

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.midlandphs.org.uk



President: Chris Jackson

Chairman:
Gordon Hardy
(01773 856765)

Secretary:
Mick Gill
(01636 672868)

Treasurer:
Alan Godfrey
(01789 765385)

Programme Secretary:
Richard Farman
(01283 566515)

Editor Midland Mail:
Brian Atkins
(01948 258918)
sniktab@gmail.com

Number 208, July 2020



Entire to Philadelphia being an extended invoice including, amazingly, for cricket balls, bats and sets of stumps! The cover shows type D of the Birmingham experimental cancels in black, with duty code N (BM 148) for the latest known date of use, 26 February 1858 – see page 12 for an article on the Birmingham experimental date stamps.

CONTENTS

Page

- 2 – Announcements, New Members,
- 8 – Oval Telegraph Hand Stamps
- 15 – Shrewsbury to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, 1833
- 18 – A Timely Christmas Present & An 1841 Sketch
- 21 – The Bishop Mark: Size v Date
- 23 – Coventry to Horncastle via London 9 August c.1714

Page

- 3 – British Isles Inland Registered Mail – 1870 to 1907
- 12 – Birmingham, experimental hand stamps 1857-1866
- 17 – Grindsbrook, Derbyshire & A 1721 Shifnal mark
- 19 – Derby 'Paid ½' Hand Stamps
- 22 – Undated circular CANNOCK

ANNOUNCEMENTS,

FROM THE CHAIRMAN - Due to the uncertainty over the situation with Covid-19 virus it has been decided to cancel the meetings for the rest of 2020 and replace them with Zoom meetings. It is appreciated that this will exclude some members without internet access from being directly involved but as it is envisaged that most of the presentations will be on power point we may be able to send out printed copies to members who request them. I am sure that many of our members are familiar with Zoom but for those who are not it is straight forward if you follow the instructions. These we will issue by email once it has been finalised. The system is secure in that we can exclude none members from the site but allow guests in at our discretion, it will cost you nothing, the cost to the Society will be less than the meeting room cost. The meeting will consist of a 20-30min power point presentation and a question and discussion section. We are looking at having additional meetings either weekly or fortnightly. Wednesday has been pencilled in but these could be held on any day of the week and at any time so if you have any thoughts on this please let me know. One other advantage is that our overseas members will be able to attend.

19 September 2020 - Cotteridge meeting cancelled - Replaced by online Zoom meeting - Date and time to be confirmed - Subject to be advised

24 October 2020 - Cotteridge meeting cancelled - Replaced by online Zoom meeting - Date and time to be confirmed - Subject to be advised

7 November 2020 - Warwick and Warwick cancelled - 10:30 Committee Meeting by Zoom - 12:00 AGM by Zoom - Online Zoom meeting at 1:30pm - Subject to be advised

5 December 2020 - Christmas Meeting with Lunch - Replaced by online Zoom meeting - Date and time to be confirmed - Speaker to be advised

If the coronavirus suddenly disappears and we can get back to the 'old normal' things might change so we will keep you informed.

NEW MEMBERS – We welcome Marc Oxley, who collects 18th & 19th century GB pre-stamp covers & Ship Letters of the 19th century and Judy Brierley, whose interest includes general postal history. Welcome to both.

ARTICLES – There are no meetings to report, as with the 'Extra Issue', so we have 20 pages of articles and once again I must thank all who have contributed to this edition of Midland Mail. It doesn't go unnoticed as several members emailed me after the 'Extra Edition' to say how much they enjoyed reading your articles; thank you to everyone for your support, whether as writers or readers.

JON BAKER TROPHY – Please remember to vote for one of the articles listed below or any other article written in the 2019 issues. Suggested articles are:

Four 19 th Century Covers between Shropshire & Southern Africa	Brian Atkins	MM201 / 12-13
Contrary to Regulations / Not Contrary to Regulations	John Soer	MM201 / 18-19
The Jack Barlow Collection – An Unexpected Find	Marion Turner	MM202 / 11-13
Coventry Cathedral Consecration Covers	Ian May	MM202 / 14-17
Mail on the Midland Railway & its Constituents 1840 – 1875, Part 7	John Soer	MM203 / 7-16
Is it Gobbalds or Cobbalds or Gobalds or Gobbalds or Gubballs	Brian Atkins	MM203 / 18-19
A 1942 Express from Maryport to Manchester ending in Oklahoma	Malcolm Allinson	MM204 / 14-15
More on Coventry's Couriers	Alan Godfrey	MM204 / 16-17

An email to me at sniktab@gmail.com will do the trick, many thanks! So far we have a clear leader, well by one vote is a clear lead, isn't it?

John Soer writes: I have produced a list of all the Midland Railway stations that are shown in the two volumes of the Impression Books, which received oval telegraph hand stamps. Since it runs to seven pages and is of limited interest I did not add it to the article. However if anyone would like a copy of it I will email them one if they let me know by email (not phone). I also listed all the other stations in the Midlands that received these hand stamps, but have not yet transferred the details from my notes. If anyone would like the details of a particular mark, then again just send me an email.

Did you know? – Ian Baker's 1858 front page entire to Philadelphia, containing an invoice for cricket items reminded me that the first international cricket match took place between Canada and the United States at St. George's Cricket Club, New York in 1844! Not postal history I admit but a fascinating fact – for those of us who enjoy cricket!!

BRITISH ISLES INLAND REGISTERED MAIL – 1870 TO 1907

by Ian M May

I suspect we all enjoy seeing displays of British Registered mail, particularly pre-stamp and the early Victorian registered covers with strips of 2d blue and 1d red line engraved stamps or the embossed stamps issued from 1847 - 1854. However, it appears to me that the period 1878 until 1907, when the registered label system described in a previous article in *Midland Mail*^[1] was introduced, is also of significant interest as many important changes to registration occurred during this period. This article will attempt to describe and illustrate some of the changes, much of the information has been obtained from Mackay's Registered mail of the British Isles^[2], which contains more detail.

Inland registration had been introduced in January 1841 with a registration fee of 1/- in addition to the inland postage charge, the registration fee was reduced to 6d in March 1848 and to 4d in August 1862. Initially there was no compensation for loss, however, in 1851 the Registered Letters Irregularities Fines Fund, which raised money from Post Office employees who were fined for infringements of the regulations for registered letters, was set up. This was used by the Post Office to provide compensation on an *ad hoc* basis for loss from registered letters.

In 1875 a number of newspapers reported on the number of losses from registered packages, which led the Post Office to examine the problem. Some of the problems were administrative, there was some stealing from registered packages and some of the losses were due to the way members of the public used the system. One of the problems arose because there was a significant number of Irish labourers who sent money home, often coins, by registered post unsuitably packaged within an envelope. This often meant that the coins broke loose from the package. A further problem for the Post Office was that because there was no formal compensation scheme small amounts of money were often transmitted using money orders and ordinary post, it being cheaper than using registered post. Whilst this was a secure method of transferring money the Post Office was making a substantial loss on money orders of low value, because the poundage, the charge for purchasing a money order, was relatively low.

In an attempt to overcome these problems a series of reforms to the registration system took place on the 1st January 1878. The three most important were, a reduction of the registration fee from 4d to 2d, the introduction of official Post Office registered envelopes and, if the registered envelopes were used, the Post Office would provide compensation for losses up to £2. A further change was to mark registered items with blue crossed lines using blue pencil. This would replace the green string then being used and would be both easier and cheaper. The reduction of the registration fee was to encourage members of the public to send smaller amounts of money by registered post rather than using money orders. At the same time as the reduction in the registration fee the poundage on lower value money orders was increased, for money orders of value up to 10/- from 1d to 2d, for money orders of value above 10/- to £2 from 2d to 3d, and for values above £2 the poundage was reduced and was on a scale from 4d for £2 to £3, to 1/- for £9 to £10.

The registered envelopes were made of linen backed paper, so called scrim lined, in order to provide more protection to items enclosed, for example coins or jewellery. However, there was a problem in finding a suitable adhesive to stick to the linen, the solution was that the flap would be unbacked by linen. Initially only the two smaller sizes were available although a further 3 larger envelopes were made available later in 1878^[3]. The envelopes had an impressed stamp of value 2d on the rear flap which was to cover the registration fee, the postage was paid using adhesive stamps. The front was marked REGISTERED together with instruction that THIS LETTER MUST BE GIVEN TO AN OFFICER OF THE POST OFFICE TO BE REGISTERED (Fig 1a). The envelope was also marked with the blue crossed lines. Because of the tight time-scale to manufacture the envelopes the impressed stamp on the first ones was a modified postage die and contained the words POSTAGE TWO PENCE with a cartouche containing the inscription FOR REGISTRATION ONLY (Fig 1b). Later envelopes had a stamp, and no cartouche, in which REGISTRATION TWO PENCE replaced POSTAGE TWO PENCE, the stamp also included the date (Fig. 2), the date plugs were replaced with florets from 1882 (Fig 3). The charge for the envelopes was 2¼d.

The introduction of the indemnity scheme was also prompted by the fact that a proposal for indemnity up to £2 had been made to the Postal Union by the French in 1877. It was considered by the Post Office that the proposal would be accepted so it would be better to introduce it rather than have it imposed. So not only would the introduction of the compensation scheme reduce losses in the Money Order Office, it was also a politically astute decision!

The changes of 1878 were considered a great success with increases in registered post of 20% to 30% within 6 months. A large number of registered packages were found to have coins in them with the address written, according to the district surveyors "in the handwriting of illiterate persons, showing that the working classes are availing themselves of this mode of sending money by post instead of money orders". Registered letters including jewellery

had risen by 50%. However, a small number of packages containing jewellery fractured at the junction of the main body of the envelope and the paper flap, where the linen terminated.

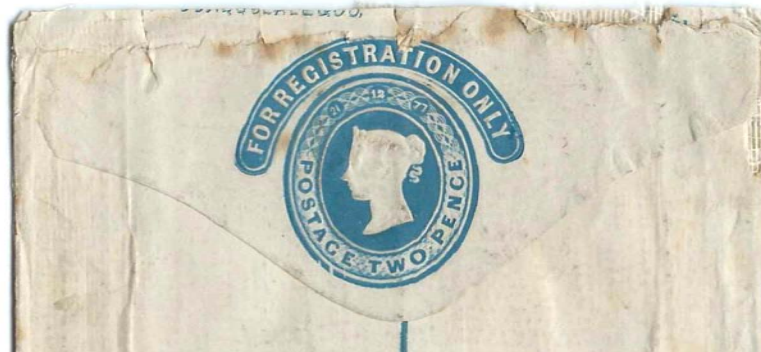


Fig 1, Registered stationery envelope 18th February 1879, Leamington to London. a) Front, b) Cartouch on reverse



Fig 2, Reverse of registered envelope showing registration stamp with REGISTRATION TWO PENCE and date.

