



MIDLAND MAIL

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



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NUMBER 64, MARCH 1990

Please accept my apologies for the hybrid appearance of this issue and its late publication. Since I knew that my spare time in March was limited, I set aside two days in which to work on Midland Mail. No sooner had I switched on the computer than there was a bang and smoke resulting in no work being done on this issue as the necessary repairs will take at least a month! Since then I have purchased my own word processor, but rather than waste work done, I have included material held over from the previous issue. This issue has been prepared with the computer manual in one hand so the layout is not all that it should be. By May, I hope to have explored the facilities available more fully. If there is anyone out there who finds computer manuals incomprehensible, then you are not alone.

If time permits, I hope to include a copy of the typestyles available with this machine. This type is produced at ten characters per inch which tends to take up a lot of space. It is possible to make the machine give twelve characters per inch - that is when I can find out how to do so. Do let me know which style you prefer as I intend to buy some more print-wheels. The Thesis PS is a proportionally spaced type (the letter i taking up less space than say an m) which the experts say gives a more professional appearance. But it is a matter of individual preference.

Would you please note the new address in the advert of Michael Jackson who has moved to Huntingdon. I suppose that he can now be said to live in the Midlands. I hope that you will support all our advertisers.

THE NEXT MEETING

This will take place on Saturday 28th April at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham when we will hold our A.G.M. and Annual Auction starting at 1.30 p.m. The meeting will be preceded by a Committee meeting beginning at 11 a.m.

We have the use of the room for the whole of the morning, so if you want more time to view the auction lots do come along early.

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

No doubt flood and blizzard accounted for the somewhat lower than usual attendance at Worcester on 3rd. February when we held our Annual Competitions. In the event it was a fine, sunny afternoon, and those present were able to add to their collections at the Stamp Fair.

There were only two entries for the competition for pre-1840 material. Alf Fieldhouse showed "Edinburgh Bishop Marks, 1693-1802". His nine sheets traced the changes in design and the colours used. "Instructional Marks of Leicester, 1823-1854", Paul Hill's entry included strikes of "Paid at Leicester", "Too Late" and the unusual "Missent to Leicester".

In the post-1840 section Mike Young produced nine sheets of "Small UDC Handstamps of Worcestershire." Those who collect this type of material will realise how much more difficult than the C1 and C2 types they are to find. A strike of "Exceeds Limits of Size/152" on a postcard caught the eye in Richard Farman's entry of "Explanatory Marks of Burton-on-Trent". The entry of Ted Coles, "Naval Mails, 1901-10", forms the basis of an article which appears elsewhere in this issue. A selection of the "Spoon and Sideways Duplex Stamps of Staffordshire" was Chris Beaver's entry.

The two entries in the post-1938 section were Mike Young's "Bromsgrove from 1852" which contained several instructional marks, and Paul Hill's "Channel Island Mails 1940-45". One aspect of this entry is described in an article which appears in this issue.

The members of the Worcester Society who kindly acted as judges chose as winners of the respective sections Alf Fieldhouse, Ted Coles and Paul Hill.

THE MARCH MEETING

Some twenty members and guests gathered in Birmingham on 3rd. March to hear Douglas Muir talk on "Postal Mechanisation". As Mr. Muir works at the National Postal Museum it was an opportunity to see material not normally available to the public.

Mr. Muir began by saying that proposals for mechanising the handling of mail were made as early as 1840. However little progress was made during the last century, and in terms of sorting it was not until 1935 that significant steps were taken in this country. In that year, so as to encourage British manufacturers, the Post Office purchased and installed at Brighton the Transorma machine from Holland. This machine worked successfully until June 1968. We were shown examples of the various operator "ident" marks produced by this machine. Douglas then turned his attention to two experimental machines used in London. First was a machine used at Mount Pleasant in 1952-55. The six machines of this type were identified by the Roman numerals I to VI. Then a Single Position Letter Sorting Machine used in the Foreign Section between February 1977 and July 1979, which used the letters A to E to identify the machines.

The next section of Mr Muir's talk dealt with the introduction of postcodes. We were shown a machine used for applying phosphor dots in trials conducted in 1957 at the P.O. research station at Dollis Hill. This was followed by examples of the publicity material, including machine slogans, used at Norwich in 1959. Between 1960 and 1965 three

coding desks were used at Luton; we saw examples of letters which had passed through these machines. This machine did not work particularly well so a new machine was tried which produced the phosphor dots along the bottom of the envelope instead of down the side. In January 1966 trials of a phosphor printer were transferred from London to Norwich. An unusual item was a card sent to Brighton which carried the Transorma mark as well as the Norwich phosphor dots. Usually an envelope was marked with either the inward code or the outward code but not both since no other office was mechanised. We saw examples of covers from tests of printing both codes.

Many people failed to use the post codes as they could not see the transparent dots. Trials were carried out using blue dots in Sheffield; a cover from the first day of use was dated 30th October 1978. Further trials of opacified tape on coloured envelopes were held at Sheffield in 1982.

In the second half of his talk Mr Muir dealt with stamp cancelling machines. No real development in this area took place until after World War II. The basic problem was one of enabling the machine to detect the stamps. The original idea was to do this optically. A series of trials to assess the effect of background colour on the detection of the stamps threw up some brightly coloured envelopes. The next attempt involved a search for a stamp which was electrically conducting. To this end George VI stamps were treated with silver paper, 2% salt solution and graphite lines on the front. An Automatic Letter Facing Machine (ALF) was developed in 1949, and we were shown the first ever card to pass through the cancelling unit of this machine on 18th. October 1950. Eventually a machine was put into use which detected graphite lines on the back of stamps. However the drawback of this machine was that it detected pins etc. in the envelope. So while the graphite lines were being introduced, experiments with phosphor stamps were carried out. The final part of the talk was concerned with the problems encountered with these stamps such as distinguishing between the stamp and the phosphor dots, and the separation of first class mail from second class.

In his vote of thanks Ches mentioned that it had been an entertaining as well as informative talk with much very rare material on display.

