

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Number 164, March 2010

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Our Annual General Meeting and Auction will be held on **17th April** at St Germain's Church Hall, Portland Road, Birmingham. Full details of the day are given in the auction catalogue but the AGM begins at 1.00 pm and the auction at 1.30 pm.

We are holding a meeting on **24th April** in conjunction with the Midland Federation Fair at Arden School, Knowle. The meeting will begin at 1.30 pm when Mel Matthews will give a display on the topic of 'Post Boxes'.

Then on **1st May** we hold our usual meeting at Worpex at Oldbury Park School, Worcester. The meeting will commence at 1.30 pm and you are invited to 'Choose your own Topic'.

SECOND EDITION OF THE SOCIETY'S 'STRAIGHT LINE' BOOK

It is planned to have a 2nd Edition of the Society's second book, 'The Undated Straight Line & Numbered Receiving House Marks of the Midland Counties, 1840-1860', available to members in the autumn. If any member has attractive covers with the relevant postal markings they would like to see illustrated in the book in place of the existing cover illustrations, will they please send photocopies to John Calladine, 5, Skillins, Kington St Michael, Chippenham SN14 6RL as soon as possible. In particular, if anyone has a tidy cover with a coloured strike that would look attractive on the outer cover of the book, will they please also submit it.

THE OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL POSTS SUPPLEMENT

A 44 page supplement to the Society's third book, 'The Local Posts of the Midland Counties to 1840', covering the county of Oxfordshire, will be available at the AGM. Essentially, this supplement brings together the Oxfordshire local post items that have appeared in 'Midland Mail' over the past two years (see 'Midland Mail' 162/19) but illustrations of strikes have been improved where possible, usage information further updated and the occasional sketch map re-drawn. The cost of the new publication will be just £5-00, plus £1-50 p&p for those who would like it mailed to them. Orders for items to be mailed should be sent to John Calladine and a cheque made out to the Midland (GB) Postal History Society.

CUMULATIVE INDEX TO MIDLAND MAIL NOW ON LINE

The Royal Philatelic Society London have now included the cumulative indexes from many specialist societies on their web-site. We were approached at Midpex last year, and we were happy to take part. Anyone who has access to the internet can go to <http://www.rpslcatalogue.org.uk> and try out this new powerful tool. If you go to this site, click on the 'search' tab and then in the 'databases' box select 'cumulative indexes'. As a small test, try searching for 'Birmingham'. This throws up 104 results, 59 of which are references to 'Midland Mail'. This means of course that there are 45 references in other society journals for which you can look out at some in the future.

MAILCOACH TIMEBILLS

During the mid 1990s, the opportunity arose to examine two sets of specimen mailcoach timebills. The first was a collection prepared for the Postmaster General, Lord Walsingham, early in 1792 and held at Guildhall Library, London. The second was provided to a new Postmaster General, the Duke of Manchester, in 1827. It is privately owned although now, at the Society's initiative, on loan to the Royal Mail Archive.

In both instances, permission was given to take photographs. These pictures are of bills in bound volumes and taken with a hand-held camera by available light. They are therefore not photographic masterpieces but are generally quite legible. Not all the timebills were photographed but the majority were and certainly all the bills relating to routes through the Midlands.

The original photographic slides have recently been scanned and assembled on a CD, together with an index to the contents of each set. While it is not possible to sell these CDs, since the Society does not hold the Copyright, they are to be made available on indefinite loan for research purposes only. Any member who would like to hold a CD is therefore invited to obtain it from John Calladine at the Society's AGM and to make, through him, a donation of £5 to Society funds. It will also be available by post at the same charge, plus £1-25 p&p. Cheques, made out to the Society, should be sent to John at 5 Skillins, Kington St Michael, Chippenham SN14 6RL.

MORE ON THOSE HALFPENNY STAMPS

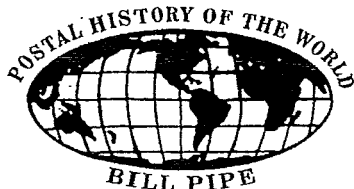
Eric Lewis has written concerning the piece by Trevor Radway about halfpenny stamp no longer being valid. Eric points out that the Post Office document which Trevor quoted was corrected by Royal Mail in a letter, dated 23rd July 2009, to Rushstamps an extract from which is quoted below:

"...following the withdrawal of the ½ p coin from legal tender in 1984, Royal Mail had a policy of honouring all stamps tendered which still bear the ½ p value as long as the total postage affixed was in whole pence. Recently, this policy was reviewed as, after 25 years, the amount of such stamps in circulation had dropped to a negligible level.

Nonetheless, after consulting the relevant parts of the business, such as Revenue Protection and RM Philatelic, it was agreed that we would continue to accept stamps with a ½ value as long as the total amount attached was a whole penny value. If such stamps were used singly, however, they will be rounded down to the nearest whole penny value.

Regrettably, our colleagues in our sister company, Post Office Ltd, issued a statement to all counters in March this year stating that all ½ p values were to be rounded down. This has resulted in some customers being asked to pay additional postage on correctly stamped mail at some Post Offices and action is currently being taken to remedy this disparity in treatment.

Unfortunately it remains possible that customers may, on occasion, be told that the correctly stamped mail requires additional postage and our advice to anyone wishing to post items carrying these stamps is, therefore, to place them in a post-box where possible."



THE MAGPIE

POSTAL AUCTIONS & LISTS
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PAPER COLLECTABLES
POSTAL HISTORY

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Email: magpiebillpipe@free.uk.com

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

At the meeting at the black Country Museum on 13th February there were eighteen members present nine of whom put up displays of material related to WW1 and WW2 (with the usual stray intruders such as a letter from the Crimean War). It proved to be a very fertile subject and material from the Middle East, Malaya, Ceylon, Japan, North and South Africa, material to and from German P.O.W.s providing the majority of the afternoon's displays. Most members brought material relating to their own County interests but social history also figured among the displays in one form or another.

Bob Viney started off the afternoon with a display of material from an internee in Holland in WW1, detailing how the British P.O.W. was moved to various camps in Germany. As Holland was a neutral country it interned British servicemen, mostly naval personnel. Eric Lewis followed with a notice regarding Free Collection of Parcels for Servicemen, followed by Parcel Post labels and other parcel related items including a Parcel sent to Holland and returned unopened.

Roger Broomfield showed Herefordshire Camps and a Zeppelin cover from Ross sent in 1939, material showing the use of Economy Labels and reuse of envelopes. He related how one Italian P.O.W. remained in Ledbury and eventually became Mayor of the town. Then, Chris Jackson showed camps from Worcestershire together with mail from the Caroline Islands, one with Japanese marks returned and one where the airmail fee had been refunded due to inability to deliver.

Alan Marshall treated us to material from Nottinghamshire including a WW1 Nottingham Soldiers Club which organised "Comforts for Soldiers" and material relating to the Sherwood Foresters. Perhaps with the March meeting in mind, Mick Gill chose not to produce Nottinghamshire covers but showed material to Switzerland together with Aerographs from North Africa to Jacksdale, and one from India, a cover to Dublin with a Censor mark, along with some material relating to various R.A.F. stations. A tour of various military dental services was provided by Stuart Geddes. German Field Dental Units, a visit to Tristan Da Cunha by a Naval Dental Unit in 1937, material relating to the American R.A.F. Dental Branch and the Royal Army Dental Corps were all included.

As it was the day before Valentine's day Jan Young gave us a view of the courtship of Will and Evelyn Gilles through the medium of postcards. The romance was sparked off by a card of thanks from Will thanking Evelyn for a parcel. Over a period of time other cards followed, including some very colourful and attractive cards by Xavier Saver of Paris. This correspondence eventually led to the marriage of Will and Evelyn.

Richard Farman treated us to material relating to Donington Hall a camp for German Officer P.O.W.s. These officers had their batmen, etc. in the camp with them and at one time the ratio of servants to officers was 2 to 1. We saw a photograph of one internee taken by a local photographer. This was the camp from which several officers escaped and on which the film "The One That Got Away" was based. (I remember one that didn't and was captured on Codnor Park Station where I was evacuated!) He also showed evidence of the only known Red Cross Parcel to have come into the camp from Germany.

The second half began with a miscellany from Richard Farman including Lofthouse Park Camp; details of how Lilly Hooson of Burton-on-Trent sent 20,750 parcels under the Red Cross Parcel scheme; material from the U.K. to Cape Town, Germany, and South Africa. He ended with a letter from the Somme and others from various Parisian Stations. Stuart Geddes showed aerographs from the B.E.F. and Mick Gill displayed material relating to Robert Lawrie a maker of Boots and Shoes for Sailors on Arctic Convoys, Commandoes in Norway, and for Sir John Hunt's successful assault on Everest in 1953.

