

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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There are two departures from our normal practice in this edition. A coloured picture on the front page refers to an article inside; as we pay for a coloured first page because of the heading in red it seemed worthwhile to produce an illustration referring to an internal article. Another 'first' is that there is an article of 12 pages presented here in its entirety. As soon as I received it I thought it deserved not to be split. Before you all start rushing to your references and laptops, this is an experiment not necessarily to be repeated *ad nauseam*! Please let me know what you think!



Superb cover shown by Ian May during his talk on Warwickshire postal history at the November meeting. Sent from Cropredy, Oxon, under Leamington from 1873, to a member of the 1st Shropshire Light Infantry in Hong Kong and forwarded to Yokohama and back to Hong Kong – see pages 2 / 3 for Ian's account of his display.

VAGUES DUTY – Feedback, see page 13 of MM 184

Stuart Geddes e-mails "I read that this refers to individuals in sorting offices who have sufficient knowledge to forward incorrectly addressed mail". **Richard Martin** has sent a cutting from the British Postmark Society Journal of Oct 2014, which illustrates the OFFICIAL VAGUES DUTY / BIRMINGHAM B6 4AA postmark on a damaged cover to Hampshire, where it arrived in an 'ambulance bag' having been found or delayed at Birmingham. The article states, 'Vagues Duty' is long-established postal jargon for senior sorters whose local and national geographical knowledge enable them to correctly direct letters bearing incomplete or inaccurate addresses! So there we have it, no longer vague!

Midland Philatelic Federation – Autumn Individual 16-sheet competition

Clive Jones gained a silver-gilt for Missent Mail of Yorkshire, **Stuart Geddes** a silver for Monmouthshire and Forest of Dean Penny Posts, **Paul Bradshaw** a silver for Northampton Postal History 1730–1792, **Robin Jarman** a silver for Compagnie Aeropostale (CGA) Chile, **Judith Bradshaw** a silver-bronze for Woodbridge Postal History 1840–1845.

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

The Society is grateful to Derek Humphreys for a full set of 10 volumes of his Nottinghamshire Post Offices (2002). The Society already holds 3 volumes of Nottingham Town Sub-Offices, so that it now has comprehensive details of past and present offices in the county, the names of postal officials and the majority of illustrations or photographs of premises.

THE NOVEMBER MEETING

17 souls braved a very wet 8th November for our meeting at St Germaine's Church Hall, Birmingham, when Ian May gave a wonderfully varied display of postal history from Warwickshire, an account of which Ian has supplied below.

The display began with maps of Warwickshire by Speed (1627), and Jacob Von Langeren (1677). Six letters written before 1635, the official opening of the Post to the public, would have been carried privately, though one of 1577 from Coventry to Hanchurch, Staffordshire may have been carried by the Royal Post with both places on the Coventry to Nantwich Kings Post Road. A letter of 1653 was carried by Manley's Post, operating in the Commonwealth Period (1649 to 1660). The letter of 1686 caused interest as it was thought it was for Northwick, a suburb of Worcester, rather than Northwick Park, Blockley, near Moreton-in-Marsh; because it had an extra 2d possibly for a local delivery. Until c1800 Rugby had a series of small hand-stamps, which are virtually impossible to separate. One item was a single sheet from Lutterworth to Daventry, stamped Rugby, marked post paid 3d when the rate was 1d. Two covers to Nottingham had Rugby and Coventry hand-stamps. Rugby Penny black covers and Mulready sheets were shown.

Coventry was subjected to a serious blitz on the night of the 14th November 1940 during which significant damage occurred. A post card of 15th November 1940 mentions "Jerry paid us a call after tea last night", has the stamp cancelled with a CV dumb cancel (see below), the etched-out **CV** runs diagonally from bottom left of the stamp towards top right.

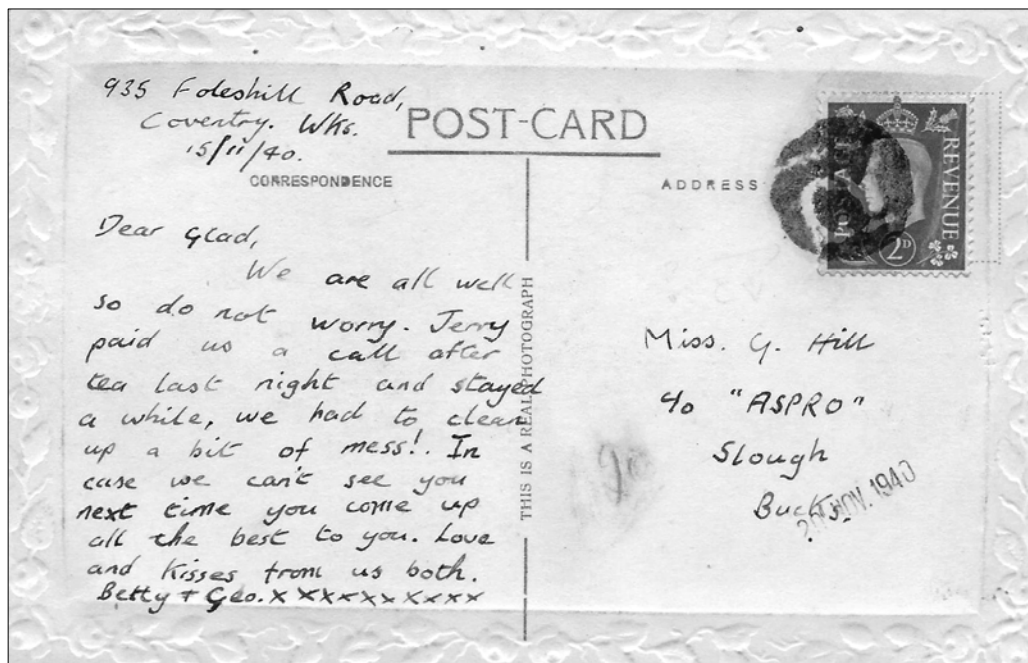


Fig 1, Postcard sent on 15th November 1940 with a temporary (locally and hastily made-ed?) CV cancel

This was accompanied by some ephemera which appear to validate it as being authentic. During the raid the Cathedral and many medieval buildings were destroyed. Coventry Philatelic Society produced a special envelope to mark the consecration of the new Cathedral in 1962; a number of these envelopes were displayed on sheets originally written up by Ches Chester and included covers signed by many of the Bishops at the consecration service.