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BY THE OLD RIVER BRIDGE AT HUNTINGDON

CORRESPONDENCE

Denis Salt writes:

Dear John,

The inference from your question in your editorial to M.M. 63 is that you feel that there are too many Postal History Societies, and that the smaller ones may be too small to be viable. As one who is Secretary of probably one of the smallest such Societies in the country, I cannot agree that there are too many, but admit that some of the smaller ones may find that they are indeed too small to be viable. Nevertheless I feel that they have much to contribute to the real study of postal history, as opposed to building up a collection, whether on a County or any other basis.

When I was instrumental in starting the Shropshire P.H.S., I was quite unaware of the fact that Shropshire was already one of the Counties embraced by the Midland (G.B.) P.H.S. Yet it was Steph Stobbs who gave me every possible encouragement to establish a local P.H.S. for this County, though he himself had collection of Shropshire P.H. items probably second to none. I think I joined the Midland Society in 1979, and the first article relating to Shropshire appeared in Bulletin No. 14 at just about the same time. The article was, of course written by Steph Stobbs.

I would like to suggest that some of the most valuable postal history research is carried out by members of local societies. Many of their members have never heard of, let alone visited, P.O. Archives; they may be too far away from London, but anyhow they can leave that research to the larger Societies. But it is the small local Society, perhaps operating on a County basis, which can do an immense amount of research in the local Record Offices and Local Studies Libraries, and yield all sorts of material which is not to be found in P.O. Archives.

I would put forward a plea for the small local Societies, whose research can supplement that done by others at P.O. Archives, the Public Record Office and similar institutions both in London and elsewhere. But if the small Postal History Societies are to survive and carry on the valuable work which I believe they are doing, they must receive some encouragement and support from the larger Societies, such as the Midland. If every small local Society could look to a large Society to join it once a year in the local Society's home town for a joint meeting, this should ensure that the local Society could spread its wings and meet the expense of a meeting, with a good guest speaker, of postal historians considerably larger than it can do on its own.

Vivien Sussex writes:

Dear John,

Thanks for the magazine with its usual very perceptive editorial. A tiny hobby is severely overloaded with little groups who see no further than the mite in their eye. We are afraid that from what we see, there are too many so called "Kings of their own castle" who love their own so called importance and are more than blinkered in their approach to philately. Surely the Postal History can be the focal point for County P.H. when it is seen in its proper context? The narrow minded collector is the main reason for the PHS widening its meeting horizons. Too many members were being "turned off" by repetitive shows of county material.

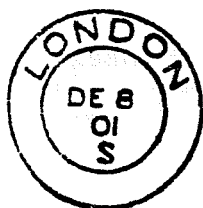
LONDON DATESTAMPS ON BRITISH NAVAL MAIL FROM 1900

by C.W.E. COLES

I am restricting this article to the period from 1900 because I have seen very few covers from the Navy prior to 1900. Fortunately much information is provided by the picture postcards which became very popular about that date and which have survived in large numbers. These cards frequently bore a picture of the ship of origin and its location at the time the card was written.

The British Navy was the largest in the world during the period under review and her ships could be found in all parts of the world on a variety of duties. The normal practice for sending mail home was for it to be bagged on board ship and to deliver the bags to the local post office at the next port of call. The bags were sent to London unopened. Normally postage was paid by British stamps affixed by the sender so that when the bags reached London the mail they contained was cancelled, sorted and despatched by the G.P.O. in London. It was usually dealt with by the Inland Section, but occasionally by the Foreign Section.

I have been accumulating material for years and it soon became evident that some datestamps could be identified as being used exclusively for cancelling naval mail (with this I include Troop Transports). These datestamps can be divided into eight different types illustrated below with the period I, and others, have recorded their use:-



Type 1
1901
1 example



Type 2
1903-05
10 examples



Type 3
1903-07
7 examples



Type 4
1903-06
8 examples



Type 5
1904-09
5 examples



Type 6
1904-16
7 examples



Type 7
1906-21
80+ examples



Type 8
1914-19
20+ examples

In type 6 F.S. 15, 21, 62, 63 & 64 have been recorded. For type 7 I have recorded the following numbers: 2,6,10,11,16,25,134,146,150,160,163,166,172-7,188,203-4,207-8,210,227,253 and 257. Type 4 has been seen in red as a transit stamp on outgoing mail to the Navy and there are some LONDON PAID datestamps, also struck in red, used mostly on mail from Troop Transports which are still under investigation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. L.D. McConnell and I wrote on this subject in the Newsletter of the Forces Postal History Society in 1976 and 1977. "British Naval Post and Censor Marks of the First World War" by Dr. M.H. Gould provided, in 1984, a consolidation of the information.

CHANNEL ISLANDS INTERNEE MAIL

by Paul Hill

The Channel Islands are part of the British Isles but are not part of the United Kingdom in that they have had their own form of government for many centuries but their major laws are subject to approval by the Queen in Council. On 28th March 1784, an Act was passed which established a packet service from Weymouth to Guernsey as well as fixing the rates of postage and authorising the P.M.G. to establish post offices and postroads in the Islands. The Act was registered by the Royal Court of Guernsey later that year, but was never registered by the Royal Court of Jersey and so was not law there. A Post Office Surveyor, Christopher Saverland, went over on the first packet and appointed Mrs. Ann Watson Postmistress of Guernsey, and Charles William Le Geyt Postmaster of Jersey.

After the evacuation from Dunkirk and the fall of France in 1940, the Islands were declared indefenceable. All military personnel were evacuated, also any civilians who wanted to go to England. Between one quarter and one third of the population left in this way. The Islands were declared demilitarised and the first Germans landed at Guernsey airport on 30th June. The rest of the Islands were occupied over the next few days, so beginning an occupation which was to last almost five years.

