

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.midlandphs.org.uk



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April 1863 cover from the Shropshire village of Bromfield, near Ludlow, to Dresden, Saxony, via Belgium, with the four 1d red stars and 2d blue cancelled by the 3HOS 079 of Bromfield. Paid to Destination (PD in circle on front) and BROMFIELD date stamp on the reverse. The 6d rate to Saxony first appeared in the GPO Postal Guide of 1st April 1860. Please turn to page 6 to see a range of member's favourite covers and postal items and another of **Jim Ball's** favourite covers.

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ERIC LEWIS (25th March 1931 – 1st May 2018)

There can be few societies with the remarkable good fortune to have been blessed with a husband and wife team of the calibre of Eric and Elizabeth Lewis. In 2003 they both received the ABPS Award of Merit, a unique achievement. Ten years ago it was my sad task to write an appreciation of Elizabeth at the time of her death. Now we have lost Eric at the age of 87 and it is surely the end of an era.

Eric and Elizabeth were at the meeting that created the Midland (GB) Postal History Society in 1975. At the first formal meeting held at the Birmingham and Midland Institute in the autumn of that year, Eric displayed Lichfield Postal History and Elizabeth Birmingham Spoons. At the second meeting on Valentine's Day in 1976, Eric displayed Birmingham Postal History of the 1830s and 1840s while Elizabeth showed Worcester material. Perhaps the variety of those displays was the first indication of the magnitude and breadth of their collections and of their postal history knowledge. For more than forty years members have been treated to Eric's displays drawn from an apparently bottomless pit of obscure and frequently humorous postal history material; he never failed to show items that left us amazed at their rarity or intrigued by their quirky relevance. One wonders if we shall ever see their like again.

Although Eric was essentially a quiet and unassuming person, he served the Society in many formal roles when, if his personal preference had prevailed, he would have chosen to remain in the background. He was our Secretary from 1993 to 2003, Treasurer from 2010 to 2013 (after assisting Elizabeth in that role for the preceding 14 years!), President from 2005 to 2007 and Auction Officer for more years than anyone can recall. As a describer of auction lots he was beyond compare and, if his somewhat haphazard handwriting left those who typed his material with a challenge worthy of an IQ test, it was all part of the fun. To ease our pain, he would often write in capital letters, appreciating that what was obvious to him might be less obvious to others. Eric did much more than describe the lots; he assembled them, accepted the book bids and dispatched lots and invoices to successful bidders. He carried out these tasks year after year with no fuss.

Beyond his immense contribution to the Society, it is not easy for those of us who knew him for the best part of half a century, to know his life outside it. Like Elizabeth, he was a person of great individual generosity and quiet humour. He was also a superb craftsman joiner. The work he has done for local churches is of a quality that would be the pride of any medieval carpenter and it is true that it is often impossible to tell where one master craftsman's work ended and Eric's began. That will remain as a great legacy.

As our Birmingham County Editor, for many years with Elizabeth and lately with Ian Baker, he compiled a collection of Birmingham postal history material unlikely ever to be assembled again. He had been a member of the Birmingham PS before our society was formed and he never relinquished the link. At his funeral on 30th May both societies were well represented, the Midland (GB) PHS by, among others, the President, Chairman and Treasurer. We offer our sincere condolences to Sharon, who has always felt like a Society member herself since she accompanied Eric to all our meetings from an early age, to David and to the grandchildren. They know how lucky they were to be of his family.

Thanks to John Calladine for this appreciation of Eric.

The Society Auction 2019.

With the sad passing of Eric earlier this year, many wondered if we would continue the annual auction. The good news is that we WILL be carrying on with the Auction as already shown in our programme for this season. The date will be Saturday 25th May 2019 at The Friends Meeting House Cotteridge, near Kings Norton station.

Of course, with Eric's death, we have had to think about how we run the Auction, as Eric did do quite a lot "behind the scenes". It has been an interesting time between the Auctioneer, Treasurer and myself, coming up with a workable timetable and task list and we are confident it will work.

The most major change of all is that now all vendors will have to produce their own descriptions of the material submitted and send in those descriptions on a Vendor form. Forms are available at meetings but if you are unable to come to the next meeting, please let me know and I will post one to you.

When sending in your form please send your material too at the address on the Form. If you are Royal Mail averse, please bring lots to meetings or get in touch with me to arrange delivery. Please do this as soon as possible so that we can get started on typing up the catalogue. This is probably the longest part of the whole process so sending material as early as possible ensures inclusion in the catalogue. We will have to limit the number of lots as usual, but this will be to the same numbers as previous years.

The reason in requesting your material straight away is that when we are producing the catalogue we will be able to check it against your description so that a) we have the right item; and b) the description matches the item. This may sound odd, but a lot of absentee bidders rely upon an accurate description to bid confidently. I am sure none of us would like to receive a 1d red (in any condition) after bidding on a "four margin penny black"!

As a buyer, you will see very little change. Catalogues will be issued in April and we hope to include a lot more illustrations of the material on offer. We would also encourage you to be present at the Auction, but if you really, really can't make it, postal bids are to be sent to me as Chairman. All relevant information will be found in the catalogue.

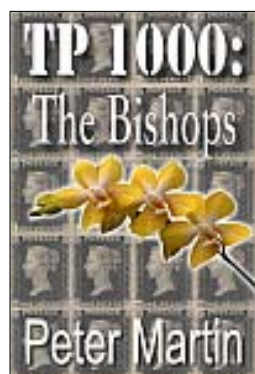
Of course, should you at any time want to clarify anything please e-mail me at mdallinson@btinternet.com and I will do my best to provide an answer.

Thank you, **Malcolm Allinson**

STOP PRESS: WORPEX 2019 cancelled. The Midland Philatelic Federation Spring Convention will now be on 19th May 2019 at the Benn Hall, Rugby. No news of a new location for our proposed meeting on 11th May 2019.

The Telford Stamp and Card Club – Noted giving a talk to the club in September were our members **Brian Atkins** (Secure Mail in Shropshire 1830 to 1870) and in October **Alan Godfrey** gave a very interesting talk 'The Life Story of Rowland Hill'. Did you know Hill had been a teacher, an inventor and Chairman of the London to Brighton Railway? Alan stated 'He was also a bit of a 'leftie' our Rowland' in that he was always looking to pay his workers a good wage – now there's a novel idea! No zero hours there then.

Peter Martin, (Singapore) has had his book published, available on Amazon at £9.95 or £2.28 on Kindle. See https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/1720602050/ref=sr_1_sc_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1533217131&sr=1-1-spell&keywords=tp1000.



Peter states 'I got the idea for the book because of the frustration of not finding any 19th century items for the postal history of my home village, Clowne, in north-east Derbyshire. When one of my cousins sent me our family tree to 1660, I thought it would be great to have a time machine to travel back to find the stamps I wanted as well as find out more about the life of my ancestors.'

A reviewer on Amazon wrote: *What a sensational, superbly constructed, story. At times I felt that I was standing alongside the main characters ... so wonderfully descriptive was the writing. This story has a very clever concept and delivery which had me hooked from start to finish and consequently I read it within a couple of days of receiving it, it was 'unputdownable'. I can see this book and its author being deservedly very successful.*

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING – FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, EDGBASTON, 15th September 2018

The Friends meeting House at Edgbaston turned out to be an excellent venue being a very short walk, along the elegant George Street, from Five Ways railway station with car parking space for several cars both in front and around the side. The display was by Tom Slemons, a retired United States Air Force and United Airlines pilot who developed a love of Suffolk during his time here at RAF Bentwaters flying F-111 jets. Tom worked on a book of Suffolk postal history for five years and his magnum opus was published by the Rossiter Trust last year. It was such a pity that we were a little down on numbers with 15 present, though we did pick up a new member during the day to compensate – welcome Tom George.

The first half of his Suffolk display, occupying the boards until the afternoon break, was a comprehensive chronological survey of Suffolk postal markings during the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century. It would be difficult to think of any English county that has a range of postmarks comparable to those of Suffolk, including unique hand struck 1s in its penny posts and ship letter marks from no less than four arrival ports. The earliest recorded Suffolk hand stamp is a 1705 strike of Ipswich.



One of the most striking marks was an August 1771 (W)OODBRIDGE that appeared to be lacking its initial letter entirely, on a letter to Cognac via London (see left). So much mail was handled that during the 18th century that Woodbridge had three further single line and three two-line name stamps.



A 22 March 1836 cover from Melton via London to Stanmore showed the straight line MELTON.S (47m x 5mm) with letter S added to denote Suffolk, though the last letters were not clear.

Other marks seen were of BECCLES (1742, 1753, 1791), BUNGAY (1791) and BOXFORD (1790) as well as an 1836 cover with Boxford in lower case. Also see the next page for a further account of mail from Beccles.

Bury St Edmunds had a wide range of marks, unusually several struck in red ink. They included a number of concave, convex and horseshoe name stamps, the horseshoe of 1791-95 being 'Bury S' to distinguish it from such as the Lancashire Bury. The first mileage mark used Bury St E but other mileage marks favoured the full name or Bury St Edms. Newmarket was yet another office with a large number of 18th century hand stamps, including a dozen or more mileage marks, some straight line and some circular, plus five different 1 penny marks, all found struck in red ink. Tom stated that the amount of mail from Newmarket increased, unsurprisingly, during the racing season.

Hadleigh's first mileage mark of 1801 was Hadleigh / 69, replaced two years later by Hadleigh / 81, a significant difference. Hadleigh was a sub-office of Ipswich and used the 69 of that town, but Hadleigh became a post town in 1802 and thereafter able to use its own mileage to London. Boxford was quite late removing the figures from its mileage stamp and replaced it with a very different looking single line stamp in the mid-1830s, the example shown dated 1836. The scarce KESSINGLAND / 108 mileage (50mm x 5mm and rarity G in the county catalogue) was also viewed. CODDENHAM was represented by a 1797 56mm x 5mm straight-line and an 1806 boxed mileage. Tom explained there were only two marks because the post road moved. Important people lived there and there was a post office but no marks used. Letters were left by a tree and picked up by the mail coach! A 22mm x 11mm ORFORD / 90 boxed mileage was used from 1807 to 1843 and a 27mm x 11mm ORFORD / 90, mileage between two lines, was used from 1840 to 1843. Orford was a penny post town (ORFORD / Penny Post, used 1826 to 1836) but when Woodbridge became a penny post town, Orford began using its mileage marks as cancellations.

Notable among the Suffolk penny posts was Ipswich, with 16 receiving houses, though it only issued four numbers for them. Not content with no fewer than a dozen hand struck 1s, the Ipswich office also boasted five hand struck 2s, interesting 'paid' stamps and two very different hand struck 4s. The penny post hand stamps can be found struck in both black and red ink. We also saw the Woodbridge 4, of which five are recorded. The one pictured left was seen on an 1845 cover from Woodbridge to Colchester and was, thus, used for post-1840 mail but a 6 DEC 1839 example was also shown, appearing to be the same hand stamp used during the 4d post period.



Tom's knowledge of Ipswich 4s was boosted when our chairman told him he had just parted with two of them! Ixworth had a lovely 'P1' mark in an oval, always recorded in red or purple from 1840. However, the oval frame gradually disappeared until there was no trace of it.

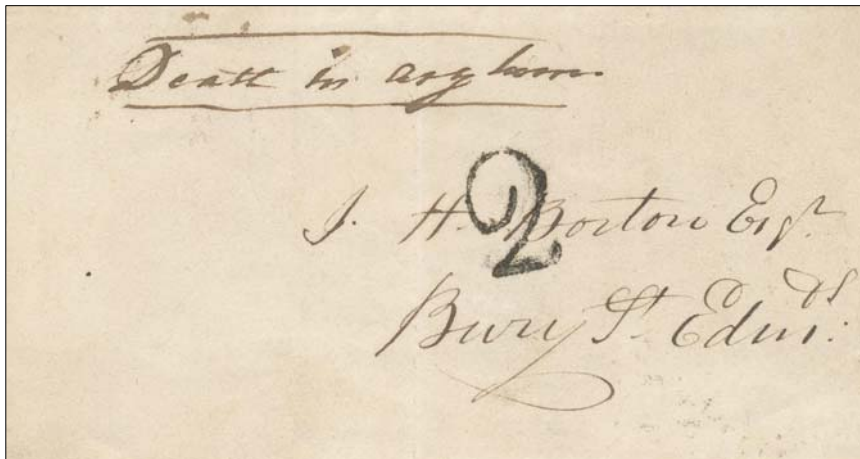
Because they are unfamiliar to land-locked Midlanders, one must mention the ship letters. We saw the concave Aldborough Ship Lre handstamp of 1809, of which there are only two records.

