

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.midlandphs.org.uk



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Cover posted at Windsor to Drem (Edinburgh) on 11th Nov 1854 but missent to WEM, Shropshire with *Try Devon* added. MISSENT-TO / GLOUCESTER on 15th and, eventually, arriving at Drem on 17th November 1854.

For more on **Instructional Marks** see page 10 for accounts of displays at the January 2017 meeting at Birmingham.

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VOLUNTEER REQUESTED – The position of **Programme Secretary** is vacant. Is there anyone who would be willing to take up that post? It would greatly help the society. If so, please contact your editor in the first instance (email and phone number are at top right of page 1) and I will pass on the information to the President and Chairman.

If sending articles or accounts of displays at meetings to Midland Mail by email use:

Microsoft WORD	I have opened all versions sent....so far!
Font	Times New Roman, Size 10
Margins	2.54cms (Top), 2.2cms (Right, Left, Bottom)

NEW MEMBERS – We welcome **Peter Leach** of Hereford, whose interests are Herefordshire and Pigeon Posts. We also welcome **Ian Royle** of Cumbria; Ian's interest is Derbyshire, especially the mail oach routes through Derby.

I understand that **Roger Simmons**, a long time member, passed away suddenly in May; we were only very recently informed. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

JON BAKER TROPHY – So what have you spotted in Midland Mail this year that you deem worthy of this prestigious award? You might like to consider the following or even another article not listed here:

- 1) MM 190 / 9 Check Your Skeletons – Alan Marshall
- 2) MM 190 / 18 Rugby Additional ½d on London Letters – Ian May
- 3) MM 191 / 9 The Great Cross Post – Malcolm Allinson
- 4) MM 191 / 13 An Update on Bingham – Alan Marshall
- 5) MM 192 / 9 A Yard of Tin – John Calladine
- 6) MM 192 / 14 Walter Scriven, Postman at Bridgnorth – Jim Hammond
- 7) MM 192 / 20 Recorded & Unrecorded Rutland Skeletons – Bill Gillham
- 8) MM 193 / 12 Rural Posts in the Midlands and Anthony Trollope – John Hine

Please let the editor have your vote BEFORE the AGM meeting in April 2017 (did you spot my not-so deliberate mistake in the previous issue – Guy did!?). My email address is on the front page with my phone number. My mailing address is available in back issues and you can even discreetly whisper in my ear at a meeting if you so wish!

Trevor Radway has confirmed that in his opinion the letters OL on the letter from Exeter prison (see **MM 192 / 5**) stand for OFFENDORS LETTER, however **Pete Elms** reports that he has spoken to someone who used to work as a Prison Officer who is pretty sure that OL stands for Ordinary Mail (Letter?). Now, a further report from Trevor states that ORDINARY LETTER is correct! He writes *'Further questions have now been asked and your informant is right. The prisoner is now at Dartmoor which is a lower category prison than Exeter. The prisoner now has to make arrangements to buy stamps and use them on letters, normally by way of family visits. At Exeter they use the boxed OL to identify an ORDINARY LETTER which is free & addressed to such persons as a relative. This is to separate the letters from Exeter Prison which may be sent by a prisoner to his solicitor for example or other official stuff needing attention like the Benefits or Tax Man. The saga continues as Pete observes that Trevor has said such letters are free (see three lines up) but he has an OL mark on a letter from Stafford Prison, which has 24p in stamps (inland first class rate up to 60gms from 16 Sept 1991 – Ed)*

Chris Jackson (Postal History of Tenbury to 1914), **Clive Jones** (Development of Late Fee Surcharge) and **Brian Atkins** (Registered Mail in Shropshire 1830-1882) all received 80 marks and a silver-gilt and **Terry Harrison** (Cilicia) gained 66 marks and a silver-bronze for their one-frame, 16-page entries in the Autumn Individual Competition of the Midland Philatelic Federation. Does anyone else think that the 80 marks gained by each of our three members is a bit of an odd result? What is the point of a competition if it is not well judged?

Derek Smeathers reports that **Gwyn Hughes** has discovered the previously unreported Northants undated circle of PAULERSPURY in blue, reference Northants 9 / 109 in the Midland udc book, issued to Towcester on 20th December 1847. The cover has a TOWCESTER date stamp for 3 MAR 1856. The blue ink of the udc is a different shade from that of the Towcester cds.

Your editor wishes all our members a HAPPY NEW YEAR; let us hope that it is a very good one for everybody.



THE 12 NOVEMBER MEETING AT WARWICK

After an energising committee meeting and a few sandwiches for lunch, 23 members and 1 guest waited with bated breath for our Chairman, **Malcolm Allinson** to introduce **Richard Farman** to give us his talk on **Large Items**.

Richard began by stating that his talk was to be more of a 'social display' as the pictorial aspect was more important than the postal history or postal content, perhaps a 'social postal display' was more appropriate! He began with a 1599 letter from John Robbinson carried privately to Walter Bagot, the High Sheriff of Stafford complaining that he had been locked up at great expense and pleading with the High Sheriff for his liberty; there was also a 1613 letter from Hugo Rudyard to Bagot and a letter of 21st December 1600 with an as-sessment! Three civil war letters (1642 and two dated 1650) were also carried privately at great risk and one was subsequently delivered to an MP in London concerning events in Staffordshire. A Commonwealth letter from London to York, dated 15th February 1657 was correctly charged 3d and a 1715 copy of the Evening Post was also charged 3d. Continuing with newspapers a 1761 copy of the London Chronicle described the introduction of the 6-day post.

Around 1590 a set of playing card maps was published by William Bowes and in 1635 this was copied by Jacob Van Langeren for the first pocket-sized road atlas '*A Direction for the English Traveller* (sic)', Richard showed such maps of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire as well as a larger, coloured map of England and Wales of the same period with no known engraver but it had a mileage chart and produced much acclaim from those who viewed it.

Also much admired was a 1672 letter from Aleppo to Blithfield, Lichfield, charged 2/6 in all, being 2/- double rated from Aleppo to London and 6d double rated to Lichfield. Many of the letters were heavily folded and were of a considerable size when opened, such as a 1681 letter from Durham to London and a 1739 from York to St. James' Palace, London. Documents were included such as one of 1809 with the Carrier's Rates for Denbighshire and an 1813 one showing Mr Godby's Riding Work as well as more maps including a 1757 strip map and a map of the road from London to Holyhead which made it look as though London was due east of Holyhead! An 1819 letter, which had been heavily folded to be relatively small, showed the proposed new turnpike from Tunstall to Bosley.

There were some delightful advertisements for Posting / Coaching inns, including one of 1808 of the Star & Garter Inn in Worcester advertising a POST COACH and no less than three of Cheltenham's posting inns dating from the 1820s. The theme of folding continued with two large letters of 1880 and 1881 reduced so that they were able to be mailed at the printed matter rate of ½d. As we might have expected, the canal system didn't miss out as there was an 1877 large letter featuring the Canal Boats Act, licensing a boat for three people (effectively a house on water!).

Post Office items included an 1831 'statement by estimate' due from Mr. Goward, postmaster of Huddersfield, an 1832 letter from Huddersfield post office with their quarterly account and an 1835 appointment of Robert Richards, Junior as Deputy Postmaster of the stage at Uttoxeter and a letter from a guarantor applying for an extension of the postal system to Coughton Court.

This part of his admirable display ended with the theme of carriers, which included a letter from William Bass, a carrier who sold out to Pickfords; he was the brewer, who realised there was more money to be made from brewing than as a carrier. Two 18th century large items ended the first half, a 1767 letter accompanied some pottery sent by Richard Holdship from Derby to London and then on to Bristol '*by the first wagon*' and in 1793 John Wilkinson, the iron master was selling a boiler weighing 3tons 9cwt costing £33 per ton, described in a letter from Bradley, Staffs, posted at Birmingham and charged 3d to Henwick, near Worcester. Here endeth the first part!

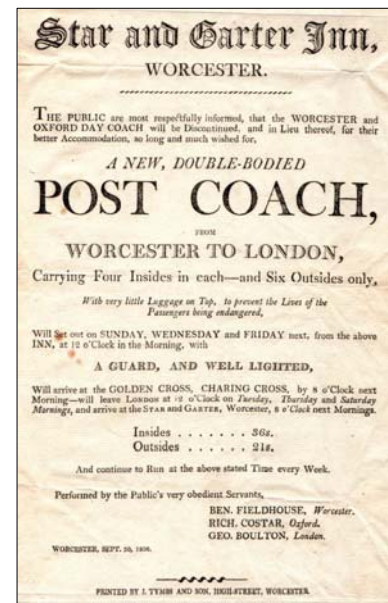


Fig 1 Star & Garter Inn (reduced)

After a suitable period of refreshment, which included time to examine the items Richard had produced, he began his second part with some large parcel post items, notably a 9 August 1883 large parcel containing documents with a **PARCELS POST** label from Marlborough to Hungerford and a copy of the London Illustrated news about the opening of a parcel depot. Overseas parcels had animals being carried, one with 'butterflies and a few locusts' and another with an iguana skin weighing 2lbs 2ozs!! Parcels posted from overseas to the UK had a number attached which stayed with the parcel all the way, an example being a parcel from Austria to Edinburgh, which had No54 attached so it could be traced (see next page). The first countries to receive parcels from the UK were India, Gibraltar and Egypt as British soldiers were stationed in those places. The military theme continued with a 1762 letter from Portsmouth to Stafford, where the writer stated he didn't know his sailing date to India but he hoped '*to come back*'

with money'! There followed a letter concerning the will of a naval officer granting probate and an early 1829 soldier and seaman's letter from India with a 3d India Letter charge, 1d postage and 2d to the sea captain. In order to qualify for the 1d concessionary rate, the letter had to be prepaid and an amazing letter from Malta had a penny sown onto the outside of the letter, the stitching holes remaining quite clear! Three letters related to the little known Carlist War (1835 – 1838) in Spain included one sent by a Royal Marine on board HMS *Talavera* at the 1d concessionary rate but on arrival in London a 'Crown / To Be Delivered / Free' was struck for passage within the London Twopenny Post, the second from the Earl of Talbot's son on board HMS *Tyne* in Tarragona writing to his father in Lichfield.

