0480 456255****VISITORS VERY WELCOME BY APPOINTMENT AT BRIDGEFOOT HOUSE****BY THE OLD RIVER BRIDGE AT HUNTINGDON**

Mr Western covered a lot of ground in June. From Sheffield he resumed his journey to Manchester, and then Blackburn. Then it was south to Oakham as Lord Winchelsea had asked for a post to Stamford. After a few days at home, he returned to Manchester to reopen the ride to Knutsford and the voucher for Birmingham. On the 28th, he set off for London by way of Cheadle and Uttoxeter.

In London he met with Messrs Freeling, Saverland and Hasker to discuss the applications for mailcoaches from Birmingham and Chester to Manchester. He left London on 11th July for Manchester and then Kendal where he met Mr Hodgson about an application for a mailcoach from there to Whitehaven. The rest of the month and the first four days of August were spent in Yorkshire.

It was then necessary for Mr Western to go back to Manchester to investigate the theft from a letter of a £20 bank bill. Although the culprits were arrested, it was not possible to prosecute as the principal witness was a Quaker. A further meeting with Mr Saverland took place in Leicester on 12th August concerning the mailcoach between Chester and Manchester and a proposal to start a mailcoach between Sheffield and Birmingham. The rest of the month was spent in going to and fro between Melton Mowbray, Oakham and Stamford. The deputy at Melton had resigned, but as no successor could be found, Mr Western persuaded the postmistress to continue which she did until 28th August. Meanwhile, Mr Western arranged a post between Oakham and Stamford and abolished that between Oakham and Uppingham. This meant that the two Rutland towns were served separately from Stamford.

In his report on the riding work Mr Western stated that the prospect of a drop in the price of horse provender, which he had mentioned in his previous report, had disappeared. Indeed, the prices had risen higher than ever so it would be necessary to continue the temporary allowances paid to a number of contractors.

After he had finished instructing the new postmaster at Melton, Mr Western performed the same task at Colsterworth from where he went to Manchester to prepare for the new mailcoach to Chester. On 26th September, after spending three days at home, he went to Birmingham to consult Mr Saverland about the "alterations & arrangements necessary on establishing the Manchester & Birmingham Mailcoach to begin the 10th October." On that date, he was in Manchester attending to the introduction of that mailcoach. On 23rd October, he visited Wirksworth where the deputy had been accused of charging more postage than was marked on the letters. Four days later, he met Mr Saverland in Leicester to find the best way of providing the Liverpool and York mailcoach with some bags, so as to give it exemption from tolls between Liverpool and Manchester.

At the start of November he was in Newark to deal with the circulation of letters from Yorkshire for "Birmingham, Warwickshire and Worcestershire etc". They were in future not to be sent through Newark and Lichfield but via Manchester so that "they might have the benefit of a Mailcoach conveyance all the Way". There was another criminal investigation in the middle of the month. The boy who delivered the letters at Southwell had been accused of stealing two letters with bills in them. On 27th November the Sheffield and Birmingham coach (not a mailcoach) ceased to run more than four times a week instead of six times. As Mr Western had not received any notice of this, no provision had been made for the carriage of the bags between Derby and Chesterfield. As soon as he became aware of this, he went to Chesterfield to arrange a horse post on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He complained to a Mr Peck of Sheffield about not being given notice. However it transpired that Mr Peck had left orders for notice to be sent as usual in other years but the clerks had forgotten to do so.

On 6th December, Mr Western went to Southwell by way of Wirksworth. At Wirksworth he looked into the late arrival of the post in Derby. At Southwell he spent five days instructing a new sub-deputy. Shortly before Christmas he visited Matlock as an allowance of 6d. a day had been granted to the Bakewell and Wirksworth rides to pay for extra feed for the horses, with the object of ensuring an early arrival in Derby.

Mr Saverland's first visit of 1800 was to Atherstone to take an account of the number of letters for Ashby-de-la-Zouch and intermediate villages. The P.M.G. had received an application from Earl Ferrers and some of the inhabitants of Ashby for a post from Loughborough instead of Atherstone. It was eventually refused.

Much of February was spent in London discussing a wide range of business which included the post office at Liverpool where the inhabitants refused to pay a halfpenny on the delivery of letters. The money raised paid for five letter carriers and four clerks.