The registered envelope continued to be developed, a box was added on the front in which to affix the adhesive for payment of postage and in 1881 a large R was included in the top left hand corner, which a year later was placed in an oval (Fig 4).



Fig 3, Reverse of registered envelope showing registration stamp with florets replacing date plugs.

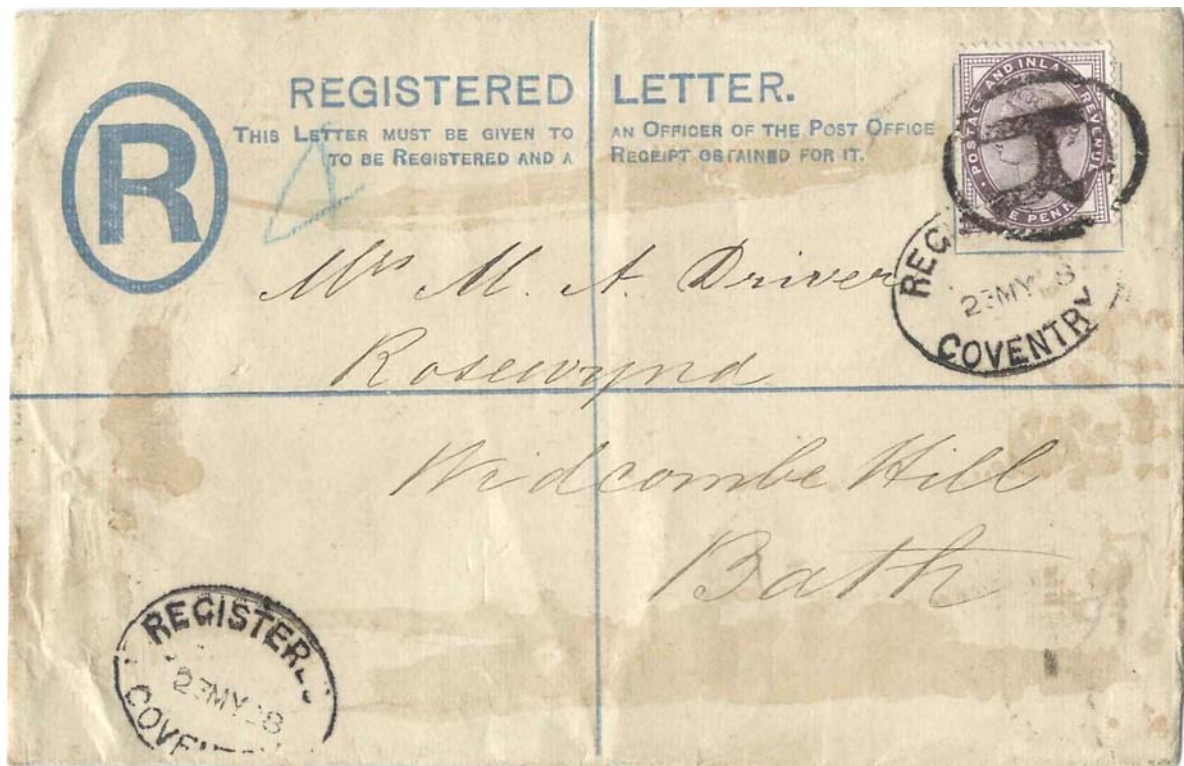


Fig 4, Registered stationery envelope showing R in an oval.

On 1st May 1886 the compensation was increased from £2 to a maximum of £10 on the scale, fee 2d compensation £2, fee 3d compensation £5 and fee 4d compensation £10. It had been decided that the compensation scheme would be printed on the back of the registered envelopes and this was carried out. However, the Post Office stores had 16 tons of previous issues of the registered envelopes in stock. Initially it was decided to send these back to McCorquodales for the table to be printed. This was going to be relatively expensive and would have involved a substantial effort to transport back and forth. The decision was therefore made to print adhesive labels which would be sent to postmasters who would be required to affix them to the envelope (Fig 5). This proved to be an extremely good decision as in 1891 the maximum compensation was increased to £25 and in 1892 to £50 offices therefore requiring new labels. It is therefore possible to find envelopes from earlier printings with the compensation scheme adhesive label attached.

There were a number of increases in the maximum compensation, from £2 in 1878 to £400 from 1906, full details of which are given in reference 2. The fees for compensation were shown printed on the reverse of the registered envelope from 1886, see Fig 6 for example.

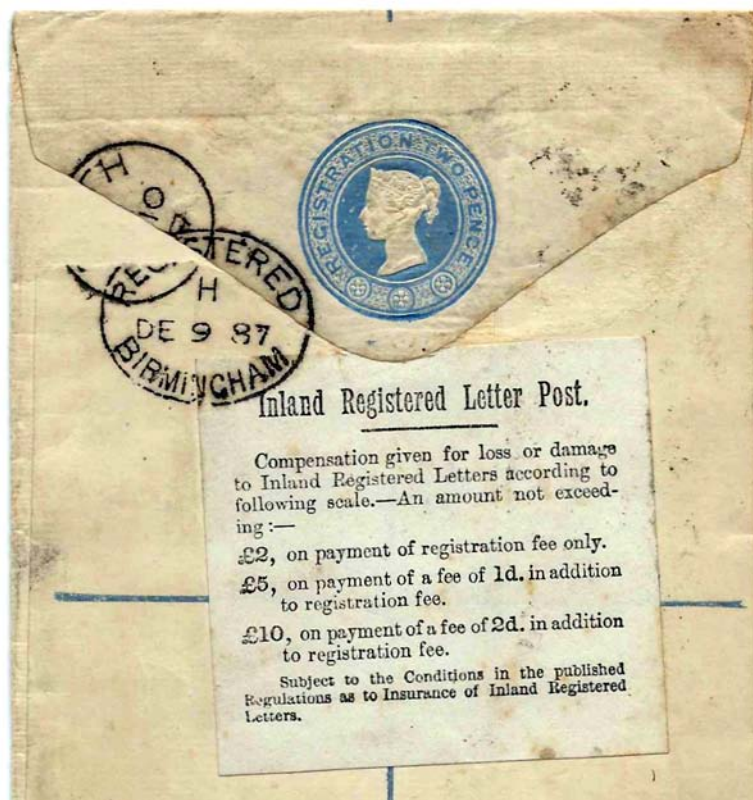


Fig 5, Reverse of registered envelope with label showing compensation scheme.

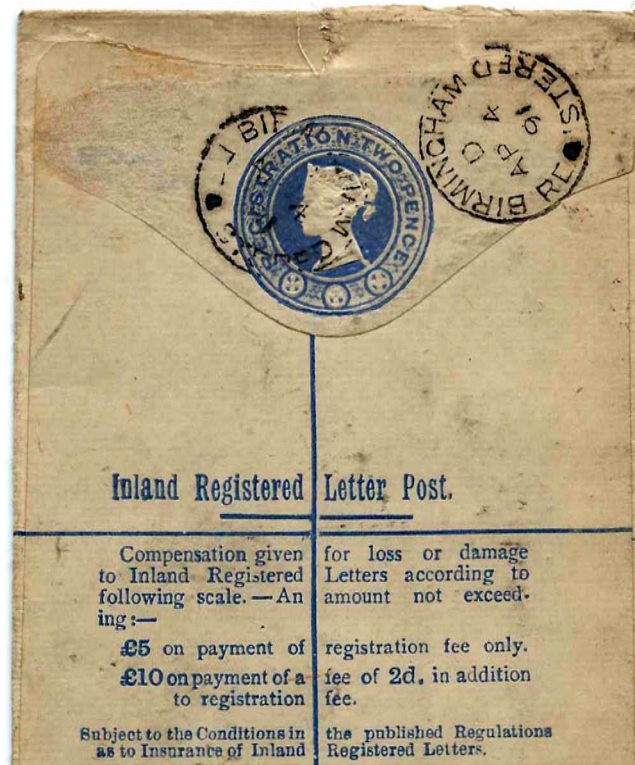


Fig 6, Reverse of registered envelope with printed compensation scheme.

In 1893 the flap was moved to the front which allowed, in 1901, the stamp to be placed either at the top or middle of the flap, Fig. 7. When the envelopes were produced in 1902 for King Edward VII's reign the impressed stamps covered both registration fee and the first step of inland postage, Fig. 8.

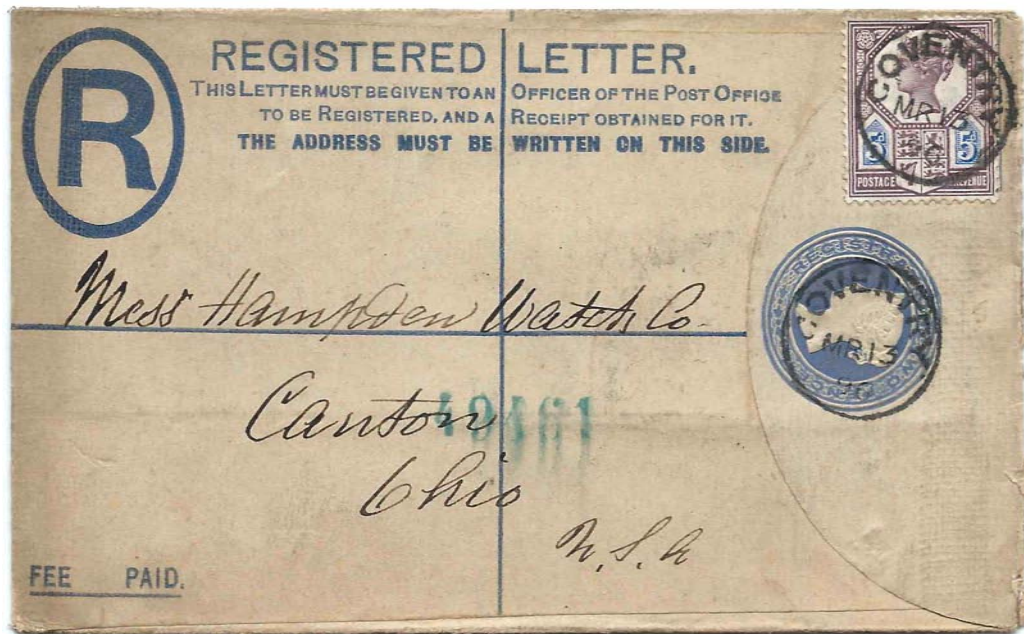


Fig 7, Registered stationery envelope with registration stamp on flap at front.