Alan Marshall's second showing consisted of WWII covers addressed to Malaya and the Middle East for which the fee had been returned due to the inability to deliver. Chris Jackson showed a Crimean War letter from Scutari, a Boer War cover and correspondence from Capt. Sandbach of the Royal Indian Army. The displays ended with Eric Lewis taking us even further back with reports of the Birmingham Riots of 1816 and the 1839 Chartist Riots when the Rifle Brigade were called to suppress the rioters.

The meeting ended with Chris Jackson thanking everyone who had displayed material of such interest.

Editor's Note: I would like to thank Sadie Cole for writing this report.

THE MARCH MEETING

There was an excellent attendance on 6th March at the Collingwood Centre, Great Barr with a full room to see our General Secretary, Mick Gill, display '*Newark and District*'. Mick began by outlining the history and industries of Newark. Apparently, Catherine the great was a devotee of Newark Ale! The first sheets consisted of a 1744 map of Nottinghamshire by John Cowley and two maps of Armstrong's survey of the Great North Road.

The earliest Newark letter in Mick's collection is one of 1609 from the Bagot correspondence which was privately carried from Newark to Blithfield Hall. Next, came a letter sent to London in 1693 which was followed by one from London to Screveton, near Nottingham, which was endorsed 'pr Newark bagg'. Mick pointed out that while other Nottinghamshire towns have recorded usage of handstamps in the early 1700s, Newark's earliest recorded mark is a 'NEWARK' of 1756 an example of which we saw on a letter to Roll's Coffee House. This was followed by a number of straight-line marks, one of which was on a letter sent to Lincoln in 1777 and endorsed 'Turn at Grantham'. The sequence of 'NEWARK' marks was broken by an example of the first-type mileage mark '125 NEWARK' used in 1785, and the unusual 'Mis-fent to NEWARK' on a letter sent in 1787 from Alnwick to Claxby. Mick then showed examples of the straight-line marks used in the latter part of the 1780s, the 1790s and the mark with smaller letters which appears to have been standard issue in the period 1799-1801. One of these covers was a 'Free' to the Earl of Stamford in London but redirected to Stourbridge. Some members thought this item should not be in a Nottinghamshire collection! A letter of 1791 sent from Caistor through Market Rasen to Boston was endorsed 'turn at Newark and Stilton'. A charge of one penny on a letter sent from Screveton to Newark in 1794 indicated an unofficial local post.

The year 1801 saw the introduction of the boxed mileage marks and Mick showed us an example of the 'NEWARK/121' on a letter dated 12th November 1801. Further examples showed double and treble charges on letters to Southwell (1803), and an Inspector's Crown, authorising an increase in the charge from 8d to 1s/4d, on a letter of 1804 to London. Newark had three different handstamps with the mileage between lines used between 1811 and 1829, and Mick explained how it is possible to identify each of them. The last cover in this frame carried the mark 'MISSENT TO/NEWARK' on a letter sent in 1817 from Ferrybridge to Doncaster.

The next section consisted of material from the local posts in the Newark area. As early as 1780 there was a post on three days a week from Newark to the Lincolnshire village of Newton. We saw a letter of March 1799 which carried the straight-line mark of Newton. In 1817, receiving houses were opened on that road and it was made a six-day post. Mick showed letters to and from the receiving offices but, the receiving houses did not use numeral handstamps, as was usually the case. However, we did see examples of the two types of penny post handstamp used at Newark. Of particular note was the earliest recorded strike (December 1836) of the unframed '*Newark/Penny Post*'. Examples of a local charge of twopence were to be seen on letters from the villages of Earl Stoke and Cromwell into Newark.

We had now reached the Fourpenny Post period. Among the items here was a letter of December 1839 which had originated in the London Twopenny Post. Letters in the penny post were still charged one penny as we saw on a letter from Gorton to Newark. The introduction of the Uniform Penny Post was represented by a variety of penny black covers and Mulreadies with red and black Maltese Cross cancellations. Of particular note were: penny black covers from 12th May and 23rd June 1840; a twopenny Mulready dated by the writer as 7th May 1840 but with a handstamp of 7th July 1840 but we cannot be sure who was in error; another Mulready struck with the missent mark of Newark; and a Newark advertising Mulready sent to Nottingham in February 1841.

The second half of Mick's display began with another penny black cover with a black Maltese Cross cancellation, a pair of twopenny blues on a letter sent to London, and a letter of 1843 sent to Edinburgh at the registered rate of 1/-. In 1844, Newark was issued with a '541' numeral cancellation. Among the items shown which displayed this mark was a letter sent to York with the postage paid by five twopenny blues. In the 1850s smaller numeral cancellations with three bars came into use; we saw an example of Newark's handstamp cancelling a postal stationery envelope.

The proof books in the BPMA show that a sideways duplex handstamp was first issued to Newark on 23rd April 1857, yet Mick was able to show this cancellation used on that date. This is truly a first day cover! What was noticeable in a comprehensive display of double cancellations, both 4VOD and 3VOD, was the number of letters going abroad to countries such as Germany, Italy, and India. In addition, Mick produced several examples of the single vertical numeral cancellations, one of which was on a registered letter. There was also an 1863 illustrated envelope from Ohio to Mick's 2x great grandfather which featured the Union flag, a cannon and 'Death to Traitors'. Mick explained that it came from one of three sons who emigrated to America in the 1850s.

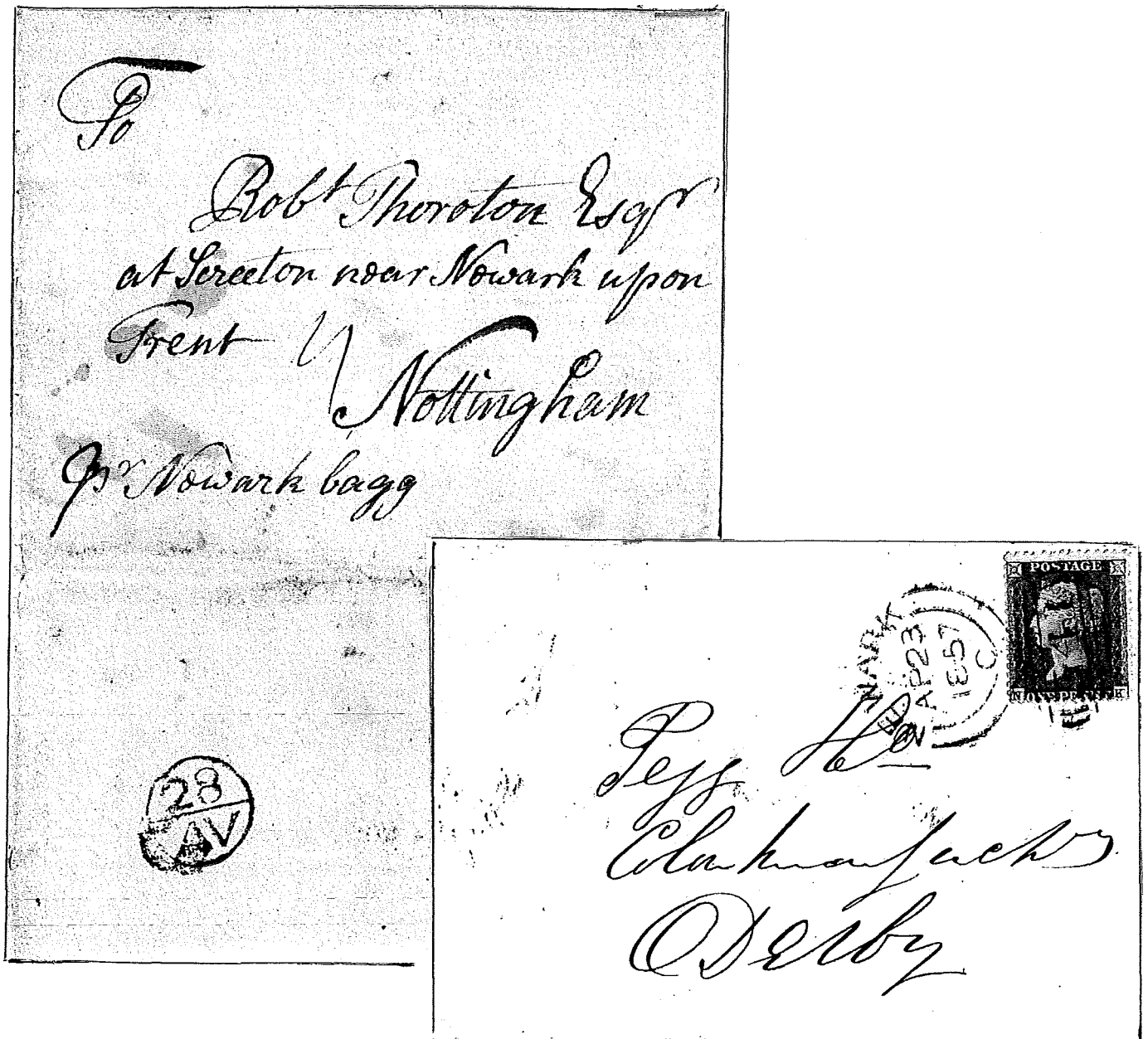
The next frame contained a number of Parcel Post labels from some of the sub-offices as well as Newark itself. Of particular note was a 'PARCELS POST' type of Norwell. Some of the heraldic picture postcards in the 'Old Newark Series' produced by H.S. Whiles in the early 1900s were particularly attractive. We saw a postcard of the post office in Kirkgate, its location from 1908 to 1994; postmasters' acknowledgment cards 85 and 85B; Krag machine cancellations with both the usual dater die and triangles containing the letters NBD – the telegraph code for Newark; and various 'To Pay' marks from the 1950s.