Illustrated below are parcel post origin number labels indicating a parcel from overseas (see bottom paragraph of above page). The one from New Zealand had the traceable number 58, whereas the parcel from HONG KONG (No 458), shows ROAD BORNE (From the Docks to Mt. Pleasant), both undated labels of different designs.



Fig 3, Two Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Origin Number Labels

Extensive use of the 'Free' system showed by the Post Office itself showed how local postmasters were controlled by London. A 5th January 1808 letter had a Post Office account showing the revenues from General Post Letters, 5th Clause Posts and Express Letters for Mr Beardmore, postmaster of Market Harborough. There were also a series of illustrated frees franked by various MPs showed political cartoons of the period (a sort of joke e-mail of its day!). A Free letter sent on 4th January 1840, during the uniform fourpenny post period confirmed Francis Roberts to be transported to Australia for life. You could not write directly to a prisoner in Australia, you had to go through official channels as the letter shows. On the theme of transport to Australia, an 1831 letter PAID AT BIRMINGHAM addressed to James Cross, Private in 39th Regiment of Foot, Chatham but on board the *Isabella*, a convict ship or elsewhere. The *Isabella* sailed to New South Wales arriving on 15th March 1832, 109 days in transit.

An 1892 large illustrated letter sheet of Bostock & Wombwell's Menagerie, Circus & Museum was sent to Burton-on-Trent and from there we passed on to the Kidderminster riots of April 1857, when Richard showed a book with two separate accounts, one official and, if the book is opened from the back, a second account containing mostly newspaper cut-outs. The Spectator of 4th April 1857 reporting on the 'disgraceful proceedings at Kidderminster last Saturday afford another illustration of the want of preparation in this country for the suppression and yet more the prevention, of violent outbreaks. In this instance, the lives of many estimable men, and the peace and security of a town of 20,000 inhabitants, were, it appears, at a time of great excitement, under the guardianship of twelve policemen and some fifty or sixty special constables'.



Fig 2, Privately printed, uprated postcard to Germany at the 1d UPU rate

A wonderfully large item of 1721 was posted from London to the 'Bayliff of the Wapentake (a subdivision of certain northern and midland English counties, corresponding to a hundred in other counties) of Loveden, att Sleaford, Lincolnshire', charged only 4d as it was one sheet only.

His final frame was of privately printed postcards, all impressed with a ½d embossed pink stamp and dated between 1882 and 1886; particularly of note was that of 1886 uprated with ½d to pay the UPU rate to Germany.

THE 3 DECEMBER MEETING at BURTON-on-TRENT

The journey to Burton can be tinged with a certain amount of misgiving – where will the roadworks be this year, sort of thing. This year no roadworks! We arrived early and smiling and ready to greet everyone who we hoped had had as easy a trip as we had! It's always a joy to put up your covers and hope someone spends time looking at them, satisfaction guaranteed! So, who had brought what with the theme, **Some gems from my collection?**

Richard Farman continued from his talk at Warwick with parcel posts, the first item having *Instructions for Sealing Parcels with Tin Sealing Black*, at least that's what my notes say! There was a Ceylon Parcel Post customs declaration and, closer to home, a Marlborough Parcels Post of 8th August, a week after parcel post began. A large sheet of foreign origin numbers (therefore trackable) on incoming parcel post labels was noticeable.

Brian Atkins showed eight covers between Shropshire and Australia, 1842 Hobart to Market Drayton with a London SHIP LETTER, 1848 Toulmin packet cover from Shrewsbury to Sydney, 1856 Sydney to Conover carried on the *Sultana* clipper, 1859 Adelaide to Burlton with SA 6d slate-blue, 1860 Sydney to Ruyton village with NSW 6d dark-green, 1869 Victoria to Oswestry via Marseilles with Victoria 10d purple, 1876 Hobart to Bridgnorth with Tasmania 6d mauve and 1878 Market Drayton to Melbourne franked double rate with two 8d orange.

Chris Jackson started with a Worcester parcel post label dated Dec 1883, needles followed with an 1845 wrapper from Milward & Sons to Bilbao, followed by 1919 Shrimpton & Fletcher sending needles to Sweden. Needles were restricted goods and the parcel needed a red POSTED UNDER PRIVY COUNCIL LICENCE LABEL, a rare item.

COUNTERFOIL (Coupon.)
Stamp of Office of Origin.
(Timbre du bureau d'origine.)

Name and address of sender.
(Nom et domicile de l'expéditeur.)

EMMANUEL SHRIMPTON & FLETCHER, LTD.
BURGONIC NEEDLE MAKERS, AG.
(FABRICANTS D'AIGUILLES CHIRURGICALES)
PREMIERE WORKS, RESOITE

Impression of seal used to close the parcel.

(M 35) Wt. 36/P.O. PT. 2mil. 10/18 J. H. Ltd. (84.)

PARCEL POST.
PARCEL CONTAINING PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED GOODS POSTED UNDER PRIVY COUNCIL LICENCE.

P.P.—No. 48
(date M.—No. 120.)

21

Insured value (in case of an insured parcel.)
£ _____ Fcs. _____

Name and Address of Addressee
By Inter-Allied Rates Committee
Stockholm, Sweden.

Place of destination.
(Lieu de destination.)

Exact weight of Insured Parcel (Poids)
kg. _____ g. _____

Route to be followed (Acheminement)
Via _____

Chris Jackson's May 1919 card with licence to send needles to Sweden and the rare red label POSTED UNDER PRIVY COUNCIL LICENCE (card reduced in size).

A 1937 registered envelope also from Shrimpton and Fletcher had S&F in a red registered seal and a 1915 parcel post of 'Small Flower Plants' from Worcester. He ended with parcel post labels of Redditch, Redditch town sub-offices and Redditch local offices.

Clive Jones highlighted the local and Penny Posts of Sheffield and the surrounding area. The first official Penny Post, established in 1817, ran into the town from North Derbyshire. Three generic penny post marks were shown from 1818 to 1840, the first one being scarce, and the second type rare (*unrecorded by G F Oxley*), and the distinctive small boxed third type rare in black ink. The new Penny Post branches to Attercliffe (1834) and Hathersage (1837) completed the study, including the only known example on cover of a Sheffield Twopenny Post rate on an entire sent from Attercliffe to Sheffield on 11th June 1836, shortly before this rate was declared illegal.

Steve Ellis produced 18 covers of Cross-Channel Rail Mail, something a little different from what we normally see. A London & Brighton Railway letter to Edinburgh was posted at Tooley St., London. London, Brighton & South Coast Railway related items included a 1911 postcard from the Steam Packet Office, Newhaven, of that railway. A MOVEABLE BOX postcard with a London postmark was related to the South Eastern & Chatham Railway.

John Soer took a break from producing his usual Leicestershire material by turning to letters carried by the posts of Tour & Tassis in the area that is now Belgium. The first item was a letter of 1560 sent from St Niklaas (very appropriate for a Christmas meeting) to Haasdonk and marked 'Cito Cito' – Haste, Haste. This was followed by a number of items from the Corsini correspondence; two letters sent from Antwerp to London in 1574 showed the charge marks applied by the Merchant Strangers Post to the top letter in a bundle - 4½ and 8 groats in this case. The

Merchant Strangers Post charge of 'd4' was applied to a 1593 letter sent between the same two cities. T & T charges of 1 and 2 schillings were seen on letters from Dover to Antwerp in 1639 and 1637 respectively. A letter of the Civil War period from London to Antwerp in January in 1643/4 also showed a T & T charge of 1 schilling.

Gwyn Hughes began with an early, undated letter to Willingstone Lovell '*Bye Buckingham Bag*', a 1785 entire from London to Buckingham, an 1873 Brierley Hill 3VOS, a 1943 Swiss Express cover, a 1944 Coventry cover and a 1946 registered cover from Willingstone Lovell completed his frame.

Dave Tarry also had two frames, which contained some remarkable Newport, Shropshire items. His first frame consisted of Mulready and penny black covers including a May 1840 1d Mulready to Shrewsbury, a Sept 1840 local 1d Mulready, a Sept 1840 1d Mulready to York and an 1841 1d Mulready uprated with a 1d red to Manchester! The penny blacks included a 28 June 1840 to Wolverhampton and a *double rated* (ie, two penny blacks!) February 1841 to Lichfield. His second frame showed rubber hand stamps from villages around Newport, Sambrook, Adbaston, Norbury, Sutton, Moreton and he ended with parcel post labels of Newport and sub-offices, notably Tibberton.