After the break we saw some of the later hand stamps from the 1840s and a whole section on the postal reforms of 1837-1840. The only Maltese Cross hand stamp to have survived is that of Wangford, Suffolk, and its current whereabouts appear uncertain. However, Tom was able to have three replicas made by a jeweller, of which he retains one. Perhaps the most obvious impression is of its small size. He explained that when circular date stamps were sent away for re-cuts, a skeleton stamp was brought into use, often for only a few days. Whether these skeleton stamps were held by individual offices or by the surveyor is uncertain but we saw a



RHALESWORT stamp of 1842 (left) with no month or day but most strikingly with a superfluous R at the beginning of the name and no H at the end. Surely this must have been a creation of the local office? The postal reforms of 1837 to 1840 included the 1837

concession of a 2d charge for letters carried less than 8 miles but also a reduction of postal charges in 1838 if the postal route along which the letter was carried (and charged) was longer, initially than the shortest distance on post roads and then, later, than the shortest distance on public roads. We saw three letters from Beccles, close to the Suffolk/Norfolk border, to Norwich (Norfolk). The first, from 1827, was charged 9d, having been carried 86 miles, the mail coach taking it from Beccles to Ipswich before it was turned for Norwich. A letter of February 1838 was charged 7d because the postmaster calculated (incorrectly) the shortest distance as being from Beccles to Yarmouth and Yarmouth to Norwich. Finally, a letter of March 1839 paid the correct concessionary rate of 5d, using the mileage of a direct public road between Beccles and Norwich.



William Row was postmaster of Woodbridge. He produced hand stamps for the large volume of unpaid letters. Melton, near Woodbridge, was the site of the Suffolk lunatic asylum and the January 1841 cover at left denotes the death of an inmate at the asylum.

A feature of Tom's display was the quality of many of the strikes and his book not only lists but illustrates every Suffolk hand stamp, often with further illustrations of strikes on cover. In the final sections of the display

we heard about some of the significant families from Suffolk, whose correspondence forms a significant feature of the county's postal history and, very unusually, a display of 1d black adhesives used in the county as the different plate numbers became available, starting with use of plate 1A at Newmarket on 7th May 1840 and concluding with the repaired plate 10 used at Eye, plate 11 not having reached the county before the 1d red-brown adhesives were brought into use in 1841. There was also a mid-1840 Spooner caricature with an Ipswich PD / 1 sent via Eye to Brome with mail dropped at the Scole Inn.

Of the county's families, we probably knew little of its connection to Elizabeth Fry, the Quaker social reformer, and her links to the Gurney family of bankers, part founders of Barclays Bank. She was, in fact, a Miss Gurney and married a member of the Fry family, of chocolate making fame. With so many connections to the Quakers, Tom thought it appropriate we were meeting in a Friends Meeting House!



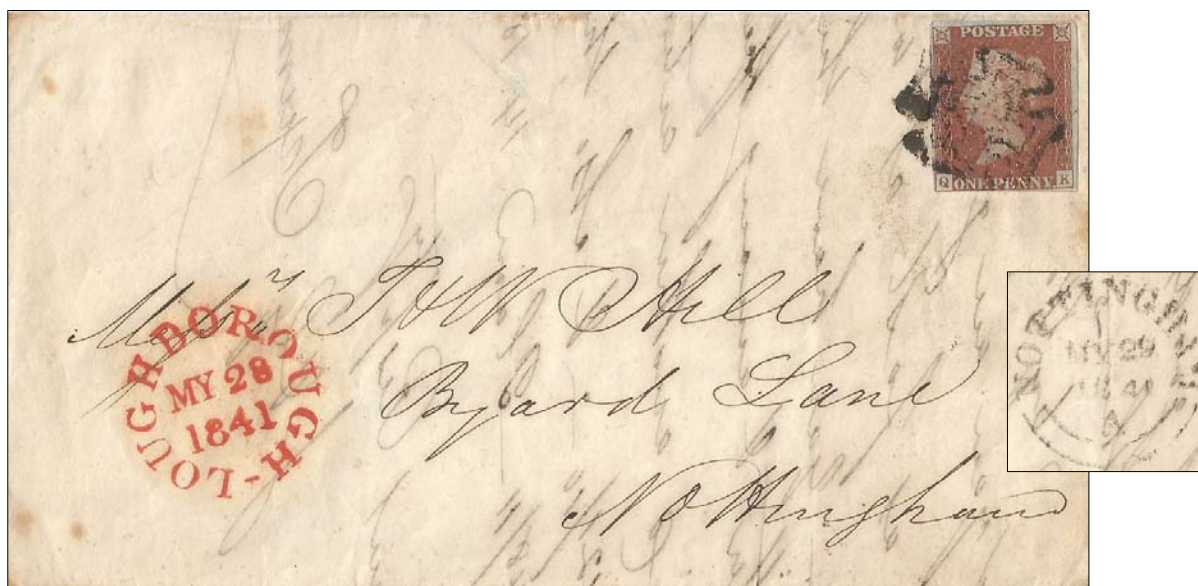
Tom also mentioned, though didn't display, an unusual post-1840 paid stamp used at Woodbridge. It was a circular mark in the form of a belt with PAID inside the belt together with the initials JD. John Dallinger was clerk to the Farmgate Union and clerks to the union had to send prepaid mail. As a result Dallinger produced his own paid stamp as illustrated left.

At the end of a wonderful display Tom was presented with a certificate of our appreciation by our Chairman, Malcolm Allinson, who also expressed the thanks of all us present who witnessed one of the best talk / displays given to the Midland society in recent years.

Your editor is indebted to John Calladine for assistance with this report.

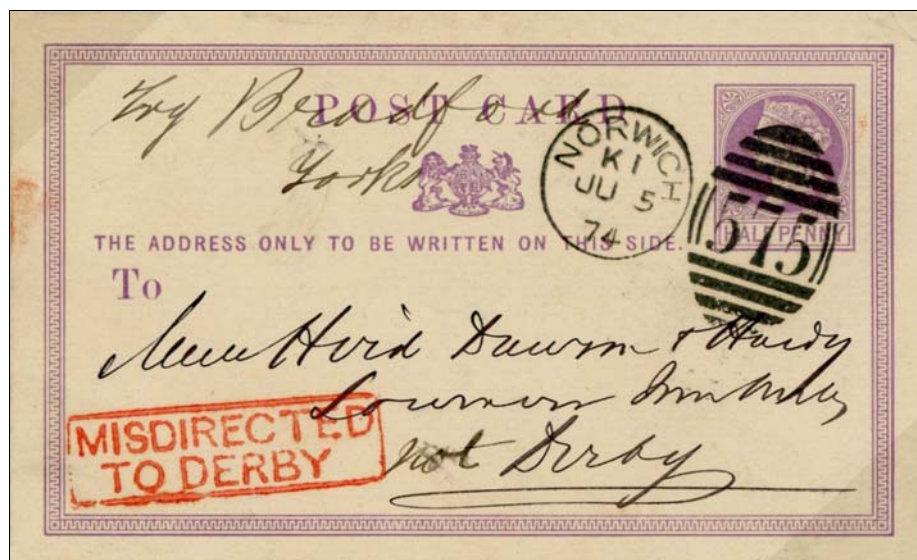
This edition of Midland Mail being the 200th, it was suggested in committee that members supply a copy of their Favourite Cover with a brief account of why it is their favourite, so here are the contributions received:

Marion Turner, Loughborough to Nottingham 1841



Thin paper entire sent from Loughborough to Nottingham with an almost 4 margin QV imperforate penny red (SG.8) cancelled with a fine black maltese cross introduced in February 1841. Also an excellent strike of the Loughborough hand stamp BCC LO 100 dated May 28th 1841 in red, known used in this colour from 18th June 1840 to 13th Oct 1847. On the reverse a Nottingham CDS in black BCC NG188(with code letter) dated May 29th 1841

James Grimwood-Taylor, June 1874 postcard, boxed **MISDIRECTED TO DERBY**



The reason that this 1874 card is my favourite Derbyshire item, is not only that it is colourful and attractive but it also reminds me of an old friend, Trevor Pickering of County Durham, now sadly no longer with us. He had an excellent collection of GB Line Engraved stamps and covers (he successfully exhibited Maltese Cross cancellations back in the 1990s), and he was a well-known 'character' who never missed a Stampex if he could help it. I think I first met him in the mid-

1970s at one of Willie Carson's excellent Glasgow auctions. I was an impecunious student at the time, just starting to build a collection of (mostly Scottish) Postal History, and Trevor was one of those annoying creatures, *the man who outbids you*.

Trevor ran an egg farm and unusually (but most profitably) did his own door-to-door deliveries (near Houghton le Spring, as far as I can recall). Over the years, we became good friends. On two occasions he told me that he had found something that '*should be in your collection rather than mine, James*'. In both cases, his asking price was very reasonable and he seemed to take almost as much pleasure in seeing the covers go into my collection as I did!

One was a 4th Dec. 1839 EL from Montrose to Edinburgh with a Last Day Scottish Additional ½d mark, that was redirected the next day to Jersey with a very fine First Day Edinburgh 4d-Post Handstruck "4" marking; it is still one

of my most treasured Postal Reforms covers. The other item that Trevor found for me was this beautiful red 1874 MISDIRECTED/TO DERBY card. The latter is certainly in my top ten of Derbyshire treasures, and the only example that I have ever seen. The only example apart, that is, from the only known (?) black example (of 1881), which is oddly also on a ½d postcard. So, taken together, they make my “favourite page” of Derbyshire.

Strangely, Derby had several “MISSENT TO” marks, and several examples of all of them are known (from 1840 to 1860+), but the Misdirected mark was hardly ever used. The distinction appears to be that Miss-sending was usually the P.O.’s fault, but Misdirecting was usually the writer’s fault. There is also the extraordinary KEVII boxed 4-line MISSENT TO DERBY / LETTERS FOR DERRY, IRELAND / SHOULD BE ADDRESSED / LONDON DERRY mark; it was 40 years before I saw an example of that mark, and I was understandably delighted to acquire it (it is also on a postcard, but that is another story which may have to wait for the 300th Midland Mail...!).

Chris Jackson, turned cover, 1840 London to Worcester, 1841 Worcester to London



This turned cover from London to Worcester is my favourite cover. The letter was sent from London to Worcester on 21st December 1840 with a plate 8 1d black stamp lettered TB cancelled with a red maltese cross (top). On the 13th May 1841 the cover was turned and sent from Worcester to London with an enclosure and so charged 2d, paid with a pair of 1d black stamps plate 10 lettered MA-MB cancelled with two strikes of the maltese cross in black.

The red ink used to cancel stamps from their introduction on 6th May 180 proved to be fugitive, could be removed and the stamp subsequently re-used. From February 1841 the Post Office changed the ink to black which could not be removed. This cover is my favourite because it shows the changes that took place when the colour of the ink was changed. The fact that both address panels can be shown is an added bonus. A further point of interest is that the address in London is a coffee house.

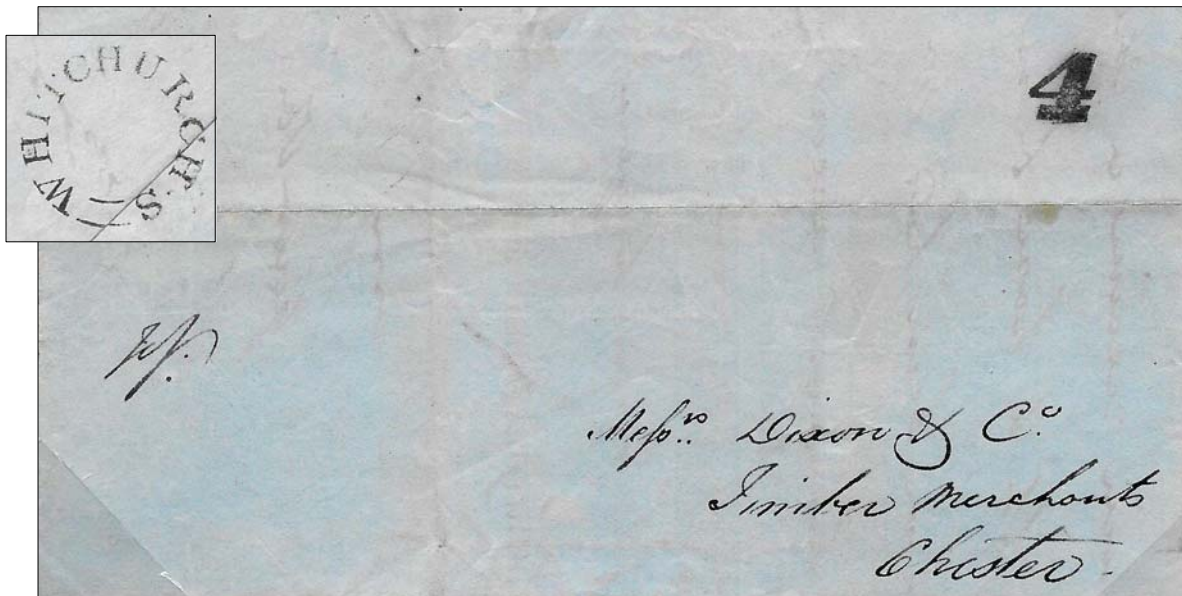
Editor's note: This turned cover was digitally 'reorganised' to allow both uses to be shown as clearly as possible.