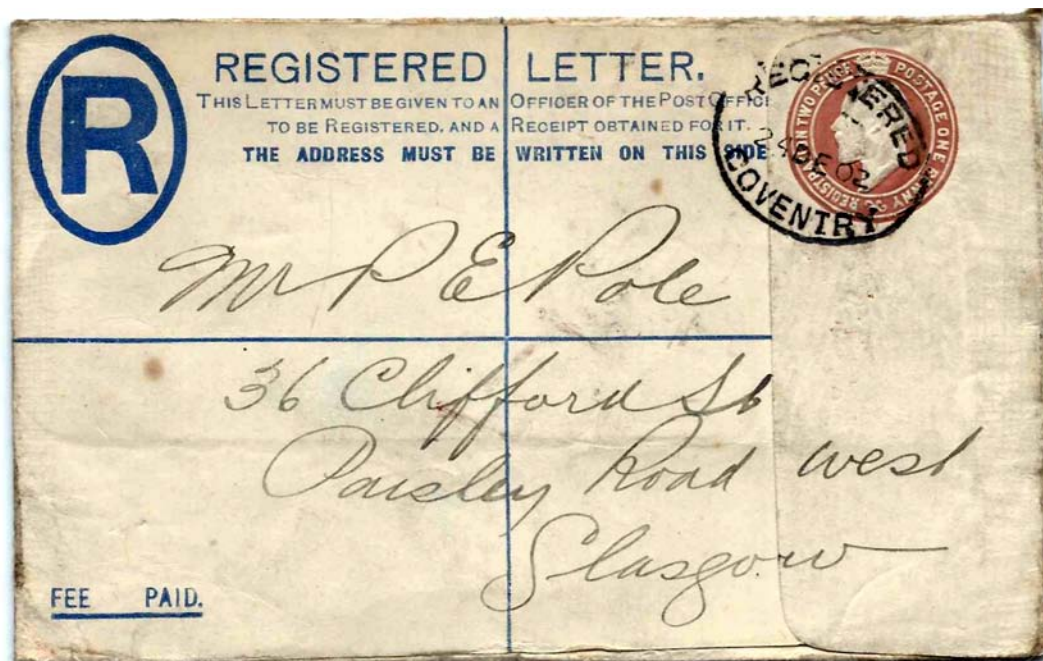


Fig 8, King Edward VII registered stationery envelope with stamp stating registration and first step of inland postage.

On the 1st June 1891 registration was extended to parcels and at the same time adhesive labels and hand-stamps, for use at larger offices, were produced with letter R in an oval as printed on the envelopes. On the 18th February 1907 the label system with serial numbers, which is the subject of a previous article was introduced.

For the next 100 years registered envelopes look very similar apart from some relatively minor changes including, of course, the change to decimal currency and the increase in registration fees and inland postage.

References

- 1 May, I. M., Registration labels with designation numbers, *Midland Mail*, 206, April, 2020, pp 12 – 16.
- 2 Mackay, J., *Registered Mail of the British Isles*, privately published, Dumfries, 1982.
- 3 Huggins, A. and Baker, C., *Collect British Postal Stationery*, G. B. Philatelic Publications Ltd. London, 2007.

OVAL TELEGRAPH HANDSTAMPS

by John Soer

I should admit at the outset that this article is not as complete as I had hoped that it would be. Closure of two archives cut short the research, and, even when they reopen, we are asked not to use public transport unless it is really necessary to do so. Also, I will be very reluctant to travel into central London for some time.

Those who collect covers from the Railway Letter Service will probably have come across cancellations which are oval and show the name of the station at the top, the railway company at the bottom and usually the word 'STATION' in the middle (Figs 1 & 2). When there is more than one station in a town or city, the name of the station is shown in the middle (Figs 3 & 4).



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4

The hand stamp issued to Hazelwell Station is shown in Fig 5 cancelling the 2d Railway Letter Stamp of the Midland Railway on a letter sent in 1894.



Fig 5

The railway letter stamp on other covers is often cancelled by other means such as a pen-stroke or a straight-line hand stamp. Yet these oval hand stamps are also struck on other types of document as shown in Figs 6 & 7.

MIDLAND RAILWAY. For Passenger Train traffic, whether Perishable or not, charged by weight, at Parcels *Guard's Signature.*
Rates or otherwise, in quantities of LESS than 2 cwt. P. F. 481

PARCELS' to *Guiseley* Via *10* *189*
WAY BILL Departure *29* day of *10* 189

BELL BUSK STATION MID. RY.

No.	Description.	NAME.	Destination.	Weight. lbs.	Paid on. s. d.	TO PAY. £ s. d.	PAID. £ s. d.	Thro'. £ s. d.	Under- charged.	Over- charged.	Sender.
1	<i>Hpr. Bawrick</i>			<i>59</i>		<i>1.3</i>					<i>Rathmell</i>
	<i>Meat</i>										

Fig 6 Oval hand stamp of Bell Busk Station struck on a Parcels' Way Bill.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS. No. of Telegram *48*
Office Stamp *LANGWATHBY STATION MID. RY.*

If the accuracy of an Inland Telegram be doubted, the telegram will be repeated on payment of half the amount originally paid for its transmission, any fraction of 1d. less than ½d. being reckoned as ½d.; and if it be found that there was any inaccuracy, the amount paid for repetition will be refunded. Special conditions are applicable to the repetition of Foreign Telegrams.

Charges } £ s. d.
to pay }

Handed in at } *Edinburgh* at *10 42* .M., Received here at } *10 10* .M.

TO { *Lockhart Estate Office Edinburgh*
Langwathby

Fig 7 Oval hand stamp of Langwathby Station struck on a Post Office telegraph form.

They even turn up cancelling the labels attached to prepaid samples of corn – note scroll at base of stamp (Fig 8).



Fig 8

A visit to the Postal Museum was called for in order to resolve the confusion. An inspection of two of the Steel Impression Books^{1, 2} resulted in even greater confusion for not only were such hand stamps sent to passenger stations, but also to a signal box, (Fig 9), a goods station (Fig 10) and coastguard stations (Fig 11).



Fig 9



Fig 10

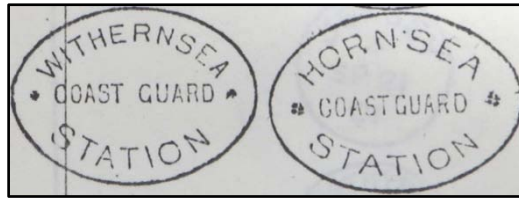


Fig 11

It was made clear on inspecting a further document³ that the use shown in Fig 6 was that for which the hand stamps had been supplied. A strike of the hand stamp supplied to a LNWR station in Liverpool was accompanied by the description '*MS 18, Railway Station Name Stamp, Brass, No Date, Price 4/6 (1931), Supplied to Railway Station Telegraph Offices*'; a pencilled note in the margin read '*Now obsolete, replaced by rubber stamps*'.

A copy of a minute of 1893 stated that 'single date stamps' should be supplied to Railway Telegraph Station Offices only where the number of telegrams dealt with average 50 a day. At other offices a brass stamp, MS 18, was used. However, in 1933 it was decided to provide rectangular rubber stamps, 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x $\frac{7}{8}$ ", without a date, to stations where ten or fewer telegrams were dealt with per day, but similar hand stamps with a date to stations that dealt with more than ten per day. No doubt this was a cheaper alternative than brass.

In the time available it was not possible to find a minute explaining why these hand stamps had been issued, so replacing numerical hand stamps previously issued by the Post Office⁴. Was it a case similar to the 1844 numerical hand stamps in that they did not readily show where they had been struck?

If anyone is wondering why the Post Office issued hand stamps to some of the telegraph offices, the answer is that the Telegraph Acts of 1868 and 1870 conferred on the PMG a monopoly in telegraphic communication, including the use of all private wires except those 'maintained for the private use of a corporation or company'. Although the telegraphs of the railway companies were primarily for their own use, they were now open to the public.

There are a number of files, originally in P.O. Archives, but which were transferred to B.T. Archives (only open Mon & Tues) that I would like to have seen before writing this article, in particular one about the transfer of telegraph clerks from the railway companies to the Post Office. Illustrated in Fig 12 is a page from a booklet 'Midland Railway/ Telegraphs / Rules & Regulations'.

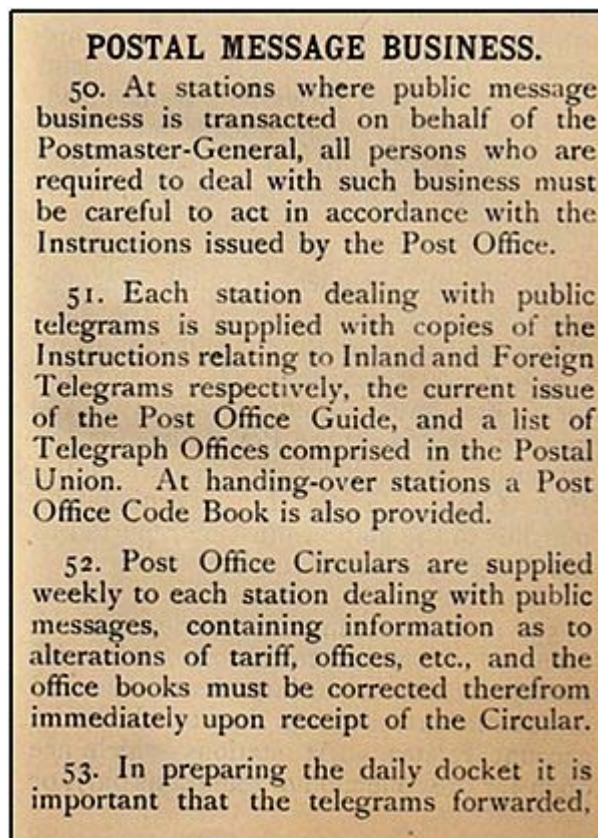


Fig 12

Until I acquired a booklet issued by the Midland Railway in 1912, containing a list of telegraph stations, I had always assumed that there was a separate telegraph office in the station buildings from which the public could send messages. (In this context a 'station' is a point from which telegraphs could be sent or received.) Figure 13 shows how wrong I was.