The 24 members and 8 guests (good to see so many 'partners' present) had ample time to view these excellent displays before venturing into luncheon with some folks even having a pre-Christmas turkey dinner with heavily roasted parsnips, at least I think they were meant to be parsnips, someone did say. The post-prandial offering was to come from **Nick Wraith**, who was to give us a splendid talk on parcels post. I am indebted to Nick for the following:

THE PARCEL POST OF GREAT BRITAIN FROM 1698 TO THE PRESENT DAY

Aspects from a display given by **Nick Wraith** to the Midland (GB) PHS at Burton-on-Trent, 3 December 2016

The first 5 frames of this display illustrate the methods of parcel carriage from one part of the British Isles to another. Until the mid 1830's this was done by "Common Carriers" or carters and also specialised carriers operating out of either their own offices or taverns. The earliest item is a letter of 1698, Fig. 1, which was sent with a parcel of "*½ Furkin of sope & 3 bus(hel) of salt*". This letter would be carried free of Government Postal charges but the regulations stated that these "With a parcel" letters should only refer to the parcel. Another example is a letter of 21 October 1805 sent from near St Andrews to Edinburgh "*Wth a Hare from Rob. Anstruther*". The Carriers and Coaching companies monopolised the carriage of parcel until the introduction of the railways.

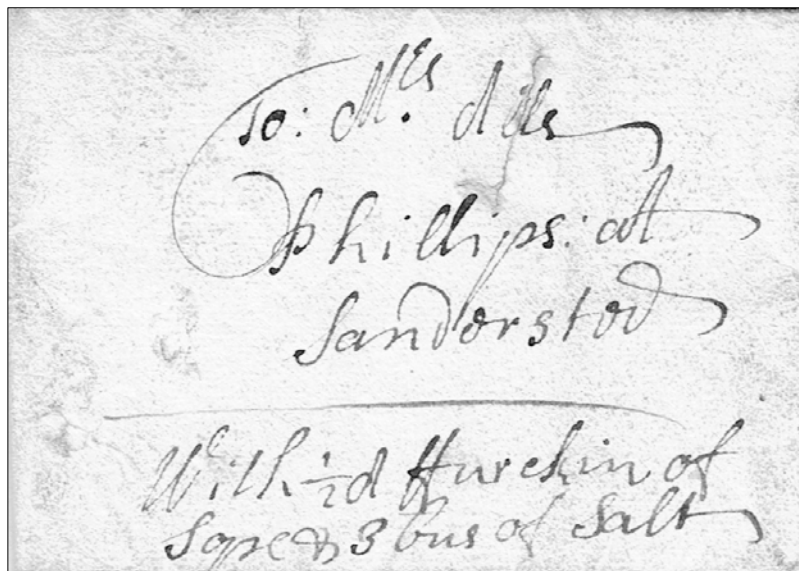


Fig. 1, 1698 letter sent by carrier 'with a parcel'

The Railway Companies quickly realised that the transportation of parcels around the country would be a lucrative business and as early as the Postal Reforms of 1839-40 the Railway Companies supported by the Carriers were powerful enough to dissuade Parliament from allowing the Post Office to introduce a parcel post. By 1848 Rowland Hill managed to introduce a Book Post which was, once again, seen by the Railways and the Carriers as an inroad into their parcel business and compensation in the form of subsidies were paid to both.

In 1874 Great Britain was a signatory to the General Postal Union treaty, with the standardisation of rates between the members being introduced on 1 July 1875 (France six months later). This agreement included the normalisation of the exchange of parcels between countries, but of course Great Britain, along with British India, Persia and the

Netherlands, did not have an internal Government parcel post system, so they were granted a concession giving them until 1 April 1882 to introduce an inland parcel post service, which would eventually lead to an overseas parcel service. In fact the other signatories signed the parcel segment of the Agreement on 1 October 1881 without Great Britain, which still hadn't introduced an inland service. That a Government parcel service was not achieved by the required date was mostly due to the intransigence of the Railways who by now had forced many of the smaller carriers out of business and also some objections from the Treasury who were wary of a financial failure of the proposed parcel service. After much negotiating the Railway Companies came to an agreement whereby they received 55% of the revenue for any parcel that was transported for all or part of any journey. This opened the way for the Parcels Act of 18 August 1882 - note **ParcelS** - part of which lists the 81 English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh Railway Companies that signed up to the agreement. The monies paid under this agreement were managed by the London Railway Clearing Committee, which received payments on 30 June and 31 December annually. This Act also published the first rates, namely:

3d for a parcel not exceeding 1lb
 6d for a parcel exceeding 1lb and not exceeding 3lb
 9d for a parcel exceeding 3lb and not exceeding 5lb
 6d for a parcel exceeding 5lb and not exceeding 7lb

Whilst the 55% share appears generous there were significant conditions placed upon the Railway Companies, including the provision of facilities at stations for handling parcels, free transport for PO Workers on trains carrying parcels, parcel sorting carriages, etc. The Post Office managed to set up all the administration, rules, provision of parcel facilities, e.g. handling systems, baskets, parcel post labels, etc ready for the service to commence on 1 August 1883. At that time there were over 15,000 Post Offices serving a population of approximately 35,000,000. (Today the population is approximately 67,000,000 being served by about 11,000 Post Offices).

The Parcel Post labels in the display are used to illustrate the rates of parcel postage during the different rate periods and also to differentiate between the different printings of the labels. These rates and dates are available both in Mackay's book, *The Parcel Post of the British Isles* published by Mackay in 1982, and on the GBPS website.



Fig. 2 First day of Use Label



Fig. 3 Blue label for delivery within London

The Parcel Post label used on the first day of the service at Highbury Park London, Fig. 2, has been mis-cut and shows a "D" at the left edge. This indicates that the labels, which were printed in sheets of 12 or 24, were laid out with different place names on the sheet. Once printed it would then be simple enough to cut down through the sheets and take out a column of same named labels. The labels were issued initially in two colours, white for general use and blue, Fig. 3 for use on parcel posted at a London PO and for delivery by road within the London Districts. On 1 June 1887 an orange label, Fig. 4, was introduced for the London to Brighton Parcel Coach route. These labels were issued for both London and Brighton and for the intermediate stops of the coach.



Fig 4, Orange label for the London to Brighton Coach Route

The response from the public was not enthusiastic, due to the comparatively high cost, even though it was a door to door service not generally offered by the railways. This led to several GPO Notices encouraging people to use the service including an experimental red Parcel Window Card, Fig. 5 (next page).



Fig 5, Parcel Window Card (reduced)

These cards were distributed in several areas around London. If you had a parcel to go then you placed the card in the window and the postman would collect the parcel from you on his round. One trial in New Barnet elicited two parcels in a month but in Putney and Kingston there was no response.

On 1 July 1885 a parcel service to overseas countries finally began: it was restricted initially to Gibraltar, Egypt and India. The service rapidly expanded to cover a service to most countries but surprisingly it was not until 1902 that a parcel service agreement was reached with the United States of America and then only through the American Express Company, not the US Post Office.

Fig. 6 (below right) shows a privately produced address label with a facsimile style parcel label sent by Pryce Jones of Newtown, the first large scale global mail order company, to Foochow, China in 1910. The cost of 1/- for a parcel not exceeding 3lb compares very favourably with the cost today (£10.75 with a delivery forecast of 56 days)

WWI brought an inevitable change in rates to raise revenue for the war effort. Additionally services to several countries were suspended or curtailed with some items being subject to Privy Council licence restrictions. Fig. 7 and Fig. 7a illustrate two of the labels used on parcels during the War. Fig. 7 shows a 1916 declaration for "Textile Machinery Parts" namely "Brass Travellers". The 2/- rate probably paid for a parcel exceeding 7lb but not 11lb to one of the following countries: Algeria, Azores, Corsica, Madeira, Portugal or Switzerland.

The changes to parcel post labels reflect the changes in the services provided within the parcel post. These include the introduction of Registration in 1891, the Express service and also Insurance. The large parcel post labels were phased out after WWI and the "bantam" type PP6 without place name was issued from November 1918 (see Fig. 8).

A new service was introduced on 29 March 1926, namely an inland Cash on Delivery (COD) service (an overseas COD service had been operating since 1 June 1908). Fig. 8 is a complete parcel wrapper sent COD from London to Taplow on 7 November 1927. The bantam PP6 label indicates that the parcel was charged 6d for a parcel not exceeding 2lb and that the COD charge was also 6d. The stamp has been cancelled with a **G.P.O.1** parcel roller.



Fig 6, Private label of Pryce Jones



Fig 7, 1916 War-time Label declaration for "Textile Machinery Parts"



Fig 7a War-time label

Figs 6 and 7 reduced in size



Fig 8, Bantam type label on parcel piece (reduced)

The parcel service has gone through many changes, especially in the last 20-30 years. Whilst most collectors appreciate classic early items of postal history, one sometimes wonders what our successors are going to think of us because most of our envelopes and parcel wrappings go straight into the recycle. In addition the complications of the modern rates with the choice of ordinary parcel, Special Delivery parcel before 9am or 1pm, declared values, Small, Medium and Large parcels to name a few makes for a complex story for the future postal historian.

The final piece below, Fig. 9, was sent from Hitchin Herts to N Yorkshire on 8 December 2014. It was sent Special Delivery for next day prior to 1pm delivery. Classed as a Medium Parcel (Max Length 61cm; Width 46cm; Depth 46cm) weighing more than 2kg but less than 5kg and the value was declared as up to £500 (information not indicated anywhere on the parcel). The cost was £26.60 but the sender has used 1st Class NVI stamps to part pay the parcel so the future collector would also have to know the value of a 1st Class stamp, in this case 62p.