Stuart Geddes, 1824 debtor's letter, London to Usk.



This is an 1824 entire sent from the Kings Bench – a debtors prison, in London. It begins '*I have at length made progress towards my liberation by the Insolvency Act which, if not retarded by pecuniary obstacles may take place*'. It is addressed to solicitors in Usk but includes 'near Raglan' so, instead of being sent to Newport and then to Usk it ended up in Monmouth where it was endorsed 'Missent to'. It has nice marks, a 'Belvedere Place' which was the local office to the Kings Bench and a Monmouth mileage mark in red. Why is it my favourite? It is the first postal history item that I bought and it led me on to interests in 'Missent', 'Monmouth', 'Raglan' and 'Usk'!

Brian Atkins, 19 Dec 1839 Whitchurch to Chester, Uniform Fourpenny Post



Why did I choose this uniform fourpenny post cover showing the scarce hand struck Whitchurch 4? Well, I wanted something from Whitchurch as we now live there, my maternal grandparents met in Whitchurch (my grandfather was apprenticed to a group of coach builders in 1888, my grandmother was in service to a local doctor) and my parents were married in Whitchurch! I bought it as a gift to myself in early 1992 after my first full year of employment in Canada, having earned rather more than I had as a Head of Department in a Sixth Form College in London!

Mick Gill, 7 March 1863, Newton Falls, Ohio to Newark, Notts, an American Civil War cover.

I found this 1863 American Civil War cover (see next page) in the Hopkinson family Bible when I was around 14 years of age. Addressed to my great, great grandfather, it was sent by one of his sons, Matthew, George or Joseph,

each of whom emigrated to Ohio in the mid-1850s. Family legend has it that Matthew sent money for George to go and George sent money for Joseph. Joseph then sent money for William (my great grandfather) to emigrate but his wife refused to go! What happened to that money is not known! The postal markings show that the cover took only 20 days to reach Newark.



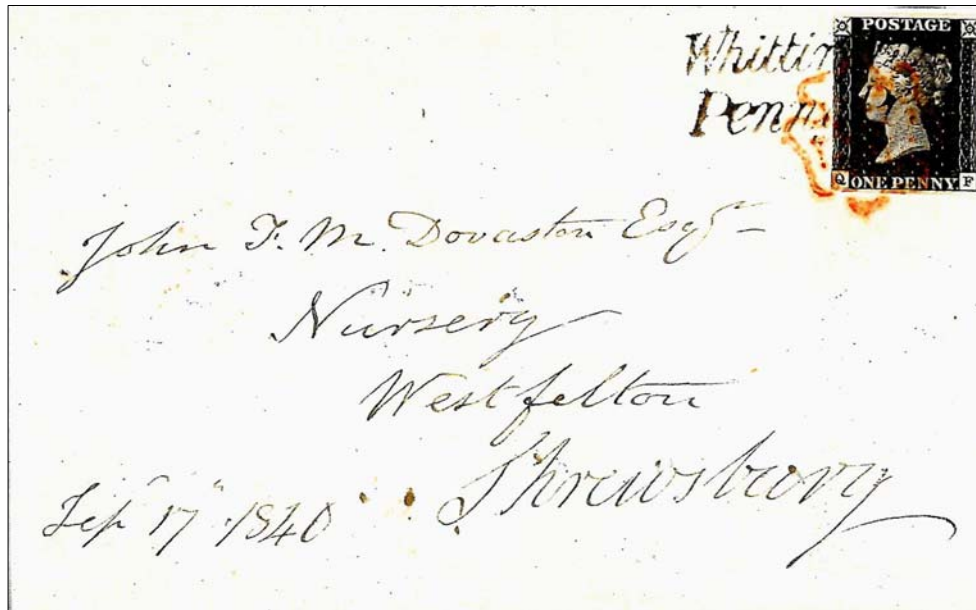
Alan Marshall, 20 May 1841 Mulready from Nottingham to Bunny



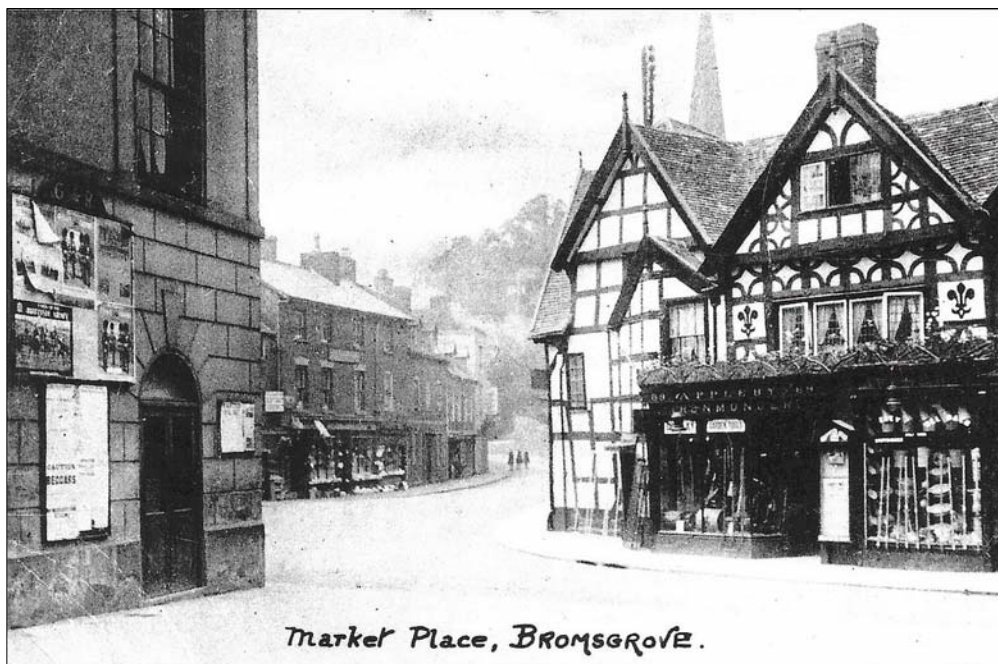
Accepting that an uprated penny Mulready is not an uncommon but nevertheless a worthwhile item, I have to submit one as a collector of Nottingham material. The only such item I have come across was posted at Nottingham on 20 May 1841 to Bunney (with an e!) my home village of 60 years.....how can this not qualify?!

Guy Bridges, 17 September 1840 cover from Whittington to West Felton, Shrewsbury

The cover (see next page) is addressed to West Felton, Shrewsbury and franked with a plate 2 penny black which entered the mails at Whittington, 4 miles east of Oswestry. The penny black was cancelled with the *Whittington / Penny Post* hand stamp, the cover was forwarded to Oswestry the same day (date stamp in red on the reverse), where the penny black was also cancelled with the red maltese cross – a very unusual pairing and my reason for making it my *Favourite Cover*.



Jan Young, 11 May 1918, postcard Bromsgrove to B. E. Forces, France



The card shows St John's Street, with St John's church spire in the background, the old Town Hall on the left is demolished. The card is from Will Giles' sister, Gertrude, who writes to him 'The bells of Peace are ringing. Have you dear boys been celebrating your great Victory. We are very excited. Eve & Mother came in today and Eve is coming again tomorrow. Hope you are A.I. Best love from all G'.

I felt this cover appropriate to fit in with events taking place in France, Belgium and England to celebrate the 100 years end of WW1. My maternal grandfather served in France; the little paperwork I have showed he served with the South Staffordshire Regiment, although, as a child, he told me he worked with horses, though he was not a vet or groom as such. Thankfully he survived, hence, I am able to tell the tale.

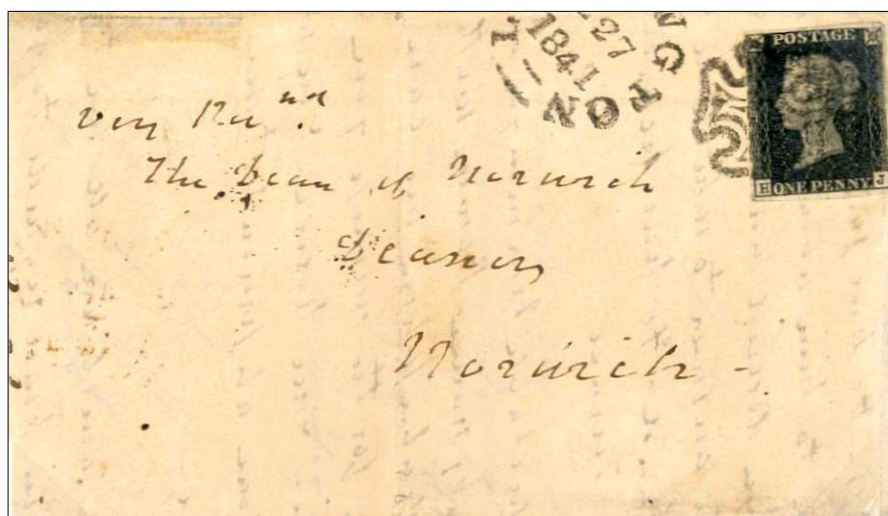
In 2006 I was able to locate and speak with Will and Eve's daughter, who was in her mid-80s. She told me Eve worked in a delicatessen in Bromsgrove and the proprietor arranged for food parcels to be sent to the troops in France. Will wrote in thanks and Will and Eve began to correspond. In 1916 Will returned to the UK at Roffey Camp, Horsham, when he and Eve married. Will's sister, Gertie, married an Anzac and went to live in Australia.

John Calladine, 1836 turned cover with two different penny post stamps from the same office.



A twice-turned cover into and out of Chalford, Glos, in 1836 illustrating use of a type 4 penny post hand stamp on incoming letters and an earlier type 2 hand stamp on outgoing mail – also digitally reorganised - Ed.

Toby Mottram, 1841 cover from Leamington Spa to Norwich



An entire with a fine example of the distinct maltese cross of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, cancelling the plate 10 penny black lettered HJ, having the characteristic plate "O" flaw. Addressed to the 'very Reverend The Dean of

Norwich' (George Pellaw), the cover has a part strike of the Leamington cds for 27 FEB 1841. The correspondence is written in two parts with a set of questions on freehold land at Charlotte House by a solicitor, and a more personal note in the handwriting of George Leigh Cooke (Sedleian Professor of Natural Philosophy at Oxford, 1810), who was Vicar at St. Mary Church in Cubington from 1820 to 1853; Cubington (with double b from the 1870s) is a village 2 miles from the town centre of Leamington Spa. It is a favourite cover of mine because I live in Cubington, and when bidding for Lot 418 in the Great Britain Philatelic Collection sale of Lady Mairi Bury, FRPSL, I could not have known that I was bringing the entire back home to where it was written in February 1841. The archivist at St Mary Church has a copy as a historical record for a past Vicar.

Trevor Radway, 1886 Gloucester Docks Money Order

Money Order for £1/1/- sent to Grunstad, Norway. The GLOUCESTER DOCKS date stamp for 28 JAN 1886 is 23mm in diameter. The added instructional label relates to payment instructions.

About 20 years ago a dealer managed to screw over £100 out of me because he knew I was looking for scarce GLOUCESTER DOCKS material. My friend Malcolm Clifford had the only postmark I had seen at the time but he also had a record of a cover to Genova, Italy in 1879. Bill Pipe also has a very nice cover of 1886 to St Neots which I think may be a 23mm circle. In 2014 John Hine let me have a printed list of known marks. GLD04 is shown as a 23mm circle unrecorded in use, I think this is the one. I know nothing about Money Orders and this is the only one I have seen in this era.

Each bit of information makes it more appealing to me!

Reduced in size - Ed

Frank Bennett, 11 NOV 1865 Sault St. Marie, Upper Canada to Hereford



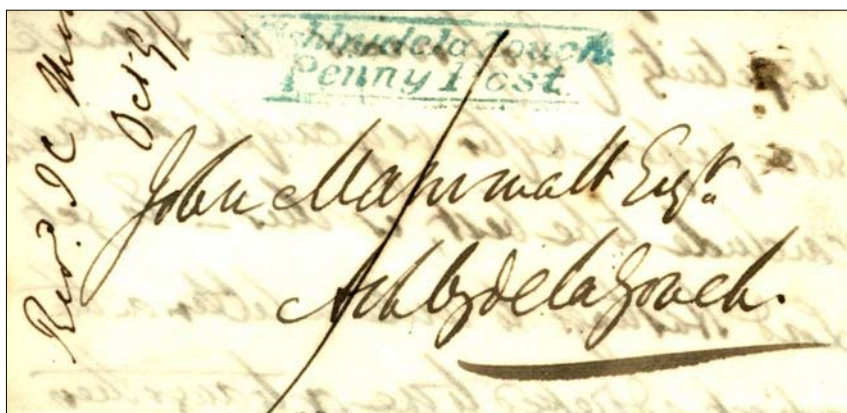
Entire from Judge John Prince to Hereford dated 11th November 1865 from Sault St. Marie, Upper Canada. Cover went from Toronto to Quebec for the **Peruvian** sailing on the 18th November arriving Londonderry 27th November and Hereford 28th November. On the reverse is a Toronto single ring dated 13th November and the signature of Judge Prince, who was born in England on the 12 March 1796 and died in Canada on the 30th November 1870. He studied Law in Hereford and was admitted to the Bar in 1821. He Moved to Canada in 1833. In 1835 he was named Justice of the Peace for the Western District. He served with the local Militia during the Upper Canada Rebellion. He was appointed Queens Counsel in 1844 and became a Judge in the Algoma District in 1860. Prince Township on Lake Superior was named after John Prince. **Rate:-** Canadian 8d. Manuscript in blue, five pence for Canadian inland and 3d half-fine. Addressee charged 1/- hand stamp, applied on board the **Peruvian** when the mail was sorted on board.