It was extremely important to maintain links with Sweden during the war because of the requirement for specialist materials and products, particularly measuring equipment for the armaments and ball bearings industries. Air contact was maintained initially by flights from Shoreham to Malmo and after 1940 from Leuchars, south of Dundee, to Stockholm. The flights were important as there was no surface mail from 1941. Covers showing how the airmail increased from 5d to 1/3d in 1942, and the subsequent reduction in 1943 when the service was well established were shown. Most covers were from Coventry to a company in Sweden providing gauges for use in the manufacture of aircraft for the war effort.

The first half concluded with a display of advertising covers connected with cycling. Cycle manufacture in Coventry began in 1868 when John Starley produced a boneshaker. At its peak in the 1890s the industry employed 40,000 workers in over 240 companies producing about 300,000 cycles. The covers included items from manufacturers including Smith and Starley, Rudge and Starley and Sutton which had a picture on the reverse of a man enjoying a country ride on a Rover bicycle. Also displayed were parcel tags complete with parcel labels and adhesives from Bayliss Thomas Co Ltd and The Premier Cycle Company as well as complete reply cards and newspaper wrappers for the journal "The Cyclist".

The second half commenced with items from Southam including a page from the London Gazette of 1691 announcing the opening of the Post Office. Various hand-stamps including a SOUTHAM of 1727 on a cover to Kidderminster via London and the unusual *Southam* hand-stamp used in 1836. Penny black covers with both black and red Maltese crosses and the uncommon 722 numeral cancellation, unusual because Southam became a sub-office of Rugby in 1851. Items from Coleshill included first type mileage covers recorded from 1789 to 1799, after which date most had been withdrawn. A cover from Towcester to Shrewsbury had a TOWCESTER hand-stamp and also had the Coleshill first type mileage mark applied. The final cover was dated 1848 and had a Coleshill traveller hand-stamp.

Warwick showed a range of items from 1660 (a letter privately carried from Astwood Bank, Worcestershire to Warwick) to 1851. A hand-stamp was used at Warwick from 1706 to 1708 then there was a period when no hand-stamp was used, according to the Society's British County Catalogue until 1739 with the next item in the display indicating a hand-stamp was not used again until 1776. The very late usage of the first-type mileage of Warwick in 1811 was also shown. The final items were the hand struck 1 and 2 of Warwick used after 1840 in the uniform penny post period.

Warwickshire used two ways to indicate missent mail. If a missent hand-stamp was not available then a manuscript "missent to" followed by an available hand-stamp was used. Three covers from Coventry, dated 1813, 1814 and 1826 demonstrate the above with the manuscript missent being followed by late usages of a mileage mark, the letters addressed to Harbury, Warwickshire; Ipsley, Coventry, Warwickshire and Daventry, nr Coventry. The next missents were all hand-struck marks and often it was not obvious why the items had been missent other than probably being mis-sorted at some stage of their journey. These included Stratford, Rugby, Coventry, Daventry on a cover to Coventry, Leamington Spa, in a variety of colours, and Warwick, an early use in 1831, and again a variety of colours. A cover of 1832 addressed to Great Barford was first sent to Barford where it was marked in manuscript missent to Barford, then Warwick, where it received the Warwick missent mark and Banbury was also added to the address.

The final section comprised a number of items from Leamington Spa covering the period from 1823 to 1900 and included examples of covers with travellers used in 1839 and 3 covers from the 9th April 1841! Leamington used REGISTERED hand-stamps and its use in 1842 on one cover showed the 1/- registration fee paid in cash and postage by a 1d adhesive, the second cover the entire fee, 1/- registration and 4d postage, paid in cash. The third cover of 1853 showed a different REGISTERED hand-stamp. A cover which still requires some research was sent from Cropredy in 1894 through Leamington to Francis Wood of the 1st Shropshire Light Infantry in Hong Kong (see front page). From here it was addressed to the The Post Office, Yokohama, Japan. Once there it appears to have been redirected back to Hong Kong; on its journey it has picked up some Chinese script on the envelope and a Chinese label and two Japanese labels!

ADVANCE NOTICE

Member John Darnell has advised that his comprehensive collections of Rampton and Retford, Nottinghamshire and Dawlish, Devon are to be auctioned by Cavendish Philatelic Auctions, Derby, most likely in March 2015.

THE DECEMBER MEETING

Over 25 members and guests gathered at The National Brewery Centre, Burton-on-Trent for the annual Christmas lunch. Prior to lunch there was a standing board 9-sheet display by society members of Express Mail.

Chris Jackson's Worcestershire Express items included a very rare example of a provincial Sunday Express delivery from Redditch to Birmingham on 16th April 1949. The provincial Sunday Express service was restricted to 20 cities in the U.K. and such items not common. Our speaker admitted to having only ever seen one provincial express which was in the Vivienne Sussex collection and also to Birmingham; most Sunday Express items were sent within London.



Fig 1, Another 12½d (or 1shilling and ½d) in stamps are on the reverse of the cover.

The total paid was 1/8½d made up of 2½d postage and 1/6d for the Sunday Express rate (from 1st Jan 1935).

An Express item from Evesham to Redditch on 30th April 1908 had normal stamps, a railway stamp, an Express label (No 55) and a 'To be handed to POST OFFICE MESSENGER at Redditch Station' label No 72.

Gwyn Hughes showed an equally rare 'Express Delivery on Sunday' but this time for Sunday delivery in London from Furness Abbey (now in Cumbria), through Carnforth dated 18th February 1904.



Printed on the reverse flap



Fig 2, The total franking is 1/4 and Gwyn suggests it breaks down as 1/- for Sunday delivery, 3d for Express and 1d for regular postage.

Clive Jones displayed a 1/- rate of January 1844 with No.12 maltese cross cancels and a 1d Late Fee to expedite a Deed of Conveyance from Nine Elms to Basingstoke on the Night Mail and a 6d Late Fee letter with 4d postage of July 1849 with a Euston Square Station cds and the earliest known use of the **964** obliterator, probably applied on the Railway Post Office as Euston Station was yet to become a receiving house. Express mail included a rare 1851 *loose bag* letter from Wensleydale with the Mail Driver paid 1d for immediate delivery. Edwardian examples posted directly into a TPO were rated at 4½d, 1d postage, 3d Express Fee plus ½d Late Fee. Yorkshire examples included a scarce provincial use of the 4d orange-brown from Bradford to Liverpool on 2nd December 1909. Incoming Continental Mail included a post card from Frankfurt on Christmas Day 1901, arriving at Bath the next day, endorsed *Do not deliver before 7.30am!* Express Mail from the Galloway S.C. in the 1920s showed use of the distinctive pink PO Express labels (P. 459) from Scotland.