The 'Victory Bells' cancellation came into use over the August bank holiday of 1945. Mick was able to show us an example dated 10th August 1945 – a very early example. Local publicity machine cancellations were first allowed in 1963. We saw a number of different ones which encouraged people to 'visit historic Newark', but of note was one dated 17th June 1963 – the first day of use. In the 1960s a mobile post office was usually present at the Newark Show, yet one letter was dated 6th May 1909. (It should have been 1960.) Mick told us how several years ago he purchased a Certificate of Posting for a registered letter at Stampex. He noticed that the initials of the accepting officer were 'MG'. This was a reminder of the fact that on the Saturday of the Show he was usually on the counter for two hours.

The final two items in Mick's display were a leaflet describing where the new post office was to be located on the closure of the Crown Post Office in 1994, and a sheet showing both sides of the leaflet left by the postman when he cannot (be bothered to?) deliver a letter.

In his vote of thanks our President, Derek Smeathers, commented that we had seen a really wonderful and comprehensive display of postal history covering five centuries. Certainly, Mick had shown what an enormous variety of material is to be found from a medium sized provincial town.

A letter from London in August 1736 to Screton (Screveton) near Newark endorsed 'pr Newark bagg'



541/NEWARK sideways duplex cancellation dated AP23/1857, the date of issue recorded in the Steel Impression Books.

BIRMINGHAM REGISTRATION 'ROTARY DEVICE'

by Ian Baker

Until December 1877, green tape or twine had been tied around each registered letter in order to more easily identify items in transit to their destination. However, from 1st January 1878 it was proposed to draw on the letter, both on the obverse and reverse, horizontal and vertical lines using blue crayon. On the reverse, where the two lines cross, there was still to be an embossed seal applied. Nearly 20,000 pencils were supplied to post offices and rural messengers at an estimated cost of £251 per annum, half the cost of the green twine.

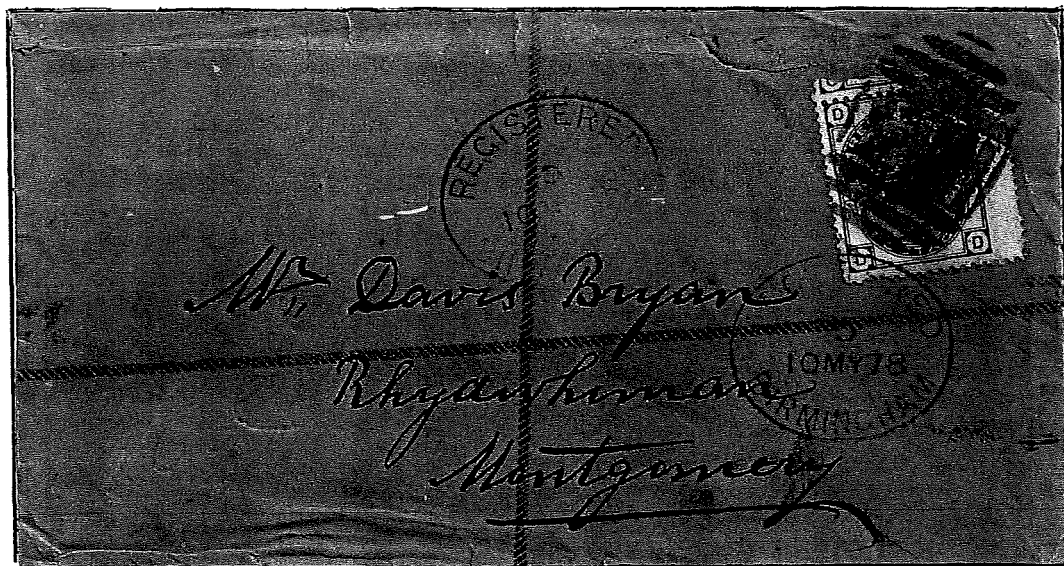
The fee for registration had been fourpence from 1st August 1862 but was reduced to twopence on 1st January 1878. At the same time, a new scheme was introduced for compensation of loss with a maximum payable, which applied to either inland or overseas mail. This followed a proposal, by the French, to the Postal Union in July 1877.

In order to speed up the marking of the envelopes, the Birmingham Head Office experimented with a 'rotary device'. This incorporated short 'hatch' strokes that sloped to the **left** and used the same blue ink as the handstamps (fig. 1).

A similar experiment was carried out in Liverpool where several 'wheels' were used with the hatching sloping to either the **left** or **right**. Six examples of this hatching have been recorded in use there between September 1878 and February 1881. Birmingham and Liverpool were in the same Post Office Surveyor Division and ideas had often been exchanged between the two offices. The Liverpool office, in the name of Ernest Goodwin, claimed to have invented the device but equally it could have been developed first in the metal workshops of Birmingham.

A similar device was also used in Jersey in September 1878. Maybe, the idea sprang independently from each postmaster. Certainly, the device was not taken up nationally, nor was another 'wheel' which repeated the word 'Registered' used in Liverpool in July 1878. It is to be presumed that this was because compared with the cost of the pencil their use could not be justified.

Fig. 1. A *blue* envelope addressed to Montgomery with the only known example of *blue* registration lines applied by a 'wheel' at Birmingham. A threepence pale rose stamp, plate 19 (SG144) covered the registration fee of twopence and postage of one penny. It is tied by the 4VOS '75' of Birmingham struck in *blue* and an oval 'REGISTERED/BIRMINGHAM', code 'C' reversed, also in *blue* and dated 10th May 1878.



WORLDWIDE GEMS IN MARCH & MAY

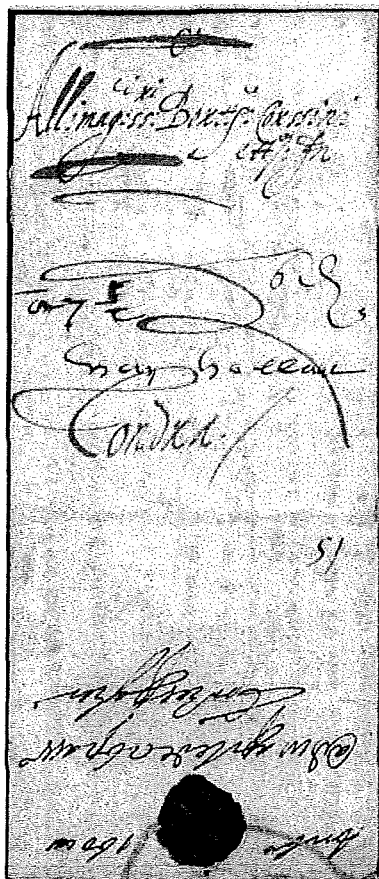
17/18 MARCH

The 'Smith' Collections of Malta & Local Posts of the World, the John Millener Collection of Fiji, the Scott Archer Corsini & Early Letters Collection.