Jim Ball, WW2 cover from Akron, Ohio to Wem, Shropshire



The cover was posted from Akron, Ohio during WW2, year omitted from the date stamp. Bunce Court School was set up, mainly for Jewish boys, in southern Germany in 1926 by Anna Essinger. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, she received the parent's permission to remove the school to England and New Herlinghen School, was set up in Otterden, Kent; it soon became known as Bunce Court. In June 1940 the authorities demanded the school be moved because of the dangers posed by the Battle of Britain but also because they were considered 'enemy aliens'! Within a week Anna had found Trench Hall, near Wem. The school returned to Kent in 1946 but closed in 1948.

John Soer, October 1840 Ashby de la Zouch Penny Post cover



It was about 1979/80 while I was looking for penny reds in Michael Jackson's stock at the Strand Stamp Centre, (there must be others who remember that wonderful place), when I found the cover illustrated. Written in October 1838 by the rector of Measham, Rev. J.C. Moore, about the founding of St. John's, Donisthorpe church in which I was christened and confirmed. I was also intrigued by the mark in green ink 'Ashby de la Zouch / Penny Post', so I bought the item. In my

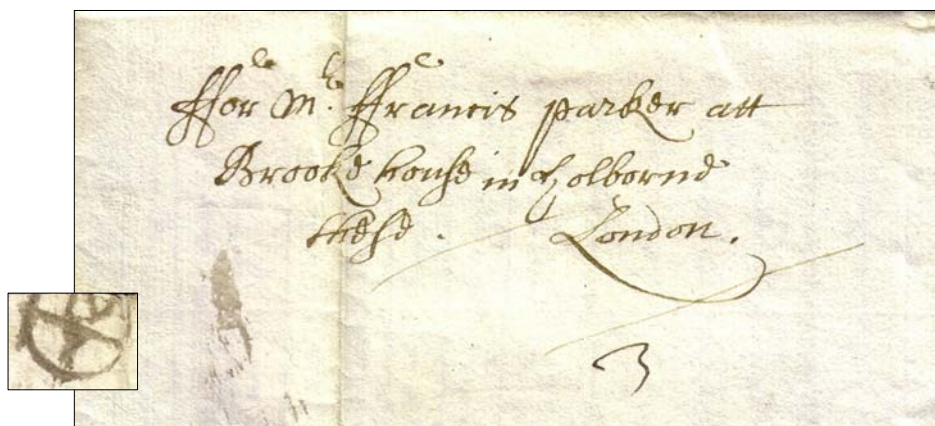
naivety I had thought that the penny post did not start until 1840 and wanted to know more. This was the start of something which I still enjoy nearly forty years later. Incidentally, what I thought was an ink smudge near the top right hand corner is, I now know, an impression of the 'No. 4' of Measham. By 1838 it was showing distinct signs of wear!

John Hine, 23 August 1856, GLOUCESTER 312 spoon, code F



This letter franked with three 1d reds (Notice of Objection rate) was sent to Hanham near Bristol but William Henry had 'Gone Away', so the letter was returned to the sender. On arrival in Bristol the letter was first date stamped **BRISTOL / IN** on 24 August 1856 (a scarce type used for a short period to denote **IN**coming mail to Bristol) before being forwarded to Hanham. Because Henry was not to be found the **HANHAM** receiver struck his name stamp on the front and returned the Notice via **BRISTOL** (date stamp with cut arcs) on the 25th August. The Notice of Objection system was set up in 1843 and lasted until 1878 and provided for registration at a reduced rate of 2d above the normal 1d post. The printed forms had to be shown to the postmaster in duplicate and he was obliged to date stamp the copy to be retained by the sender as evidence of posting. As with most Notices of Objection from this period the postmaster at Gloucester endorsed the cover in red ink 'Notice'

Alan Godfrey, 5th July 1676, Alcester to London



My favourite cover is the earliest recorded from Alcester in Warwickshire, dated 5th July 1676 sent from Matthew Bridges in Alcester to Francis Parker at Brooks House, Holbourne (Holborn), London. The letter has a manuscript 3 the 3d rate for over 80 miles from 1653 as well as a Bishop mark, 7/ IY for 7th July 1676.

The cover concerns land and fishing rights and rivalries between Robert Greville (4th Baron Brooke of Beauchamps Court), Sir Edward Littleton (Tory MP for Penkridge) and William Congreve (landowner and father of the playwright, William Congreve) at Penckrish (Penkridge), Staffordshire. Matthew Bridges and Francis Parker represented Robert, Lord Brooke of Penkridge Manor. Matthew Bridges (1620-1677) was the son of John Bridges and his wife Elizabeth Holyoak, John (born 1588) was a barrister of Alcester and Hackney. Matthew's elder brother, John, was Steward to Lord Brooke and commanded the garrison at Warwick Castle. Matthew was made Major in the Warwick Foot and fought for Parliament during the Civil War. During the Protectorate he was made Receiver of Alcester and a justice of the peace.

John Reynolds, Family postcard from sister to sister, 11th November 1918 (reduced in size to show both sides – Ed)



I inherited this 1918 birthday card an interesting item in the history of our family. It was written by my grandmother, Annie Smallwood, to her youngest sister, Winnie, at 35 Honeywall, Stoke on Trent Staff: "My Dear Sister, Many happy returns of the day, and we hope to be with you soon. You will remember this birthday, so love, until we come from here, Annie XXX". A similar one was sent by another sister, Polly, adding "We shall never forget your 16th Birthday". Note the machine slogan cancel, "FEED THE GUNS WITH WAR BONDS", dated 5.45 PM, NOV 11, 18, from BIRMINGHAM A, cancelling KGV red 1d. The 11th November 1918 was Armistice Day.

From late 1916, Annie and Polly had left home in Stoke to do their bit for the war effort at Kynoch's munitions factory at Witton, in Birmingham. A third sister, Pat had also spent some time at Kynoch's. They had lodgings with the Scott family in Aston. Annie was not happy at the factory. Writing to her mother on the back of another post card headed, 'With best wishes from Birmingham', she says: "...as you did not write last night and the girls not coming, I was sick of it all, the only thing you have to look forward to is work & bed, what hope'. Their father, William Smallwood, was 46 at the start of the war. He joined the North Staffordshire Regiment and survived.

Malcolm Allinson, Cumberland to Ohio, USA



When asked to send in "My Favourite Cover", I could not decide which from my collection should be submitted, so I have resorted to the old maxim: my favourite is the latest one! A cover from Cumberland to USA. There are a number of interesting features to sustain quite a lot of research before it can be truly exhibited. So far, I have worked out that the rate from UK to USA is 1/-, nicely paid by a couple of 1d reds and a 10d embossed – quite rare on cover. The other postal markings will take a while to decipher as I am not a USA collector. Maybe there are more knowledgeable members out there! There is a Boston arrival mark; two separate charges of 38 cents, 48, and an ABOVE OZ mark, so, yes. My favourite cover – until the next one.

Gordon Hardy, 10th June 1765 straight-line DERBY to Chapel-en-le-Frith

This entire typifies what, to me is good postal history; as it fits into a definite time period and tells the story of what routes and rates applied. In 1736 Ralph Allen set up a cross post between Chesterfield and Manchester, the route taken went via Bakewell, Tideswell, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Disley and Stockport.

This letter is clearly addressed to *Peter Legh Esq. Mempoar (sic) at Lyme*. The cross post route that it was to be carried is clearly indicated, "Near Disley Cheshire by Chesterfield to Chapel le Frith". The letter was written at Codnor Park near the village of Codnor located about 11 miles north east of Derby and about 2 miles east of Ripley and is dated June 10th 1765. The letter would have been carried privately to Derby where it was handed in to the post office and it is here that the large DERBY hand stamp was applied. It would have been carried to Chesterfield on the Sheffield post and then transferred to the cross post, the "X" indicates that the cross post is to be used.

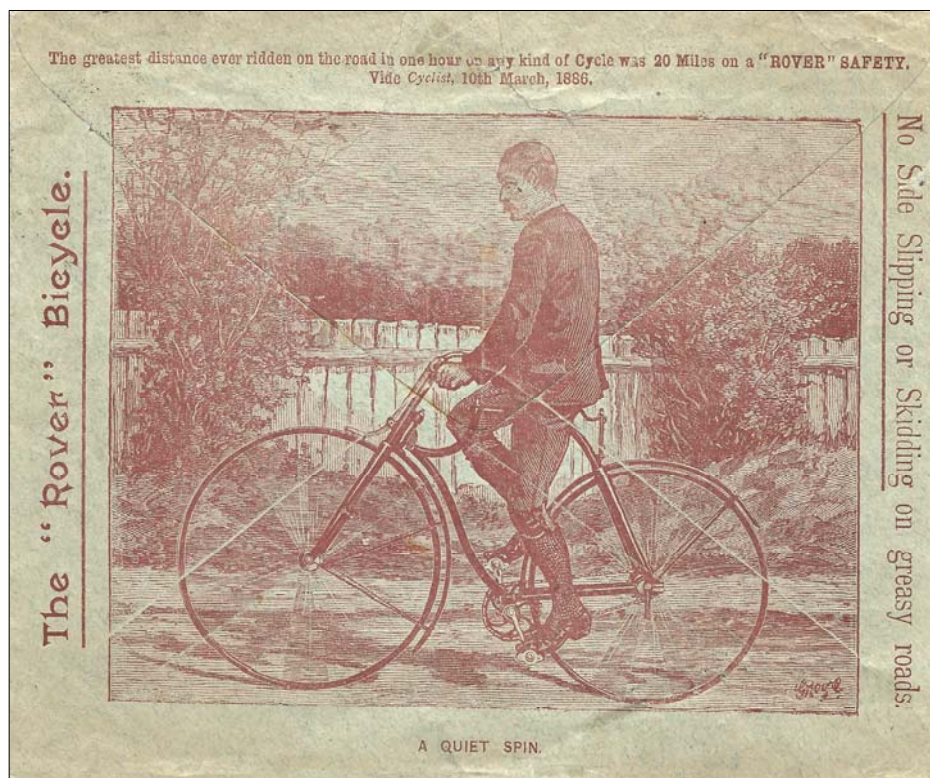


Peter Legh (1708-1792) held the office of Member of Parliament for Newton, Lancashire between 1743 and 1774 so had the privilege of free postage, which is why there is no charge on the letter.

Ian May, 1888 Coventry Cycle Cover

The Figure shows the front and reverse of one of my favourite covers from my Coventry Postal History collection. When not pouring over my collections I train and compete in triathlons, readers will probably be aware a triathlon comprises three elements swimming, cycling and running hence my particular interest in cycling covers.

Coventry was a major manufacturer of bicycles, Kimberley^[1] lists over 450 firms which existed in the period 1868 – 1990. The Premier Cycle Company produced up to 30,000 cycles in the 1890s. But from the 1900s the cycle industry was to go into decline as the motor engine took over, with many of the cycle manufacturers moving into the new industry. The company of Starley and Sutton was founded 1878 by John Starley, whose uncle James Starley was known as the “Father of the Bicycle Industry”, and William Sutton and survived until August 1888 when William Sutton left the company. Starley relaunched the business as J K Starley and Company, which survived until 1898.



There are a number of reasons why I particularly like the cover shown. The front is mainly about advertising the quality of the “Rover” bicycle using quotes from a number of the relevant journals, a copy of a medal from the 1885

International Inventions Exhibition and the Company's address. The one penny adhesive is cancelled with the Coventry squared circle dated February 5th 1888. But it is the reverse that is in my mind so special. It not only shows a stunning drawing of a man on a "Rover" bicycle but details the then current record one hour record of 20 miles, something many modern amateur cyclists would be pleased to accomplish on a modern bike, never mind on one over 120 years old!

I have seen a number of covers produced for other companies involved in the cycle industry in Coventry but, whilst many are both interesting and attractive, none match this one.

Reference.