Derek Smeathers' Northamptonshire items included a 1752 free endorsed 'With Care & Speed' and remains of a feather indicating urgency. A January 1911 cover charged 6d from London to Towcester sent under the 'Express & Railway' service used GPO messengers at each end and a 1953 registered pse to Germany charged 1/6½ with an 'orange cross'.

Alan Marshall's items included a 1839 Nottingham to New Tamworth 'with speed' and a Too Late! A 1937 Nottingham to Lincoln with KGV 6d (perfin) and KEdVIII 1½d, 1952 with reuse label from Long Eaton to Widnes at 6d express and 2½d postage. Overseas, 1927 from Lithuania to Darmstadt and 1928 to Copenhagen. Finally, a very large, colourful, 1984 US Express Mail cover from 'The Toucan Trail, Spring Hill to the 'Cuckoo Bush Inn' at Gotham, Nottingham.

The above mentioned sent me a brief account of their display. Because we arrived late due to an expected late departure plus my inability find the correct exit from a double roundabout due to horrendous road works, I apologise to Richard Farman, Alan Godfrey, Trevor Radway and Dave Tarry, who also displayed but no account was forthcoming from them.

After the marvellous turkey-with-all-the-trimmings luncheon there was an excellent talk on Express Mail given by **Julian Tweed**, who has generously sent the following report:

With some reluctance, the British Post Office introduced an express delivery service in London in March 1891 but very quickly extended it to cover the rest of the country. It was gradually extended in scope but remained essentially the same until relaunched in July 1980 as Royal Mail Special Delivery (RMSD), which for the first time offered compensation if delivery was not made within set limits. Two delivery methods predominated.

For Service I the letter or packet was to be delivered all the way by express messenger (usually a telegram delivery boy in the larger centres). The charge was set in 1891 at 3d a mile or part mile carried and so on cost grounds Service I was usually used for relatively local mail. Payment was accounted for on the accompanying tracking document, an "E-Form", rather than on the envelope itself. A signature was needed from the recipient to acknowledge the time of delivery or a card was left asking for delivery instructions if no one was at home. As telephone use increased Service I declined and mail carried all the way by messenger after 1940 is not often seen.

The second main method of sending mail express was for the item to be sent through the postal service until it reached the delivery office nearest the addressee, from where it was delivered as in the first method. This, Service II, required normal postage to be paid in addition to the mileage based express fee (a flat rate express fee was introduced for Service II in 1938 but mileage charges remained for Service I). As it was impossible for the sender always to know what the delivery mileage charge would be, items were accepted for Service II provided the basic express fee for up to one mile and the appropriate postage had been paid. Any shortfall was collected from the recipient without penalty.

Express letters using either service bear a red "Express" label or an equivalent hand-stamp, both of which changed designs several times up to 1980 but the labels remained red until a change to a green "Special Delivery" for the inland service in the early 1960s. Mail using Service II should show a vertical blue line across the envelope; not required for Service I. The express service could be combined with other services, such as a late fee, registration or recorded delivery, provided the appropriate charges were paid.

From 1 August 1892 it was possible to send express letters overseas provided the recipient country offered an express service. At first this involved nineteen countries but more were soon added. Normal postage had to be paid together with the basic UK express fee (3d in 1892). On arrival, the recipient authority levied any charges over and above their own basic express fee and collected them from the addressee. Similar arrangements operated on express mail entering the UK from overseas; any charges over the basic UK express fee were charged to the recipient and kept by the Post Office here.

A special Sunday express service was introduced for delivery in London in February 1899 as there were no deliveries in the capital on a Sunday. Letters had to be marked as requiring Sunday delivery and express charges based on the distance from the Chief Office at 3d per mile had to be prepaid in addition to normal postage. For some outer districts the express charge could be 3/- and few examples of mail using the service are recorded. The service was suspended during the early part of WW1. When reintroduced it was extended to several of the larger cities in the UK with a flat-rate 1/6d express fee but examples are even scarcer than those from the pre-war London service.



Fig 1, Letter sent by Service II on 4 May 1913 from London Western District to Barford Hill, near Warwick, which was between 2 and three miles from the nearest delivery office and so has paid an express fee of 9d in addition to a further 1½d, probably in this case 1d postage and ½d late fee as the letter is timed at 6.00pm. Unusually it has both a red express label and hand-stamp. Very unusually it also has a boxed "EXPRESS FEE PAID 3d" mark, which was meant for use on incoming express items from overseas to draw attention to the allowance of the basic express fee in calculating any extra charges.



Fig 4, A registered express letter sent from London to Berlin on 12 May 1899 on which a late fee has also been paid. It nicely illustrates the payment of the four different charges by different stamps. The registration fee of 2d was covered by the embossed stamp on the envelope. Appropriate adhesives pay the 3d express fee, 2d registered late fee and 2½d postage.

THE JANUARY MEETING

The 10th January 2015 meeting at St Germaine's Church Hall, Birmingham diverged from the usual postal history display in that the 19 attendees witnessed 'Maps and Large Items' with a wonderfully diverse array of items produced. The following members assembled their highly original displays, well worth the effort of attending to view:

Derek Smeathers assembled a 1724 Moll of Northampton (map maker, not the highwayman's better half), Great Eastern and 1846 Bradshaw railway maps, a 1903 postcard showing Luffield farm was now part of Silverstone racing circuit and a c1930 postcard advertising the Talbot Inn at Oundle, showing the old post road east of the Great North Road.

John Calladine brought framed maps of Wiltshire by the great 17th century cartographers of English county maps, the Englishman John Speed and the two Dutchmen Jansson and Blaeu. In 1611, Speed, a tailor by trade but with a great interest in history, published the first book of English county maps, "The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain". Speed's maps mark the 'hundreds' for the first time and include a town plan, the first collection of provincial town plans. Jansson was the son-in-law of Speed's Dutch engraver, Hondius and took over his business. With his great commercial rival in Amsterdam, Bleau, pursuing the same aim, he set out to produce an atlas of the United Kingdom, which was published in 1646, a year after Blaeu's. Both Jansson and Blaeu derived their maps from Speed and we were told how to distinguish them. The Wiltshire maps contain one of the best known oddities of English map making. Not knowing the name of a hamlet five miles west of Salisbury, Speed temporarily marked it as "quare", (query) or "what is this?). By the time the map went to the engraver the matter had not been resolved and "Quare" was engraved with Jansson and Blaeu perpetuating the error, not corrected until Bowen's map 144 years later, naming the hamlet as North Burcomb(e).