After two years of occupation, an order arrived which was as much a surprise to the German Command as it was to the Islanders. A notice in the press contained the following order from the Feldkommandant:

By order of Higher Authority the following British subjects will be evacuated and transferred to Germany:

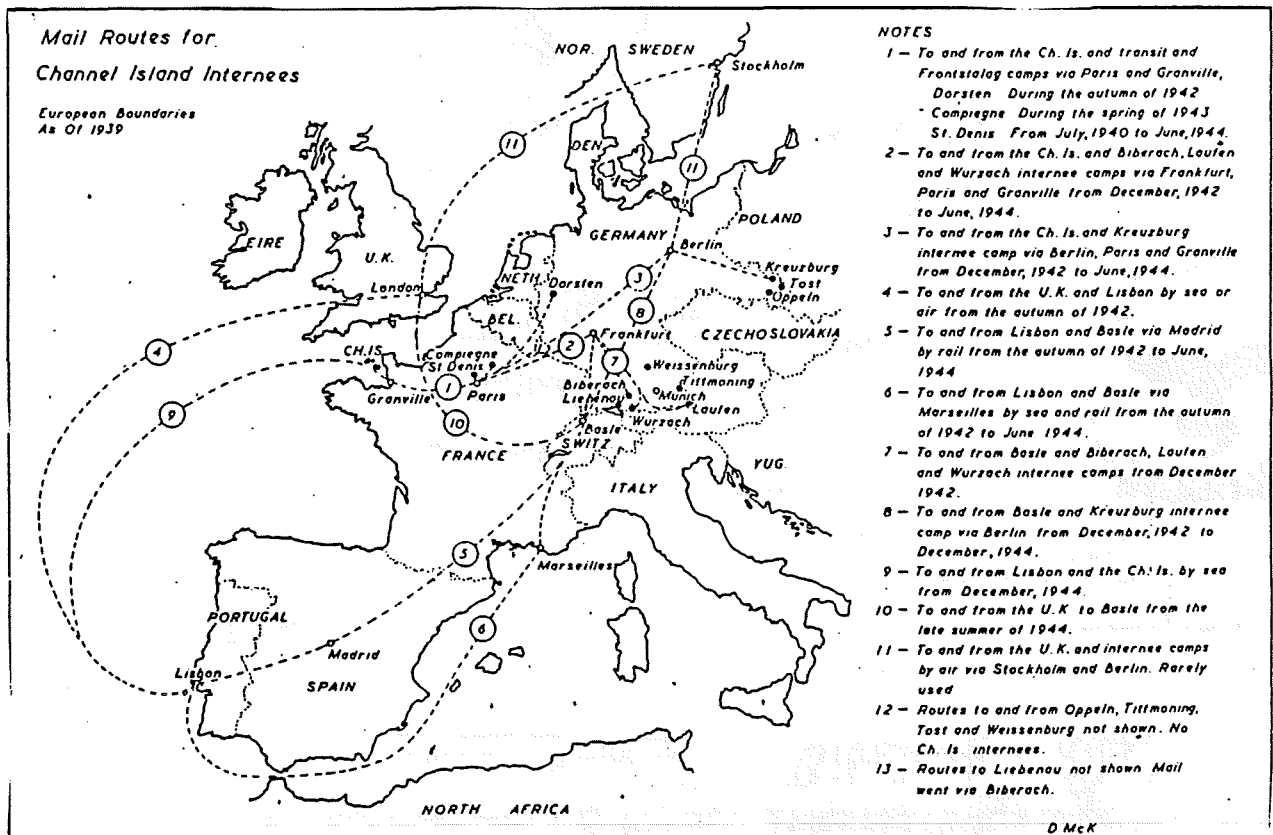
- (a) Persons who have their permanent residence not on the Channel Islands, for instance those who have been caught here by the outbreak of war,
- (b) All those men not born on the Channel Islands and 16 to 70 years of age who belong to the English people, together with their families.

It was thirty years later that the reason for this action was made known. In the autumn of 1941, Britain interned 500 German agents and citizens working in Iran. Hitler was outraged by this and ordered reprisals. The German Foreign Ministry looked to the captive population of the Channel Islands and more especially the United Kingdom citizens resident there of whom it was estimated there were between 1,000 and 2,000 available for deportation. Initially Hitler's order was not carried out, the Wermacht and the German Foreign Ministry each thinking it was the responsibility of the other. When the mistake was realised the orders were reissued, arriving in Jersey on 15th September 1942. The first of the deportees had to assemble at 4 p.m. on the 16th in St. Helier, and by 9 p.m. were on their way. More followed over the next few days, 1186 people eventually being deported. The Guernsey deportation followed about a week later. Some people committed suicide rather than submit to deportation.

Initially some of the deportees were sent to Dorsten in the Ruhr, and some to Biberach in Southern Germany. Then it was decided that Dorsten would not be used and that single men over 16 would be moved from both camps to Laufen in Bavaria. Married couples with families would be moved from both camps to Wurzach, near Biberach, and the remainder would be housed at Biberach. By mid-November this had been done.

A further series of deportations took place in February 1943 as a result of a commando raid on Sark on the night of 3rd October 1942. This time the women and children with men over 64 were sent to Compiègne near Paris. While all other men went to Laufen and a few married men to Kreuzberg in Upper Silesia. Most of the women and children, and married

men had, by August 1943, been moved to Biberach. Channel Islanders were placed in other camps for limited periods of time, notably the Womens' camp at Liebenau. These are shown on the map below.



Mail to and from these deportees makes a fascinating postal history study, but letters to and from these camps are difficult to acquire. Mail from them is easier to find than mail to them. This is not so surprising when one considers that an internee keeping his mail would have to pack it with his belongings on repatriation and then keep it perhaps for several months before arriving back in the Channel Islands.

Deportees over the age of sixteen were allowed, after arrival at the permanent camp, to send three lettersheets and four postcards per month (doctors and priests received double this allowance). Mail, which was sent free but was subject to censorship, soon settled down and became quite regular. Mail from England took about six weeks, while letters from the Islands took as little as ten days. However, after the D-Day landings mail from the Islands dried up almost completely. The Germans there would not accept any mail for internees after 13th June 1944.

The lettersheets and postcards were preprinted to a standard format similar to that used by Prisoners of War, but with the camp's own name or number printed in the sender's panel. This stationery was headed on the address side with the word INTERNIERTENPOST. When supplies of this ran out Prisoner of War stationery headed KRIEGSGEFANGENPOST were used.

An unexplained aspect is the four digit cachet which first appeared in the summer of 1944. It is normally struck in red, but is also known in purple. There are to my knowledge only two such examples, both of which have been censored inside. All the red examples have no other signs of censorship. Anyone who would like to delve deeper into this fascinating subject is recommended to read "ISLANDERS DEPORTED PART I & II by R. Harris

Kriegsgefangenenpost



An Mrs Sebire
Belvedere Lodge

Empfangsort: Fort Road
Straße: Guernsey
Land: Chan Islands
Landesteil (Provinz usw.)