1 Kimberley, D., Coventry's bicycle heritage, The History Press, Stroud, 2015.

Clive Jones, 1855 Two Missents on one cover



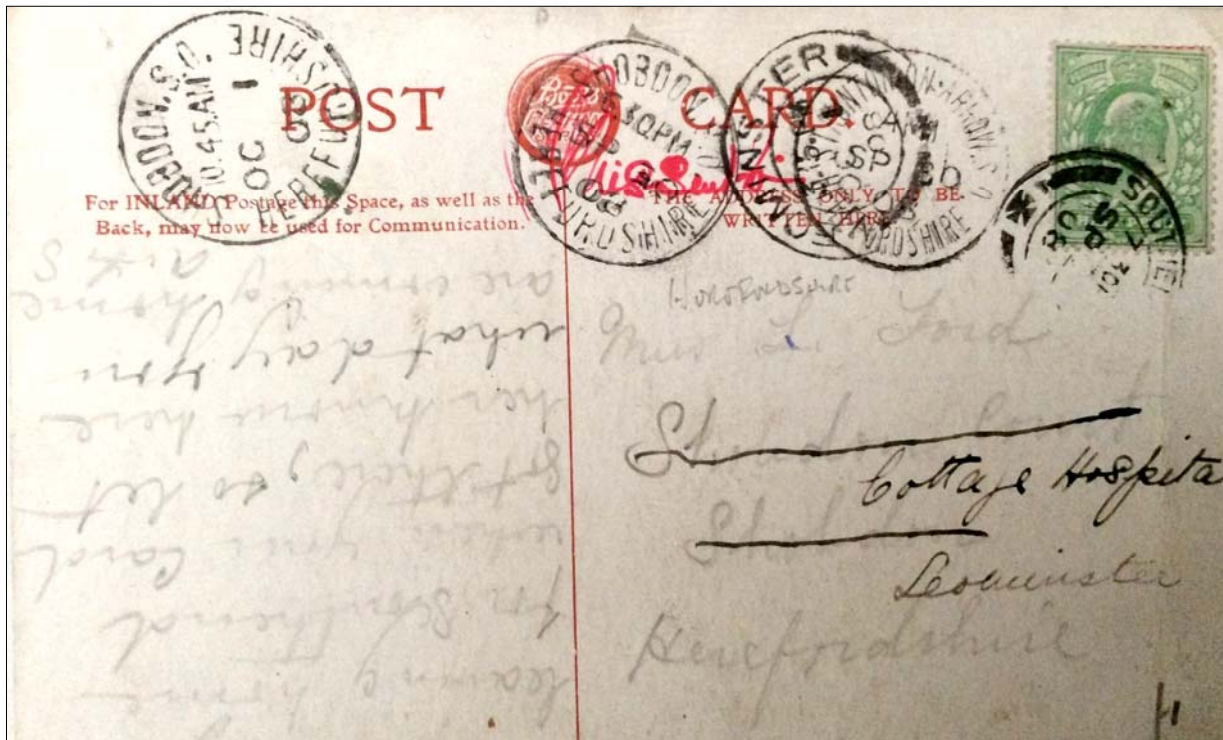
It is one of my favourites because it is the finest and earliest use of one of only two examples of the 'MISSENT - TO / MIDLAND R P O UP' mark known in black ink. Also, it has collected a 'MISSENT TO / BIRMINGHAM' mark (BM176) on its way from London to Ulveston, Lancashire.

The cover is also special because a rare 'Late Fee' of sixpence was paid at the Chief Office for a posting between 7pm & 7.30pm on 10th December 1855. This did not prevent the missort, and was a complete waste as the cover did not arrive until 12th December!

Bill Hicks, 1908 postcard from Southend to Shobdon, Herefordshire, redirected.

The attached postcard (next page) left Southend later in September 1908 addressed to Shobdon Court Herefordshire, it was redirected to Leominster Cottage Hospital. The card must have been delivered on or about the 30th Sept with no additional markings, then redirected and put into the postal system again as follows. The date stamps show the card was put back in the mail at Staunton on Arrow Herefordshire (am Sept 30th 08). The First Shobdon Herefordshire date stamp is for (6.30pm Sp 30 08) the same day, was it picked up by the local postman for sorting at the larger Shobdon office? The Second Shobdon date stamp is for (10.45 am Oct 1st) must have been when it was collected by a postman and taken to Leominster. The Leominster date stamp is for (3.15pm Oct 01 08) - it may have been delivered on that day.

The reason I like this card is the Staunton on Arrow postmark is really uncommon and quite a distance from Shobdon Court when there was a post office in the village.



Gavin Littaur, 5 December 1839, Dublin to London FIRST DAY of UNIFORM FOURPENNY POST



Dublin 5 Dec 1839

Although I find it impossible to pick a favourite cover, given changes in mood, one of my favourites is a letter posted from Dublin to London on 5 December 1839, the First Official Day of Usage of Uniform 4d Postage, showing a hand struck '4', which is rather elusive on this key date. What is of particular appeal are the contents:-

"Among the fantastical expressions that one hears in this fantastical country, I have heard a man threatened with a 'kick in the arse that should make his nose bleed' ... I enclose your P.O. and Mr Buckley's receipt that you may have good value for your 4d."

COMPUTED MILES AND JOHN OGILBY

by John Calladine

“Mr Ogilby is a cunning Scot, so I must deal warily with him . . . God deliver me of such men” ⁽¹⁾
 John Aubrey FRS, born Kington St Michael, Wiltshire, 1626.

Dr Ian May, author of the important article “The use of Computed Miles by the British Post Office” (Midland Mail No.199) may secretly be disappointed the quote does not refer to him, for its place of origin is not unexpected and contradiction of his assertions no less than he anticipates. John Aubrey’s problem was that Ogilby had asked him to do quite a lot of work towards his great project “Britannia”, published in 1675, which he then decided not to use and for which he made no payment. Ian’s work is not contentious, does not involve payment and there is no need to deal warily with him.

The question of whether computed mileages were used to calculate postal charges in the 18th century will probably have escaped the attention of many, unless they have a particular interest in an office between 80 and 100 miles from London, where a charge based on computed distance will be for “below 80 miles” and a charge based on measured distance will be “above 80 miles” and cost 1d more. In other instances, the absence of 18th century letters in their collections, apart perhaps from a few in the last decade, will mean they can add nothing to Ian’s deliberations. His assertion that computed mileages were used to calculate charges, certainly on the major routes and particularly on the Chester Road, until late in the 18th century appears proven. There remain two outstanding questions:

When did the change from computed to measured miles occur in England?

Why, when Ogilby’s “Britannia” maps (with accurately measured mileages) were available from 1675, did the Post Office continue to use computed miles for another hundred years or more?

I can add little to help answer the first question. John Hine has far more relevant Gloucestershire material than I and he has carried out his own analysis. I leave Ian to correlate it with other results but they appear to confirm that the change took place shortly before the introduction of mileage marks in 1784.

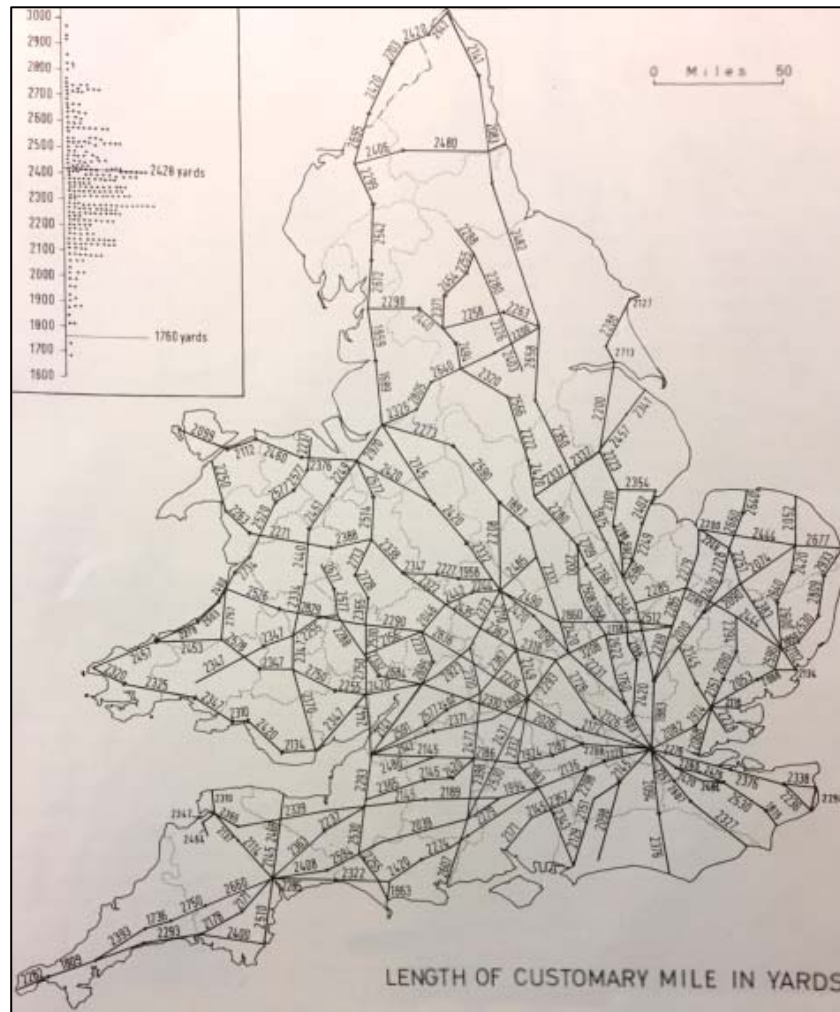
The second question is perhaps worthy of more extended consideration and provides an excuse to consider both the background to “Britannia” and of the remarkable man who became King Charles II’s “Cosmographer Royal”. Most of us may be familiar with Ogilby’s “Britannia” through the 1731 “Britannia Depicta or Ogilby Improved” by Emanuel Bowen and, in particular, through the facsimile re-print of 1979 ⁽²⁾. The introduction states it to be a “Correct copy of Mr Ogilby’s actual survey of all the direct and principal cross roads in England and Wales . . . with their respective distances in Measured and Computed miles”. As a handy pocket book it is far removed from the original and the introduction of a table of both computed and measured distances in the heading of each road map must be seen as one of the “improvements”. Ogilby did not include such a table (but see below).

The original 1675 “Britannia” was a massive and heavy volume of 100 map plates with a further 200 pages of text – far less than originally intended (hence Aubrey’s disappointment) – and reproductions that include the text pages are rare and very expensive. However, their price is hardly comparable with the original, which was never intended for purchase by the general public. Probably no more than a hundred copies of the original “Britannia” were printed and these were for specific very wealthy clients.

No maps like those in “Britannia” had ever appeared before. Lord Kelvin had said of science in general “*If you cannot measure, your knowledge is meagre and unsatisfactory*”. Until “Britannia”, maps had been nothing but “guess plots”. Ogilby himself said “*No actual dimensuration was ever performed but a computation of distance by a cursory perambulation . . .*” and he made disparaging comments about those who had adapted the maps of such as Campden, Speed and Blome, transferring all their original errors and adding new ones. Where roads were shown, they were often no more than “notionary”. Ogilby’s plan was to map the eight principal roads from London and thirty-five routes branching off them. (In the event, he failed to map two-thirds of the branches or did not publish them). What he did map, he measured so accurately that even modern measurements show no significant discrepancies. All map distances were measured in statute miles (1760 yards) and a scale of 1 inch = 1 mile was introduced, both for the first time. Ogilby used a wheeled “waywiser”, which he claimed was invented by an astrology teacher but which was probably a Roman invention, and, ignoring the suggestion of the great scientist Robert Hooke that he attach it to a carriage, insisted on it being pushed by hand with one man pushing, a second recording distance and a third cleaning any mud off the wheel and checking that wear on the wheel did not alter its diameter.

That Ogilby's "Britannia" was a very different publication from John Cary's "New Itinerary" ⁽³⁾ of 1798 is evident from the dedication. Cary makes it crystal clear that his "*actual admeasurement (was) made by Command of His Majesty's Postmaster General*" and was under the direction of Thomas Hasker, Superintendant of the Mail Coaches. Ogilby's "Britannia" was declared to be "*an Illustration of the Kingdom of England and the dominion of Wales*", ignoring both Scotland and Ireland, with no mention of any postal connection. In fact its purpose was to glorify the King and his dominion over a country centred on London. Ogilby was a Royalist through and through. After all, it was he who had devised and overseen the magnificent coronation procession through London for the Restoration of King Charles II, just one of his diverse and remarkable achievements in the years before he became a master of mapmaking. That the purpose of "Britannia" changed immediately before its delayed and hurried publication is evident but at no time was the postal system given any obvious consideration.