Malcolm Allison began with Worcestershire **Defcribed** by John Speed from the rare 1616 Latin edition, which also shows an inset street plan of the city of Worcester, which one of our members regards as being of appropriate date for page one of his Worcestershire collection! Christopher Saxton's 1637 Map **Wigorniensis Comutatis Sabrinae** taken from Camden's Britannia, was only available by a subscription of 50 shillings, equivalent to over £400 today. A small **Van Langeren** distance table of places in the County, from Jenner's 1657 book followed as well as a much larger version of the same distance table from Thomas Cox in 1720. Road Maps started with John Ogilby's 1698 second Edition, of the Road from Hereford to Leicester. Ogilby (1600-1675) is also credited with standardising the statute mile at 1760 yards, compared with the three vastly different values that existed in that period. He finished with the map collectors bible "County Atlases of the British Isles" by R A Skelton. As a second display Malcolm showed us a number of Road Maps from various publications including 1718 Thomas Gardner, 1720 Owen/Bowen and 1767 Thomas Kitchin.

Robin Jarman showed a large 1935 map of the air mail routes from Brownsville, Texas and Miami, Florida, USA to Central and South America with an inset of the Trans-Pacific route from Hong Kong to San Francisco via Manila.

Alan Spencer began with an Edinburgh town map of 1683 and followed this with Edinburgh Uniform Fourpenny Post and Uniform Penny Post items paid in cash, a June 1840 penny black and a Mulready. Notable was a letter from the Second Philatelic Congress of GB to St Helena about forgeries and a series of items relating to Edith Cavell.

Guy Bridges had Shropshire maps of 1617, 1643 (van den Keere), 1731 Emanuel Bowen, 1741 Toms, plus two Acts of Parliament for the construction (1865) and then the winding up (1881) of the Potteries, Shrewsbury and North Wales Railway. He also exhibited a contract for the Cambrian Railways to carry mail.

Mick Gill started with an unstamped 'On Active Service' envelope sent from Germany to Nottingham in December 1945 made from a German map of the Ederstau-See area showing the dam of the reservoir breached in the Dam Busters raid. Six maps of Nottinghamshire by Bill (1626), Jenner (1643), Moll (1753), Gibson (1759) and Baker (1793) followed. A miniature by Petrus Bertius from an abridged version of Camden's Britannia (Amsterdam, 1643) showed various north and midland counties. Finally two maps of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire together, a large one by Condor (1784) and a miniature French map in the form of a vase by Perrot (1823). His second display included the full set of five maps of 'The Road from London to Barwick' by John Sennex (1719) and three maps of the Great North Road through Nottinghamshire from Armstrong's 1776 Actual Survey of the Great Post Roads between London and Edinburgh.

Pete Elms surprised us with what may have been the exhibit of the day, a miniature, scale model of the London to York mail coach, found on an auction website and possibly based on one built by Vidler of Millbank in 1827. Decked out in maroon and black livery and 'Post Office Red' wheels, it made a fine exhibit.

Eric Lewis came up with a triangular envelope, a note about the London Postal Service Bank Holiday arrangements, a 1910 PO notice about betting and gambling, the Pershore Record Book of date stamps, with the Inspector asking to 'Try and keep cleaner'! Diagrams of a 1d stamp vending machine at 2 inches to the foot and Balfour's proposed 1d stamp vending machine. A giant letter of 1832 from Edinburgh to London much folded and paid at the single sheet rate.

Brian Atkins showed a newspaper page about Hafodunos Hall, Denbighshire and its fire in 2004 along with letters from India addressed to Mrs Sandbach at the Hall. His second effort included prints and tokens of the *Swan with Two Necks* and *Bull and Mouth* Coaching Inns and Shropshire maps of 1627 by van den Keere (the Miniature Speed); a Cary of 1817 and, to end, a used Time-Bill for the Hironnelle (Swallow) coach from Worcester to The Lion at Shrewsbury.

Gordon Hardy regaled us with maps galore of Derbyshire by van Langeren (1677), Morden (1695), Osbourne (1748), Condor (c1784), Paterson (1785), a canal map (1794), Stockdale (1794), Roper (1816), Bowen (1820) and two Mail Coach Time Bills of the 1790s from Leeds to London and Carlisle to London.

Clive Jones showed an 1834 Greenwood map with of the North Riding, showing the extension of the Stockton & Darlington Railway to the new coaling wharves at what was to become Middlesbrough. Two smaller maps gave an insight into the *railway mania* that swept the country in the mid-1840s and a September 1840 1d black from Sheffield to Leam Hall, Derbyshire with advertising for a Catalogue of Flower Roots! There was also a lovely 1925 4d railway commercial letter which had gone on the Severn Valley Railway to Bewdley and, although it had paid the correct postage rate it had never been in the postal system; it had divorce papers inside. A 1905 London & Holyhead to New York with a surcharged, part paid late fee and an Insured Mail cover at 4/11, which could not be reconciled ended Clive's display.

Richard Farman had two displays, the first of Staffordshire large letters included an 1599 letter carried privately to the High Sherriff and 'With Speed', the sender being locked up in gaol at 'great expense'! In 1613 Hugo Rudyard from Rudyard Lake, Leek had been commanded to be at Stafford to be a soldier but he wrote that he could not do so as he had to look after his ailing father and a letter of 1642 from Barton-under-Needwood. Non-Staffordshire items included a letter of 1645 from an officer pleading for money to pay troops (from Abingdon?) and a fascinating letter of 1672 sealed with gold wire from the Aleppo Warehouse, used to store British goods. His second involved letters about missing banknotes, 1816 from Birmingham to Stourbridge and c1825 from Bridgnorth to Stourbridge concerning the Bridgnorth and Wenlock Bank! There was a general Coach Office ticket from the Nelson Hotel, Birmingham, an 1808 advert for a Post Coach from the Star and Garter Inn, Worcester and a Grand Junction Canal receipt postally used in January 1844.

Alan Marshall started with a 1794 Traveller's Companion by Roque, then Nottingham town maps of 1644, 1820, 1830 and 1856 and Nottinghamshire maps of 1695 (Morden), 1900 & 1820. His second effort included 12 maps with notable ones of 1618 original vinegarred paper corner plan of Nottingham from Speed's map, 1643 (Jenner), 1670 plan of Nottingham with postal routes through, 1720 (Morden), 1742 (Toms) and 3 strip-maps, especially 1740 (Owen, Bowen).