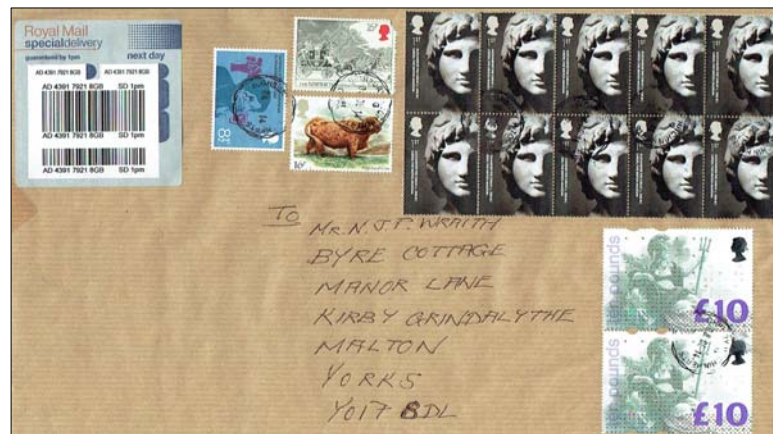


Fig 9, Part of Dec 2016 parcel from Hitchin to Yorkshire

In comparison finding out the rates for a 3lb parcel, say to Chile in 1893, pales into insignificance!

The meeting ended with **Malcolm Allinson** giving a well deserved and hearty vote of thanks to Nick for his display, full of the type of items most of us rarely, if ever, see in our county collections. Once again Richard has found an excellent speaker for our day out in Burton, well done to all! Now all we have to do is improve those parsnips!!



Bill Pipe

THE MAGPIE

*Buying and Selling Postal History
and Postcards of the World*

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THE 14th JANUARY MEETING AT BIRMINGHAM

In the absence of **Malcolm Allinson**, **John Calladine** brought the meeting to order at 1.30pm and introduced our topic for the day – **Instructional Marks** – to the 17 members and 1 guest present.

Gordon Hardy began proceedings with an 1889 slim book wrapper endorsed CONTRARY TO REGULATIONS / 75. He followed with an 1812 Missent to Ashbourne, addressed Ashbourne, Derby. A Too Late of Buxton (1846) and an 1891 Over 1oz from Ireland to Buxton was taxed 1d and an 1823 Free from Buxton to Liverpool via Manchester had a very unusual oval TOO LATE FOR 1st MAIL.

Guy Bridges showed a manuscript *Missent to* and *Misdirected to* with two-line SHREWS/BURY of 1773 and 1786. An 1808 Free from London to Salisbury had ms *Missent to Shrewsbury* (mis-spelt) and he followed this with the framed two-line MISSENT TO SHREWSBURY in black (1809), red (1827, only example in red) and blue (1852, only recorded example in blue); he also showed the two different sans-serif MISSENT TO SHREWSBURY used in green in 1856. Finally an 1871 cover to Llanidloes with ‘Not Known’, at Shrewsbury received the only recorded example of *Received open and resealed / at Shrewsbury P.O.*

Richard Farman showed Burton-on-Trent items, late Victorian & Edwardian ‘rubbish’ as he stated a judge had once called it! He began with an 1875 large 2d postage due, as well as examples from 1894 and 1899 (were they the same 2d mark?), followed by an equally large 1d used in 1878 and 1889. He finished with 9 early 20th century postcards with a boxed UNPAID and handstamp 1d.

Alan Godfrey exhibited an 1853 MISSENT TO WARWICK in green and in black (1859). Missent to Leamington in 1844 and 1852 and three MISSENT / TO / STRATFORD AVON, 1830 (red), 1841 (black) and 1851 (blue) were followed by a MISSENT / TO / RUGBY of 1850. He finished with a selection of Missent to Warwickshire villages.

Brian Purcell brought Cannock items, notably a charge mark 1d to Pay / 840 and a taxed cover from India to Cannock. He finished with MISSENT TO WORCESTER in black (1856) and red (1853).

Stuart Geddes had an 1863 manuscript *Not Called For* (at Monmouth) and then he produced items with notes on letters, notably an instruction by the postmaster *Mr Matthews will oblige Mr Griffiths by causing this letter to be delivered immediately!* There were then various Missent marks, manuscript *Missent to Newport* (Mon), oval MISSENT / TO / CARDIFF (1841 with 1d black), MISSENT / TO / NEWPORT-S (to denote Newport Shropshire, 1839?) and a modern Missent to Newport, Isle of Whyte, Try Gwent (2003).

Mick Gill showed manuscript delivery instructions starting with a 1789 from Collingham to Dale Abbey ‘*To be left at the blew Bell, Risley*’, a 1796 from London to Norwell ‘*To be left at the Bell Inn / Carlton on Trent*’, and from the same correspondence ‘*To be left at the Muskham Toll-bar*’, the last referring to the writer’s linen which he had been sending home to be washed!! Following were missent items to Newark (1849), Beckingham, Notts (1905) and Sutton on Trent (1910), each with *Missent* and a date stamp alongside. He finished with a 1904 from Newark with **Contrary to Regulations**, a 1929 cover from France Newark New Jersey and returned with a **DEFICIENCY IN ADDRESS** handstamp and a 1966 cover from Nottingham to New England, Peterborough returned from Boston, Mass with exceptionally good markings

Alan Marshall decided the word markings was to be interpreted as manuscript instructions from a sender for an item’s journey in contrast to Post Office hand struck stamps providing reasons for late or non delivery. On this basis we saw 1745 & 1764 by *Hitchin Bag* and by *Rochdale bag*; 1774 with delivery to be made to an address other than that on the entire; 1789 ‘*To be turned at Macclesfield*’, 1838 ‘by Cross Post and subsequently missent; 1839 *With Speed* but received *Too Late*; 1928 postcard with *Imprimé* with stamp on picture side and tax charge cancelled; 1943 POW card to Malaya and by **Red Cross in Japan** and finally 1964 a Head Postmaster sticker requesting return of the envelope for official purposes.

Clive Jones marks included 1884 Contains a Communication of the Nature of a Letter; 1879 Insufficiently Addressed; Birmingham to York **NOT TO BE FOUND**, York **EXCEEDS LIMITS OF SIZE** of postcard; Hull had two district offices NW and SW, an 1883 two items had NOT TO BE FOUND / SW 383 and NW 383; a **LIABLE TO LETTER RATE** / K97 Grimsby and Peterborough SC.

Colin Fountain showed Gloucestershire with 1878 Not Known, Try Salperton with Try erased to Cheltenham; 1818 **MISSENT / TO / ·GLOCESTER·**, 1905 Contrary to Regulations / 312; 1925 Gloucester Inadmissible at PP Rate / 312; 1926 **LIABLE TO LETTER RATE / 312**; 1953 **NOT KNOWN / 312** and 1964 **GONE NO ADDRESS / 312**, PAID AT STROUD two sizes 1832 and smaller one 1835

Brian Atkins showed two manuscript Missent to Wellington Salop (1841, 1851), 1834 ms *Missent to Wenlock*; 1810 ms *Missent to Newport Shropshire* and 1838 **MISSENT / TO / NEWPORT S**; 1851 ms *Missent to Ludlow*; 1837 **MISSENT TO SHIFFNAL** circular in red and 1844 ms *Missent to Shiffnal*; 1882 ms *Missent to* and LYDBURY NORTH date stamp from Toronto meant for Ledbury and 1911 ms *Missent to Cardington, Salop* with date stamp.

Eric Lewis showed a remarkable variety of **MISSENT TO BIRMINGHAM** items with 1788 manuscript, 1805 and 1807 with serif capitals and oval 1825, 1829 and 1840.

John Calladine began with an oval **MISSENT / TO / GLOUCESTER**, followed by the rarer **MISSENT-TO / GLOUCESTER** (1854) which had also gone to Wem, Shropshire instead of Drem, Scotland (see front page); **MISSENT TO / STOURBRIDGE** (1848) and items to Sir Thomas Phillips with **MISSENT TO WORCESTER**. He also brought the original brass stamps with wooden handles of Stourbridge **MORE TO PAY** and the equivalent rubber stamp.

After a suitable time for refreshment of tea and biscuits, ably supplied by Sharon, the second half began with.....

Richard Farman, who showed an 1834 boxed **MISSENT TO STAFFORD** and the 1839 lower case one and also the 1852 **MISSENT-TO / STAFFORD**; 1793 ms *Missent to Lichfield* and 1842 handstamp *Missent to / Lichfield* and he ended with a London to Worcester but *Missent to Lichfield* with 9d, 10d and 11d charges.

Eric Lewis began with an 1844 circular **MISSENT TO BIRMINGHAM** in blue and in black, there were examples of BM170 with **MISSENT / BIRMINGHAM** within two ovals and **TO** in the centre. A **MISSENT TO LONDON** of 1858 (see Fig 1 below) and a fine 1907 photographic postcard of postal workers inside a postal carriage with a bag clearly visible which had printed on it **MIDLAND TPO GOING SOUTH TO BIRMINGHAM MISSENT**.

Brian Atkins produced an 1861 cover from Shrewsbury to Washington DC with a 6d lilac stamp but the rate was 1/- and the cover marked **INSUFFICIENTLY PREPAID**, the cover treated as unpaid in accordance with the 1849 UK / US Treaty, the recipient paying the full 24 cents on arrival. 1869 **DEFICIENT POSTAGE 2d / FINE 9d** on a cover from India to Cleobury Mortimer with a stamp missing, 1873 **INSUFFICIENTLY PREPAID** from Wellington, Salop to France with **PD** erased and surcharged 9 decimes. 1898, 1904, 1924, 1928 with Liverpool, London and Birmingham tax marks to USA. 1878 Market Drayton to Australia with **UNCLAIMED AT MELBOURNE** and 1886 Bridgnorth to Victoria, Australia, forwarded to Bourke, NSW and 2^d / **MORE TO PAY**.