Although the book does not include a tabulation of computed and measured miles with each map, the computed/reputed/customary mileage of each route is available from the text. I am grateful to the Curator of Antiquarian Mapping at the British Library for providing scans of pages from the Introduction to the 1970 complete facsimile reproduction of "Britannia" by the Theatrum Orbis Terrarum publishing company of Amsterdam. It includes a masterly discourse on the origins of the different mileage measurement used around the country by J.B.Harley and, most importantly, it includes a map showing the length of the "customary" mile in yards on each route mapped in "Britannia" (something that could be deduced from "Britannia Depicta" but a time-consuming exercise.) The map is illustrated below. Inset into the map is a plot of the length in yards of the computed/reputed/customary mile on each route, which vary from just under 1760 yards to 3000 yards but with a mean distance of 2478 yards. The ratio of 2478 to 1760 is almost 1.38. Interestingly "our" c1735 Holkham map uses a fixed scale of 34.5 computed miles to 30 measured miles, a ratio of 1.15.



Length of the customary or old English miles between stages along Ogilby's roads, derived from data in the text of "Britannia".

It may be worthwhile to consider how these variations in the length of a computed mile arose. Although the statute mile of 1760 yards came into legal existence in 1593, only in parts of London and its environs was it adopted and, as

Ogilby commented, “vulgar computations” were still widely used elsewhere in the country, with their “erroneous and irregular consequences”. It is likely that the computed mile originated from the Gallic “lenga” a distance of 1500 paces, widely used from Saxon times until 14th century. It is unsurprising that any measurements based on paces should show modest variation across the country simply because a variation of two or three inches in the length of a pace becomes significant over a mile. Furthermore, Ogilby’s surveyors would have obtained their information from old documentary sources or even from local hearsay. Smaller computed miles on roads out of London were probably based on the Roman mile of 1000 paces but extra-long miles in Norfolk and Suffolk defy explanation.

The first map in the 1675 “Britannia” is the road from London to Aberystwyth. The road from London to where? Who on earth would want to travel from London to Aberystwyth. This was a small town of fewer than a hundred houses and the route Ogilby chose to use was a morass beyond Rhaydar, unusable by wheeled vehicles and little better than a drovers’ track. This is not the only surprising route. The road from London to St David’s diverts from the accustomed route at Monmouth to go through Cardiff and along the coast, a near impossible and impassable route at the time, in part because of the rivers that had to be crossed. Although it soon becomes apparent that the chosen routes are generally to or via harbours, one of the most important of them, Liverpool, is not included in the book at all and his map stops a road at Warrington that actually continued to Liverpool. Also completely excluded from “Britannia” were towns such as Sheffield, Bradford and, in the Midlands, Wolverhampton. Furthermore, his routes stop at the Scottish border. Ogilby had planned to measure over 40,000 miles of roads but if, as he claimed, two-thirds of those had been covered, much less was actually included in “Britannia”. Whatever Ogilby’s agenda, it was not to help the Post Office.

If “Britannia” looked like a book for travellers, it was not. It was a depiction of Royal power and it was an account book of resources useful to the king. Perhaps its most interesting feature, however, is the emphasis on ports and harbours. Few of us will have any knowledge of the two treaties with France signed in 1669/70. One was in effect a dummy treaty of friendship between England and France. The other treaty, the Secret Treaty of Dover, was known only to the two kings and literally a handful of senior aristocrats in England, perhaps five persons. The treaty required England to join with France in an assault on Holland, albeit at a time of their choosing, for which king Louis would pay Charles II a military subsidy of £250,000 a year. It went much further and promised Charles another £165,000 a year if he restored the Roman Catholic faith in England. (Charles had spent his exile in Catholic France, of course.) Incredibly it went almost beyond reason and promised the King that, if his conversion led to an uprising in the country, Louis would send 6000 French troops to his aid. These troops would land at harbours and beaches away from any expected resistance. Now Aberystwyth or, more specifically, the road from Aberystwyth to London begins to make some sense. By the time Britannia appeared, the French assault on the Netherlands had failed and Charles had not converted to Catholicism but, by then, the make-up of the book had been decided.

The reasons for the omission of certain towns (and even ports) are at least twofold. If a town had no lead or tin mines useful to the King or iron works of military significance, it risked omission. Liverpool was a special case. It had declared for Parliament at the beginning of the Civil War and it had been necessary for Price Rupert to subdue it. Liverpool was to be made to pay for its treachery and Ogilby was certainly not intending to help its trade. It simply did not exist. The absence of Scottish roads was almost certainly due to the importance of Edinburgh, which had several major roads converging on the city. Ogilby was determined that his work would not suggest there were two centres of importance in the British Isles. The glory was to be with the King in London and London alone.

We can now see that, with some major routes and towns omitted from “Britannia” altogether, roads terminated at the Scottish border and with obsolete routes chosen in preference to the roads then in use if they happened to pass potentially useful ports and harbours, there could be a number of reasons why the Post Office did not adopt “Britannia”, in spite of its accurate distance measurements. It was a magnificent contribution to mapping and maps of England and Wales produced by others during the next hundred years did no more than adapt Ogilby’s work.

John Ogilby had been born in Scotland in 1601. He was therefore in his 70s when “Britannia” was produced, the final phase of a quite remarkable life. Would anyone guess he started life as a dancer and that it was more important for 17th century lawyers to dance than it was to have any significant knowledge of the law. Ogilby taught them to dance. The full story is to be found in a highly recommended and entertaining book by Alan Ereira⁽⁴⁾. As a dancer, soldier, impresario, sea captain, poet, publisher, gentleman, secret agent and finally as the man who put modern Britain on the map, how could John Ogilby’s life be anything but fascinating?

References:

- 1, Brief Lives, John Aubrey, Folio Society 1975
- 3, Cary’s New Itinerary 1798

- 2, Britannia Depicta or Ogilby Improved, 0 906656 00 1
- 4, The Nine Lives of John Ogilby, Alan Ereira ISBN 978-0-7156-5110-0

MORE ON THE USE OF COMPUTED MILES

by John Soer

Ian May's superb article (MM 199/10) caused me to look again at some of the earlier covers in my collection. The starting point was a mileage chart in Van Langeren's map of Leicestershire (c1640), Fig. 1. The same chart was also shown in a publication of 1720.

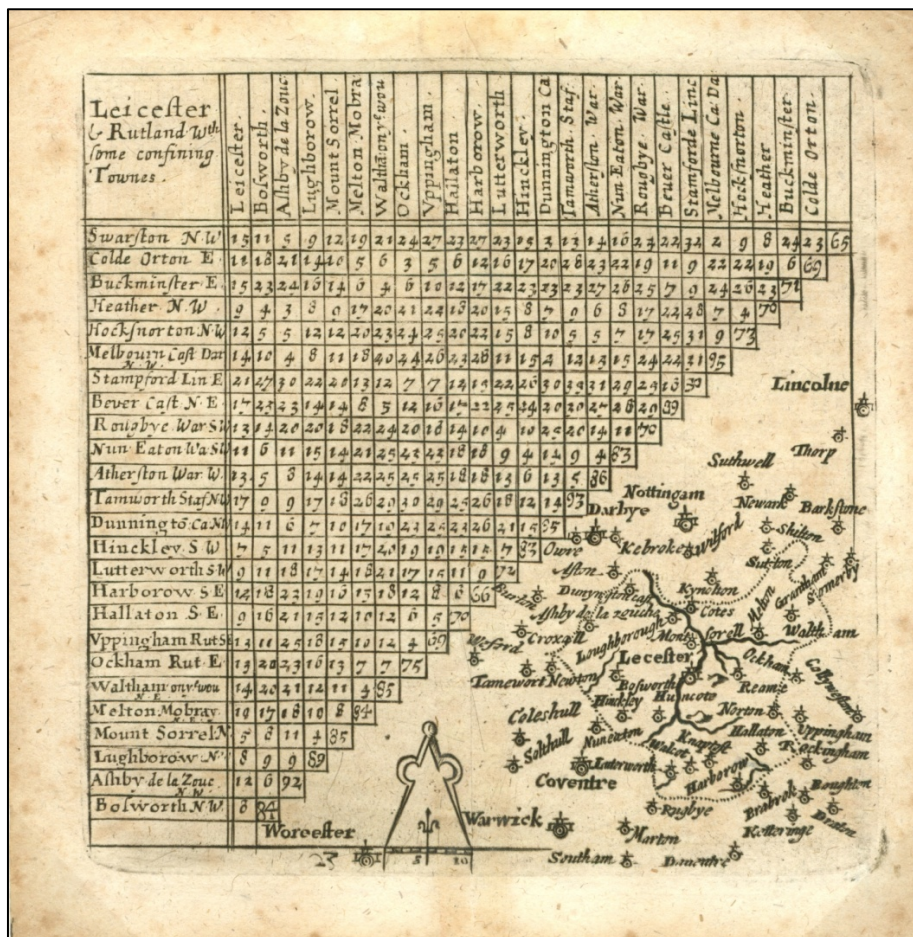


Fig. 1, Van Langeren's Map of Leicestershire, c1640.

The figures which run diagonally from the top right-hand corner are clearly the computed mileages to London. Of the post towns in Leicestershire it is clear that the only towns whose postage to London was likely to be affected by the difference between the computed mileage and the measured mileage to London were Market Harborough (Harborow) and Lutterworth. Market Harborough was on a branch from the Chester Road to Derby which ran through Northampton and Leicester. The computed mileage to London was 66 miles, while the figure shown on its 1784 mileage mark was '85'.

The position of Lutterworth is more complicated for it did not become a post town until 1788 when the route of the Chester mailcoach was altered so that it ran through Lutterworth, (strictly it would be more correct to say that no salary was paid to a postmaster until 1789). However, there is documentary evidence for the existence of some form of post office in Lutterworth from 1713. It is probable that until 1788 Lutterworth received its mail through Dunchurch. (Does anyone have a cover sent to Lutterworth that might confirm this?). The computed mileage was 72. The figure on the 1785 mileage mark is 90.

In addition to the letter shown in Fig 2 (see next page), I have a letter sent from Market Harborough to London in March 1734 which was also charged 3d. The only other letter sent from Market Harborough that I have earlier than 1785 is one sent to Nottingham in 1766, the charge on which is a squiggle which could represent any integer. An undated letter to Edgware struck with the first type mileage mark Market Harborough, so no earlier than 1784, shows charges of '5' (crossed out) and '6', i.e. 5d for 80 to 150 miles and 1d in the London Penny Post. This suggests that by 1784 measured miles were being used at Market Harborough.

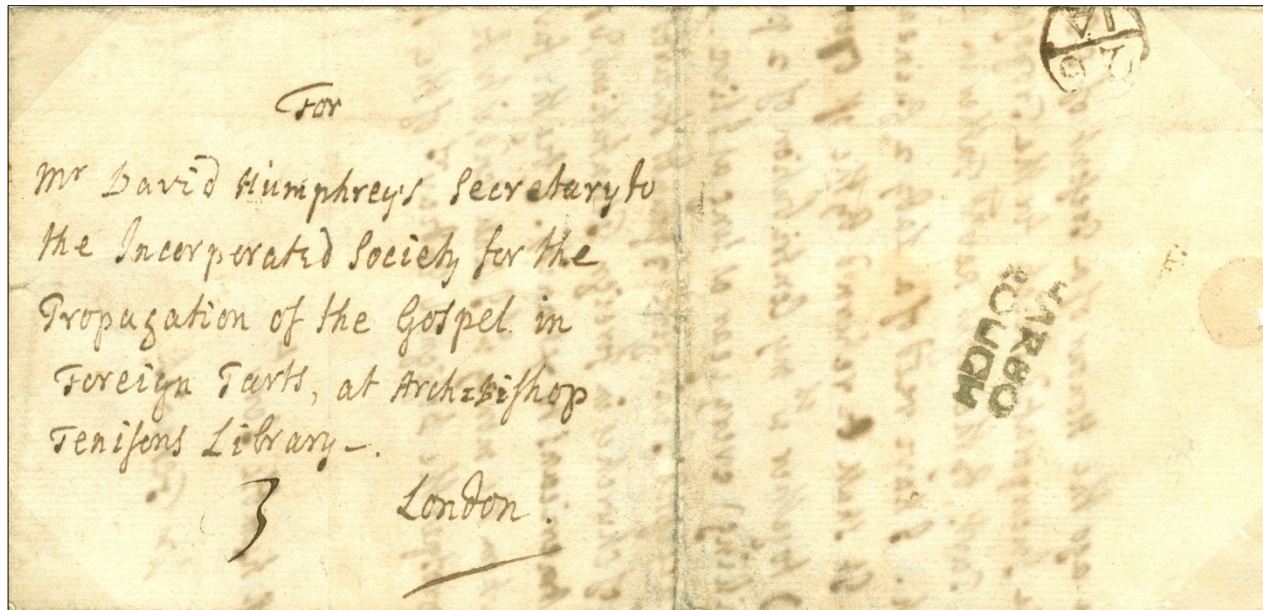


Fig. 2, January 1725 / 6 HARBO / ROUGH to London, charged 3d for less than 80 computed miles