An altogether fascinating day at Birmingham with a variety of items from maps to Acts of Parliament and newspaper pages! Come along to a meeting to take part and view the variety and quality of items, you are sure of a warm welcome.



Bill Pipe

THE MAGPIE

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GLOUCESTER STATION OFFICE 1842 to 1886

by John Hine

When the Birmingham & Gloucester Railway was opened in 1840 Gloucester Station was the terminus of the line and by 1842 a post office was opened at the station.

On 27 January 1842 Gloucester Station was the very first Railway Station to be issued with a date stamp.

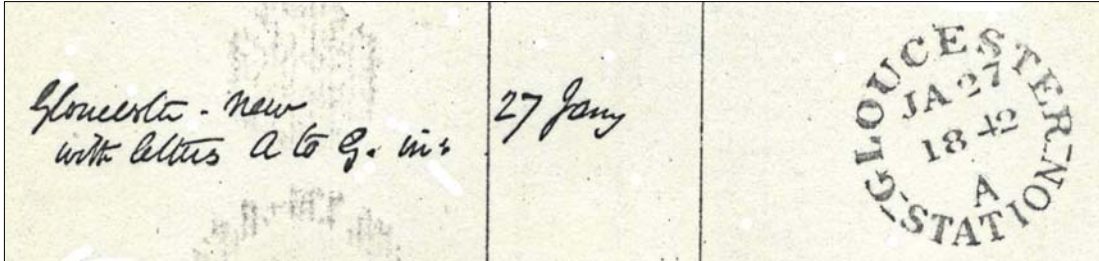


Fig.1 GLOUCESTER / STATION date stamp issued with code letters A to G (P.I.B. 5/71)

Very quickly the Gloucester Station office became the hub for the sorting and distribution of mail for a large area around Gloucester and through the Forest of Dean into Wales. Gloucester Head Office became less important and for some years the Gloucester Station Office was busier than the one in the city, remaining so until it was closed in late 1886.

Five days after the issue of the date stamp, on 1 February 1842 two Maltese Cross cancellers in the standard pattern were issued to 'Gloucester (for Gloucester Station)'. These are among the very few Maltese Cross stamps entered in the Proof Impression Books (PIB). This occurred only when replacement or repair was necessary or, as in the case of Gloucester Station, a new office was opened with stamping duties. The earlier issue of Maltese Cross stamps to hundreds of offices throughout the country in 1840 was carried out without entering them in the PIBs.

From 1844 onwards with the introduction of barred numeral cancellers Gloucester Station used the same number, 312, as the Head Office in the City. Some of these stamps were intended for the Station and others for the City office according to Proof Impression Book information. However their recorded use shows that the postmaster did not follow the PIB instructions and some stamps were used at both offices.

From 1858 the double arc date stamps were replaced by single circle date stamps and these continued in use until office closure in 1886. Eight of these single circles including some re-cuts were re registered in the PIBs but several other **re-cuts** were not entered. The list of these is simplified and excludes some of the later re-cuts

In 1866 the first duplex 312 with GLO'STER STATION in the cds was introduced. Later versions showed the GLOUCESTER STATION name in full. Many re-cuts of these stamps have been identified and recorded but the list in this article is restricted to the basic stamps and most re-cuts are not listed. In 1884 the last re-cut of a 4 bar 312 duplex resulted in a 3 bar 312 that is very scarce and difficult to find.

From 1870 Gloucester Station was issued with a barred numeral duplex E94 but strangely continued to use the 312 duplex stamps alongside the new one. This unusual state of affairs continued through until the E94 stamp was withdrawn probably in late-1884. I do not know the reason for the use of two different office numerals at Gloucester Station. If anyone does know then please tell us more.

In 1881 two very similar squared circle cancellers were issued and these two were in concurrent use with the various duplex stamps and the single circle date stamps until the office was closed in late-1886

The list includes later date stamps issued for non-postal use to the GWR and Midland Railway Companies.

The last part of the list is a note on what may have been an unofficial endorsement 'via Gloucester' that was added to ensure that letters to Wales from the south were not carried along the old route via the New Passage.

Key to information in the list of Gloucester Station Office postmarks:

Illustrations are copied from the Proof Impression Books where available supplemented by scans of actual examples. The illustrations are undertitled with reference numbers according to the list. Where a 'p' follows this reference number it indicates a 'proof' impression.

Column 1 Reference number. Where relevant the BCC Gloucestershire numbering is used with prefix GL, all later items use a GLS prefix. Where barred numeral cancellations are listed the John Parmenter (JP) identifications are shown underneath the GLS reference. Similarly the squared circle book reference from Cohen et al (edition 3) is shown under the GLS number.

Column 2 The exact name as in the postmark.
For barred numerals the JP designation plus the office number is added.

Column 3 The size in mm where relevant.

Column 4 The issue date where known taken from the Proof Impression Books

Column 5 The colour of ink. B = black, R= red and BL= blue

Column 6 The earliest date of use recorded by the author. Where other writers note an earlier use but it is unconfirmed by the author this is added underneath in a note

Column 7 The latest date of use recorded by the author. Where other writers note a later use but it is unconfirmed by the author this is added underneath in a note

Double Arc datestamps:



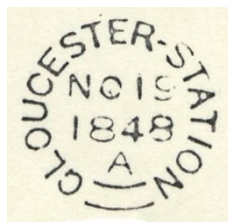
Fig.2, The earliest recorded GLOUCESTER / STATION postmark dated MR 9 1842 code A used as an arrival datestamp on a 2d prepaid letter from London sent the previous day



GL422p



GL424



GLS05p



GLS07p



GLS09p

GL422	GLOUCESTER // STATION Issued with code letters A to G. Codes seen, A, B, C, D, E, G	30	27.01.1842	B	09.03.1842	02.03.1847
GL424	GLOUCESTER / STATION Codes seen, B, possibly 5 Data and illustration from the BPS Skeleton book 2006 (ed.3) and the RPG	31	skeleton	R	08.11.1848	22.11.1848
GLS05	GLOUCESTER-STATION Codes seen, A, B, C, G RPG book (1994 ed.) records use from 22.12.1848	26	19.11.1848	BL R	09.03.1849 10.01.1853	14.12.1852 01.04.1853
GLS07	GLOUCESTER // STATION Codes seen, A, B, C	26	19.04.1853	R B	22.06.1853 08.03.1854	10.07.1855 09.03.1854
GLS09	GLOUCESTER-STATION Codes seen, A, B, C RPG book (1994 ed.) records use to 06.06.1858BL	26	14.07.1856	R B	20.08.1856 11.02.1857 08.08.1857	05.02.1857 24.04.1858