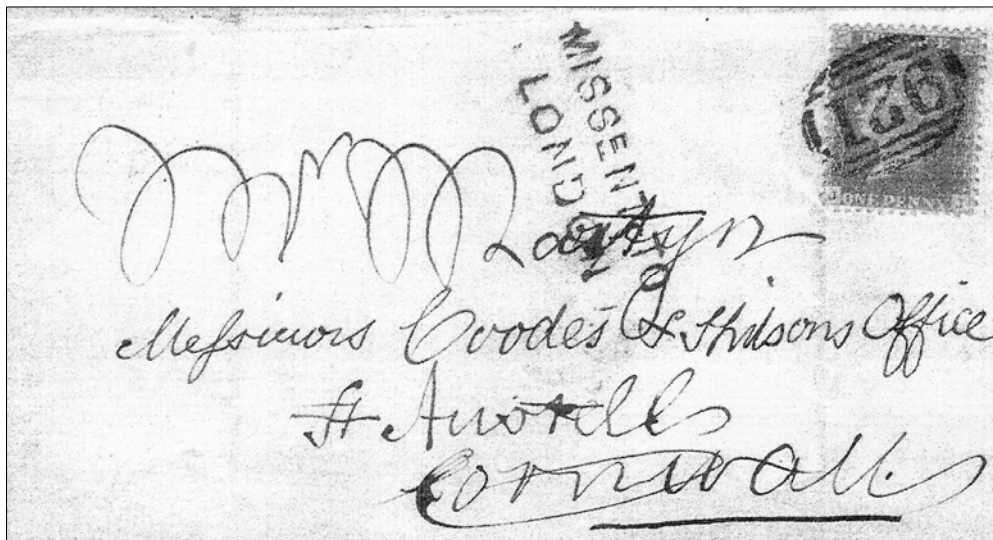


Fig 1, The **MISSENT TO LONDON** that Eric Lewis put up for us to view, which he states is a typical example of an 1858 letter missent to Birmingham from London to where it had been missent from Workington. The dates are **WORKINGTON 13 OCT 1858, LONDON 15 OCT, BIRMINGHAM 15 OCT, ST-AUSTELL 16 OCT 1858**

He further writes that whilst the 'Missent to Birmingham' handstamp occurs until up to 1860, these handstamps were generally taken out of use in the mid 1850s and mail of this nature was handstamped with Birmingham's receiving date stamp, without manuscript or instructional stamp, prior to forwarding to the correct post office.

My apologies if I missed anyone from the second showing but my lack of refreshment time kicked in!

RURAL POSTS IN THE MIDLANDS AND ANTHONY TROLLOPE

by John Hine

Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) was not only a prolific and popular Victorian novelist he also worked for the Post Office for more than 34 years. From the 1840's onwards he was involved with many Post Office activities including the reorganisation of rural posts in different parts of Britain and with setting up postal agreements with many foreign countries. During all these years he managed to write 2,500 words of his novels early every morning before carrying out his professional Post Office duties.

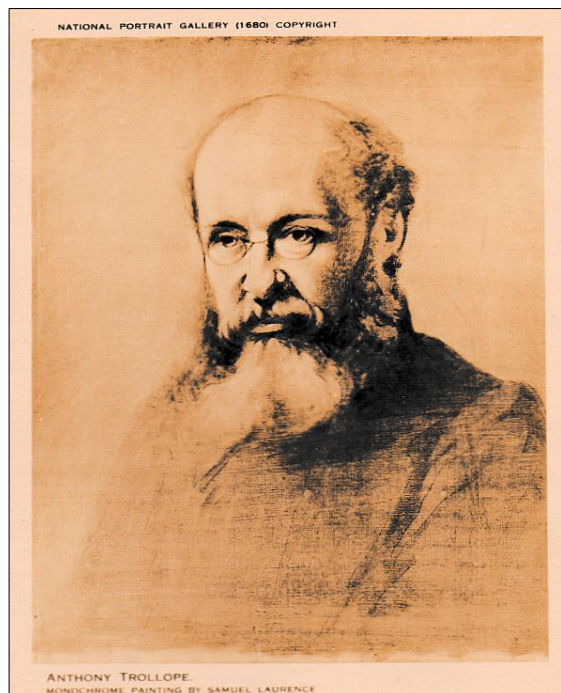


Fig 1, Monochrome painting of Trollope

Professor R H Super's book 'Trollope and the Post Office'¹, still readily available on internet, describes the postal work carried out by Trollope relating it to his work as a novelist. I quote the following passage from Super's book regarding Trollope's early activities as an assistant Post Office surveyor:

"Rowland Hill was certainly at first much impressed by Trollope. Part of his reform involved the extension of rural postal deliveries, and Trollope worked very energetically in mapping out routes in the Southern District of Ireland. The nature of the work was thus described by Hill to a parliamentary committee a few years later: The surveyor determines the length of a walk a letter carrier might reasonably make in a day, arranges the walk to include as many villages and hamlets as he can, determines whether the weekly volume of letters for those places be sufficient to pay the expense (reckoning at a penny per letter), and if it be sufficient, the postmaster general establishes the route. Trollope's effectiveness is evidence of his energy: he himself walked the routes to discover what might be expected of the carriers, or, more often and more expeditiously, went over them on horseback. 'It was,' he said 'the ambition of my life to cover the country with rural letter carriers.'

Hill praised 'the prompt and satisfactory completion' of the task as 'very creditable to Mr Trollope,' and in August 1851 borrowed him to assist another surveyor in the reorganisation of rural southwest England. Following southwest England Trollope was sent to south Wales to set-up and reorganise the rural postal system there and in early 1853 he continued with this work in the English Midlands. Professor Super comments on this work: "His detailed reports on the revision of the rural posts out of Dawlish and Teignmouth in October 1851, survive (in PO records) and minutes putting into effect his recommendations for Stratford on Avon, Stroud, Banbury, Tetbury, Woodstock, Stourbridge, Bromsgrove, Worcester and Hereford from February 26 to November 2 1853 give some indication of how busy he kept. The Postmaster General was gratified to observe that in the districts of the revised posts 'every house, however remote, is included in some one free delivery.' Trollope himself said that he visited every house – certainly every house of importance – in Devonshire, Cornwall, much of Dorset, Somerset, part of Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire and the six southern counties of Wales.

Trollope was thus responsible for an important expansion in the rural postal service in the Midlands during the 1850s and as collectors we can relate his work with the appearance of many village undated name stamps on letters posted from the newly established Receiving Houses. Apart from his work in setting-up and reorganising rural postal services Trollope was also responsible for other innovations in the Post Office organisation including the introduction of the first pillar boxes in Britain in 1852 following observation of how well they worked in France².

Checking through our UDC book³ reveals the existence of 100 Midland Receiving Houses (RHs) that can be attributed directly to Trollope's work in 1853:

Gloucestershire: 43 RHs established between February and October 1853 including 11 under Stroud and 4 under Cheltenham.

Herefordshire: 10 RHs established between February and October 1853, 7 under Ross and 3 under Hereford.

Oxfordshire: 21 RHs established between February and October 1853 including 5 under Banbury, 4 under Woodstock and 3 under Witney.

Worcestershire: 26 RHs established between February and October 1853, 7 under Bromsgrove, 5 under Stourbridge 5 under Kidderminster and 3 under Evesham. It is probable that the next group of RHs opened in December 1853 and January 1854 including 11 under Worcester and 3 under Bewdley are also a result of Trollope's work.

During his work in the Midlands Trollope moved house with his family for short periods to live in Cheltenham and Worcester. Cheltenham features in some of his novels where he refers to the town as 'Littlebath'.



Fig 2, Both sides of a Letter from Trollope at Letterkenny, Ireland to Kensington

On 9 October 1854 Anthony Trollope was promoted from assistant surveyor to become the permanent surveyor for the northern district of Ireland. The above letter dated 30 December 1854 was written by him from Letterkenny near Londonderry to his elder brother Thomas (Thomas Adolphus) in Kensington and although he used an OHMS envelope with his seal General Post Office Ireland / Surveyor embossed on the flap he stamped this personal letter with a 1d red stamp, perhaps an indication of his integrity as a civil servant.

When PO archives are reopened it may be worthwhile for one of our members with sufficient energy and time to look into the extensive records of Trollope's work that is kept there. Professor Super's book has a detailed list of the sources that he consulted including Trollope's travelling journal and many other documents held in the archives. In particular Post Office Records, Rural Posts, Post 14, vol.28 contains details of his work in the south west and the south midlands.

After reading these notes members will appreciate just how important Anthony Trollope was in the development of rural posts in the Midland counties in the middle of the 19th Century.

Sources for this article:

1. Trollope and the Post Office by R H Super (1981), ISBN 0-472-10013-0
2. An Autobiography by Anthony Trollope (1883)
3. The Undated Circular Marks of the Midland Counties, Midland (GB) PHS (1996), 4th edition plus supplements.

A YARD OF TIN – A POSTSCRIPT

by John Calladine

The article on mailcoach, coach and post horns in Midland Mail No.192 produced a much greater response from our members than expected, (That is probably unsurprising because most articles produce no reaction at all – *no comment – Ed!*). The Editor has asked me to share the comments with our readers and has even offered a couple of pages to allow illustrations.