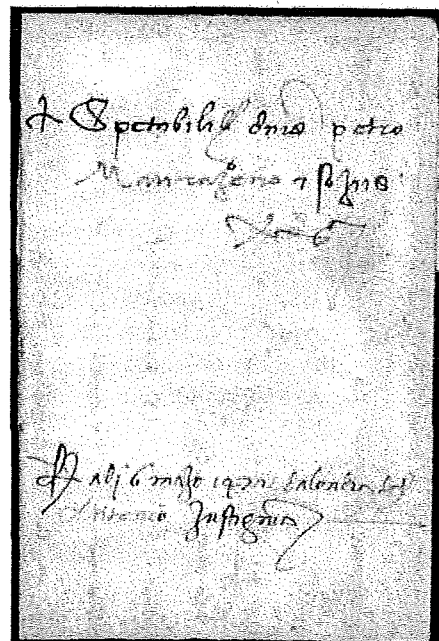
19 MAY

(on view at Stand 54, 'London 2010')

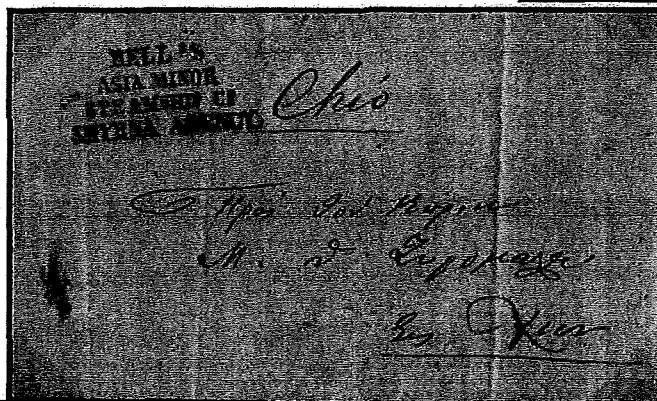
The Ed Siskin Collection of Early Letters



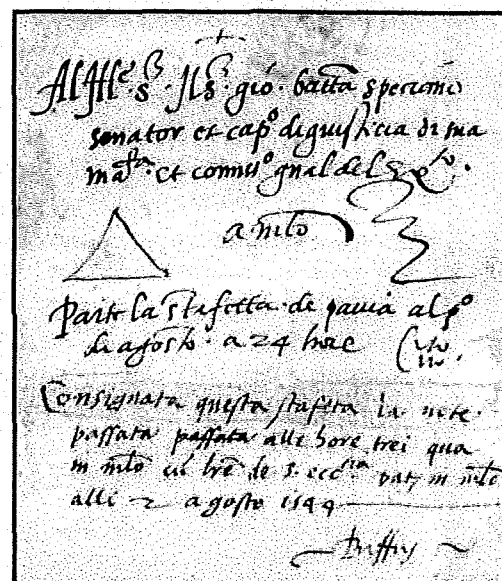
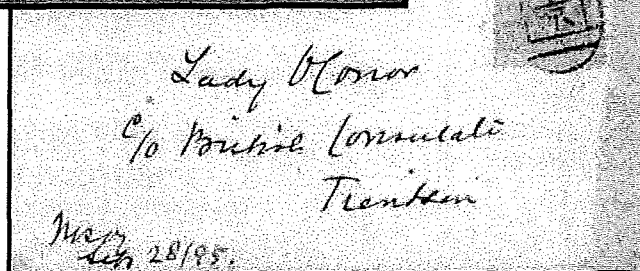
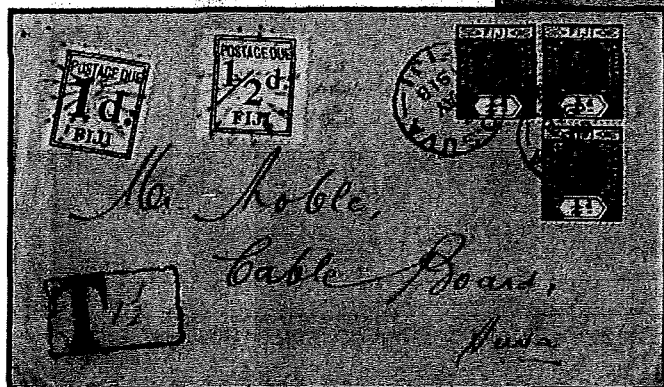
1600 EL Hamburg to London, endorsed 'van Hollant' and exceptionally charged twice; both '6d' and 'on 7½'.



Rare 1472 letter carried by 'galley' from London to Italy.



1544 Italian "Stirrups" Express cover; ex Ed Siskin.



TWO ROUTES BETWEEN BRITAIN AND NEW ZEALAND, ILLUSTRATED WITH SHROPSHIRE COVERS (1872 to 1878)

By Brian Atkins

The General Post Office Notice of May 1870 stated "The Government of New Zealand has entered into contract with the California, New Zealand and Australia Mail Line for a monthly mail packet between San Francisco, Auckland and Sydney; 6d post paid for letters up to ½oz. New Zealand mail will be sent via San Francisco unless otherwise directed". The cover to Otago on the south island of New Zealand (Fig 1) is a perfect example of this route with the rate paid by the 6d chestnut (SG 122, plate 11).



Fig 1, Cover from Much Wenlock to Otago, New Zealand, 25th June 1872.

The letter was sent in a closed bag on the *City of Brooklyn* (Inman Line), which left Liverpool 27th June 1872, arrived New York 8th July. It was then forwarded to San Francisco by train, from where the steamship *Idaho* (J. D. Howell commander) left for Honolulu on 17th July. The side-wheel steamer *Nevada*, of the California, New Zealand and Australia Mail Line, took the bag from Honolulu to Auckland, arriving mid-August. The correspondent of a publication called the *Alta California* reported in 1872, that "Whole towns turned out in New Zealand when Captain James H. Blethen sailed the magnificent steamer *Nevada* into port. In Auckland, after the signal had been run up that she was making for harbour, the excitement was intense and thousands crowded on the wharf awaiting her arrival". The bag was opened in Auckland and the domestic coastal service took the letter via New Plymouth, Nelson, Wellington and Port Lyttleton (for Christchurch) to Port Chalmers (for Dunedin). The letter arrived at Dunedin on 3rd September 1872 and was delivered through Milton, south west of Dunedin, on 4th September 1872.

The contract service with the California, New Zealand and Australia Mail Line had ceased by March 1873 (G.P.O. Notice 10/73), from when mail to New Zealand was to be forwarded via Suez and Australia, as previously. However a new contract via San Francisco was given to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company from 27th September 1875 (GPO Notice 36/75) with the rate remaining at 6d.

The rather scruffy letter at Fig 2 shows the newly instituted San Francisco service used from New Zealand. The letter originated at Waimate (2nd Jan 1878), 100 miles south of Christchurch (date stamp 2 JAN 1878, code K), where it was put in a closed bag for England and forwarded to Auckland. The steamship *Australia* left Sydney on 3rd January 1878 and arrived in Auckland on 8th January, Honolulu on 21st Jan and San Francisco on 30th January, from where the bag was forwarded by rail to New York. The Cunard Line *Abyssinia*, departed New York on 6th February and off-loaded mails at Queenstown on 15th Feb, with the letter arriving at Whitchurch post office on 17th February 1878 for delivery to Terrick Hall 1½ miles north, a total journey of 46 days. The *Australia* was an iron-screw vessel of 3000 tons with engines of 2200hp and a maximum speed of 13.5 knots. She was specifically built for the start of the 1875 Trans-Pacific mail contract. The New Zealand 6d blue (probably SG 163) paid the 6d rate.



Fig 2, Cover from Waimate, New Zealand to Whitchurch, 2nd Jan 1878



Fig 3, Cover from Much Wenlock to Otago, 30th July 1872

Though service was available via San Francisco, mail had continued by the route via Suez and Australia as shown by the double rate cover, also to Otago, Fig 3. The 6d per ½oz rate to New Zealand via Southampton and Suez was first established by GPO Notice 73/1856, from 13th January 1857, when a new service of contract packets was established with the European and Australian (E&A) Royal Mail service. When the E&A failed, a new contract was awarded to the P&O from 12th March 1859. The double rate of 1/- for 1oz was paid by two 6d pale chestnuts, (SG 122, plate 11). The P&O *Surat* departed Southampton 1st August 1872, arrived Alexandria 15th August, from where the bag went overland to Suez. The P&O *Ellora* departed Suez 17th August, arrived in Galle (Ceylon, Sri Lanka) 31st August. The P&O *Bangalore* departed Galle 1st September 1872, arrived Sydney 23rd September 1872, from where the bag was transferred to Auckland and the letter forwarded to Dunedin by the coastal service, arriving on 5th October 1872 and Milton on the same day, 67 days in transit.

The Reverend H. W. Wayne, Anglican vicar of Much Wenlock, and his wife, were writing to their son Frederick in Otago. Frederick Wayne was educated at Bridgnorth Grammar School, Trinity College, Cambridge and the London School of Mines. He sailed to Sydney, Australia in 1859, and reached Port Lyttelton (Christchurch) on the 1st of January 1860. In those days, newcomers with sufficient finances purchased large acreages with sheep runs, making money from the wool. Mr. Wayne's investment was not successful as his sheep became diseased and he sold the run in 1871 to purchase the large Akatore estate, near Milton, Otago, which he relinquished about 1885 to become a land agent. He was a politician becoming a JP in 1862, later a local councillor and in the late 1860s he represented the constituency of Hampden in the NZ General Assembly. In 1864 he married a daughter of the Rev. George Barber, M.A., Queen's College, Cambridge, and they had four sons and one daughter.