In mid-March, Mr Saverland went to Hinckley to subpoena the postmaster and the clerk of a Mr Ingleby to appear at Lancaster Assizes for the trial of a person charged with stealing a £10 bill sent in the post by Mr Ingleby. The same matter took him to Lichfield where he found that the attendance of the postmaster would not be required as the evidence of the postmaster's clerk was sufficient. From Lichfield he went to Birmingham and then Warwick for the Assizes where a Mr Tompson, a clerk to a lawyer in Birmingham, was being tried for "advancing the postage on his masters letters."

The absence of journals for April and May is explained by a letter dated 8th April in which Mr Saverland states that because of a violent fever, which had confined him to his bed, he would not be able to go to London, prior to his visit to the Continent, until the beginning of the following week.

His journal for June reads: "From the 4th of June till the 12th attending the Office, on my return from Germany, by order of the Postmaster General. Left London on the 13th and arrived at Portsmouth the next day; from which time till 4th July I was employed at Portsmouth, on Service, by order of the Postmaster General. Left Portsmouth on 5th July and arrived in London the same Evening."

In London, he discussed with Messrs Western and Hasker the proposed mailcoaches from Manchester to Chester and Birmingham. At the end of July, he received information from the Rector of Thornby, in Northamptonshire, that a Bridget Sleath had been at Thornby with a person answering the description of Charles Hill, for whose arrest the P.M.G. had offered a reward of £50, and that he had reason to believe they were hidden at relations of Sleath near Frowlesworth in Leicestershire. So, Mr Saverland thought it his duty to: "employ a Constable & his Assistant to accompany me in a private manner & to make inquiry after these People; when after a very diligent search & inquiry, at all the Villages for many miles round, I could not find that any People answering the description of Sleath & Hill had been, or were in that part of the Country."

There is no journal for August, although we have seen that he met Mr Western in Leicester during that month. The first two days of September found Mr Saverland at Axminster investigating the theft of bills passing through that office. A week later, after spending two days in London, he arrived in Chester to superintend the introduction of the mailcoach to Manchester on the 11th. He then visited the offices at Liverpool and Lichfield before returning home. He went to Dunchurch, on the 22nd, to obtain a search warrant to search the office and house of the deputy at Rugby who was suspected of having stolen a letter, containing bills, put into that office.

Towards the end of September, he met Mr Western at Lichfield and went on with him to Birmingham to prepare for the introduction of the Birmingham to Manchester mailcoach on 11th October. (Note that Mr Western refers to the Manchester to Birmingham starting on the 10th.) Before the coach started, in order to instruct the deputies about the changes in circulation caused by the introduction of the mailcoach, he visited the offices at Walsall, Wolverhampton, Stafford, Stone, Newcastle, Congleton and Knutsford. That business concluded, he was instructed by Freeling to go to Uttoxeter to obtain payment of the debt due from the deputy there.

We have seen that towards the end of October he met Mr Western in Leicester. There is only one brief mention of the Midlands in the journal for November; two days were spent looking into the conduct of the office at Rugby.

His duties took Mr Saverland to Lancashire for much of December. He was in Ormskirk when he received a letter from Freeling saying that his services were required at Newcastle in Staffordshire. He does not say what it was that kept him there until the end of the month.

Mr Woodcock made one brief foray in January 1800, into Oxfordshire and Berkshire to correct "some irregularities in the circulation of the Bye letters". Whilst at home he wrote to the deputies to "be very careful and correct in exchanging proper lists of delivery with each other."

There is no journal for the February but the first ten days of March found him at Bishops Castle instructing a new deputy. On his way home, he called at Ludlow to tell the postmistress to be more punctual with her payments to London. At the end of the month, he began a tour of the offices in South Wales which lasted for almost one month.

Consultations at the G.P.O. in London occupied the first ten days of May; in particular he mentioned conferring with Mr Bartlett about extending the vouchers from Uxbridge and Wycomb beyond Oxford to Birmingham and Worcester. Then he had to go to Minchinhampton as he had received complaints about the postmaster there moving his office.