Single Circle Date stamps:

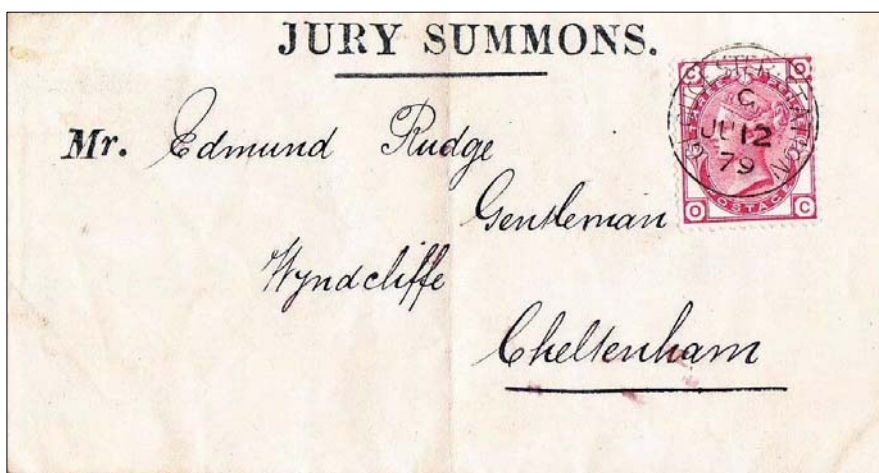


Fig.3, 12 June 1879 GLOUCESTER-STATION single circle date stamp cancelling a 3d rated Jury Summons to Cheltenham. (reduced to 80% full size) with Cheltenham receiving stamp. Like Notices of Objection, a Jury Summons was treated as registered mail and the 3d adhesive covered the 2d registration fee plus 1d postage.

Gloucester Station single circle date stamps are mostly seen as backstamps on envelopes although they were used for counter duties and are occasionally found cancelling newswrappers and postcards. (Fig.3)



GLS11p



GLS13p



GLS15p



GLS17p



GLS19p

GLS11	GLOSTER-STATION codes seen A, B, C	21,5	16.07.1858	B	03.08.1858	21.07.1865
GLS13	GLOSTER-STATION codes seen A, B, C	23	30.11.1865	B	12.06.1866	27.09.1868
GLS15	GLOUCESTER-STATION code seen D	22	05.10.1868	B	09.11.1868	
GLS17	GLOSTER-STATION codes seen A, B, C, G, H, K, O, 7 Probably a recut of GLS13 (sent for recutting after the issue of GLS15)	22,5	14.10.1868	B	10.05.1869	23.02.1883
GLS19	GLOUCESTER-STATION codes seen A, C possibly a recut version of GLS15	22	12.03.1869	B	14.12.1871 JH	23.07.1873 JH



GLS21p



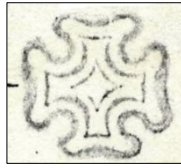
GLS23p



GLS27p

GLS21	GLOUCESTER-STATION codes seen A, H, K, 4	22,5	01.01.1872	B	27.09.1872	01.01.1881
GLS23	GLOUCESTER-STATION codes seen A, H, I, K, 2	21	23.07.1872	B	31.10.1872	09.08.1883
GLS24 GLS25	GLOUCESTER-STATION Codes seen A, B, H These are recuts of earlier single circles without entries in the PIB. Not illustrated.	20,5		B	30.11.1883	03.11.1885 &
GLS27	GLOUCESTER-STATION 2 digit codes seen _ A, _6	23	02.12.1885	B	03.05.1886	24.07.1886

Maltese Cross cancellations



GLS50p

GLS50	Maltese Cross	01.02.1842	B	11.05.1842	31.05.1843
-------	---------------	------------	---	------------	------------

Two Maltese Cross cancellers were issued to 'Gloucester (for Gloucester Station)', although only one was proofed as shown above. Very few Maltese Cross proof impressions are known after the initial general issue in 1840. This occurred only when a canceller was lost or damaged or, as in this case, a new office was opened with cancellation duties.

Barred numeral & squared circle cancellations

Although some single barred numeral 312 stamps were issued to Gloucester Station specifically others were issued to Gloucester Head Office and some were used at both offices. This makes it difficult to determine which stamps were used where. For this reason the following list for single barred numerals is the combined use for Gloucester Head Office and Gloucester Station. John Parmenter uses a simple reference numbering for Gloucester and Gloucester Station barred numeral 312 and combines them into one list, his designations are retained here alongside the GLS reference numbers.

Single barred numeral 312 (Combined Gloucester Head Office/Station Office listing)

The 1844 type



GLS55 The three sub-types of the 1844 type 312 barred numeral (the second type is also shown in red ink)

GLS55	312 1844 type	05.1844	B	17.05.1844	03.08.1853
			R	05.1848	
			BL	1850	

The 3HOS



08.11.1850	c.29.08.1853	25.05.1857	12.06.1863 (two stamps)
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The five 312 3HOS barred numerals issued to Gloucester HO & Station Office

GLS57	312 3HOS	first issued	08.11.1850	B	15.11.1850	24.01.1866
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From March 1854 spoon and later, sideways duplex, stamps were in regular use at Gloucester HO and little use was made of the 3HOS single barred numerals after this date. Perhaps this explains why most post-1854 312 3HOS use is found with a Gloucester Station backstamp.