It was the editor himself who wrote of a recent meeting of the Shropshire PHS where Jim Ball, a member of both societies, brought along what he believes to be a coaching horn (illustrated below). There can be no doubt of it being a coaching horn, almost certainly Victorian, but it bears no inscription or emblems of any kind. Although there is therefore nothing to link it to the mailcoaches, it was probably used on a stagecoach.



Fig 1, Jim Ball's Victorian coach horn

Both Mike Mapleton and Gavin Littaur then provided photographs of horns in their possession. Both are virtually identical to the horn described in the article and therefore to the two mailcoach horns held by the Postal Museum. Mike's horn (No.82) was acquired at Barnstaple Market, perhaps thirty years ago. When he bought it, he had no idea of its likely provenance and he wrote to the then Post Office Archives for help but they could provide none at the time. It was no less an authority than John Scott who suggested to him that the number on the horn might refer to the mailcoach route on which it was used and, since then, he has believed it may have been from the Holyhead route, as numbered in Chris Beaver's record of the London mailcoaches. It is a romantic notion but probably postal history fiction.



Mike Mapleton's Mailcoach horn No.82

When Mike gave a talk on postal history to a local history society in South Lakeland, he was told that, as the Kendal mailcoach approached Bowness on Windermere, the guard used the horn to warn pedestrians to keep clear, coaches having no brakes at the time. (As I spent six years at a school in Bowness on Windermere, I can verify the steepness of many local hills.) The driver should have stopped the coach before each sharp descent to fit a "drag" - effectively a chock - to one of the wheels to stop the coach picking up excessive speed. It is not difficult to image that, on a

route with many steep hills, the instruction would be ignored and the driver would have used his experience to keep the speeding coach under control, thereby saving valuable time. However, there is apparently some record in Cumbria (then Westmorland) of children and elderly pedestrians being killed by speeding coaches.

The article mentioned that the horns were held on mailcoaches by either leather loops or by a wicker container of some kind. Gavin's coach horn, which is just over 4 feet long, has a wicker container and while we can hardly be sure it is the original (illustrated below), there is nothing to suggest it is not contemporary with the horn. It certainly provides us with an excellent idea of what was probably provided on a coach.

Since Mike's post horn is numbered 82 and Gavin's numbered 84, their numbers conveniently 'bracket' one of the two horns held by the Postal Museum, numbered 83.

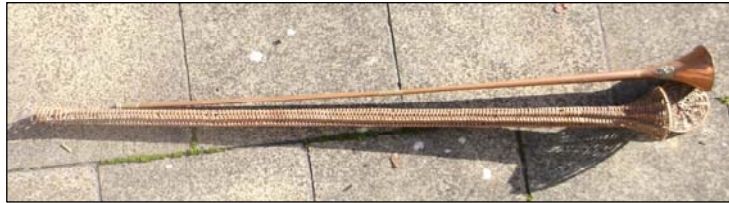


Fig 3, Gavin Littaur's Mailcoach horn No. 84 with wicker container



Fig 4, Close up of Gavin Littaur's Mailcoach horn and container

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THE THOMAS BELSEY LETTERS

by Richard Capon

Fotheringhay in the northernmost parts of Northamptonshire has been described as the Royal city that never was. It has a long association with royalty notably as the birthplace of Richard III and place of imprisonment, trial and execution of Mary, Queen of Scots. It remains as an attractive village with only a few obvious signs of its illustrious past in evidence.

The period covered by this article covers 1799 to 1832. In September 1799 the six joint owners put the estate up for sale. This included the whole of Fotheringhay and parts of the neighbouring villages of Southwick and Wansford – a total of some 2000 acres. The sale was widely advertised in local papers over a three-week period, and even though the estate was said to generate £2300 in rent a year (£160,000 today) there were no takers. William Bradshaw (see below) was already the agent and gamekeeper for the owners in the intended sale. Annual adverts appeared in 1800 and in September of each of the succeeding years until the whole estate was put up for auction at the Talbot Inn in Oundle on 30 November 1804 in 34 lots⁽²⁾. It is not clear what happened at the auction but in September 1805 the estate was still in the ownership of the six previous owners, until June 1806 when there is a notice in the newspapers discouraging the poaching of game from the estate, giving Thomas and William Belsey as the owners. Also in June 1806, the paper mill and lands in Wansford were auctioned off with the Belseys as the beneficial owners. All I can say is that at some time after September 1805, the previous owners must have accepted an offer from the Belseys. Thomas and William Belsey, together with their two sisters Mary and Elizabeth came from a minor branch of the *armigerous* Tomlin family. They lived in High Street, Margate with the minimum of conveniences and never married. Put simply – they were misers. Their early lives have not been researched, but during court action after Thomas' death they were described as Land Jobbers. This is an insulting term used for people who were asset strippers, who bought up land cheaply from impoverished aristocracy, then broke up the estate and sold it off to maximise profit.

William died first, and sister Elizabeth died in 1828. Her executor, Thomas, never disbursed her estate of about £10,000 (About £1M today). This was the basis of the first legal action after Thomas' death in August 1832 where the other executors of Elizabeth's estate acted against the executors of Thomas' estate. Matters were complicated by the fact that Thomas changed his Will shortly before his death and the disinherited family members challenged it in court. This suit became something of a *cause célèbre*, with many column inches being devoted to the hearings in the London newspapers. Thomas' (and Elizabeth's) estates were finally disbursed in December 1835 with 124 legatees and annuitants benefitting from his almost £62,000 estate (Approx £5.5 million in today's money). This grated with the disinherited family members who obtained the right to establish a commission held to enquire into the state of mind of Thomas Belsey prior to his death. The commission was held in 1837 (after Mary Belsey had died) and pencil comments on the letters make it likely that the bundle of letters came from the vaults of the Margate solicitors, Brooke and Willett, who represented the main beneficiaries of the 1832 Will. It is probable that William Bradshaw would have given up his private correspondence to a legal firm, as he was a major beneficiary of the Will in question. In fact Thomas was found to have been in sound mind when he wrote his Last Will and the claims against the Estate failed⁽⁵⁾. After the conclusion of the legal actions, Fotheringhay was sold to Lord Overstone in 1842 and the involvement of the Belseys with the village ceased.

In 1810 the detailed enclosure map of Oundle does not show an identifiable post office, but the postmaster was Edward Everest⁽³⁾. In 1824 the post office is recorded as being three shops away from Parson Latham's Hospital in North Street, Oundle⁽⁷⁾. The Everest father and children were corn factors⁽¹⁾, and in these early days the Post Office must have been a minor part of their business. Edward resigned as postmaster in 1828 and for the next three years; his son George was appointed. Subsequently George's sister Anne replaced him, and the Post Office moved to New Street by 1830 where it remained⁽³⁾ until Anne retired by 1861⁽¹⁾. Anne was born in Kent in 1795 and her father seems to have moved to Oundle with his son and daughter. A move from Kent to Oundle may seem odd, but there were two families of Everests in the area. One family farmed with substantial holdings in Lower Benefield and the other owned Cotterstock Mill. Further afield there were Everests who were millers at Yarwell and at Titchmarsh. Family links have not been established with certainty, but are plausible. The Everests and the Belseys had Kentish origins, and similar business interests. It is not unreasonable that the Everests would have been happy to make an arrangement to deliver letters to Fotheringhay for 6d.

The Belsey letters examined for this article were written between 1823 and 1836. Four are in the author's ownership, and another member of this Society owns three, whilst two are in the care of the Northamptonshire Record Office. They are reputed to be part of a small batch acquired by the late R M Willcocks. All the letters from Thomas Belsey have Margate departure marks and London transit marks; a typical letter from the correspondence is illustrated as Fig 1 on the next page.

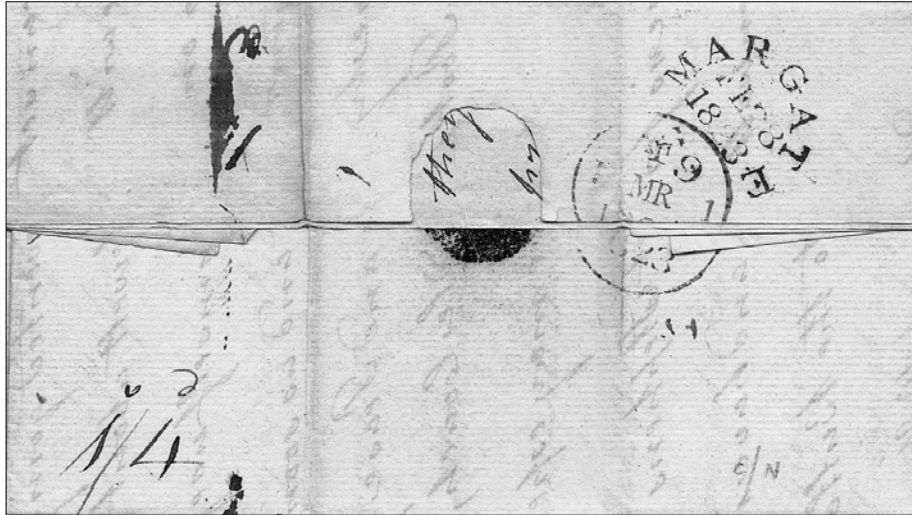


Fig 1, Entire 1823 letter of the Belsey Correspondence from Margate to London

Unlike many larger towns, Oundle never had a penny post to deliver letters to the recipient's home address, and Fotheringhay's own sub-post office did not open until 1850. There are two known letters with anomalous postal rates, but this bundle of Belsey letters where 6d was added to the standard postal rate of 10d for Margate to Oundle, is otherwise unique. The letter fronts show the usual scrawled 10(d) scribbled out and a very neat 1s/4d written low on the left side of the letter on front or rear. These alterations are clearly written by the same person in the Oundle post office who was probably left-handed. The writing appears to be more feminine. Anne Everest assisted her brother before she became Postmistress and it seems likely that she wrote the 1s/4d on each envelope and possibly delivered the letters to William Bradshaw, the Belsey's steward.