*Look to the
Box, by Warrior Queen
(as said by Shaw & Saville)
Consigned to Dever & M^cLean
said to leave E. Ind. Docks at 8th Aug.*

A note on the back flap, (left), states "Look to the box by the *Warrior Queen*", a ship chartered by Shaw and Saville, which left London on 25th August 1872 (not 8th as per note) and arrived at Port Chalmers on 10th December. Did the box contain that year's Christmas gifts?

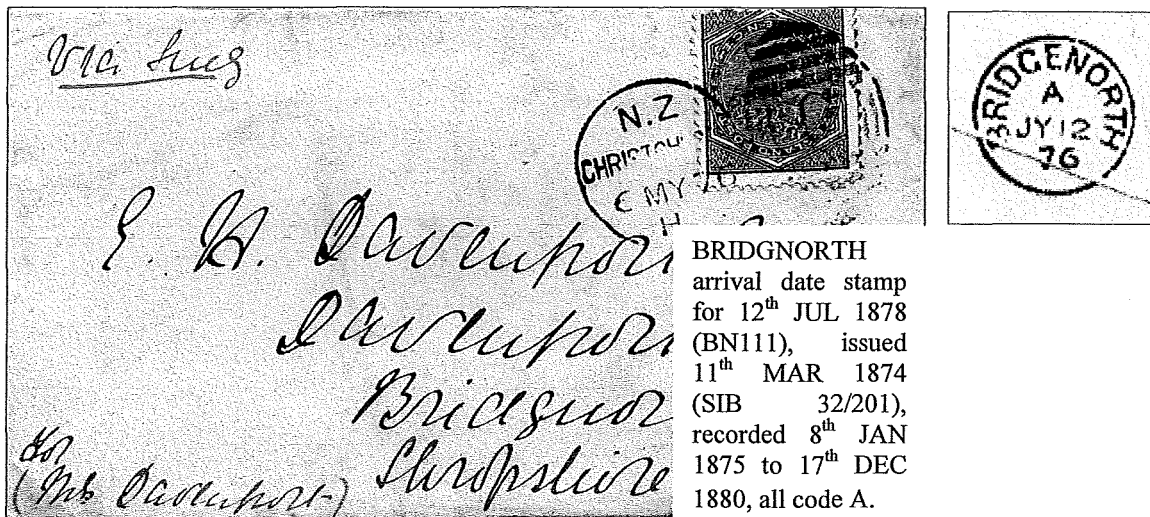


Fig 4, Cover from Christchurch to Bridgnorth, 6th May 1876

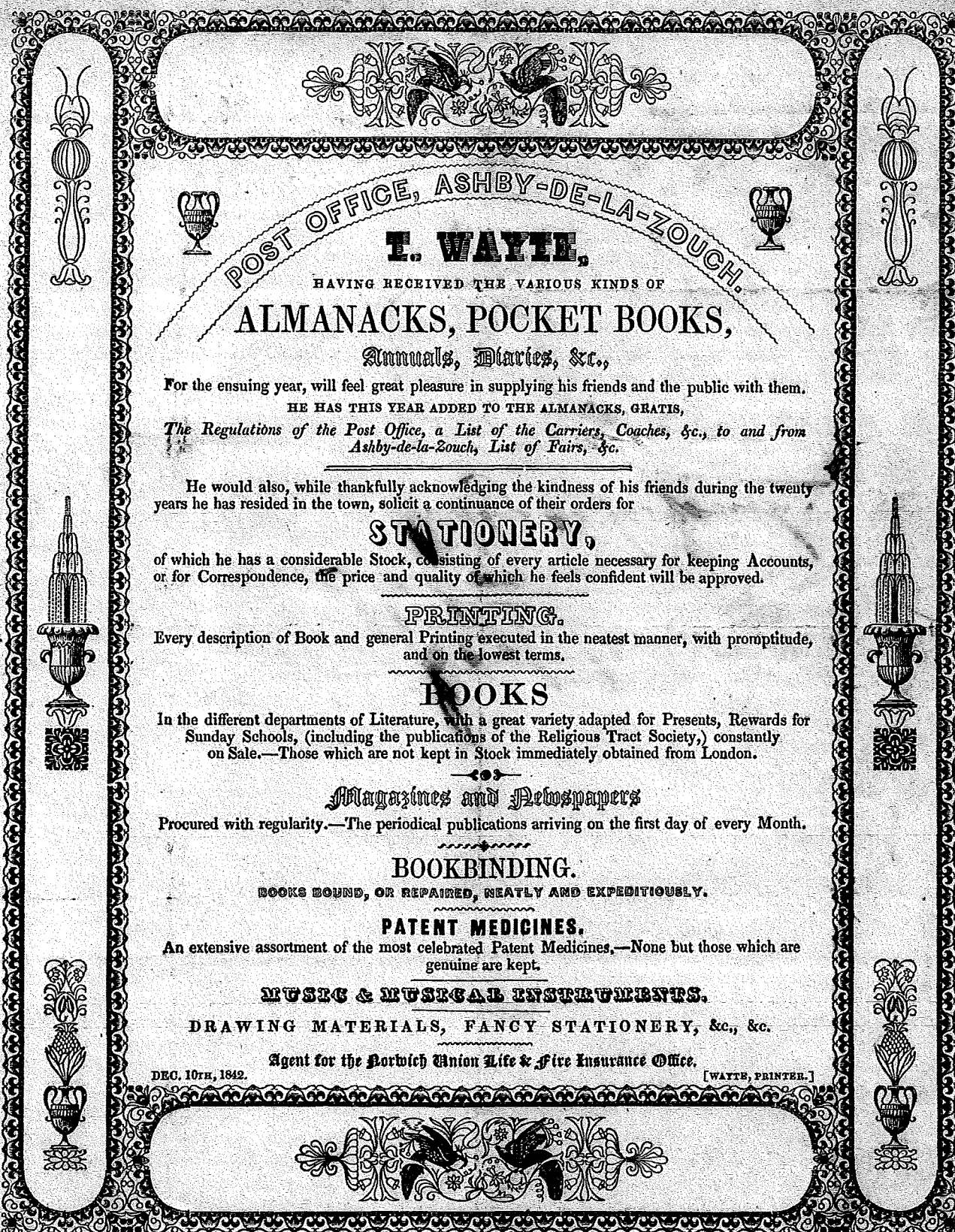
A letter from New Zealand to Bridgnorth, Shropshire via Suez is shown at Fig 4, a New Zealand 6d blue paying the 6d rate. The letter was put in a closed bag for Sydney, where the P&O *Avoca*, left for Melbourne on 12th May; the bag transferred to the P&O *Bangalore*, which left Melbourne on 16th May and arrived at Galle on 7th June. The *Hindustan* left Galle on 8th June and arrived in Southampton on 11th July, the letter reaching Bridgnorth on 12th July 1876.

These were not the only mail routes from Britain to New Zealand in the latter part of the 19th century. A GPO Notice, (24/66), of 28th May 1866 announced a route via Panama to Wellington at 1/- per ounce, pre-paid, reduced to 6d in September 1866 and ceased operation by February 1869. By 1870 the route via Brindisi was open at a 9d rate, reduced to 8d on 1st July 1876, with 8d also charged for mail on the Marseilles route. The long sea route from Southampton ceased on 1st February 1880 with mail by the Brindisi route reduced to 6d in March of that year. The long sea route was reinstated on 1st January 1889 with the P&O and the Italian Orient Line steamers from London carrying mail at 4d per ½oz, postcards 2d. Finally the letter rate reduced to 2½d on 1st January 1891 with New Zealand entering the Universal Postal Union on 1st October 1891, the rate remaining at 2½d until the end of the century and beyond.

References: North American Mail Sailings 1840 to 1875, Hubbard and Winter, US Classics Soc 1988.
UK Letter Rates Inland and Overseas 1635 to 1900, Tabart, HH Sales 2nd Edition 2003
Australia New Zealand UK mails to 1880; Rates Routes and Ships Out and Home, Tabart, 2004
The Hocken Collection, University of Otago, New Zealand, Bulletin 58, August 2008
The Postal Markings of Shropshire, Part 1. ed. Atkins Shropshire Postal History Soc (2008)
<http://www.maritimeheritage.org/ships/ss.html>

THOMAS WAYTE OF ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH

I would like to thank Richard Farman for sending of copy of a leaflet produced by Thomas Wayte who was postmaster at Ashby-de-la-Zouch for about thirty years from February 1838.