STATIONS.	HOURS OF ATTENDANCE.				Postal Stations.
	Week-day.		Sunday.		
	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	
Earby (Station Box)	5.0	Mon. to	.....	9.0	CD *
„ Barnoldswick Junction	7.30	to 8.50	9.30 to 10.30.	4.50 to 6.15	
Eardisley (Junction)	Always.		{ 12.0 to last booked train } { and 9.0 p.m. to 12.0. }		
„ West Box	„		{ 12.0 to last booked train } { and 9.0 p.m. to 12.0 }		
East Buxton Lime Sidings.....	.....		(See Miller's Dale.)		
East Langton .....	.....		(See Langton.)		
East Rudham .....	.....		(See Rudham.)		
Ecclesall .....	.....		(See Millhouses & Ecclesall.)		
Ecclesfield (Station Box)	6.0 to last train		.....		
† „ Goods	{ 9.0 to 1.0		{		
	{ 2.30 p.m. to 4.30		{		
	{ 6.0 to 7.0		{		
	{ (Closed 3.0 p.m. Saturday).		{		
„ Smithy Wood	As required.		.....		
Eckington (West)	Always.		Always.		CD *
Eckington & Renishaw (Goods Office) {	a.m.		{		
	{ 10.0 to 12.0 noon		{		
	{ 1.0 p.m. to 6.0 p.m.		{		
„ Station Box.....	a.m.		.....		
	6.0 Mon. to		 12.0 noon.....		
Edale (Station Box)..... {	{ 6.0 Mon. to		{		CD
	{ 12.0 midn't Sat.		{		
„ Cowburn East	6.0 Mon. to		 8.30		
Edmondthorpe & Wymondham	7.0 Mon. to		6.0		
Edwalton	6.0 Mon. to		6.0		CD
Eggleton .....	.....		(See Oakham.)		
Eldroth .....	.....		(See Giggleswick.)		
Elmton & Creswell (B.O.)	8.0 to 8.0		.....		CD *
„ Junction	4.0 Mon. to		6.0		
Elsecar & Hoyland (Station Box) {	{ 6.0 Mon. to		{ 6.0 and Train times.		
	{		{		
„ Hoyland Curve	6.0 to 12.0 midn't		.....		

Fig 13

The fourth column shows those places at which Post Office telegrams could be sent or received. Three were signals boxes; one was in the booking office, and only one (Edwalton) possibly in a separate office. The 'CD' indicates that the station was open for the collection and general delivery of telegrams, while the '*' meant that the office was open for collection and delivery 'on station'.

Figs 1 – 3 and 8 – 11 appear by courtesy of the Postal Museum

REFERENCES

1. POST 55/59 Date Stamp Impressions, Vol 47, 1887-1898
2. POST 55/62 Date Stamp Impressions, Vol 50, 1898-1911
3. POST 55/205 Supply of Date stamps, Brass and Rubber to Railway Station Telegraph Offices
4. POST 55/65 Numerical Date stamp Impressions of Railway Telegraph Offices, 1870-71
5. POST 55/66 Numerical Date stamp Impressions of Railway Telegraph Offices, 1882-91

BIRMINGHAM – THE EXPERIMENTAL RECEIVING HANDSTAMPS 1857-1866

by Ian Baker FRPSL

It is now over twenty-five years since Elizabeth and Eric Lewis wrote an article entitled '*The Small Birmingham Receiving Hand stamps Introduced for a short time in the late 1850s*' (Midland Mail, MM 88 / 10, January 1995). The information was incorporated within the Midland edition of the British County Catalogue published in 2013 (BM 147 to BM148f). The hand stamp types involved, together with the 'standard' single circle 125 introduced in 1858, are illustrated below in Figure 1 and Table 1 on the next page updates the catalogue data. Stamper code 2 for BM 148b and stamper codes 1, 2 and 4 for BM 148f are not shown separately.



Figure 1, Birmingham Distinctive Marks

Many more covers have come to light since 2013, including the new stamper numbers 1 and 2 for BM 148f (G above) as well as new earlier (EKD) and later (LKD) known dates of use. It has also been possible, in most cases, to separate each stamp by the perceived colour differences of 'black' and 'dark blue' and with their associated duty codes. These marks are inevitably found on the reverse of covers, although sometimes on the obverse or occasionally on both the front and back, see Figure 2.



Figure 2 (reduced), Envelope from London to Sutton Coldfield then redirected, showing early arrival code A at Birmingham (BM 148f/4) and Sutton Coldfield, with return to Birmingham later in the day on 15 December 1860, code W (BM 148b/2 – E new above) for delivery to Erdington.

The ink colour recorded in the table is as it is perceived *now*, this may not be as was originally used. The mix of the stamping ink used could vary from day to day, black can be jet black to pale grey (or various shades of brown or olive, if too much sweet oil was used in the making), while blue can turn to grey, due to atmospheric pollution reacting chemically with pigments in the ink and therefore appearing blue-black. However, in addition to black, a dark blue stamping ink was in use in Birmingham from mid - 1857 into the 1860s. See the report of Mark Samwell's display to the society in September 2002 (Midland Mail, MM 127 / 2 of November 2002).

Cat. BM No.	Hand- stamp Type	Stamper Code	Proof	Colour	Duty Codes	BM Cat. update	
						EKD	LKD
147	C			B Dk BL	A, B, T, none A, L	06.08.57 <i>31.07.57</i>	<i>24.09.59</i> <i>11.12.58</i>
148	D		22.05.57	B Dk BL	A, <u>B</u> , <u>C</u> , <u>D</u> , E, <u>F</u> , <u>G</u> , K, <u>L</u> , N A, E	<i>09.08.57</i> <i>28.10.57</i>	26.02.58 <i>15.11.57</i>
148b	E	2 2	26.09.57	B Dk BL	A, <u>G</u> , L, M, S, T, Z, none L, T, W, 9	<i>17.10.57</i> 09.03.58	<i>25.02.62</i> <i>15.12.60</i>
		3 3	26.09.57	B Dk BL	A, E, S, T, W, Y A, M, R	<i>05.12.57</i> <i>09.11.57</i>	<i>24.09.64</i> <i>21.06.60</i>
148d	F			B Dk BL	A3, G3, L3, *3, 93, none A3, 93	28.01.58 10.06.58	<i>24.12.63</i> 14.01.59
148f	G	1	09.04.58	Dk BL	V (inv)	<i>04.02.59</i>	
		2		B	A, R	<i>05.08.65</i>	<i>24.02.66</i>
		4 4	09.04.58	B Dk BL	A, B, P, S, <u>T</u> , W, 9, none A, 9	<i>14.05.58</i> <i>24.05.58</i>	<i>22.12.64</i> <i>15.12.60</i>
		5 5	09.04.58	B Dk BL	A, C, M, W, Z A, 9	<i>16.12.58</i> <i>08.09.58</i>	08.03.64 <i>14.08.60</i>

Table 1 - Known use of Birmingham experimental receiving hand stamps, 1857-1866

Comments and Questions

(1a) Dk BL = Dark Blue BUT beware poorly mixed or applied black ink

(1b) New BM Cat. dates are in *italics*

(2a) Duty codes recorded but not seen: BM148 - B, C, D, F, G, L.

Confirmation of the colour and date is required for each of these duty codes underlined.

(2b) Duty codes recorded but not seen: BM 148b - G; BM 148f - T. Confirmation of the

stamper code number, the colour and date is required for each of these duty codes underlined.(2c) Duty codes underlined have been temporarily allocated to Black ink, until colour, etc is confirmed(3) The LKD for BM 147 in Black is recorded in the *current* catalogue as 22.08.58.Required is confirmation of the colour and the duty code for this date.(4) The EKD for BM 148b in Dark Blue is recorded in the *current* catalogue as 09.03.58.Required is the stamper code number, 2 or 3, and confirmation of the colour and the duty code.(5) The EKD for BM 148d in Black is recorded in the *current* catalogue as 28.01.58.Required is confirmation of the colour and the duty code of the cover.

Additional notes on the Table –

- (a) Help is required with the questions below the Table. For the period 1857-1866, please check your covers addressed to, via or misssent to Birmingham, from your county of interest. New dates and confirmation of stamper numbers, colour and codes can be sent to ianbm47@outlook.com or to the Editor, all will be appreciated.
- (b) Regarding BM148f stamper code 1, this was noted on the Mark Samwell website and the cover also showed undated circles of Rowsley (Type C1) and of Yardley (D3) so maybe in a member's udc collection. Can anyone confirm that the colour is Dark Blue?
- (c) It is probable that the EKD for BM 148f with code 2, see Figure 3, will be in the late 1850s, as will code 3 and BM 148b code 1, if and when each is found.



Figure 3 – Reverse of envelope from Wellington / Salop with arrival hand stamp BM 148f, stamper code 2 and duty code A in black ink, dated AU 5/65. One of two records of this sans-serif mark. (Pete Elms collection)

Research is required into when the hand stamps were re-cut or new ones sent. For instance, the hand stamp of BM 148b / 3 – Type E – was originally issued on 26 September 1857 but a recut is proofed on 30 June 1858. A new one – Type E (New) – with larger letters, was recorded in the article by Eric and Elizabeth with a date of 29 October 1858 and was itself a re-cut, a further re-cut was issued on 31 December 1859, see Figure 4.



Figure 4 (reduced) – Two envelopes with BM 148b stamper code 3, one with the original issue dated AU 23/58 and the second, the later issue with larger letters, for OC 18/59.