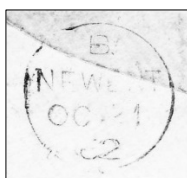
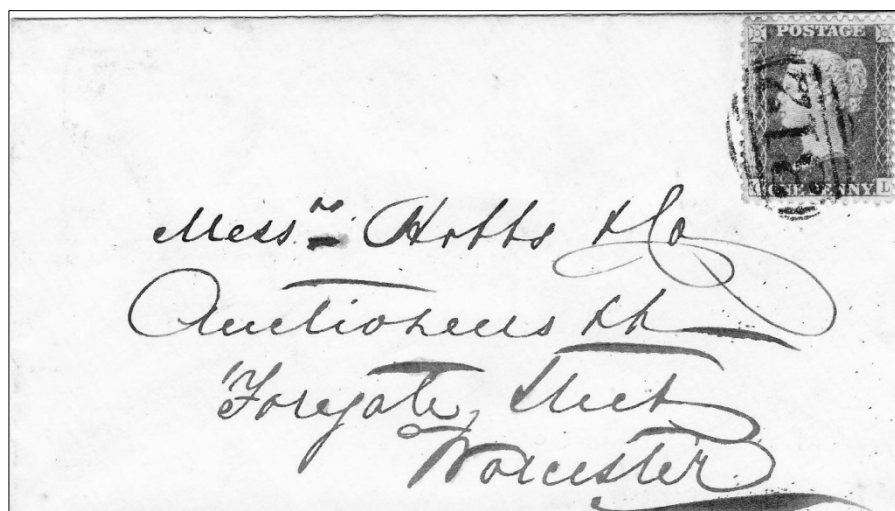


Fig.4, 21.10.1862 Newent to Worcester via Gloucester Station with a 3HOS 312 barred numeral GLS57 (1850 proof). On the reverse is a single circle GLS11

The 4VOS and 3VOS



4VOSp 1868



Three 3VOS proofs issued in 1876, 1880 & 1881



02.07.1877

GLS58	312 4VOS	11.11.1868	B	09.06.1870	01.04.1876
GLS59	312 3VOS	first issued	B	02.07.1877	15.04.1893

The 1893 latest use is for the Gloucester Head office as is a JP latest use of 10.08.1904
Note that the 4VOS has a round-topped 3 whereas all 3VOS stamps have a straight top 3.

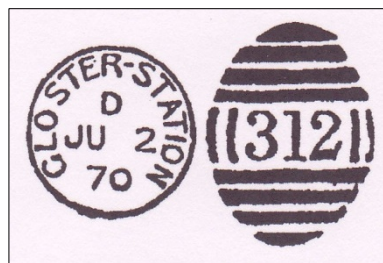
Duplex 312 (4 bars with round topped 3)

The Gloucester Station duplex stamps issued from 1866 is complicated because two different numerals were in use for a time concurrently.

When the first 312 4 barred numeral (4VODB) was sent for recutting in 1870 it was replaced by a 4VOD bearing number E94. This E94 stamp remained in use concurrently with other 312 duplex and two squared circle stamps at Gloucester Station during most of the period until the office closed in late 1886. Covers illustrating these various cancellations are shown in Fig. 4 to Fig.11. below.



GLS60p



GLS62p

GLS60 (4VODB)	GLO'STER-STATION 312 Codes seen, C, D, O, none	24.04.1866	26.06.1866	02.03.1870
GLS62 (4VODB)	GLOSTER-STATION 312 Codes seen, C, none. Entered in PIB as 'recut' (from GLS60) with the apostrophe removed.	01.06.1870	01.10.1870	02.01.1872

JP combines these two sub-types and lists an improbable latest use of 12.08.1879.
JP also records the following additional codes, E, G and H.



GLS60 with apostrophe 1869



GLS62 recut with apostrophe removed 1871



Fig.5, DE 1 1871. GLS62 used on a ½d postcard to Cradley

Duplex E94

GLS70p



GLS72 used in 1881

GLS70 (4VOD)	GLOUCESTER-STATION E94 No codes used until at least May 1877. From September 1877 a code was always used Codes seen (from 09.1877), G, H	30.04.1870	10.05.1870	30.03.1880
GLS72 (4VOD)	GLOUCESTER-STATION E94 codes seen, G, H Recut in 1880 with narrower bars and a completely different figure 4 JP combines these two sub-types and lists the following additional codes C, F, 6, 7		13.09.1880 eBay	06.08.1884 eBay

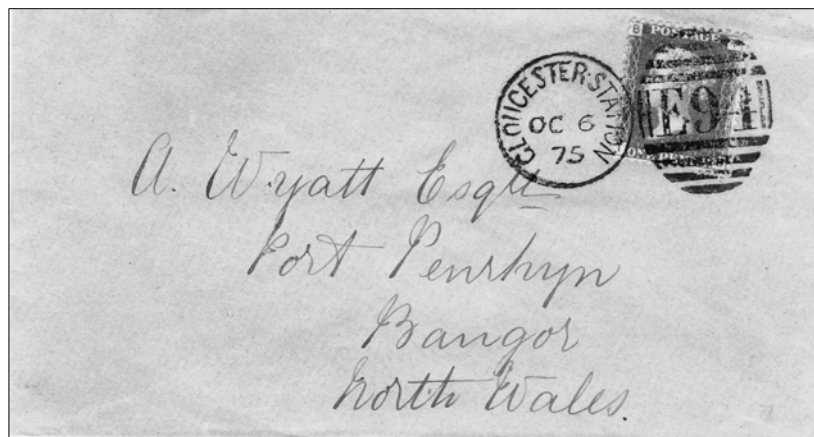


Fig.6, OC 6 1875. The first type of E94 duplex (GLS70) used on a cover to Bangor, North Wales



Fig.7, AP 20 1881. The later version of the E94 duplex (GLS72) showing a different figure 4

Duplex 312 (4 bars with flat topped 3)

GLS80p



GLS84p

GLS80 with a flat top 3 was first issued in May 1872 to be followed in July 1872 by a similar stamp (GLS84). These two stamps continued in use until 1884 and 1886 respectively. During this period both stamps were subject to regular recutting with 5 recuts identified for both stamps.

GLS80 4VODE	GLOUCESTER-STATION 312 codes seen, C, F, G, H, 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, none	13.05.1872	05.06.1872	10.11.1884
GLS84 4VODE	GLOUCESTER-STATION 312 codes seen, C, E, F, G, H, 5, 7, 8, 9, none	18.07.1872	01.01.1873	28.07.1886