In the Northamptonshire Record Office there is the daybook owned by William Bradshaw; the recipient of the Belsey letters. Regular entries show the expenses he claimed for visiting farms and shops or other agencies as part of his work. He claimed 1d a mile for a return journey using his own horse. Fotheringhay is six miles from Oundle by the road used in 1820, so it may be suggested that the extra 6d added to the letters covered expenses at 1d a mile for the return journey to deliver the letters.

The Belsey family would not appear to have been likeable from the court records and newspaper articles, but the contents of their letters encourage a somewhat different view. Thomas Belsey was active in making the River Nene navigable, and also supported the Great Reform Act. He supported the development of the Turnpikes in north Northamptonshire, and built new cottages for his tenants, where each cottage was given a garden⁽⁶⁾. He also built three farmhouses and a home for his steward, William Braithwaite. The family gave a new Communion set and bell to the church as well as reconfiguring the interior. The wind vane showing the family symbol of a falcon remains on the church tower today.⁽⁶⁾

Thomas comes across as a man with a great eye to detail, giving precise instructions over crops to be planted and harvested, and improvements to be made to buildings. Often sketches with measurements are included to emphasise his expectations. He was also solicitous about the health and wellbeing of his tenants. He may have mellowed with age, but he does not come across as a calculating asset stripper with a Scrooge-like addiction to land ownership. From nearly 200 years in the future, we will probably never know the full truth about this enigmatic man and his fortune, but the letters do give a poignant insight to this period of Fotheringhay's history.

Sources

1. Commercial directories, such a Pigot and Kelly for Northamptonshire, available for download through the Leicester University library or in hard copy at Northampton Central Library.
2. The online searching facilities of the British Newspaper Archive. Adverts for the sale were in The Stamford Mercury for 20 Sept 1799, the Northampton Mercury for 19 Oct 1799 and often in the next five years. Eventually it appeared in the Morning Post on 2nd November 1804 in preparation for the auction.
3. The Post Office appointments book made available online by Ancestry.com
4. The Northampton Record Office who hold comprehensive documentation on the formation of Northamptonshire Turnpikes, enclosure and other maps, together with making the River Nen(e) navigable.
5. The Times. 9 March 1839. Page 7
6. Historic Notices in Reference to Fotheringhay by Rev. H K Bonney, Oundle, 1821
7. Map of Oundle (1824) owned by Oundle School

HANDWRITTEN PENNY POST STAMPS

by John Hine

These notes were written after the surprising discovery of a handwritten 'Penny Post' inserted inside a CIRENCESTER / 93 undated circular mileage mark. Despite the scruffy and stained appearance of this free franked front dated 1827 its significance was directly apparent and when offered for sale by auction on eBay was acquired without real opposition. The Cirencester / 93 mileage stamp is relatively common (GL222 used from 1826 to 1828) but normally it is found struck on the reverse. The reason for placing it on the address side was to authorise the 1d charge written alongside.

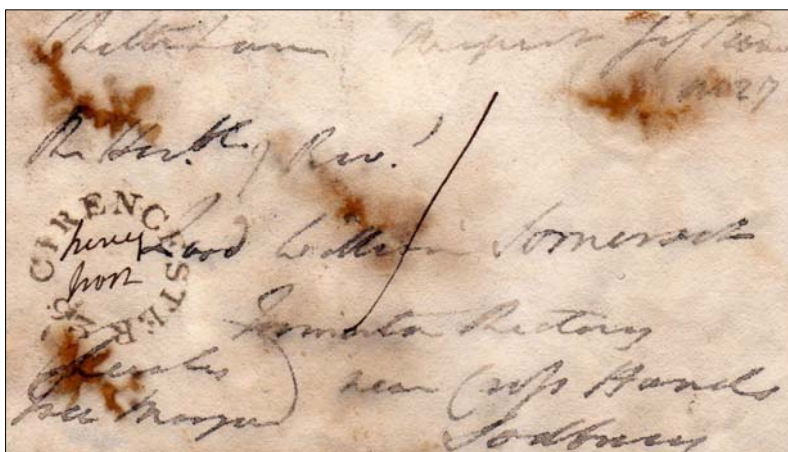


Fig 1, Free front from Cheltenham to Tormarton, near Cross Hands, Chipping Sodbury, August 15 1827

The sender was Charles Morgan (1760-1846) MP for Monmouthshire from 1896 to 1931. The recipient, the Hon^{ble} Rev^d Lord William Somerset, Tormarton Rectory, near Cross Hands, Sodbury was the 7th son of the 5th Duke of Beaufort (Badminton House) and held the office of Prebendary of Bristol. Tormarton Rectory is of late C16 origin with C17 and C18 alterations and was enlarged and remodelled c.1812 for William Somerset then rector of Tormarton. It is now known as Tormarton Court.

Referring to the Midlands Local Posts book² the earliest recorded Cirencester / Penny Post mark GL230 dates from 1834 although since publication this has been pushed forward to 1833. The Local Posts book describes two separate branches of the Cirencester Penny Post. The branch that was established in November 1834 is well documented and linked Cirencester with the villages to the west through Daglingworth, Edgworth and Miserden (Miserdine) and further to Painswick. There is little documentary evidence available in archives on the earlier branch that ran more to the south and linked Cirencester with Dunkirk (serving Acton Turville) and the Cross Hands Inn. The Cross Hands Inn near Sodbury was situated at the cross roads where the Cirencester to Bath road crosses the Chippenham to Sodbury road. That Cross Hands was a penny post Receiving House under Cirencester is remarkable both because of the distance involved, in excess of 20 miles, and because another post town, Tetbury, was situated between the two. Another unusual aspect is that Cross Hands was also a RH in the Bath and the Chippenham Penny Posts and used the Bath RH No.11 stamp on letters in three different penny posts. The Cirencester / 93 mileage mark with 'Penny Post' inserted in manuscript has been allocated GL229 in the BCC Midlands edition¹.

Since the Local Posts book was published in 1993 more examples of this penny post branch through Cross Hands have been found bearing the Cirencester / Penny Post stamp, GL230, with the addition of a boxed No.11 for Cross Hands receiving house. Now that this 1827 precursor for the Cirencester PP marking has been found it is reasonable to suggest that GL230 was probably issued much earlier than 1833 and possibly shortly after this 15 August 1827 free frank. An 1834 example of a letter emanating from the Cross Hands receiving house is shown over the page at Fig 2. The letter is stamped by the No.11 stamp of Cross Hands and with the Cirencester / Penny Post mark (GL230) before passing on through the Bath PP and Bristol to Alvestone.

The 'provisional' Cirencester Penny Post described above is not the first recorded handwritten Gloucestershire penny post marking. In 1835 GL825 (Fig. 3) the framed Tewkesbury / Penny Post stamp was no longer available and was replaced temporarily by GL826 (Fig. 4) an old 18th century TEWKESBURY straight line town stamp with 'Py Post' added in manuscript. This is illustrated in the BCC Midlands edition on page 58. Within a few weeks a new, this time unframed, Tewkesbury / Penny Post stamp (GL827, Fig. 5) was issued and put into use.



Fig 2, 26 September 1834 from Horton just north of the Cross Hands Inn to Alvestone nr Thornbury.

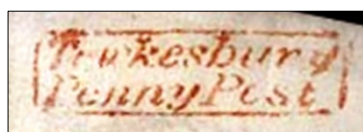


Fig 3, GL825

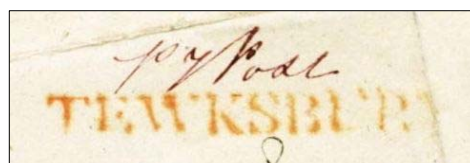


Fig 4, GL826 (GL806 reused with 'py post' added)



Fig 5, GL827

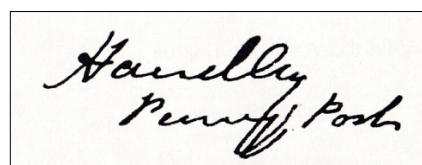


Fig 6, Handley / Penny Post

The only other English manuscript or provisional penny post marking that I can discover is that used at Handley in the Whitchurch (Shropshire) Penny Post. This was listed and illustrated as used in 1839 by Geoff Oxley in his English Penny Posts book.² In the Midlands Local Posts book³ the same manuscript Handley / Penny Post stamp is illustrated and entered as MLP745 with a single date of use 1 May 1839. In the BCC Vols. 1 & 2, 2nd Edition⁴ the use of this manuscript penny post mark in the Whitchurch (Salop) Penny Post appears underneath the listing for SH790 with the comment 'only one example is known.' The Handley / Penny Post marking is not mentioned in the new BCC Midlands edition perhaps because Handley is over the border in Cheshire.