POST OFFICE, ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH.
T. WAYTE,
 HAVING RECEIVED THE VARIOUS KINDS OF
ALMANACKS, POCKET BOOKS,
Annuals, Diaries, &c.,
 For the ensuing year, will feel great pleasure in supplying his friends and the public with them.
 HE HAS THIS YEAR ADDED TO THE ALMANACKS, GRATIS,
The Regulations of the Post Office, a List of the Carriers, Coaches, &c., to and from
Ashby-de-la-Zouch, List of Fairs, &c.
 He would also, while thankfully acknowledging the kindness of his friends during the twenty
 years he has resided in the town, solicit a continuance of their orders for
STATIONERY,
 of which he has a considerable Stock, consisting of every article necessary for keeping Accounts,
 or for Correspondence, the price and quality of which he feels confident will be approved.
PRINTING.
 Every description of Book and general Printing executed in the neatest manner, with promptitude,
 and on the lowest terms.
BOOKS
 In the different departments of Literature, with a great variety adapted for Presents, Rewards for
 Sunday Schools, (including the publications of the Religious Tract Society,) constantly
 on Sale.—Those which are not kept in Stock immediately obtained from London.
—
Magazines and Newspapers
 Procured with regularity.—The periodical publications arriving on the first day of every Month.
BOOKBINDING.
 BOOKS BOUND, OR REPAIRED, NEATLY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY.
PATENT MEDICINES.
 An extensive assortment of the most celebrated Patent Medicines.—None but those which are
 genuine are kept.
MUSIC & MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.
DRAWING MATERIALS, FANCY STATIONERY, &c., &c.
 Agent for the Norwich Union Life & Fire Insurance Office.
 DEC. 10th, 1842. [WAYTE, PRINTER.]



Penny Posts into Oxfordshire from without.

READING (Berkshire) PENNY POST

into Oxfordshire

1811 – 1840

The Reading Penny Post was established in 1811 and further extended in the 1830s. Only the initial establishment served villages in Oxfordshire and directly concerns us. In general, the Reading Penny Post served towns and villages in Berkshire.

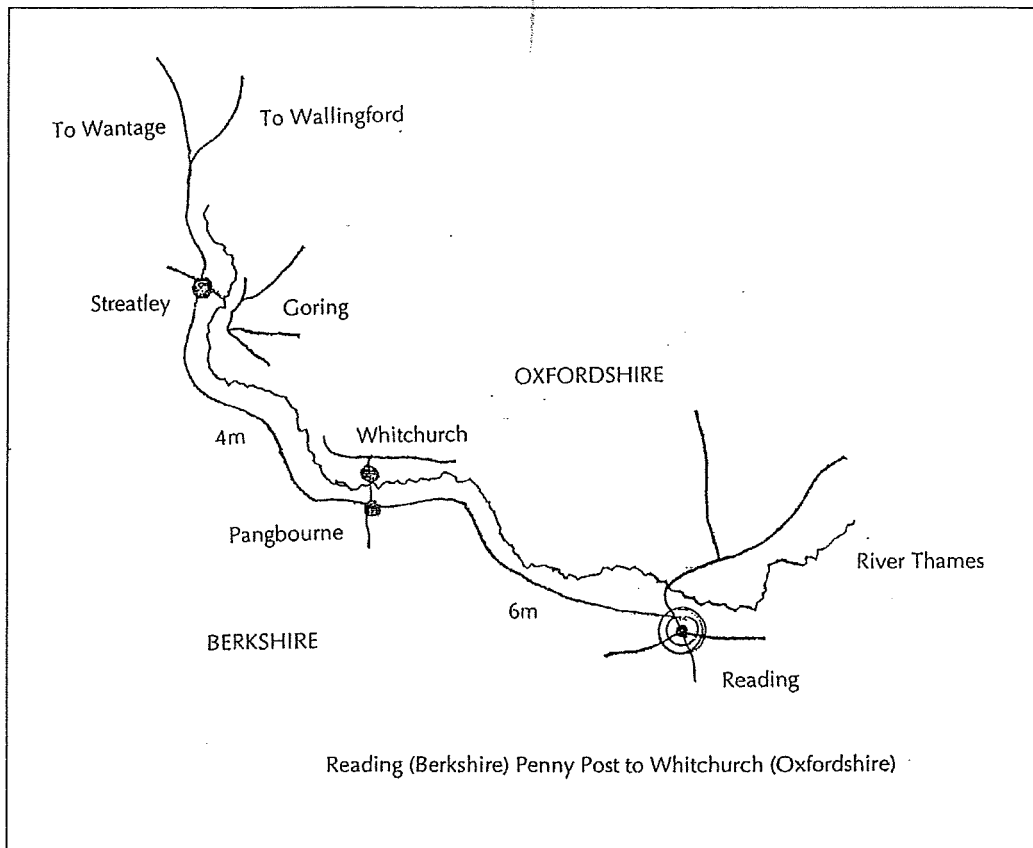
On 16th May 1810, the surveyor wrote a preliminary report addressing the possibility of establishing some kind of penny post at Reading. In it he confirmed Francis Freeling's known fears that such a post would be difficult, if not impractical, to implement. He identified eight distinct local delivery routes, no two of which could be combined. The surveyor also reported that he believed the number of letters to be small and he did not consider a penny post likely to be beneficial to the revenue or likely to increase "public accommodation". He wrote again on 31st May to advise Francis Freeling that he had obtained a record of the letters and newspapers sent from Reading to Streatley and the number of letters brought back to Reading by the messenger. He admitted that the latter far exceeded his expectations. Even so, he was still not prepared to recommend taking the delivery out of the Reading postmaster's hands. The postmaster's unofficial messenger carried parcels, even to the more remote villages, and he doubted he could be re-employed on similar terms. He thought an official penny post might dissatisfy as many persons as it would please.

In November 1810, the Postmaster General received a Memorial from the principal inhabitants of a number of towns and villages on the route of, or close to, a new road constructed to Wantage seeking an earlier delivery of the letters. Many residents were said to have mercantile business in London and yet were unable to answer letters by return of post. The applicants favoured the establishment of a "Mail" serving all the parishes between Reading and Wantage and continuing to Farringdon, where, they claimed, it would expedite the correspondence with such counties as Gloucester, Worcester, Hereford and Monmouth. They also suggested it would add to the public revenue. Among the eighteen signatures on the memorial, no fewer than seven were residents of Whitchurch, an Oxfordshire village close to the new road but across the River Thames, including the Rector of Whitchurch. Mr Scott, the surveyor, recommended dismissal of the petition saying the inhabitants of Wantage would receive their letters much later than before and a ride from Reading to Wantage could only be established at "great expense". He also commented that, if a penny post were to be established, the rider would need to keep to the main road, without branching to the right or left. It would necessitate the expense of new receiving houses and, he believed, residents of villages in the neighbourhood, but not on the main road, would suffer great inconvenience.

By April 1811, the surveyor had a change of heart. He finally appreciated that the carrier, who the Reading postmaster employed on the "Wallingford Road" (which diverged from the Wantage road just beyond Streatley) regarded the carriage of letters as subservient to his parcel business and therefore did not reach any of the places along the road until a late hour. Mr Scott, now recognising that the petitioners had a legitimate complaint, proposed the establishment of a penny post along the Wantage road from Reading but only as far as Streatley, the county boundary. It was not quite what the petitioners of 1810 had hoped for, of course but it would give them a much improved delivery. The distance from Reading to Streatley was said to be about nine miles and the surveyor advised Freeling that a penny post messenger could reach Streatley by half past nine in summer and just fifteen minutes later in winter. Surprisingly, the residents and the surveyor recommended that the existing messenger/carrier be employed as the official messenger with a caveat that, if his performance failed to meet the new requirement, he would be replaced. The "estimated" expense of the Reading Penny Post would be £60-5-10d. Establishment was recommended as an experiment for one year, the usual procedure at the time.

Arrangements were apparently completed by 29th April 1811 and the penny post was "to commence (in) the middle of next week". It has been suggested elsewhere that it may have been delayed until 1812 but there can be no doubt the Penny Post had begun by 6th July 1811. The breakdown of the cost of the new post was 20/- a week for the foot messenger between Reading and Streatley, two guineas a

year for penny post receivers at Pangbourne and Streatley (both in Berkshire) and one guinea for a receiver at Whitchurch (Oxfordshire). That totalled £57-5-0 and the balance of the "estimated" £60-5-10 was accounted for by a payment of 2d a day for crossing the bridge to Whitchurch, 365 days a year (sic).



The Oxford Penny Post messenger had been required to make a similar payment when crossing Lord Abingdon's Private Bridge over the Thames. The Whitchurch bridge was a much less grand construction, opened in 1792. (The current bridge is the third on the site and is due to be replaced in 2013/14.) However it is, like Lord Abingdon's Bridge, a bridge maintained by toll payments and, although the charge for a pedestrian was originally a halfpenny, it had evidently increased to one penny by 1811.

The profit after the first year of operation of the penny post to Streatley was £42-15-3 and it increased to £57-3-3 in the second year. The post was made permanent. The report of penny post profits for the year ending 5th July 1836 showed a further increase to £63-9-10. By 1838, the payment to the foot messenger was unchanged but the salary of the Pangbourne receiver had been increased to £5-5-0. Although the Streatley receiver was still paid £2-2-0, from 1838 he was paid a similar additional sum for conveying letters to and from Goring. (See the Henley Penny Post for the relevance of this payment.) Meanwhile, the Whitchurch (Oxfordshire) receiver's remuneration was almost trebled to £3-2-0.