One of the first lettersheets sent from Biberach on 11 Dec 1942. The cachet on the left is the rare eagle censor mark which was replaced in Jan 1943.

Deutschesland (Allemagne)
Lager-Bezeichnung: B 10/66 Internierungslager
Gefangenennummer: 86
Vor- und Zuname: Lily. Wise
Absender:

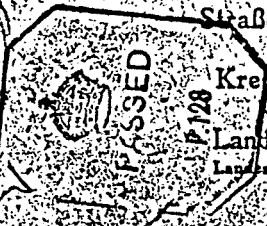
Interniertenpost

6961



An Mrs D. C. Sebire
6/6 Mrs D. D. Martel

Empfangsort: 26 Albert Rd
Straße: Bolton
Kreis: Waukesha
Land: England
Landesteil (Provinz usw.)

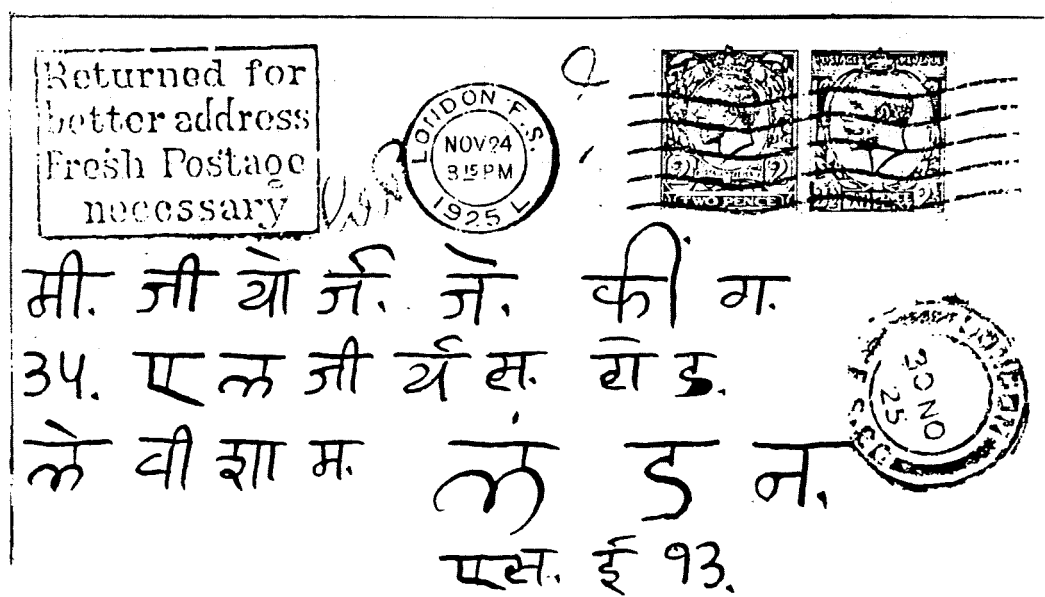
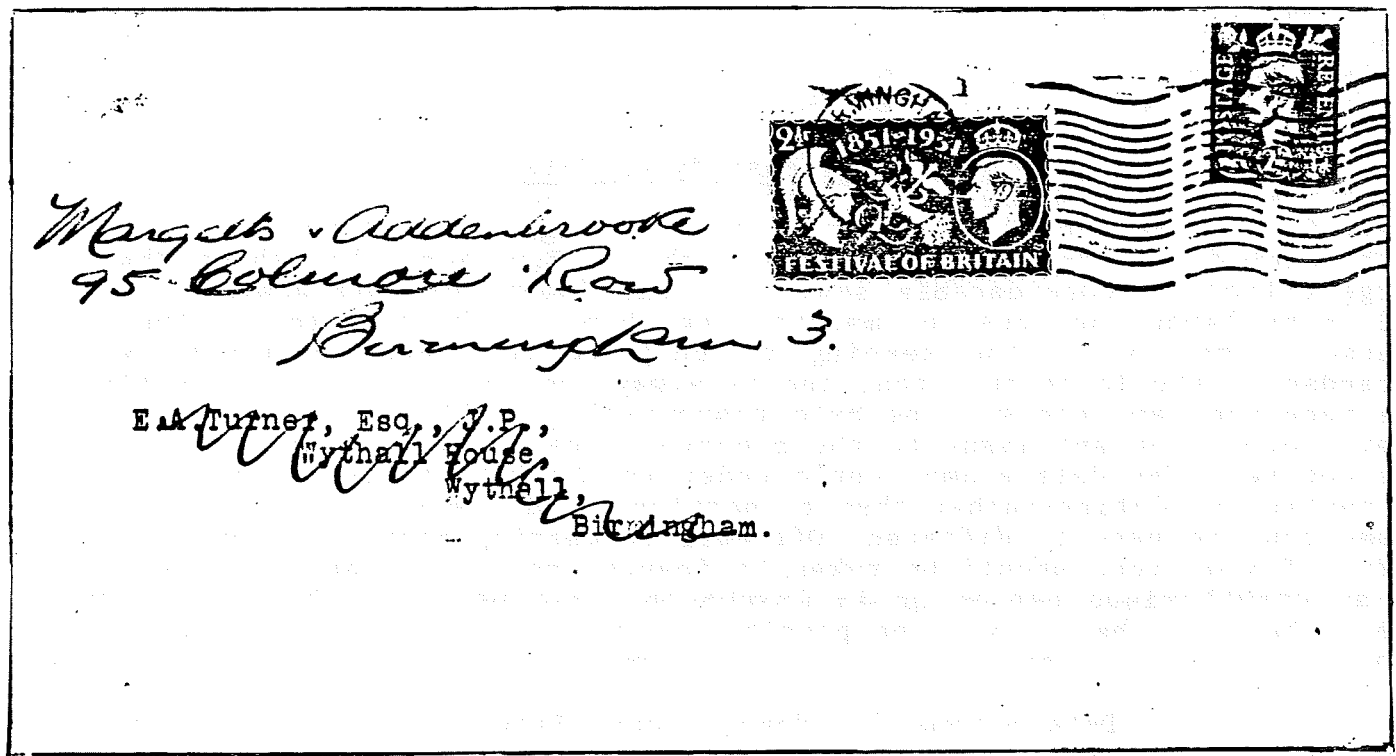


An example of the four digit cachet (6961).