References:

- 1 The British County Catalogue of Postal History, Midlands Edition, 2013.
- 2 The English Provincial Local Posts 1765-1840', by G F Oxley, 1973
- 3 The Local Posts of the Midland Counties to 1840, 1993
- 4 The British County Catalogue of Postal History, Vols. 1 & 2, 2nd edition, 1996

Editor's note: When I first started collecting Shropshire items, the written *Handley / Penny Post* was in a list sent to me by a dealer. Knowing nothing about penny posts or the significance of written ones, I passed on it!! Mistake!

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A PUZZLING GLOUCESTER MILEAGE HANDSTAMP

by Colin Fountain with input from John Calladine & John Hine

Gloucester's first mileage handstamp GL360 showed a mileage of 103 and has been recorded in use from 26.01.1785 to 24.12.1786. This was followed by four different successive hand stamps without mileage, culminating in GL368, the GLOUCESTER horseshoe stamp recorded used from 09.08.1798 to 11.03.1801. After this, eleven different hand stamps are recorded from Gloucester between 22.06.1801 and 06.12.1828, all showing the mileage as 111.



Fig 1, GL360



Fig 2, GL368

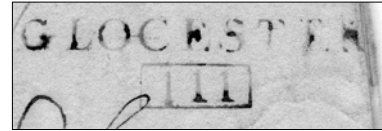


Fig 3, GL370

Now an incomplete entire has been found stamped with a previously unrecorded **GLOUCESTER / 104** hand stamp. The letter was sent free by the frank of C Bragge and put into the post at Newnham on 20.05 1804 as can be seen from the sender's inscription. Charles Bragge at this time was MP for Bristol and Secretary at War. Later in 1804 he assumed by royal licence the surname Bathurst in lieu of Bragge when he inherited Lydney Park from his maternal uncle. Unfortunately the text of the letter is no longer present, but he may well have been visiting Lydney Park when he wrote the letter because Lydney receiving house did not open until August 1804 and Newnham would have been the nearest receiving house. The letter is addressed to Winchester and there is no London date stamp, nor indeed any other postal markings on the reverse, so it probably travelled by cross post, rather than via London, and the London postal officials would not have seen the incorrect mileage.

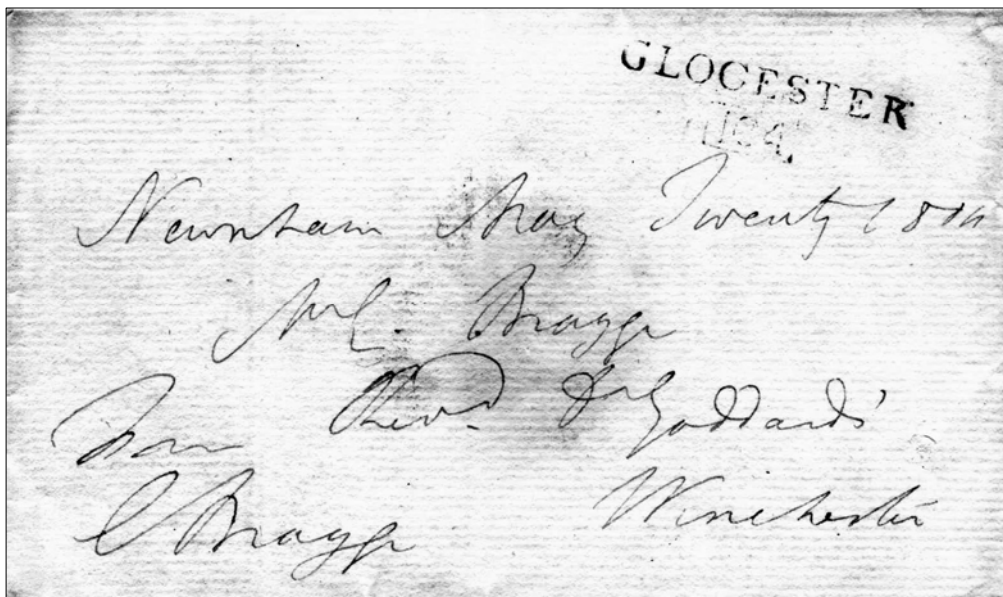


Fig 4, 20 May 1804 entire letter showing the GLOUCESTER / 104 mileage mark

Because **GLOUCESTER / 111** mileage stamps were currently in use at Gloucester, it seems probable that this **GLOUCESTER / 104** stamp was applied at Newnham rather than at Gloucester but it raises a number of questions.

Was it issued to Gloucester in 1801 when mileage marks were re-introduced, but then replaced by the **111** mileage after the postmaster or the surveyor realised the mileage was incorrect?

Was it used in Gloucester at all, perhaps towards the end of the period 11.03.1801 to 22.06.1801, during which we have no recorded sightings of Gloucester marks?

At the time of this letter, Mr. Woodcock, the Gloucester postmaster ran an unofficial local post from Newnham, but the earliest recorded Newnham hand stamp GL590 inscribed **NEWNHAM-GLO / 123** was used 14.07.1806, so did he pass the 104 hand stamp to Newnham to help identify letters emanating from there to ensure that he received his fee? However, there is no indication on this letter of the charge for this service having been paid or being due. If a letter from Newnham received the **104** hand stamp but needed to be sent to or via London, did the Gloucester postmaster delete this marking and apply the correct **111** hand stamp?

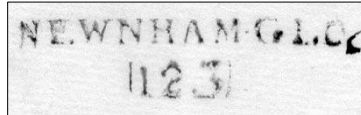


Fig 5, GL590

Does anyone have any other mail from Newnham in the early 1800s? If so, we would be very interested to know what postal markings it received, to try to answer some of these questions.

POSTCARDS OF NOTTINGHAM POST OFFICES (No1 in an occasional new series)

by Mick Gill

I started to collect old postcards of Newark, my home town, in the late 1970s. Although I do still come across some new finds they have become something of a rarity. When former society member and Nottinghamshire editor Dennis Humphreys produced his 13 volumes of the county's post offices, it opened a new area for postcard collecting. Accordingly I now look out for postcards which show Notts post offices or the buildings which had been a post office or were later to become post offices.

A typical example is Gunthorpe, which was served by the Bingham private post from before 1823 to 1839 at a charge of 5d in addition to the General Post charge.



Fig 1, Raphael Tuck postcard showing the post office in Main Street with H W Spouge the name on the *Players Please* advertisement. The postcard has an indistinct 1945 postmark.

A post office opened at Gunthorpe in 1875. When Henry Mills was appointed sub-postmaster in 1881, the post office moved to what is now The Orchards, Main Street. In 1929, during the tenure of Ida Mary Mills, the post office moved to a shop in Main Street close to St John the Baptist church. Harold Wand Spouge, grocer, became sub-postmaster in 1932 and served until 1954. He was followed by his son, Robert, who served until his retirement in 1988, when the post office moved to the Anchor Inn, where it remained until closure on 1 December 1999.

POST OFFICE AWARDS

by Malcolm Allinson

My interest has been aroused by Jim Hammond's article about Walter Scriven (MM 192/14), as my father was also a recipient of the Imperial Service Medal.



Fig 1, Obverse of medal



Fig2, Reverse of medal

Awarded in 1981, his medal bears the Crowned effigy of the reigning monarch, Queen Elizabeth II on the obverse side with the wording ELIZABETH II DEI GRATIA REGINA F D (By the Grace of God, Elizabeth II Fideii defensor (Defender of the Faith) - the same as on coinage. On the reverse, as stated previously the text is "For Faithful Service" and allegorically depicts 'well-earned rest' - clearly only symbolic as after retirement my father seemed to do more than ever! Unlike many awards the ISM is not engraved around the edge.

My father's citation in The London Gazette of Thursday 16th April 1981¹ reads:

CENTRAL CHANCERY OF THE ORDERS OF KNIGHTHOOD
St. James's Palace,
London S.W.1.
21st April 1981

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to award the Imperial Service Medal to the following former officers of the General Post Office. (To be dated 30th September 1969):-

General Post Office ALLINSON, Richard Henry, lately Postal and Telegraph Officer, Midlands Postal Board.

This citation may appear at first rather curious being dated 1981, yet the award being dated 30th September 1969. The answer to this apparent delay is not any tardiness on the part of HM Government, but the simple fact that the Imperial Service Medal is only awarded upon the recipient's retirement. Still confused by two dates? The date of the **award** gives it away; the General Post Office ceased to be on that date, becoming a Corporation the following day, 1st October 1969. From then on its Officers continued employment but ceased to be civil servants and lost any further eligibility for a medal. Fortunately by then my father had undertaken over 25 years of "loyal and meritorious Service to the Crown" so was eligible for the award, which then happened on his retirement on 19th March 1981.

The Imperial Service Medal ranks in Category 3 in the hierarchy of Orders and Decorations of the UK, alongside the British Empire Medal and the Queens Police Medal, so it isn't that easy to receive.

Reference

- 1) **London Gazette** Second Supplement No 48590, page 5775.



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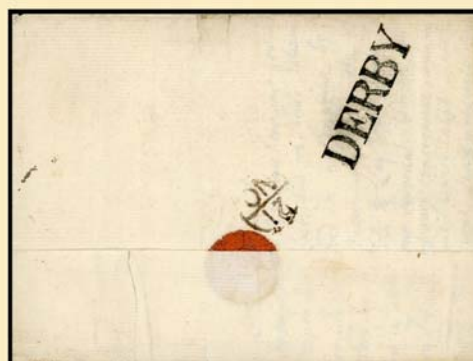
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