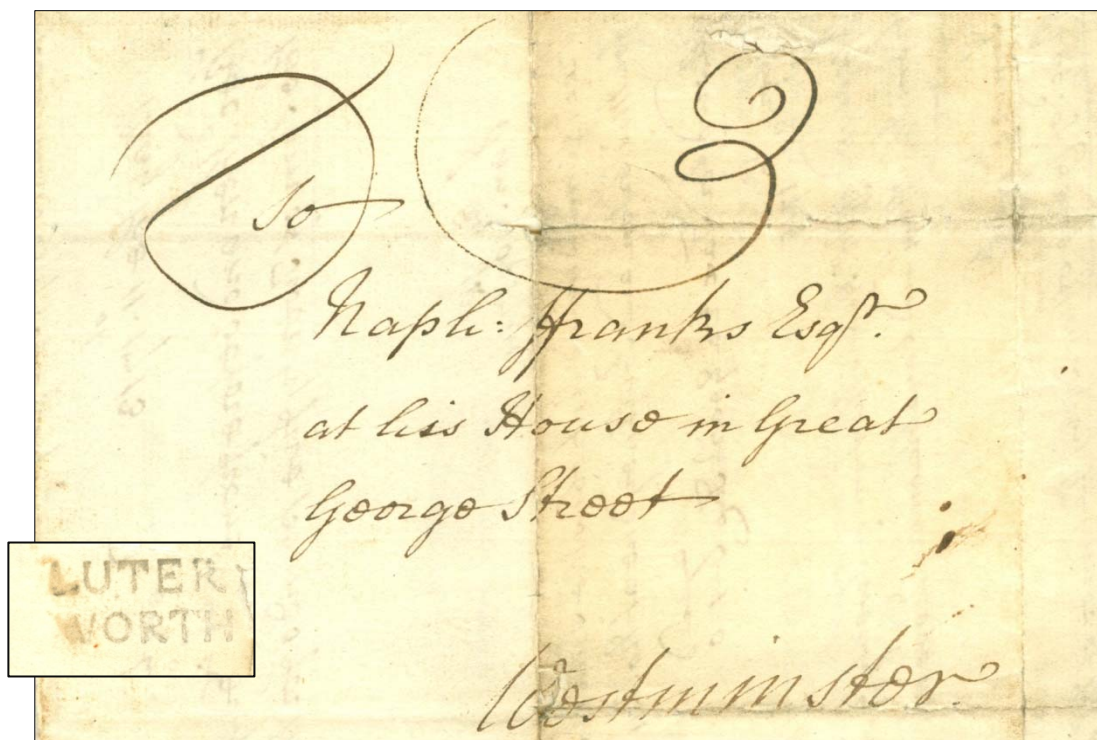


Fig 3, September 1770 from Lutterworth to London, charged 3d for below 80 miles.

When we turn to Lutterworth, the picture is less clear. As already stated, Lutterworth did not become a post town until 1788. A computed mileage was used to rate the letter shown in fig. 3. As both Dunchurch (66) and Lutterworth (72) had computed mileages below 80, it is not possible to say on which town this was levied. Fig 4 shows a letter sent from Lutterworth to London in October 1785. It was struck with the first type mileage mark of Lutterworth, 90 LUTTER / WORTH, the only recorded example of this mark, and charged 4d the rate for below 80 miles. So, either Dunchurch or Lutterworth, or both places, were still using computed mileages in 1785. We have here a charge for below 80 miles on a letter where the mileage mark shows a distance to London greater than 80 miles. As Gilbert wrote, 'A paradox; a most ingenious paradox!'

A cover which may or may not show an anomalous charge based on computed mileage is illustrated in Fig 5. This was sent from Appleby, Leicestershire to London in May 1685. It shows, in addition to a charge of 2 and a Bishop mark for 15th May, an endorsement 'by Jo. Osborne att Blosams Inn' Laurance Layne'. Other items in this correspondence either show a charge of 3, having been sent via Loughborough, or an indication of having been transported by a carrier, usually one Jo. Osborne. Did the sender of this letter originally intend to send the letter by a carrier only to find that one was not available, so sent it through the post? Then, instead of sending it to Loughborough the writer found someone to take it to Coventry? Ian May's article shows that the charge of 2d fits that supposition, though we shall never know the reason for this charge.

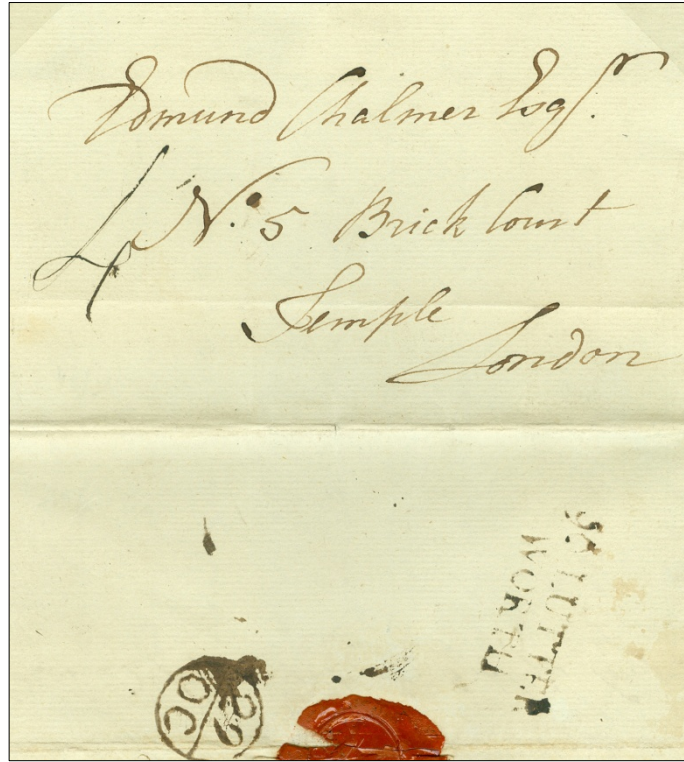


Fig 4, October 1785, Lutterworth to London, charged 4d for below 80 miles.

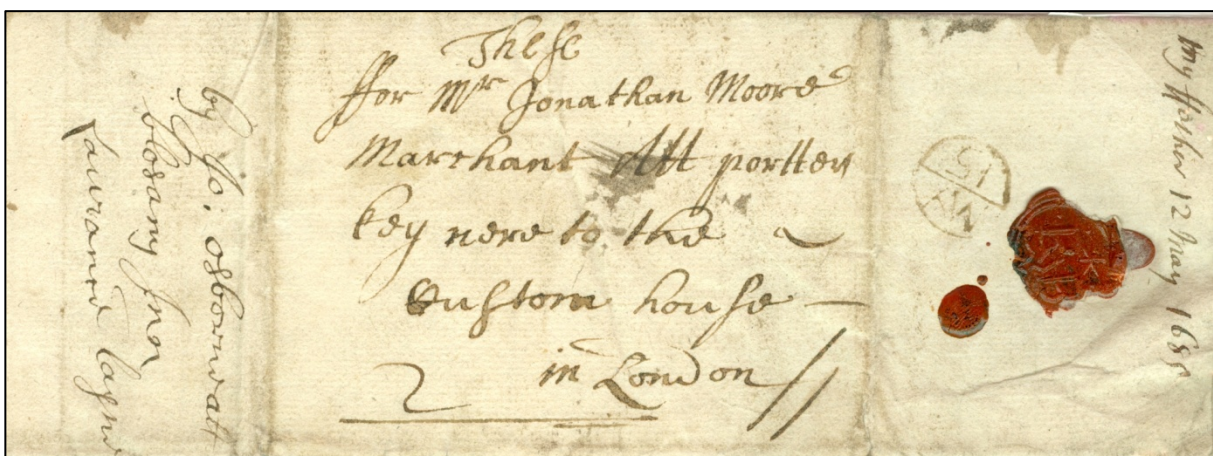


Fig 5, May 1685 Appleby to London, charged 2d for below 80 miles.

A POSTAL FRAUD?

by Richard Capon



Fig 1, 1901 H. I. M. S. cover from Oundle to Cairo and ISMAÏLIA-CAIRE TPO date stamp on the reverse

This letter and its cover were obtained recently by the author. It is hoped that the combination of social and postal history will make interesting reading. The letter is from O(liver) Paul Monckton to the Minister of the Interior in Cairo, Egypt and was dated 16 July 1901. The letter says that the writer was recommended by the Marquis of Lansdown, and asks whether the Egyptian government was requiring any irrigation engineers and if so, how he should apply for such a post. O. Paul Monckton was the sixth child of Edward Monckton M.P. and in 1901 was living at Laundimer House, a fine town house in North Street, Oundle. The envelope flap has the embossed crest of the Viscounts Galway (surname Monckton) who owned Fineshade Abbey until 1928.

Paul Monckton was born in March 1879 and grew up at Fineshade Abbey in comfortable circumstances. He went up to Cambridge University in 1898 and was awarded his Engineering Tripos BA with Honours in 1901, only weeks before this letter was written. His letter does not seem to have generated any job offers, but he worked in Britain in engineering posts before obtaining a professorship in Engineering at Sibhur Civil Engineering College (now called Ilest, Shibpur) near Calcutta. He returned to Britain when his health deteriorated and worked as a consultant engineer until he died in Bournemouth when he was only 46 years old.

The letter is interesting because Paul Monckton has written On H.I.M.S. in manuscript at the top of the letter, and there were never any stamps attached. Oundle Post Office had no access to the contents of the letter of course, but seem to have accepted the letter as being on His Imperial Majesty's Service and sent it without payment by applying two Oundle Squared Circle postmarks for 17 July 1901. It would seem very unlikely that Paul Monckton had any authority to obtain free postal services and, as such, the use of the Post in this way was fraudulent. Why an affluent young man appears to have defrauded the UK Exchequer in this way seems reprehensible, but one must also look at the gullibility of the Oundle Post Office staff that also had some responsibility.

One can only surmise that Oundle Post Office may have been in a bit of a state. The previous Head Postmistress and Chemist shop owner, Sophia Turner had died in 1900 and the Post Office authorities decided to create purpose built premises. These did not open until July 1903 and it is believed that the new salaried Postmaster, William Warren operated from the Post Office garage for the three years until the new Post Office was ready. The letter has various hand stamps and wax pencil markings both on the outside and on the letter itself tying them together. The letter arrived at the Egyptian Ministry on 25 July 1901 leaving only one final point of interest, the ISMAÏLIA-CAIRE TPO back stamp may be uncommon.



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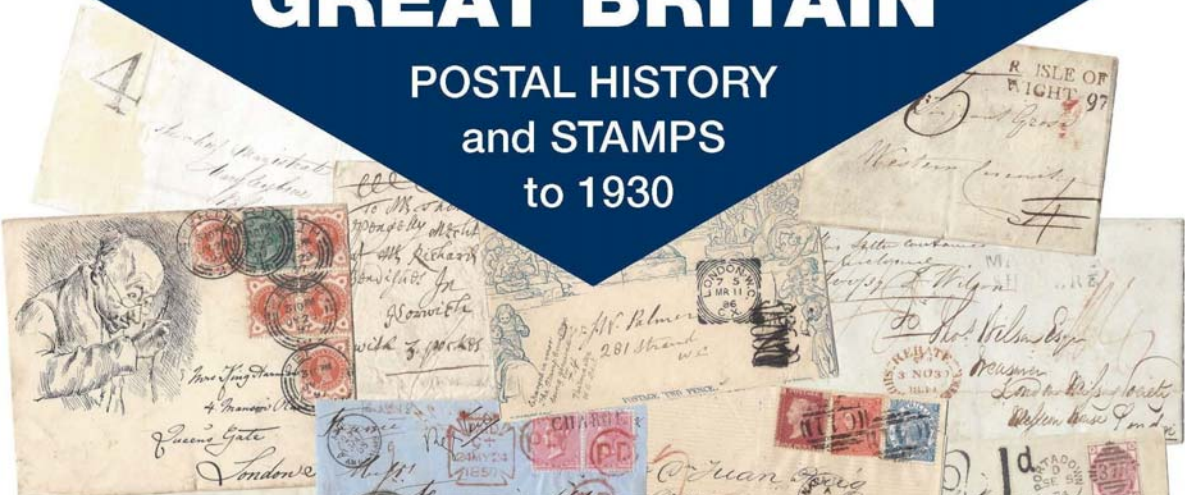
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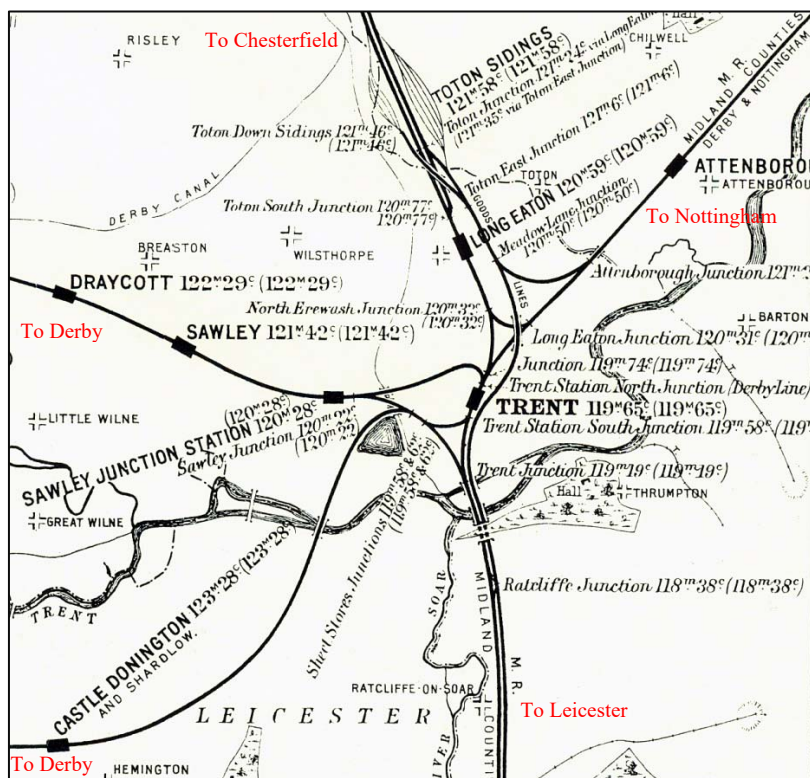
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AN ABORTED ROBBERY FROM THE LINCOLN-TAMWORTH BAG TENDER?