TWO UNUSUAL ITEMS

The two covers illustrated below were displayed by Eric Lewis at the January meeting. The first shows a fourteen line canceller with only one date-stamp die. In fact it was remarkable coincidence that the wavy lines of the second cancel lined up so neatly with those of the first. Also the second adhesive was applied over the first circular die impression.

As regards the second, can anyone tell Eric and Elizabeth why a better address was required?



DECISIONS ON DATE STAMPS

Whilst looking for information about the style of certain datestamps I came across, in Post 55, a file titled "Date Stamps, General, Decisions." Whilst it did not contain the information I was seeking, it did contain much information which may be of interest to members. So selected extracts are reproduced below.

February 1909. (1) Stamps bearing letters "S.O." or "R.S.O." sent up to be recut and adapted for clock time type to be replaced by new ones. (2) Stamps sent up to be recut, but not adapted for clock time type; if they have already been recut several times, and do not appear to be likely to last for many more years to be replaced by new ones; if they are worth recutting the letters "S.O." or "R.S.O." to remain unaltered.

June 1913. Arrangements for custody of Date-Stamps.

Attention has been called to a practice which prevails at some Offices of assigning permanently to each Officer engaged on stamping duties a particular date-stamp or set of date-stamps. Experience has shown that at large Offices a considerable saving in the number of date-stamps in use, and in the labour and cost of maintaining them, can be effected if they are placed primarily in the keeping of only two or three Officers, where attendances should be such that one is always on duty while the date-stamps are required, and who will be held responsible for their safe custody, for their correction and issue to the proper Officers, and for their return in due course. The date-stamps would under this system be regarded as proper to particular duties rather than to particular Officers; and the same date-stamp could be used by different Officers succeeding each other on the same duty. Precautions should be taken to insure that date-stamps are not used by an unauthorised person or in an unauthorised way; and the arrangements should be such that it will be possible to ascertain what Officer was using a particular date-stamp at a particular time and date.

May 1919. Date Stamps for Sub-Offices: Principles to be followed in meeting applications for

(a) When a sub office which has more than one dispatch, but only one (non-time) stamp, is given a second stamp (this is to be done on the recommendation of the Surveyor or Postmaster) this should be a clock-time metal stamp. If the stamp already in use is a clock-time metal stamp the second should generally speaking be a rubber non-clock-time stamp (Climax dater). If the first stamp is a clock-time rubber stamp (Blackwell) it might be well to supply a clock-time metal stamp and to use the rubber stamp without clock time eventually replacing it by a non-clock-time rubber stamp.

(b) When a sub office has more than one dispatch and two stamps, neither showing clock time, sends up one of its stamps for repair it should be given a clock-time metal stamp.

(c) When a sub office which has more than one dispatch a day but not enough work for two stamps wants its stamp renewed, it should be given a metal stamp not showing clock time but showing index letters, if the stamp already in use is not of this pattern.

June 1921. Date-stamps showing incorrect addresses.

When a new date stamp is requisitioned to replace a worn out one which does not show the correct postal address of the Office, the Postmaster should see that a stamp showing the correct address is ordered; and if more stamps than one are in use for letters all should be ordered simultaneously.

April 1921. Inward Date Stamping (Provinces).

With the exception of Registered, Insured and Mis-sent packets, the date-stamping of inward postal packets at Provincial Offices to be discontinued.

February 1924. In future the designations on date-stamps (metal and I.R.) to be in accordance with the current P.O. Guide, i.e. the name of the county will be shown when included in the official name of the office. In cases where the length of the name renders this impossible - even when abbreviated - the Postmaster concerned will be communicated with as to the omission of the "County".

February 1925. When necessary to abbreviate "Shropshire" should be shown as "Shrops" not "Salop".

1928. Recutting abolished in steel stamps and type on introduction of "standard" stamp and type. Oval Regd, Paid and Hooded stamps to be retopped if balance of type is in good condition.

February 1929. Date-stamps for Sub-Offices - Revised principles.
(See MM62/4 for details.)

September 1931. Use of steel stamps extended to all Cash Account Postal Order Offices transacting Licence business.

January 1934. Suggestion by Head Postmaster, Huntingdon, that steel stamps be supplied to sub-offices where only one date stamp is in use, in place of rubber climax dater, adopted.

May 1934. As a result of a report to the Secretary in Sept 1933 that a large number of steel cancelling stamps now in use, still have wrong or incomplete addresses, it was decided that all steel stamps used for the postmarking of correspondence which do not contain the office of service, or are of incorrect pattern should be replaced during the next 12 months.

December 1934. Decided that "Salop" should be substituted for "Shrops" in all future date stamps supplied.

November 1936. Stamps giving an impression similar to that below supplied to London I.S., Edinburgh (P&T), Bristol, Liverpool, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Hull, Portsmouth and Southampton for obliterating postage stamps on letters received from H.M. Ships (Navy). The stamps are standardised with that previously used at Plymouth.



G.B. POSTAL HISTORY

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COMPETITION

A few more covers for which you have to calculate the charge(s) which have been obliterated. The next issue will contain the last part of this particular competition. You should then send your answers to the Editor to arrive by 15th July.

Cover M was sent from Sutton Coldfield.

M

'TOO LATE

100-443886-100

Wm. P. Thurgfield & Son
Lob.
Bedford

N

Mr. Piddoche

LEICESTER
91

Solicitor

Ashby de la Bouch

47
ESPION

Mr W. Garrard

Olney

POST OFFICE NOTICES, 1666 to 1800

Two members of the PHS of Lancashire & Cheshire have done a great service by transcribing all the notices which were published for the GPO in the London Gazette from its beginning to the end of the 18th century. Nearly twenty years ago there was published in Postal History a summary of them as far as 1695, compiled by Jeremy Greenwood. Some of the most important of the later ones have been referred to by other writers of course, but now at last we can have in one convenient volume the precise wording of every one - several hundred occupying 184 large pages. A useful introduction and twelve pages of indices complete the book. It is only in the index that I have discovered any errors.