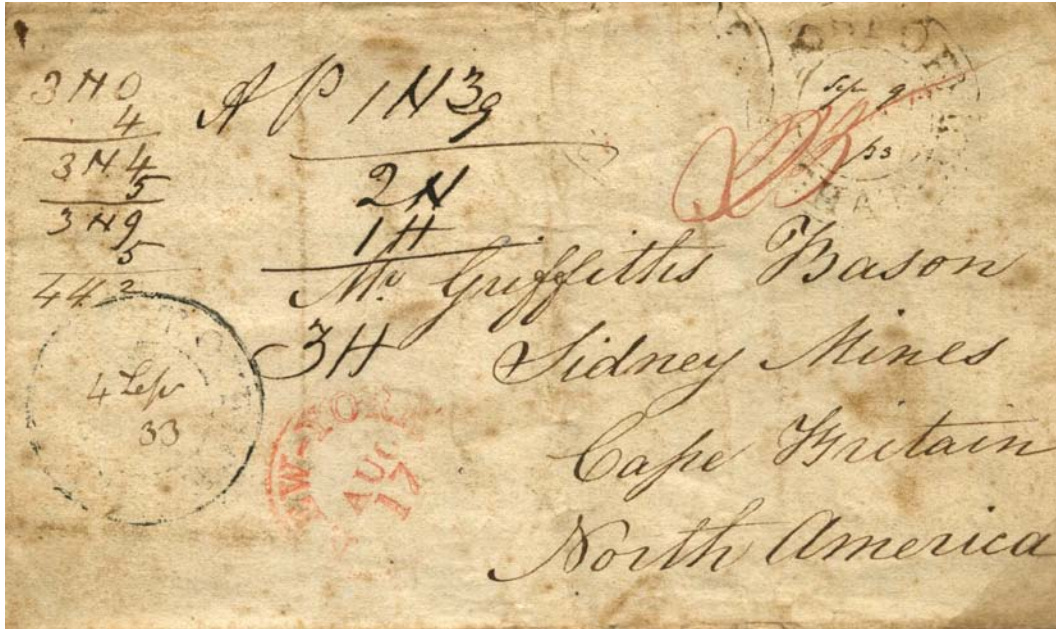
On 1 April 1858 Birmingham was sent a new ‘standard’ type of single circle, see Type 125 above. This is one of the many types to be included in a book in progress of Midland hand stamps used in the 1840-1860 period. Many other places received this standard type at the same time, although some towns had been issued with them earlier. This differed from the experimental types being used by Birmingham at the time, by having two ‘code’ slots above the date, thus it is similar to Type F but without the ‘arcs’. This standard type was used alongside the experimental hand stamps until the mid-1860s and then continued alone into the twentieth century, with changes to the code positions and to the size of the hand stamp. A note of the date of use of this type, together with its colour and the codes used, would also be appreciated if dated from April to July 1858.

My thanks are due to Pete Elms for his input of new dates and codes and to Brian Atkins and Martin Scroggs for their helpful comments.

SHREWSBURY to CAPE BRETON, NOVA SCOTIA in 1833

by Brian Atkins

Sometimes one finds a piece of postal history that just cries out to be investigated and so it is with the entire I discovered deep in a dealer's 'odds and ends' box at the Royal 2011 Royale Canadian National Stamp Show, at Dorval, Quebec (a western suburb of Montreal, near the airport) in 2011; it is illustrated below.



Since there is no external indication on the entire that it was from Shrewsbury, it was fortunate that the dealer had stuck a label on the transparent holder reading 'Shrewsbury, UK 1833, Cape Breton' (not Cape Britain as per the address panel!), otherwise I may have missed it. I thought an investment of Can\$10 (about £5) might bring a bit of fun trying to work out the charges and so it proved. There are no UK postal markings, suggesting it was carried privately to New York and put into the mails, unpaid, at New York on 17 August 1833 having probably been carried by a passenger on the *Tecumseh* (Capt Tomkins), which had sailed from Liverpool on 28 June 1833. On searching Lloyd's List, the *Tecumseh* was the only vessel I could find which arrived at New York on (or slightly before) the 17 August having left an English port after the letter was written on 14 June. The charges are as follows:

25	US cents in manuscript for New York to the Canadian border, probably St Andrews, New Brunswick, reached via Portland and Bangor, Maine
AP 1N3	1/3 American postage (AP) converted to Canadian currency
9	9d St Andrews to St John, New Brunswick
2N	2/- Total so far
1N	1/- St John, New Brunswick via the Bay of Fundy to (probably) Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia
3N	3/- Total so far, the entire has cost three Canadian shillings to get it to Nova Scotia

On the left hand side there are several more charges, which I am advised may be as follows:

3N0	3/- carried from above
4, 5, 5	4d, 5d and 5d, probably for three stages across Nova Scotia to Sydney Mines
4N2	Adding the 4d, 5d and 5d to 3/- makes four shillings and twopence (4/2) as the final total to collect

At this time Nova Scotia postmarks were of two concentric rings with POST OFFICE at the top and a town name below with the date hand written inside. But of the three that can be seen only one can be positively identified, that of POST OFFICE / ARICHAT / Sep 9 / 33 at top right. Arichat is a small, secluded fishing port on the southern tip of the same northern island of Nova Scotia as Sydney, 75 miles south west of that town (see map next page). The problem is deciding the other two stops before Arichat. There was certainly one on 4 Sep / 33, as per the manuscript inside a partly unreadable double ring at bottom left, where POST OFFICE can be read but, frustratingly, not the town. The other double ring at the top and to the left of Arichat is totally unreadable. The first post office in Canada was established at Halifax in 1754. By 1783, seven more post offices had been established in Nova Scotia, including Sydney and Annapolis. Until the outbreak of the War of 1812 the main internal mail route in the colony was between Halifax and Annapolis Royal, taking the mail to New Brunswick and the rest of Canada. By 1817, there was an

established mail route from Halifax to Truro and Antigonish¹. It is possible the letter's route across Nova Scotia was from Annapolis to Halifax (one stage), to Antigonish (second stage) or to Arichat (second stage, possibly even by sea), and then to Sydney and Griffiths Bason at Sydney Mines (third stage) but this is by no means certain.

The poignant letter is from Mrs Miller, a butcher's wife in Shrewsbury to Mr. Griffiths Bason, informing him that his mother had died. Pigot's Directory of Shropshire (1828) confirms John Miller, Butcher, Fish St. and Martha Bason, Druggist, Princess Street, Shrewsbury. The letter reads in full:

Shrewsbury June 14th 1833

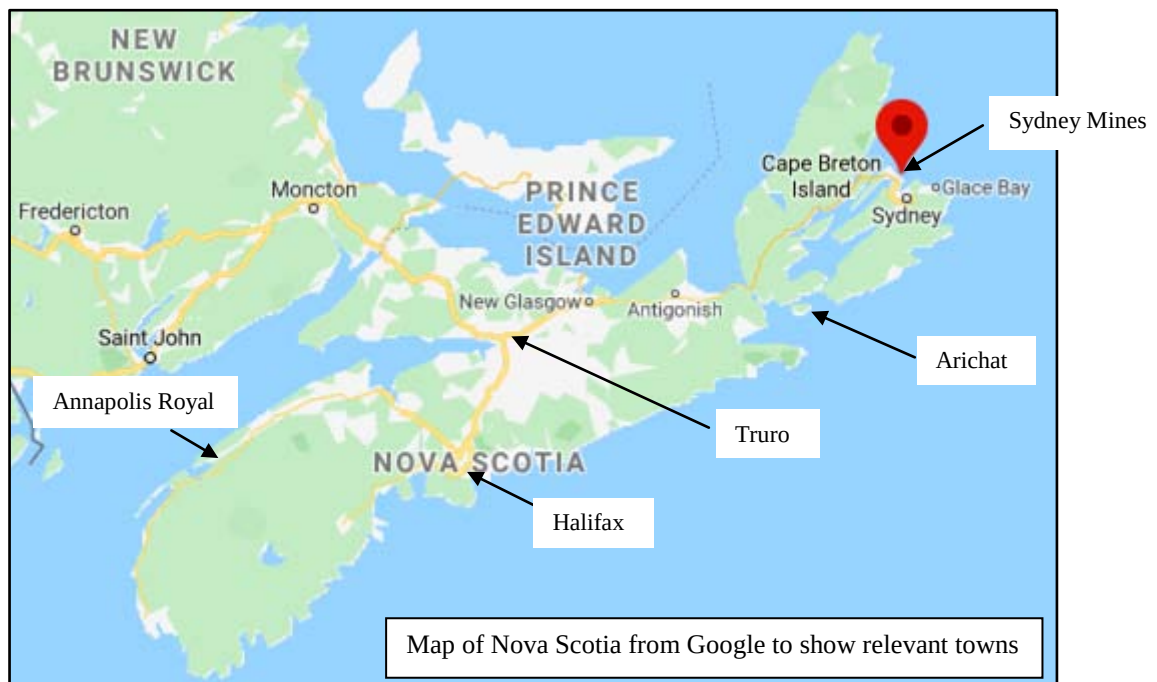
Mrs Miller writes this to inform Griffiths Bason of the death of his mother Margaret Evans, which took place in March last. She was poorly 6 months. I was with her half an hour before she died. There was £6 of ready money in the house and that went to bury her. Her brothers Benjamin and William out of the country came and ordered her funeral, they parcelled her clothes and took them with them and locked the door on her goods and intended to sell them and send the money to you and in the meantime her husbands son brought in a Lawyer and took the things away, they could not prevent him doing so. But I have £10 of your Mothers she brought me to keep and I think you the properest person to have it and shall keep it till I hear from you and you will please to direct me how you think it best to send it there are a many people coming to some parts of America please to send word which way I had best send it to be safe. If you should forget or don't understand who I am by Mrs Miller, I was May Griffiths of Marton.

Yours respectfully,
M. Miller

Please to direct: Mrs Miller, Butcher,
Fish Street, Shrewsbury

An interesting comment in the letter (*there are many people coming to some parts of America*) suggests it was not unknown for letters to be carried privately and Mrs Miller is concerned about the money to *send it to be safe*. The Falmouth packets were well in operation at this time but did she trust them, did she even know they existed?

Sydney Mines, on the northern side of Sydney Harbour was founded in 1784; the first mining taking place in 1766 along the exposed seams of the harbour cliffs². During the American Revolution the British used the coal from Sydney Mines to supply the British loyalists in Boston and Halifax but had to fend off attacks from the American navy trying to rescue prisoners working in the mines. The General Mining Association took over Cape Breton coal mining in 1827 and in 1830 the first shaft was sunk, one line said to eventually extend for 5 miles under the sea³. By 1833 Griffiths Bason was clearly going to find work in such an environment. The mines ceased operating in 1975.



References:

- 1) <https://memoryns.ca/nova-scotia-post-office-fonds>
- 2) <http://www.sydneymines.ca/>
- 3) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sydney_Mines

I am indebted to Gray Scrimgeour of Victoria, British Columbia for his help in unravelling the possible charges

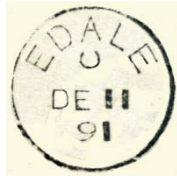
GRINDSBROOK, DERBYSHIRE

by Frank Walton RDP FRPSL

The sub-post office named Grindsbrook is one of the most elusive offices in Derbyshire. Its existence had only been known from Trade Directories and Post Office Notices, and a search through the Impression Books held at The Postal Museum in London has not yielded any evidence of a handstamp with this name. Nor had it ever been seen by any of the pioneer collectors of Derbyshire postal history. But finally, an example of a postmark has been discovered.