In the journal for June he lists a number of offices that he had visited including Evesham, Pershore, Cheltenham and Frogmill. For the rest of the month he was "fully occupied with the general concourse of the District I survey."

At the beginning of July, Mr Western went to Worcester, Stourbridge and Birmingham to look closely at the operation of the ride between last two towns. In his report on riding work in April he had commented that the ride from Birmingham through Bewdley to Worcester was badly done, in particular between Birmingham and Stourbridge, with the result that it often failed to reach Worcester in time for the Bristol mail-coach. He suggested that one possible remedy was to place a horse and rider at each end of the Birmingham-Stourbridge stage and let them pass each other, rather than wait for one another so losing time, and then return "empty". He appreciated that this would be more expensive but felt that there was no alternative if the branch was "to reap any steady advantage from the Cross road communication." In his report for July he said that the work had improved since his visit but again stressed the need for the measure he had suggested earlier.

He appears to have been even more exasperated about the ride between Worcester and Leominster. He wrote: "- the riding duty on this branch is not done to my liking - I have remonstrated & scolded till I am tired - I fear it will never be well done while the Deputy of Bromyard has anything to do with it - "

The first fortnight of August was spent in instructing the new postmistress of Gloucester about her duties. Then after two days at Upton-on-Severn, he set off on a tour of South Wales. Thereafter, there is nothing in the journals for the rest of the year of relevance to the Midlands. That for December is very succinct - "Nothing particular occurred in my District."

PRESS RELEASE

At the end of December, I received the following press release from the British Philatelic Trust Exhibition Committee. As one who has often criticised the rules for competitive philately for, what seems to me, their rigid and antediluvian nature, I feel that this approach is something to be welcomed. Though I do feel uneasy about cash prizes. Are we really so materialistic that we can no longer do things for the mere enjoyment?

STAMPEX are pleased to announce that, with the assistance and generosity of the British Philatelic Traders Society and the British Philatelic Trust, they are introducing a new class in the AUTUMN STAMPEX competition, to be known as the OPEN CLASS.

The aim of the OPEN CLASS is to encourage those collectors who do not have high powered collections or whose exhibits do not conform strictly to the rules as laid down for the various existing classes, to show what they can do and how they enjoy the hobby.

Entrants will be able to take one or two frames, at an entry of £10.00 per frame, to display their stamps in a manner which is attractive to the public, who will be the judges, returning voting forms that will be in the catalogue.

The three prizes will be in the form of vouchers valued at £200, £125 and £75 that may be redeemed at any dealer who is a standholder at the current AUTUMN STAMPEX. Full information and an entry form will be available at SPRING STAMPEX as a pull out centrefold in the catalogue or from the offices of the PTS or BPT at 107 Charterhouse St LONDON EC1M 6PT after the exhibition.

Entry fees for the AUTUMN STAMPEX International and National competitions are being held at 1992 levels, entry forms will be available at SPRING STAMPEX and from the PTS or BPT offices thereafter.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

After much negotiation it has been agreed that the joint meeting with the Somerset & Dorset PHS will be on 17th September at Cranham.

ANSWERS

The datestamps on page 13 should read	FURZEHILL WIMBORNE/DORSET
SMALLFORD/ST. ALBANS HERTS;	HIGH ST. WESTON FAVELL/NORTHAMPTON
PEAT CARR/HOUGHTON LE SPRING	ABERYSTWYTH/DYFED
BRIDES LANE/SUTTON COLDFIELD W. MIDS	UPPER TADMARTON BANBURY/OXON
KINGSWAY RUGBY/WARWICKSHIRE	BIRCHFIELD ROAD/NORTHAMPTON
FLAMSTEAD/ST. ALBANS AL3 8BX	WOODFIELD AVE./LINCOLN
43 BARKING RD/EAST HAM E6	DOVER MANCHESTER TPO/No 2 SIDE
TRAINING SCHOOL/WIDNES	LLANGYBI/GWENT
CRIGGION/SHREWSBURY SALOP	CHERITON FOLKESTONE/KENT
FRANCIS STREET/LEICESTER	

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

I hope that it will be published before Easter but should that not be possible it will be mid-April before it appears. All articles should be sent to:
John Soer 51d Barkham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 2RG.