Though there are a good many notices which relate to the Midlands that I had not previously encountered, none of them was a surprise, and it is pleasing to be able to report that to the best of my knowledge nothing that has appeared in Midland Mail has been contradicted. Many things, on the other hand, receive confirmation in one or more notices.

Surveyors and deputy postmasters, as we know, sometimes put notices in provincial newspapers, most of which remain to be fully researched. Henry John Everson did the job with Aris's Gazette long ago, you may remember (c.f. MM45/12). Arthur Lloyd is engaged on the Staffordshire Advertiser, as he told us when he came to speak to us a few years back.

"Post Office Notices Extracted from the London Gazette, 1666-1800." by D.G. Haslam and C. Moreton was published in 1989 by the PHS of Lancs and Cheshire, and is obtainable from:

149 Chapel Road, Oldham OL8 4QJ.

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MORE ON MINOR OFFICE RUBBERS
OR "CLIMAX DATERS"

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

Assiduous readers may have realised that the piece in MM80/14ff was an extract from a nine sheet competition entry, which the editor thought fit to publish as something a little different. (I didn't know what Denis George was up to in Salop and have yet to see his results!) No original research was required, only eighteen clearly struck village rubbers and powers of observation just sufficient to provide a commentary.

Since then I have discovered James Mackay's "Sub Office Rubber Datestamps of England & Wales", a 466 page tome published in 1986. This has not been alluded to in MM so perhaps members who knew of it considered it too expensive for their pockets or too comprehensive for their needs. There's more to the story than I had supposed. The twenty-five pages of introduction, which required considerable research by James, trace the use of what the records generally refer to as "Climax Daters" from their introduction in 1885 at certain minor offices selected to stock the new postal orders. Previously no office stamp was needed because they were not Money Order Offices. The number involved grew gradually from 174 to several thousand. Nevertheless more than a thousand more required their first Climax Daters when it was decided in 1904 to extend the sale of Postal Orders to all post offices.

Because the special violet ink supplied was not indelible it was not intended to use these handstamps as cancellers on franked mail, but their use for purposes other than on postal orders became customary and some authority to cancel was given or assumed about 1904-05. Then at the end of 1910 an "Indelible Black Fluid" was introduced and when this was received any unopened bottle of "Violet Fluid" was to be returned to store. This was not oil based as was the black ink to be used for the steel stamps which all Money Order Offices had, but no doubt akin to if not identical in composition with the "special obliterating fluid" for the "Parcel Post Obliterating Stamps" also made of india rubber. (See the 1889 P.O. Circular in MM61/5. Though all offices dealt with parcels and had parcel post labels issued to them minor offices did not have parcel post obliterating stamps.) When the new ink came into use in the following months (or later, officially by 1912) it was stipulated that "The small wood block stamping pad should continue to be used"; it will have been noticed that the 1889 Circular identified such pads then as "covered with brown silk".

In course of time and for various reasons many offices which once used a "Climax Dater" graduated to a steel stamp. Though some P.O. officials considered such a stamp ought to last twenty years, in practice a replacement was often needed in three or four, and in 1933 it was at last realised it would be more economical to discontinue issuing them. A steel handstamp would be supplied to every minor office that didn't have one, at a cost of 16/2 each instead of 3/-. They were issued with "a piece of star type", no index letter being required above the date as no office with more than one dispatch a day was by this time still dependant on a Climax Dater.

The bulk of Mackay's book consists of reproductions from the Rubber Impression Books (in alphabetical not chronological order) together with a list of these filled out with such additional varieties (including additional offices and skeletons) as are represented in just four major collections. These additions are sufficient to show the proof books are far from being a complete record of issues, particularly from 1912 onwards, and generally contain only the first stamp for each office not the repairs and replacements even if the wording is quite different.

The incompleteness can be illustrated from an analysis of such sub-office "Climax Daters" as I have accumulated. As many as 247 offices in Staffordshire or under Staffordshire post towns appear in Mackay's list. Thirty-nine of these I have in one form, nine in two and five in three forms, and two more offices are not listed at all. Out of some seventy different rubbers (and ignoring colour variations) fewer than fifteen correspond with the illustrations from the Impression Books. Neither of my skeletons is among Mackay's five in the county. For all those pages of lists not one in two of what I have corresponds with those he records. I'd no idea what scope for expanding the record and making new finds must exist.

It will be interesting to see how many more different sub-office rubbers of Shropshire Denis George has discovered than Mackay listed from that county. Meanwhile thanks to James for permission to extract from his copyright material for this outline.

Illustrations: Mackay's book records only the Impression Book issue for Checkley, dated 15AUG.12, here struck 20JUN.13. The wording is the same in 1924, but with much smaller lettering. In 1932 a third stamp, differently arranged to include the county as well as the post town, is in use. Up to six stamps have been distinguished elsewhere, but it is not always easy to be confident.