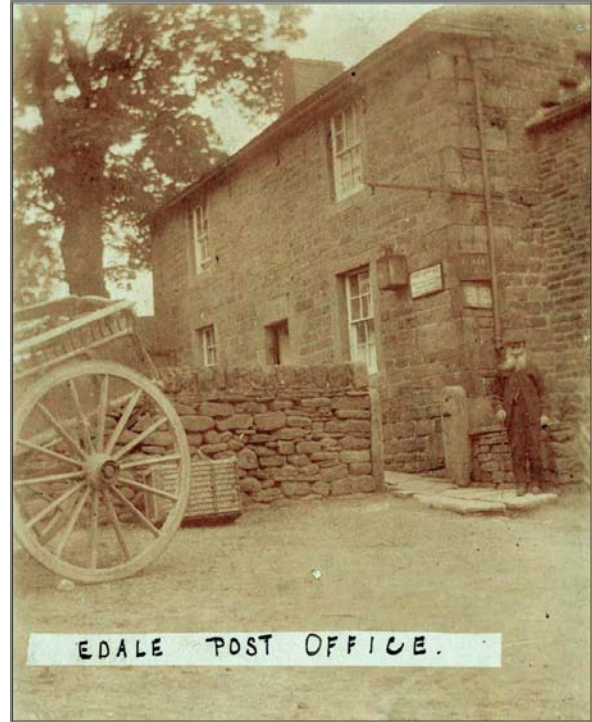
Grindsbrook 1890



Edale 1891

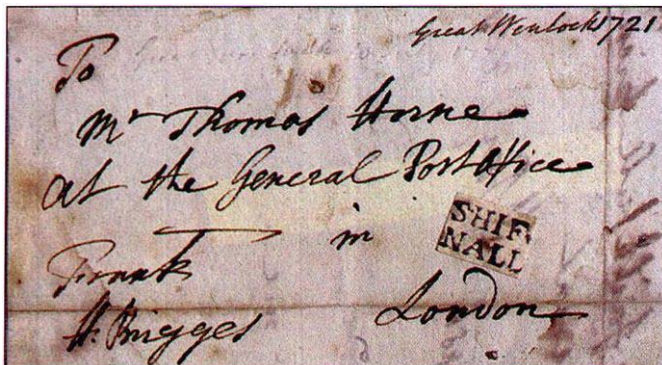
An article entitled 'Edale' was published in *The Derbyshire Messenger* (October 1997, pp90-91). Although it is not attributed to an author, it is probable that it was written by Harold Wilson. In that article it is stated that a Trade Directory dated 1887 lists Joseph Cooper of Grindsbrook as a 'shopkeeper, carrier and sub-postmaster'. In *Sheffield Posts in Peakland and the Hope Valley* by Eric Lewis, Bill Sedgewick and Ron Ward an 1888 Trade Directory is quoted that states Joseph Cooper was 'a receiver' – which suggests that there was not an established sub-post office there yet. In my book *The Sub-Office Postmarks of Sheffield*, I record that a post office was opened at Grindsbrook on 1 May 1889.

Both *The Derbyshire Messenger* and *Sheffield Posts in Peakland and the Hope Valley* quote an entry in the Post Office Circular of 27 October 1891 which specifies that the sub-office at Grindsbrook was to be renamed Edale. In *The Sub-Office Postmarks of Sheffield*, the earliest postmark recorded for Edale was 7 October 1897: but the same accumulation that contained the Grindsbrook example also had an Edale postmark of 11 December 1891.



Photograph taken from a postcard used in 1904

All the relevant census returns show the Cooper family resident at Grindsbrook, Edale. Those of you who know this beautiful rural village at the southern end of the Pennine Way will understand that Grinds Brook is the name of the stream that flows through the village. The buildings in the village centre today are exactly as they were in the 1890s; the post office remained in the Cooper family until at least 1940 – and the sub-postmistress in 1997 was Mrs P.W. Cooper. All references to the location suggest that the same building, just a few yards from the Nag's Head public house, was used from the earliest time through to at least 1997. The photograph shown is taken from a postcard used in 1904, but could well date from much earlier.



The illustration (left) was taken from the 8th page of a report by Cavendish Philatelic Auctions of 'The Stamp Show 2000'. Examples of Free Fronts were illustrated which had the town mark cut out and pasted onto the front! For a long time it showed the only known example of a small two-line SHIF/NALL (SH499). Note the endorsement 'Great Wenlock 1721'. It is noticeable how similar the Shifnal mark is to the newly found use on an entire (14 August 1721), even to the downward mark on the letter F – another, but broken F?



A TIMELY CHRISTMAS PRESENT

by Mick Gill

I have collected Nottinghamshire postal history over many years but examples of two early marks in the County Catalogue had long eluded me. Searches of countless dealers' stocks at various venues had always proved fruitless.

In December 2019 I received a package from a dealer in which I expected there might be some items of general interest but nothing of great note. How very wrong I was!

Included was an item described as '*Superb and very rare.....The first seen in 50 years*'. It was nothing less than an entire from Southwell to Lincoln dated 20 January 1797 with a fair strike of a straight-line SOUTHWELL mark NG 257 (Fig 1). The earliest Southwell mark had come to light, one of the two marks I had sought for so long. Father Christmas was alive and well!!

The letter, from Southwell attorney George Hodgkinson, is a reply to a letter containing an Inventory and Accounts of the effects of a Mr Marshall received '*this moment.....by the Post Boy from Newark*'. Charged 4d for up to 30 miles the letter has a manuscript 8, seemingly cancelled by the SOUTHWELL mark. That the rate charge was 4d is confirmed by a manuscript 5 on the reverse, the additional 1d being the charge for delivery in Lincoln.

For Christmas 2020 I shall write a letter to Father Christmas with a request for an example of the WORK / SOP two-line mark of 1781, NG 294.

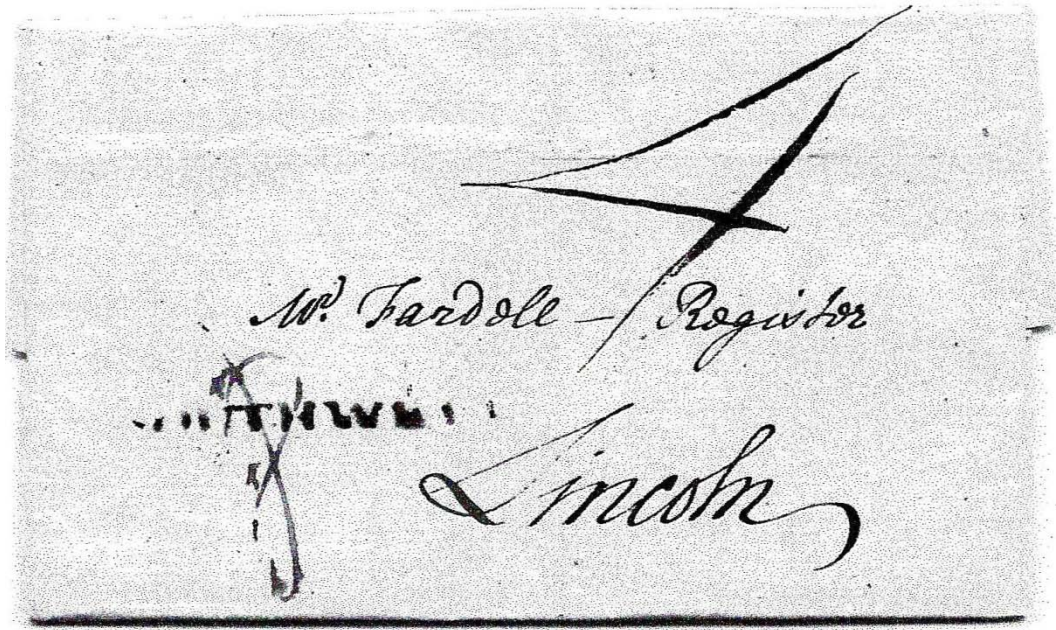


Fig 1, Entire dated 20 January 1797 with a fair strike of a SOUTHWELL straight-line 50 x 4mm, NG 257



Sketch of Windsor Place, Shrewsbury, found at the top of an August 1841 letter from the then owner, Thomas Farmer Dukes, writing to his daughter Eliza Ellen Panting in Calcutta, the letter forwarded to Singapore. Do you think he was missing her?

DERBY 'PAID ½' HANDSTAMPS

by John Soer

Two covers that I acquired recently are illustrated in Figs 1 & 2. That they are different hand stamps can be seen from the height of the letters. The colour of the strike on that sent in 1903 is better described as orange, but that of 1910 was struck in brown ink. Has anyone else seen this colour ink on Derby hand stamps of that period? Or was it a 'one-off' caused by the hand stamp being pressed on to black inkpad in error? A third stamp of this type is shown in Fig 3.