References:

Post 40/39R/1810 and attachments
 Post 40/86/1811
 Post 40/200/1813
 Post 9/132, pages 243 & 244
 Appendix No.24 of the 1st Report of the Select Committee on Postage (1838)

HANDSTAMPS OF THE READING PENNY POST

Post town: Reading

Receiving houses: Streatley (Berkshire) No.1, Whitchurch (Oxfordshire) No.2,
Pangbourne (Berkshire) probably No.3 and Sonning (Berkshire) No.4



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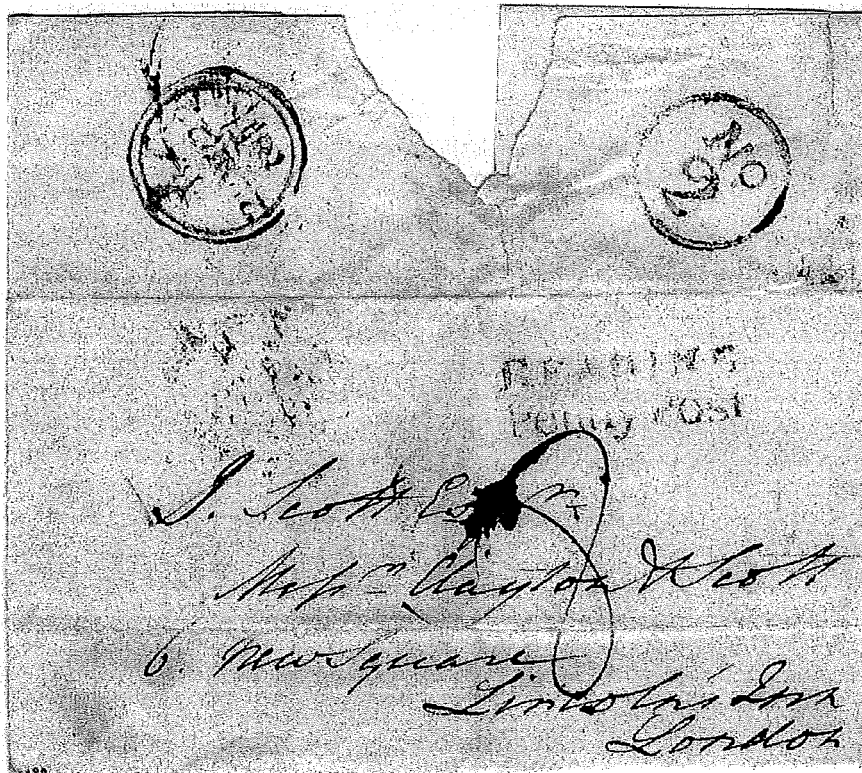
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25JUN33- 4FEB34

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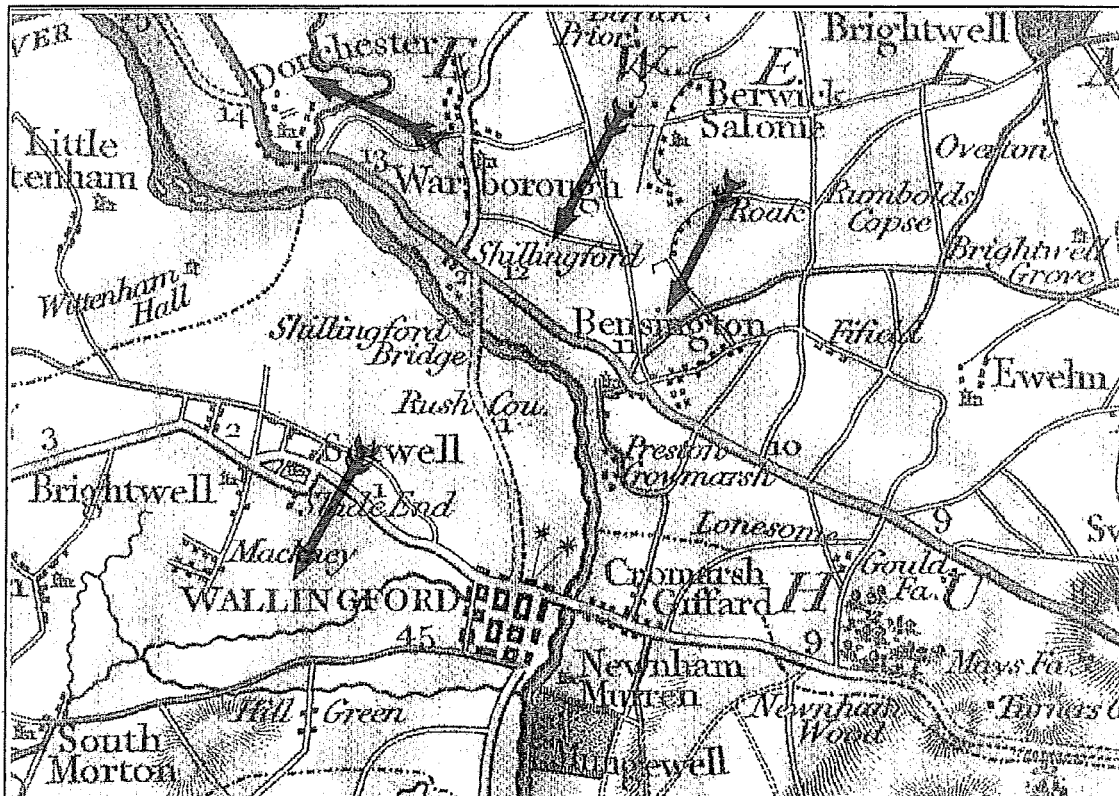
The only recorded cover with the first Whitchurch 'No.2' mark (see above).

WALLINGFORD (Berkshire) PENNY POST into Oxfordshire

1812 – 1837

The London-Stroud mailcoach, via Nettlebed and Wallingford, was withdrawn on 20th July 1812. On 13th July, Mr Scott, the surveyor, wrote to Francis Freeling to tell him of the changes he proposed to make to the bye correspondence of Nettlebed and Wallingford from 20th of the month and Freeling obtained the approval of the Postmasters General for the new arrangements the following day.

An existing ride from Nettlebed to Wallingford was to be discontinued. In its place, the London bags would be exchanged at Benson, presumably using the Gloucester Mail, and a foot messenger would be appointed, who would leave the town at 6am for Wallingford. The same messenger would then return from Wallingford as a penny post letter carrier to serve Shillingford and Dorchester, where he would arrive by 9am. Although the arrangements for the delivery of letters in Benson is not spelt out, it would appear they were also carried to Wallingford, sorted there and returned to Benson by the penny post messenger, passing through the town on his way to Shillingford and Dorchester. Benson became receiving house No.1, Shillingford No.2 and Dorchester No.3.



Wallingford Penny Post

The surveyor proposed that the messenger be paid 18/- a week and the Benson receiver £18 a year, principally because of his responsibility for the bag exchange. £2-4-0 would be paid to the receiver at Shillingford and £8-16-0 to the Dorchester receiver. It is not clear why the Dorchester receiver was to be paid more than was customary but we know the payment continued through to 1840, even after the Benson Penny Post was established. The total cost of the Wallingford Penny Post would therefore be £75-0-0 a year and that was said to be £7 less than the cost of the earlier arrangements while, at the same time, providing a better service to the villages than they had ever enjoyed.

The distances in this penny post were small. It was two and a half miles from Wallingford to Benson and a little over three miles from Benson to Dorchester, through Shillingford. Although there has been a bridge at Wallingford since the 12th century, in the 1838 Allowances to Deputy Postmasters there is mention of a payment to Wallingford of £1-10-0 for ferryage of the Benson foot messenger. As that is not mentioned in the proposals for the Wallingford Penny Post, it was possibly a later temporary arrangement, perhaps due to damage to the bridge. (It is known that three arches of the bridge had to be re-built between 1810 and 1812 following flood damage.)