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Miss Brittlebank

Picture Post Card

ADDRESS

15 APR 1900

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POST CARD

FOR CORRESPONDENCE

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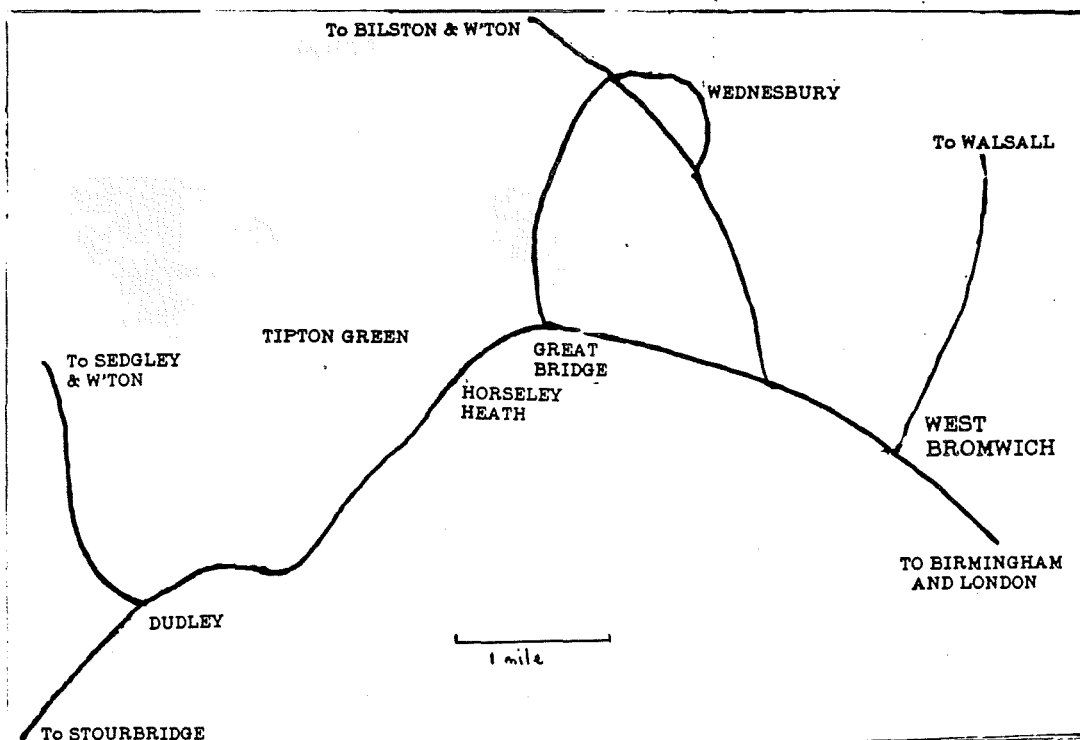
A TALE OF TWO TIPTONS

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

One of the oddities drawn to more general notice by the publication of our "Straight Line and Numbered Receiving House Marks" book is the fact that use of MSL 137, the "Tipton" name stamp of the Birmingham Penny Post era, continued in the early 1840s in addition to a "Tipton" cds. It looks as though the straight line ought to have become redundant; and if not why should both have been deemed necessary. Usually of course there's a cancellation as well, maltese cross or barred oval "799". Applying all three stamps was surely a time consuming task, and not done unless there was good cause.

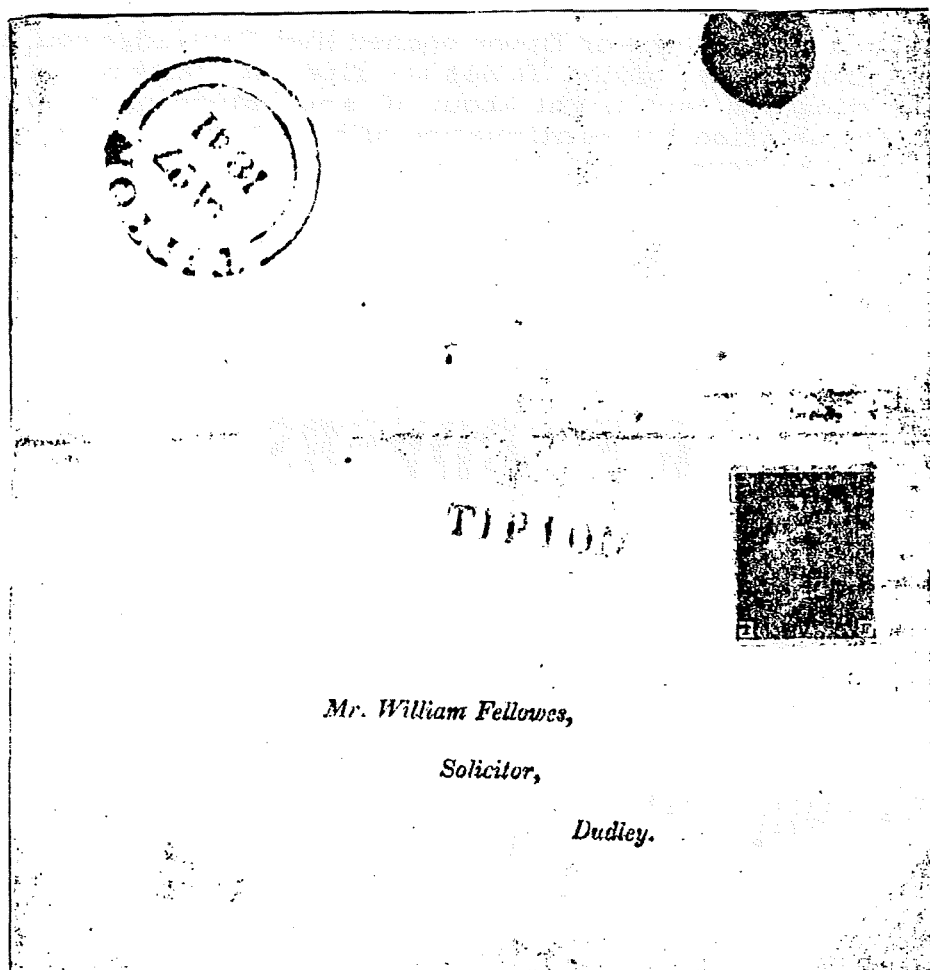
A possibility worth investigating begins to dawn. MSL 137 has not been reported after 1845. In 1846 a "Tipton Green" udc was issued, to be followed later by MSL138 with the same wording. Perhaps "Tipton Green" was not a new office in 1846? Yes indeed a directory of 1845 does list such an office "1½ miles from Tipton". What handstamp was used at that time? The snag against too hasty a conclusion is the awkward evidence that the cds of Tipton never seems to be without the straight line at that period. If they were struck at different offices you would expect to find the cds sometimes, even usually, on its own.

Now, the thing to do if you have a hunch of this kind is to mention it to the Coordinating Editor. If as well as to our books an investigation may relate to Stourbridge, speedy assistance is almost guaranteed! Years ago I concluded, without quite proving, that the route of the Birmingham to Stourport mailcoach was by the indirect road via Bromwich Heath and Horseley Heath to Dudley. This supposition was based on the total distance given as 148 miles, deducting 119 for the quoted distance of the Aylesbury, Banbury and Warwick route to Birmingham, and the timings of despatches and arrivals at various places on the several roads that could have been used, apart from Dudley, Stourbridge, Bewdley and the terminal towns. Without stating that the Birmingham - Stourport mail went through Tipton there are some directories which specify it did carry Tipton's mail.