Fig 1

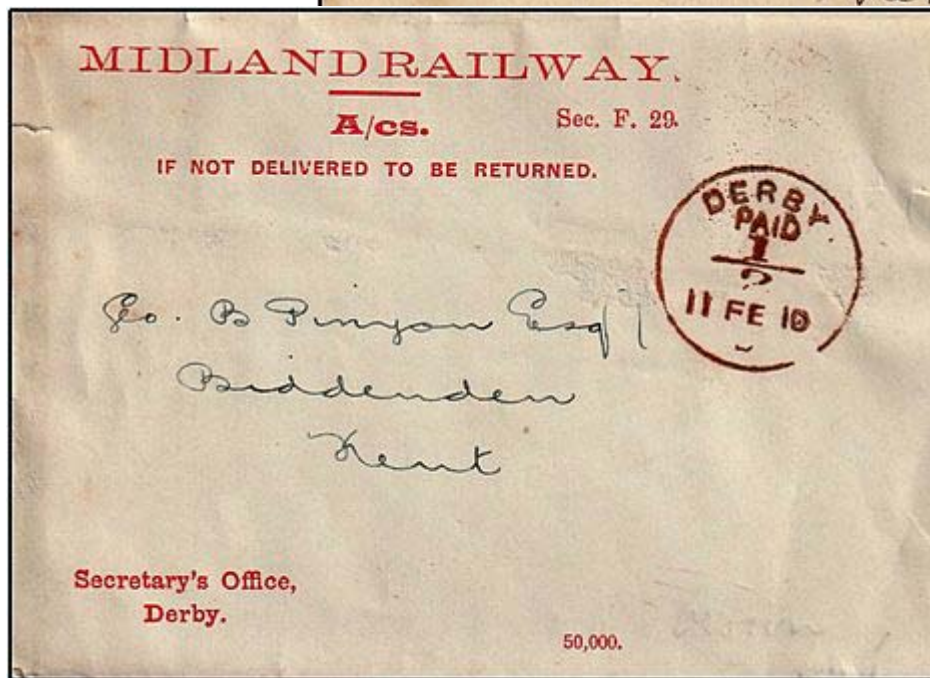
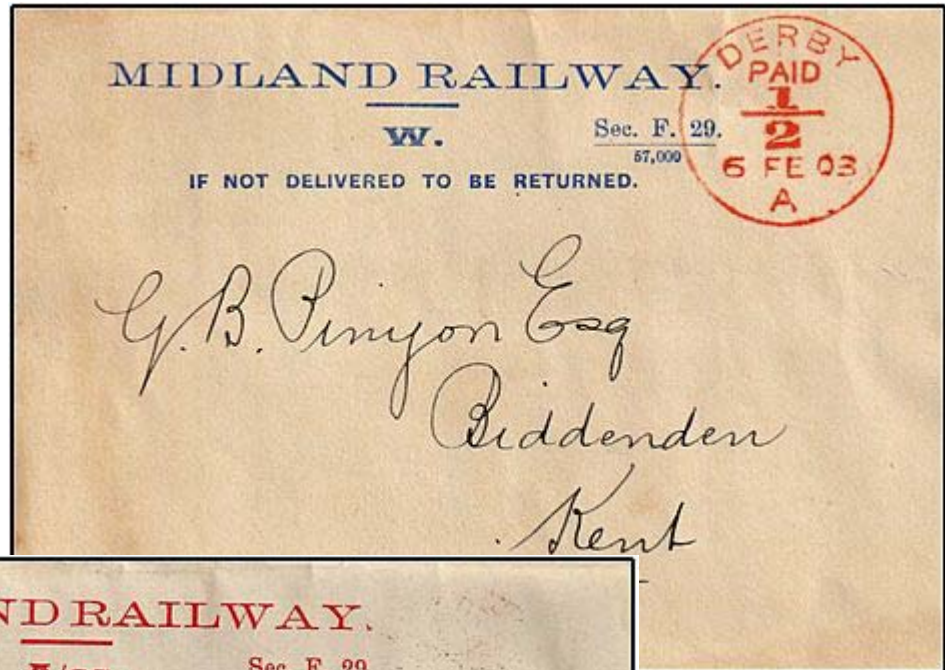


Fig 2

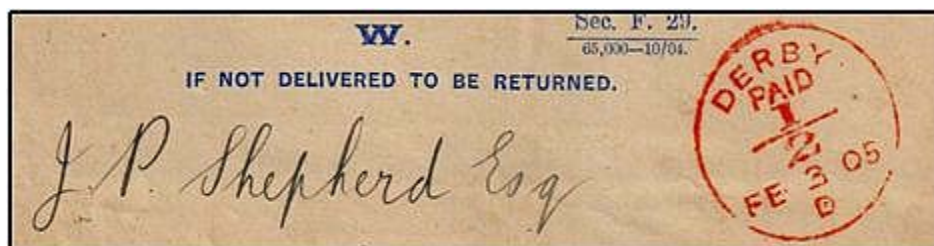
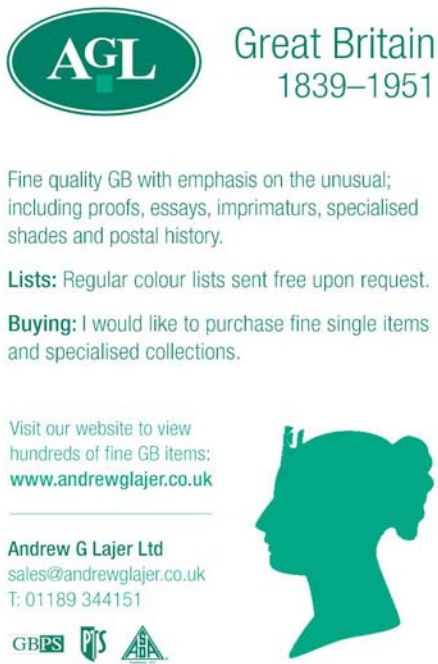


Fig 3



Bill Pipe
THE MAGPIE
*Buying and Selling Postal History
 and Postcards of the World*

7 Richard Close · Upton · Poole · Dorset · BH16 5PY
 Tel: 01202 623300 · Fax: 01202 631149
 email: magpiebillpipe@freeuk.com
 web: www.magpiebillpipe.com



AGL Great Britain
 1839–1951

Fine quality GB with emphasis on the unusual;
 including proofs, essays, imprimaturs, specialised
 shades and postal history.

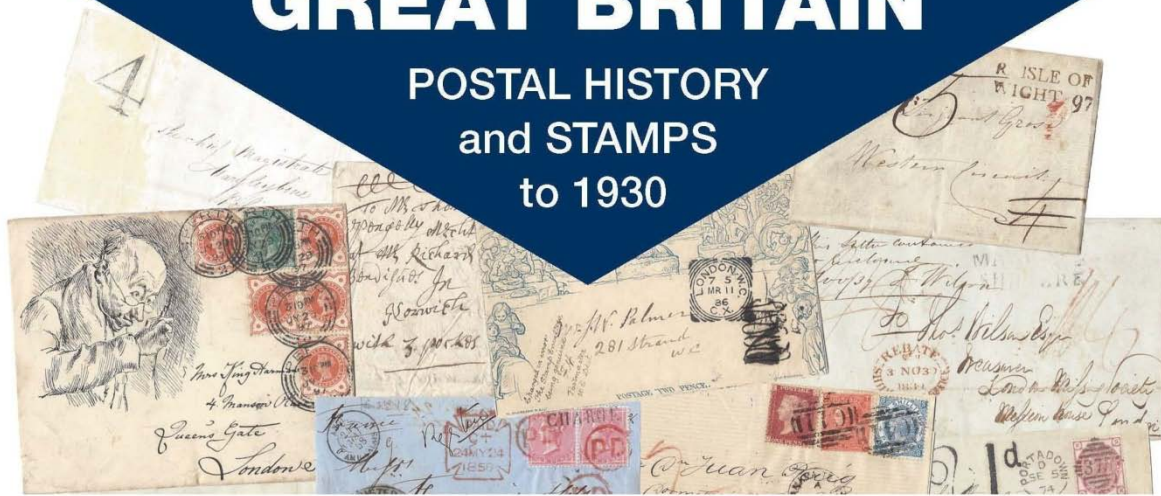
Lists: Regular colour lists sent free upon request.

Buying: I would like to purchase fine single items
 and specialised collections.

Visit our website to view
 hundreds of fine GB items:
www.andrewglajer.co.uk

Andrew G Lajer Ltd
 sales@andrewglajer.co.uk
 T: 01189 344151

GBPS PIS AHA



GREAT BRITAIN
**POSTAL HISTORY
 and STAMPS
 to 1930**

Postal History from 1300 and Fine Stamps from Queen Victoria to King George V

YOUR WANTS LIST IS WELCOME!

BUYING Collections and single items of Postal History and Fine Stamps

 **Martin Townsend** 

Established over 40 years - clients may rely on our reputation and expertise
 PO BOX 1100, CAMBERLEY, SURREY, GU15 9RY Mobile 07801 769117
 TEL/FAX: (01462) 420678 E-mail: Martin@martintownsend.com
www.martintownsend.com

THE BISHOP MARK: SIZE v DATE

by Malcolm Allinson

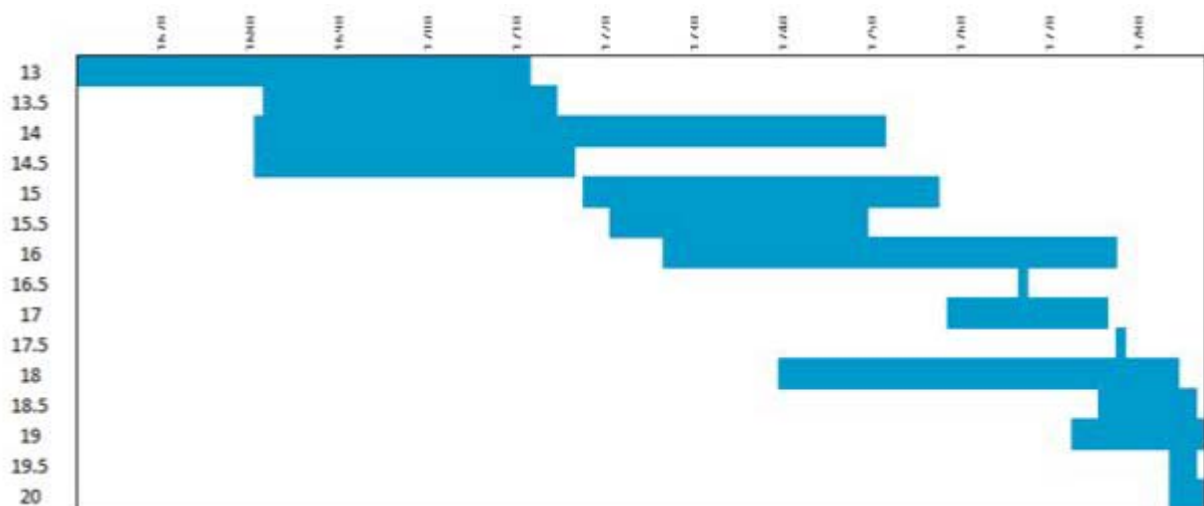
A while ago a fellow collector asked me whether a letter could be dated from the size of the Bishop Mark postmark. Whilst my answer was that the diameter of the mark is only a very rough proxy for a date, at least you could give a range of dates. The question then is ‘How big is that date range?’ and is it of any use to us collectors?

From my own collection I then set forth and measured every example, except Scottish, Irish, Foreign Branch and undated examples. The table below shows us a surprising longevity of some marks. For example, 16mm diameter marks are found over a period of 50 years; and marks ranging from 13mm to 14.5mm diameter were in use at the same time.

Diameter	Sample size	Earliest Date	Latest Date
13mm	20	24 January 1661	11 April 1711
13.5mm	3	9 May 1682	26 November 1714
14mm	11	15 March 1681	11 July 1751
14.5mm	4	4 January 1681	20 September 1716
15mm	16	21 April 1718	11 May 1757
15.5mm	5	28 November 1721	27 December 1749
16mm	12	10 June 1727	5 February 1777
16.5mm	1	23 May 1767	
17mm	10	27 June 1759	29 April 1776
17.5mm	1	20 October 1778	
18mm	16	23 September 1740	10 September 1784
18.5mm	2	30 April 1776	1 March 1786
19mm	9	1 June 1773	18 January 1787
19.5mm	2	22 November 1784	26 January 1786
20mm	5	20 November 1784	24 April 1787

Table 1: Earliest / Latest dates of London Inland Bishop Marks over time.