by John Soer

Those who grew up in Northwest Leicestershire or South Derbyshire will no doubt have heard the expression, “Well, I’ll go to Trent.”, used by someone who had come across circumstances beyond belief. This saying is thought to have derived from the unusual situation of Trent station. There is neither a town nor a village in the vicinity of the station called Trent, though, as might be expected, that is the name of the river a little to the south of the station. Trent station, which opened in 1862 and closed in 1968, was intended to be an interchange station, lying as it did among the network of lines where the line between Nottingham and Derby met that from Leicester and London and the Erewash Valley Line from Chesterfield. The illustration below, taken from the Midland Railway Distance Diagrams, shows the situation in 1908.



It was to be expected that after the robbery from the mail train at Mentmore, Buckinghamshire in August 1963, that particular attention would be paid to the security of such trains, particularly those carrying ‘High Value Packets’ (HVPs). A file¹ shows that this was certainly the case as far as the Lincoln-Tamworth bag tender was concerned.

In a letter dated 9th October 1963 to the Director of the London Postal Region, TPO Section, an official in the Midland Region expressed concern about the vulnerability of Trent station where the Lincoln-Tamworth TPO stopped in the early hours of the morning. He drew attention to the remote location of the station and commented that in view of the extra security being provided at Tamworth, thieves might regard Trent as offering an easier alternative. The fitting of alarm bells to the station had been considered but, because of the remote location, they might not be heard by anyone.

In his reply the Director stated that the Lincoln-Tamworth bag tender vehicles each had a mechanical bell alarm installed and that they were high in the order of priority for strengthening of security. However, British Railways had not started that work. (I am sure that I have read that this work had started by the time of the robbery in 1963. But, none of the vehicles was available at the time.) He added that no dispatch of HVPs or ordinary mail was made from the tender at Trent. The train to which the tender was attached stopped there to give a passenger connection with the 12.5 a.m. St Pancras to Leeds train. The bag tender should therefore remain closed with all the doors locked while the train was at Trent. The TPO section felt that Newark Castle presented a greater risk to the mail than Trent. Although only ordinary mail was offloaded there, the station was opened for the arrival of the train by a BR porter, one of a rota of several men, some of whom were ‘not prompt in their attendance. On a number of occasions the train had arrived to find the station closed. It would not have been difficult for thieves to impersonate the porter, overpower the postal staff and get away on the nearby main road.



Trent Station c. 1910.

The lines on the right are the high level goods lines which lead to Toton sidings.

Then, on 31st March 1965 the Director of the London Postal Region wrote to the Postal Services Department, Midlands Branch about the action taken, in the way of police presence on the train following the threat of an attack on the Lincoln-Tamworth Bag Tender, which reflected the vulnerability of that tender.

He went on to say that the bag tender was one vehicle attached to a passenger train. This vehicle had been strengthened and had a loud hailer and mechanical bell alarms installed. The staffing was two postmen and while inspections had shown they observed all security precautions, they would be too few to defend the tender against attack. High Value mail amounting to eleven sacks at the seasonal peak and three sacks as a minimum was carried and stowed in a steel lined cupboard. H.V. mail was transferred at Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby and Tamworth and a recent inspection had shown transfers to be well carried out and escorted. The route of the train had a number of lonely sections and some of the scheduled stopping points were "very thinly populated" when the train was there, particularly Newark, Trent and Burton-on-Trent in both directions and Repton on the journey from Lincoln. These he regarded as places even though at Trent and Repton the stops were for passengers only and the tender remained closed.

In the view of the London Postal Region additional protection of the tender was desirable in the form of V.H.F. radio communications. The vulnerability would be reduced by a police presence in the vicinity of the stations at Burton-on-Trent, Trent, Newark and Repton when the tender was there. The Head Postmaster of Lincoln provided further details. The railway police at Lincoln had asked for permission to send one of their officers in the tender as the British Transport Police at Derby had received information the bag tender was going "to be done". This officer travelled as far as Nottingham where he was replaced by four railway police officers who travelled as far as Derby, where they in turn were replaced by four uniformed police. These travelled to Tamworth in the tender along with two CID officers in the train. This operation was repeated on the return journey.

The next day, a Superintendent Kightley discussed with the Head Postmaster the question of escorts on the bag tender. He mentioned that the previous night the telephone lines had been cut between Trent and Spondon and that contact with the train had been lost. Police forces in the area alerted, but nothing untoward had happened. Supt. Kightley suggested that, in view of this scare, special attention should be given to this bag tender and that the Post Office might wish to consider the train being escorted by police on all occasions, as was the practice on some TPOs.

THREE RECORDS OF UNDATED CIRCLES

Reported by Gwyn Hughes

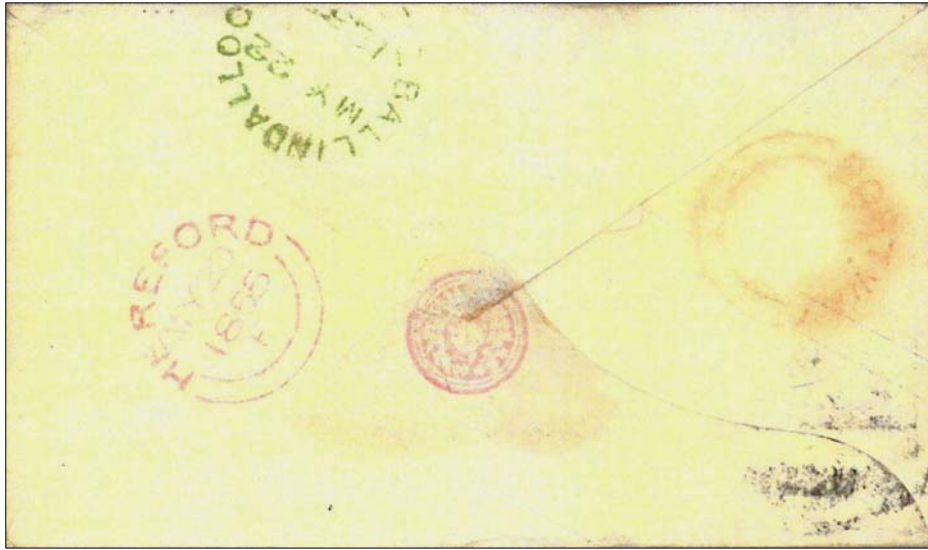


Fig 1 shows an undated PORTWAY (red on the right) on a 20 MAY 1855 postal stationery cover to Ballindalloch (Ireland) via Hereford. On page 51 of the society publication, THE UNDATED CIRCULAR MARKS OF THE MIDLAND COUNTIES, PORTWAY is shown under Hereford with the undated circle issued in May 1853 (Volume 11, page 171 of the proof impression book - PIB) and one previous recording in red on 10 DEC 1855. This is, clearly, a scarce mark.

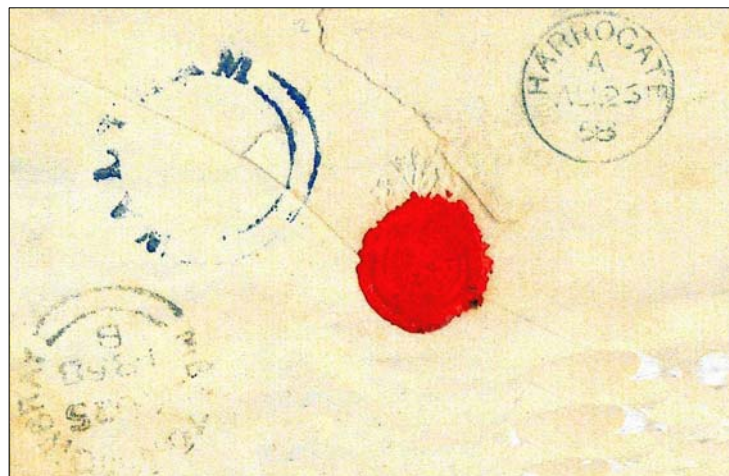


Fig2, Undated WALTHAM in blue, cover dated 24 AUG 1858

The C2 undated WALTHAM is on a cover to Harrogate, Yorkshire via Melton Mowbray. Page 60 of THE UNDATED CIRCULAR MARKS OF THE MIDLAND COUNTIES shows Waltham was transferred from Grantham to Melton Mowbray on 7 APR 1846 and page 61 shows that WALTHAM, then under Grantham, was issued with an undated mark on 5 JUL 1843 (Vol 5 page 168 of the PIB), recorded in black from 17 SEP 1843 to 15 SEP 1848, which makes the above example the only one recorded in blue.



The undated NEWHALL was found on a double used wrapper, originally through Burton-on-Trent to Redditch on 18 JAN 1859 and then reused from Redditch to Birmingham on 4 FEB 1859. Although in Derbyshire, a C1 NEWALL was issued through Burton on 28 JUN 1844 (PIB 7 / 75) and the previously unrecorded D4 NEWHALL was also issued through Burton on 8 NOV 1858 (PIB 16 / 87). The original cover is too large to reproduce but it appears to show a 152 of Burton, which may be a new latest date, the previous one being 1856.

BARLESTONE POST OFFICE (LEICESTERSHIRE)

by John Soer

Although Barlestone first received an official post in 1852, a post office did not open there until 1883. The office of Richard Kirkland, listed as postmaster in the 1888 Kelly's Directory was in Church Terrace (now Church Street). He was succeeded in January by Mrs Selina Bott who in turn was followed by Frederick Neale, a tailor. It is probably his office shown in the postcard which was posted in 1908. At the time of the 1911 census, Mr Neale had four daughters ranging in age from 9 to 15. Were they among the girls in front of the post office which was in the Bagworth Road? The quality of the image is not good, but when this is the first copy that you have seen in nearly forty years of collecting cards of Leicestershire post offices you buy it while you can.



Although Mr Neale was still the postmaster in 1927, Kelly's Directories of 1936 and 1940 list Mrs Muriel Dean, a stationer as postmistress. It was in the latter year that Mrs Lilian Ball began work in the office which she ran for her father until she was officially made post-mistress in 1953. She eventually retired in September 1991.

The office in Bagworth Road closed on 24th September 2011, but reopened as a P.O. Local in the Coop in West End on 23rd January 2012. The photograph to the left was taken in 1990.

I regret now not taking the view looking up the street for it appears that the post office was possibly on the same site for over one hundred years, but the view today is totally different from that on the postcard. A look at CV13 0EG on Google Street View will show what I mean.

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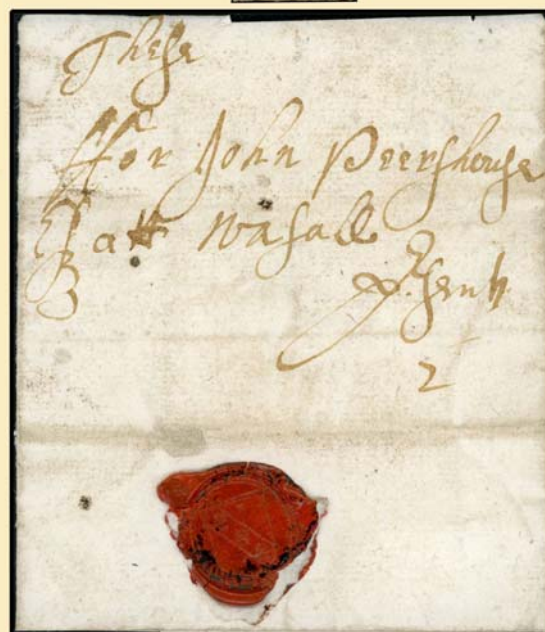


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