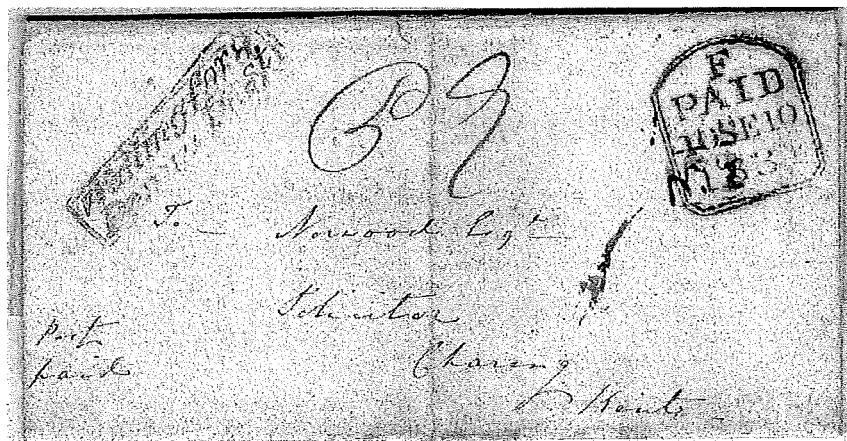
As was usual at the time, the new penny post was regarded as a trial for its first year of operation. On 3rd October 1814, the surveyor reported the produce of the Wallingford Penny Post from 5th January 1813 to 5th January 1814. The expense was said to be £75-18-8 – a little more than originally estimated – and the produce £58-9-8. To this he added £7-3-4 saved by dispensing with the ride from Nettlebed and he therefore claimed a “nett produce” of £65-13-0. In a minute to the Postmasters General dated 4th October, Francis Freeling described this (and the results of four other penny posts) as “perfectly satisfactory” and recommended that the penny post be made permanent. This recommendation was approved.

In 1829, an application was received from Messrs Wells & Co, bankers of Wallingford. They were unhappy that mailbags were being carried to and from Benson by an unarmed foot messenger and they asked for security to be improved by arranging for a mailcoach to be diverted to travel through Wallingford again. The matter was referred to Mr Scott, the surveyor, who said it was not possible to send either the Gloucester Mail or the revived Stroud Mail, which now ran through Abingdon, through Wallingford. Freeling himself had suggested to the surveyor that the foot messenger be provided with a brace of pistols. The surveyor was not in favour of arming any foot messengers since it would set a precedent and there were other posts in the area he considered to be of more importance than this one. However Freeling argued that this post was not only concerned with serving a few villages but in taking the London bags, containing the bankers’ remittances, to and from a post town. The distance was short but the walk was performed in the dark in the winter and involved crossing the Thames. He therefore felt justified in recommending the additional small expense of arming the foot messenger and the Postmaster General agreed with him.

The Wallingford Penny Post continued until 1837 when Benson became a post town and thereafter ran its own penny post to Shillingford and Dorchester. A full description of the Benson Penny Post appears in an earlier section.

References

Post 42/170/1812
 Post 40/209/1814
 Post 42/994/1829
 Post 9/132, page 376



The Wallingford Penny Post handstamp struck in 1831 on a letter to Kent.

HANDSTAMPS OF THE WALLINGFORD PENNY POST

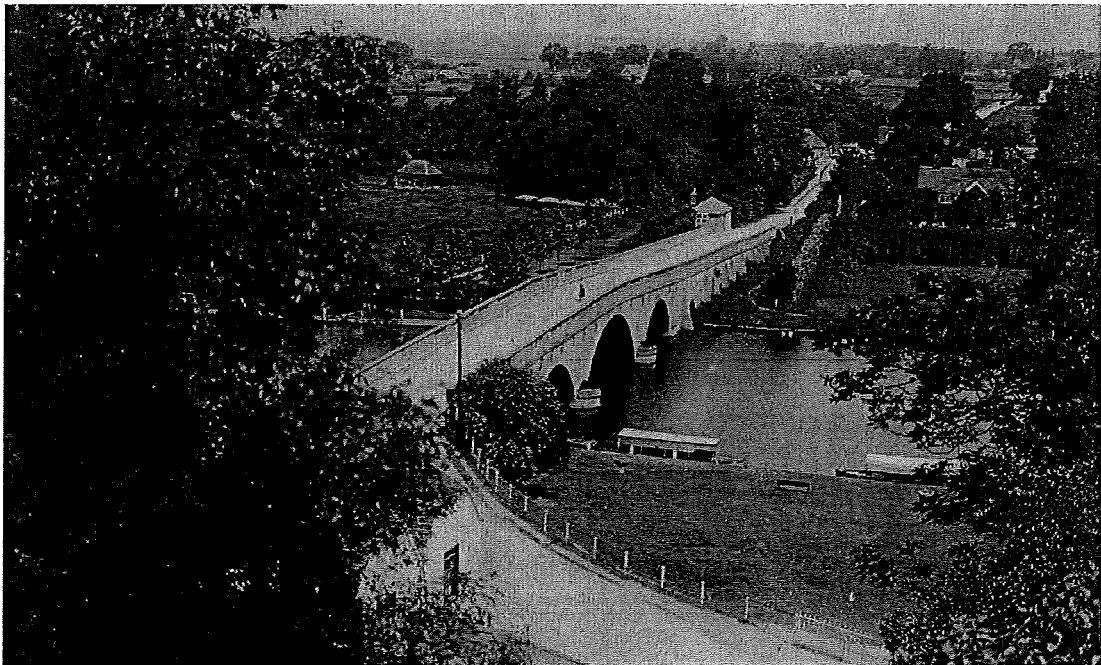
Post town: Wallingford

Receiving houses: Benson (No.1), Shillingford (No.2) and Dorchester (No.3)

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Wallingford Bridge

A MISCELLANY OF LEICESTERSHIRE HANDSTAMPS

I do not know if there is a Post Office regulation which states the maximum number of letters which can be placed round the circumference of a circular datestamp, but, if there is, I initially thought that the handstamps for Woodhouse Eaves (fig. 1), Quorn (fig. 2) and Tudor Road, Hinckley (fig 3.) with thirty-one letters must be close to the maximum permitted. Then I noticed that the postmark of Great Bowden (fig. 4) contained thirty-two letters. Then, at a recent fair I came across a postcard of Waltham-on-the-Wolds, and when I turned it over found a postmark (fig. 5) with not only thirty-five letters but also two small solid arcs. Surely, it is not possible to fit more letters than this around a datestamp? The postmark used in the post office at New Harborough, Market Harborough, Leics contained thirty-four letters, but my one copy does reproduce well. Whoever ordered the handstamp for the office in Moira Road, Donisthorpe when it became a sub-office of Swadlincote could not get in all the letters of the full postal address, so we have the name of an office which does not exist (fig. 6). Even if there is a Moira Road in Swadlincote, there is certainly no post office there.



fig. 1

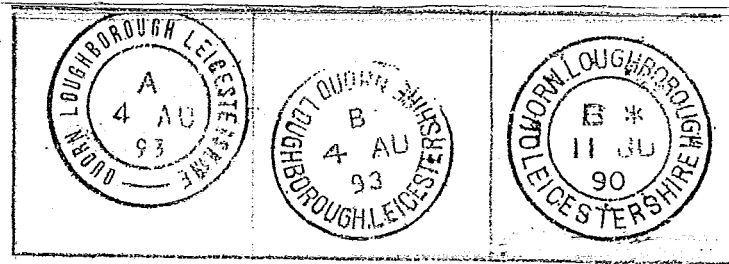


fig. 2



fig. 3



fig. 4



fig. 5

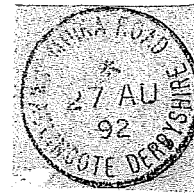


fig. 6

I was aware that there was a place on the Isle of Angelsey called Valley but I had not come across anywhere of that name in the Melton Mowbray area. The two datestamps illustrated in fig. 7 should make the situation clear.

The Great Bowden handstamp shown in fig. 4 is first recorded used in January 1948, so it remained in use for about fifty years. The previous handstamp had been issued in November 1883 and remained in use, apart from a period in October 1914 when a skeleton was used (during recutting?) until August 1946, if not later. So, three handstamps were used in 110 years. But, in the ten years from 1998 to 2008 the same office has used three handstamps as illustrated in fig. 8. Is it a case of "they don't make them like they used to". The observant will notice that since 2000 Great Bowden has become a posttown!

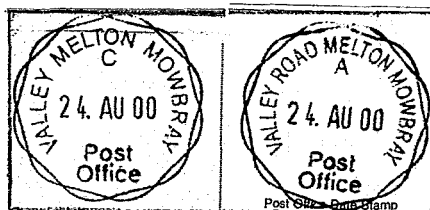


Fig. 7

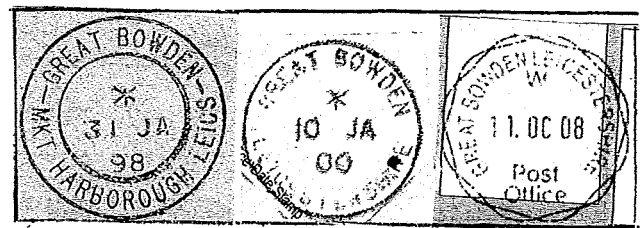


fig. 8

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

It is intended that this will appear by mid-June. I do not know what it will contain so it is imperative that articles, short and long, are sent to

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