In next to no time P.O. Archives had been visited and relevant reports extracted from Post 35/46, numbered 636DD and 851DD, which give all the details one might hope for. They are the official responses to persistent applications in the early months of 1839 that Tipton become a post town. (The existing receiving office was at Horseley Heath, still under Birmingham and in its penny post since 1815, though several nearer places had become post towns in the meanwhile, in particular Dudley in 1822 and West Bromwich in 1837.) After a considerable correspondence between Benjamin Churchill, surveyor, and William Maberly, the Secretary, and before making his recommendations, Maberly spelt out the existing arrangement: "The bag for Tipton & the neighbourhood is now left by the Birmingham - Stourport Mail at a spot a mile distant from Tipton and the receiving house is held there and the letters for all parts are distributed from thence." Churchill's recommendation was that the distribution should be from a new office in the town itself which should be made a post town, and a receiving office "on the line of the Mail Coach" be responsible for taking the bag from the coach, no longer even to open it; this could be the existing office or a replacement at Great Bridge - presumably suggested because it was a developing community whereas the office at Horseley Heath was in a more isolated spot though nearer to the original Tipton settlement and to the more recent industrial developments and the new town.

Maberly was persuaded about establishing a new post town but hesitant about allowing free delivery, as Churchill recommended, for the ironworks of the whole neighbourhood which had enjoyed no extras to the penny post charges. After receiving a good deal of explanation Maberly was ready to treat Tipton as "a special case" because of "the peculiar circumstances attaching to these great mining Districts".



In the course of discussion of these proposals yet another Black Country anomaly came to light. When making arrangements for West Bromwich to become a post town a couple of years before, it evidently didn't occur to the authorities that Tipton ought not to have remained in the Birmingham Penny Post at all. What Maberly now called a mistake arose "from the supposition that the Coach conveying the Tipton Letters did not pass thro' West Bromwich". This mistake would not be perpetuated if Tipton became a post town!

The proposals as outlined were approved by Lord Lichfield on 23 March 1839. However, while Churchill was attempting to implement them, local representations were strongly made on behalf of Miss Martha Partridge the receiver at Horseley Heath. Not only was the idea of replacing her office by one at Great Bridge quietly dropped but there was no adequate reason why hers should not be the main office (and consequently Tipton remained its name), the new central office (distinguished therefore as Tipton Green) being subordinate. The latter was of course more convenient for the great majority of the industrialists and inhabitants actually to use. This arrangement was approved on 15 May 1839 by the P.M.G. and it continued at least into the 1860s with Miss Partridge still in charge.

A Tipton udc was issued on 19 June 1839 to the Birmingham postmaster, but perhaps it was an error, never put to use at either office and returned. A Tipton Green udc and a Tipton cds were really what were wanted. Such a cds was sent on 22nd. July. One may suppose Miss Partridge then passed on her now redundant straight line stamp for use at the new office in the town where it served well enough for the next seven years because no one thought it necessary to bother about ordering one with the proper title.

Once that office in the middle of Tipton opened Miss Partridge could no longer expect many customers at her office. It was the fleeting visits of the mail coach on its way to Birmingham each night about 10 and returning to Stourport at about 3 a.m. which justified the continuance of her office a mile and more from where the new town had developed during her lifetime.

G.B. COVERS

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

ROGER HUDSON



P.O. Box 172,
COVENTRY CV6 6NF

Phone: 0203 686613

A BIRMINGHAM TO WORCESTER TIME BILL

Calculation will soon show that the post-boy should have been punished, if the warning at the bottom was enforced.



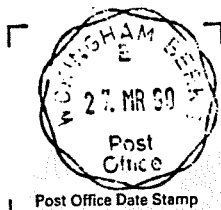
For His MAJESTY's Special Service.

BIRMINGHAM to WORCESTER
TIME BILL.

Contractors' Names.	Miles.	Time allowed H. M.	
			DISPATCHED from the Post Office, Birmingham, the 11 of May 1786 at 12 20 in the Afternoon.
			London Mail Arrived at 11 40 <i>W. H. W. H. W. H.</i>
Mrs. Savage	15	2 30	Arrived at Stourbridge at 20 Minutes past 3 <i>W. H. W. H. W. H.</i>
Mr. Payton	10	1 40	Arrived at Bewdley 45 9 10 1/2 4 10 1/2 <i>W. H. W. H. W. H.</i>
Mr. Fieldhouse	15	2 30	Arrived at Worcester at 50 11 2 1/2 7 in Time for the Bristol Mail Coach. <i>L. Fieldhouse</i>
			RETURNED from the Post Office, Worcester, the 20 of 1796 at 5 in the Morning. 20 Minutes after the Arrival of the Mail from Bristol. <i>L. Fieldhouse</i>
Mr. Fieldhouse	15	2 30	Arrived at Bewdley at 10 11 10 1/2 0 10 1/2 <i>W. H. W. H. W. H.</i>
Mr. Payton	10	1 40	Arrived at Stourbridge 40 1 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 <i>W. H. W. H. W. H.</i>
Mrs. Savage	15	2 30	Arrived at Birmingham the 20 of May at 12 1/2 in the Morning. <i>W. H. W. H. W. H.</i>
			The Post-Boy carrying this Mail will, if he loiters upon the Road, or does not travel with the Mail, in all possible Cases, at the Rate of at least Six Miles within the Hour, be committed to the House of Correction, and confined to hard Labour, agreeable to Act of Parliament.

By Command of the Postmaster General,

S. WOODCOCK, Surveyor, Gen. Post Office.

TAILPIECE (Or SID strikes again)

No you are not seeing things, and it is nothing to do with privatisation. Some of you are almost certainly aware that post offices in the Thames Valley are being automated. To which end odd things including computer terminals and SID have appeared on the counters. Wokingham has now joined this select band of offices. SID stands for Self-Inking Datestamps. They look rather cumbersome, but no doubt in time, they will take their place alongside UDC, CDS et al. I suppose they may be seen as a significant development in postal history, so I will try to acquire enough to distribute to those at the A.G.M. who would like one. If you cannot be there and would like one, drop me a line and I will try to include it with with a future issue.

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

This should appear at the end of May. It will contain a report of the AGM and something on mileages. The rest will consist of articles sent to:

John Soer 51d Barkham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 2RG.

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