If this same data is re-ordered chronologically and shown in graph form (below), we get a very irregular chart which offers a better illustration of how haphazard the use of specific sized hand stamps were.



Plot 1: Date ranges for each size (diameter) of Bishop Mark (1661 to 1787)

We know that the Inland Office used a different hand stamp for every day of the year, so when a particular date wore out or became damaged, it was replaced with a new one. The early (smaller) examples were constructed from wood, possibly boxwood, and so it is even more surprising that some of them lasted so long, although the quantity of mail in the 17th century was no-where near that of the 18th century⁽¹⁾. Later hand stamps were constructed from metal, probably due to that relative increase in postal traffic needing a more substantial hand stamp.

Doubtless, manufacture of replacement hand stamps was on an ad hoc basis, but it is intriguing why the size of the stamp increased over time. A further thought is, why can we competently measure those increases in millimetres when metric measurement did not exist then, nor did a standardised imperial measure?

The only published reference I have relating to the date / diameter relationship of Bishop Marks is a Robson Lowe monograph **The Bishop Mark**⁽²⁾, which gives a table of approximate dates relating to size of mark. Shown below are Lowe's date extremities against my own findings. Lowe confines his analysis to just Type 2 Bishop Marks (day over month) whereas my analysis does not distinguish between Types 1 and 2.

Mark dia.	Lowe data	MA Data
13mm	-	1661-1711
14mm	1713-1750	1681-1751
15mm	1717-1750	1718-1757
16mm	1718-1750	1727-1777
17mm	1721-1774	1759-1776
18mm	1770-1778	1740-1784
20mm	1773-1787	1784-1787

Table 2: Comparison of date ranges v size (diameter).

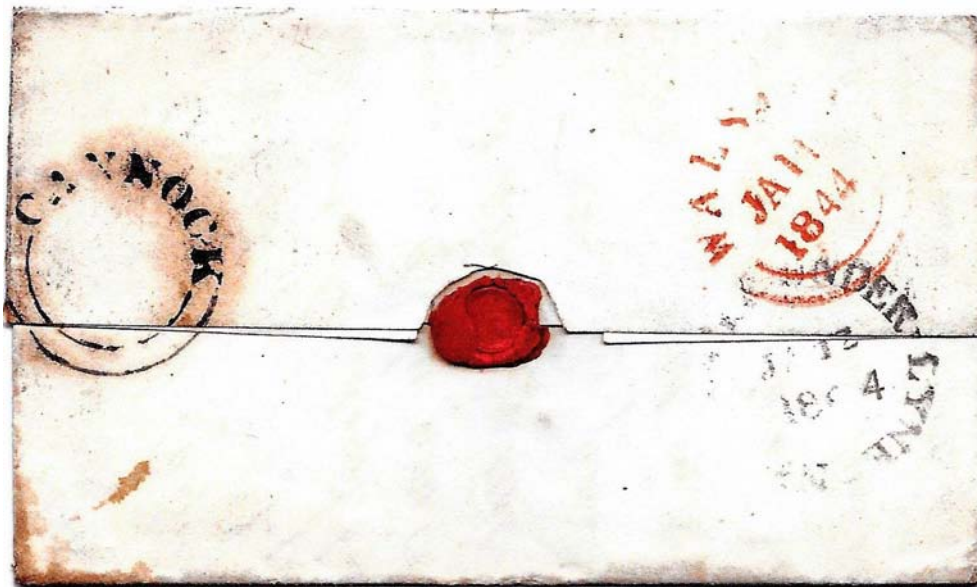
In conclusion, it would be exceedingly difficult to age an item just from the size of the mark alone. It is also clear that the range of possible dates is not consistent for each size of mark and so we either have to accept 'unknown year' or examine the rest of the letter to see if there are any other clues such as a recognised town mark - and even that could be a new earliest or latest date without knowing; or the text of the letter that could pinpoint a known event in order to narrow down the date range for that item. In addition if an increased sample size were examined it is highly likely that the date ranges recorded above would be further extended!

Notes: (1) An approximate indication of mail quantities from the mid-17th century to mid-18th century shows an increase by a factor of 4, based upon PO revenues over the period, and then a further doubling in the forty years up to 1790. See **'The British Post Office A History'** by Howard Robinson publ. 1948 Princeton University Press.

(2) **'The Bishop Mark'**, monograph compiled and published by Robson Lowe, for The Postal History Society. May 1937

~~~~~

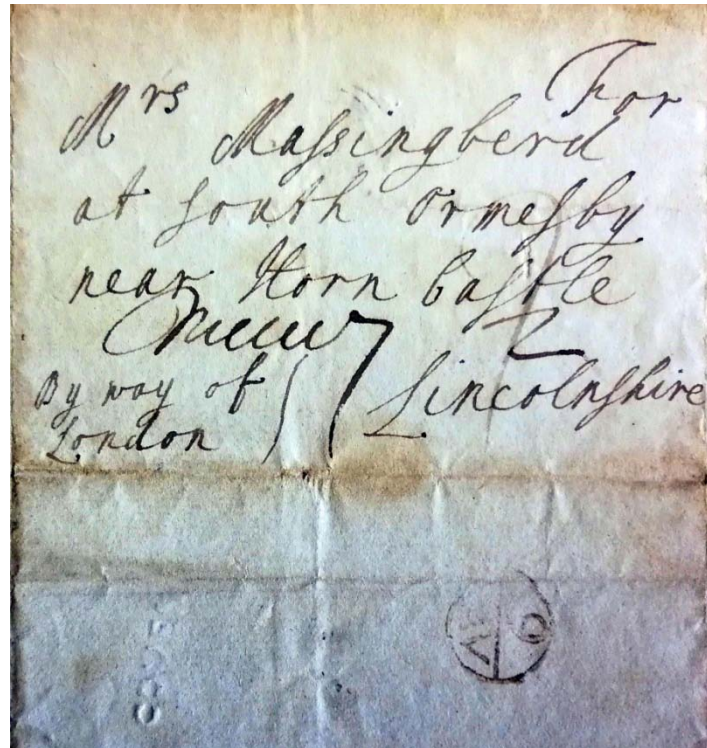
#### CANNOCK UNDATED CIRCLE



**Brian Purcell** writes that he discovered only the fourth CANNOCK udc on a popular auction website. The entire was addressed to Hanley and has a double arc WALSALL (Head Office of Cannock) dated 11 JAN 1844 and a partial NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYNE dated the following day. Someone has tried to rip off the 1d red stamp on the front leaving only scarred remains, which is probably why it only cost him £4! Bargain!

## COVENTRY to HORNCASTLE via LONDON 9 AUGUST c.1714

by Marc Oxley



COUEN just visible to the lower left. Stamp impressed into the paper but no ink transferred, thus an albino strike.

A Wrapper to Mrs Massingberd at South Ormesby, near Horncastle, Lincolnshire 'By Way of London' with an albino part stamp COUEN (Coventry), probably WA74 which dates from 1713. The Bishop mark is 14mm with the day above the month so dates from after 1713.

Quite a lot is known about Burrell Massingberd (1683-1728), from his extensive correspondence with the renowned artist and architect William Kent. Many of the letters have been published and are housed in several public collections.

This wrapper is to his wife at the family home in South Ormesby (sic). But with only the month and day of the Bishop mark to go on it is very difficult to accurately date the wrapper. We know Massingberd married Phillipa Mundy in 1714 so I am presuming that it was sent to her from a friend perhaps congratulating her on her marriage. When researching the content of an entire or even a wrapper, I always have the question why was it kept for posterity?

August 9<sup>th</sup> 1714 was a Thursday so falls within the 3 day delivery window from Coventry to Horncastle via London at the time.

#### An explanation of the handwritten notes on the front, kindly supplied by Ian May

The Post Office was using computed miles at that time and the computed mileage from Coventry to London was less than 80 miles and the computed mileage to Horncastle more than 80 miles. The rates used on this cover are those that came into use from 1st June 1711. The rate from Coventry to London was 3d, the rate mark in lighter ink and cancelled in the darker ink with what looks like a 2. Horncastle was more than 80 miles from London so the rate was 4d – hence the **In all 7d**. So the cover is later than the 1st June 1711 and the Bishop mark dates it from 1713.

**Editor's note:** From *The Spy and the Traitor*, by Ben Macintyre, page 306 hardback version – 'On Monday evening, Gordievsky found himself in South Ormsby Hall, a grand country house in the Lincolnshire Wolds....The seat of the Massingberd family since 1638. Its owner, Adrian Massingberd-Mundy was an MI5 contact and happy to host a welcoming reception for an honoured guest of the Service'. The spy (for Britain) Gordievsky, late of the KGB, had been 'exfiltrated' (brilliant word) from Moscow by road through Finland and Norway, only to make a soft landing in Lincolnshire. So, was there any spying in the Massingberd household in 1714? We wait for news!!

**DERBY OFFICE**

Cavendish House  
153-157 London Road  
Derby  
DE1 2SY



**LONDON OFFICE**

Suite G06  
Dowgate Hill House  
14-16 Dowgate Hill  
London, EC4R 2SU

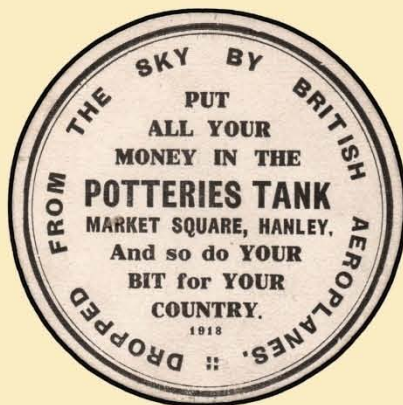
Over 65 years' Service to Philately

**September 9 & 10 2020 - Great Britain & Worldwide Auction**

Featuring a collection of fine Staffordshire postal history with many unusual items, a collection of Great Britain pioneer airmails, and a large collection of GB Squared Circles arranged by county.  
Also including exceptional Great Britain & British Commonwealth stamps.

LIVE ONLINE BIDDING  
in association with  
[easyLiveAuction.com](http://easyLiveAuction.com)

Search our catalogues on  
[PhilaSearch.com](http://PhilaSearch.com)



Consignments welcome  
for our future sales.  
Please contact us for  
further information.



**[www.cavendish-auctions.com](http://www.cavendish-auctions.com)**

[stamps@cavendish-auctions.com](mailto:stamps@cavendish-auctions.com)

Derby - Phone (44) 01332 250 970

Fax - (44) 01332 294 440

London - Phone (44) 020 8785 7750