JP records use of the combined type 4VODE until 21.09.1886

JP records additional codes for 4VODE A, D, L, 6

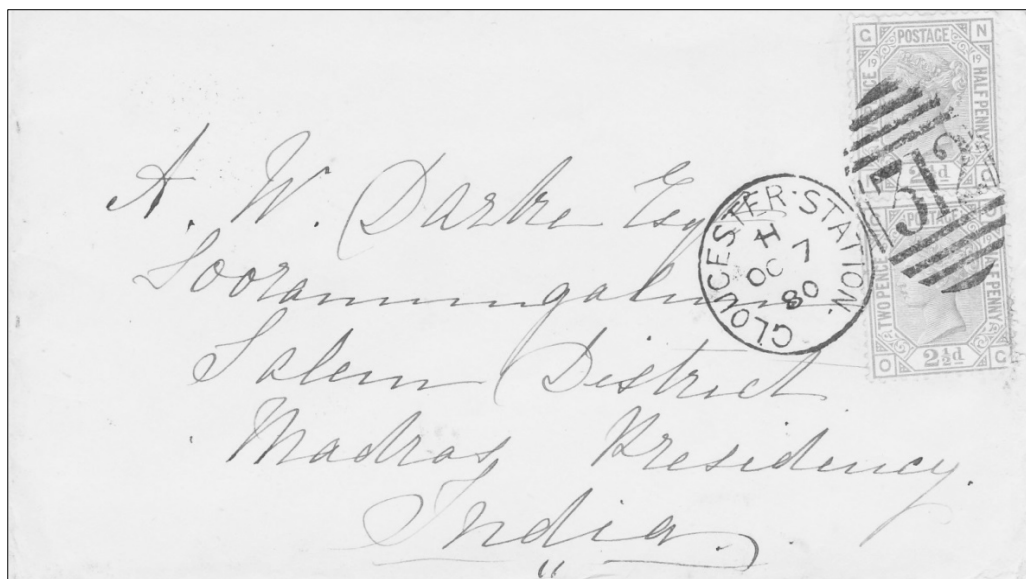


Fig.8, OC 7 1880 Newent to India with 2 x 2½d blue (SG142) adhesives cancelled by GLS84

Squared Circle

Two very similar squared circles were issued to Gloucester Station in June 1881 and they remained in use until late in 1886 when the office was closed. Minor differences in the shape and positioning of letters and bars enables identification of well-struck examples. The squared circles saw concurrent use with various 312 and E94 four barred duplex stamps and also with the three bar 312 duplex.

G/030 and G/031 in the list below refer to the designations in the 'Cohen' squared circle book.



GLS90p



GLS92p

GLS90 (G/030)	squared circle codes seen, E, G, H, 2, 3, 4, 9	07.06.1881	09.06.1881	01.04.1886
GLS92 (G/031)	squared circle codes seen, G, H	07.06.1881	14.06.1881	06.10.1886

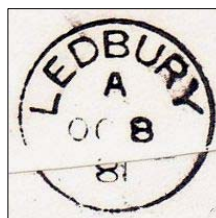
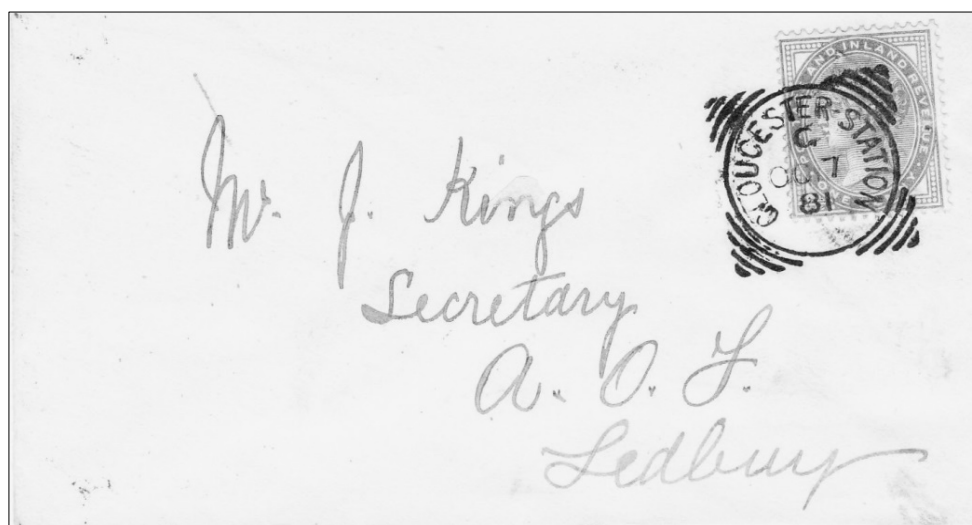


Fig.9, G / OC 7 / 81. A GLOUCESTER-STATION squared circle (GLS92) cancelling a 14 dot 1d lilac cover to the A.O.F. (Ancient Order of Foresters) in Ledbury arriving on the next day.

The letter was posted from FAWLEY STATION B inverted / OC 7 / 81, Herefordshire. Instead of the direct road route to Ledbury (9 miles) it was carried by rail through Gloucester Station (9 miles) and on to Ledbury (a further 14 miles).

Duplex 3 bar 312 This was the last Gloucester Station duplex to be issued and is rarely seen.



GLS100p

GLS100 GLOUCESTER-STATION

18.12.1884

03.11.1885

09.11.1886

3VODA Two digit codes seen G_, H_
 JP records codes C, G, H, 4, 7, 9

Very probably recut with 3 bars and a double code slot from the 4 barred / single code slot GLS80. The latest date is also the last recorded use of a Gloucester Station stamp prior to office closure.

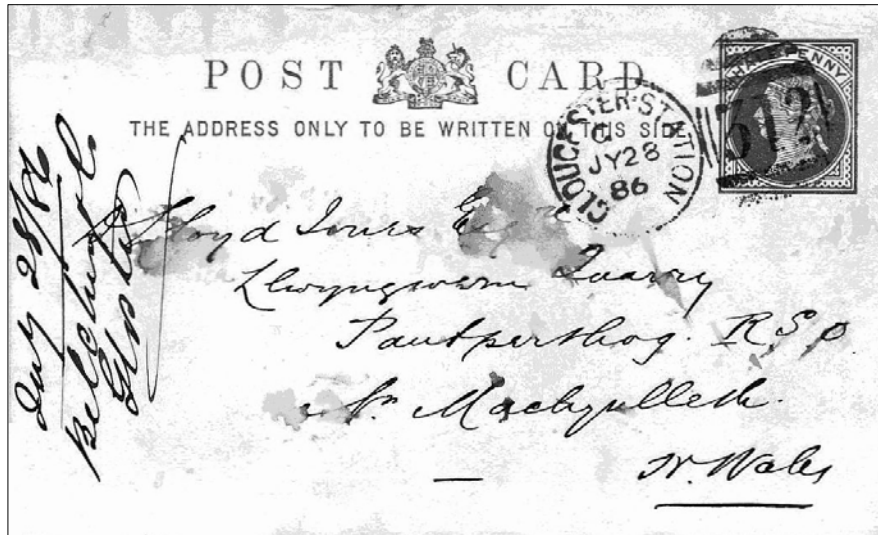


Fig.10, 28.07.1886 GLS100 duplex used on a postcard to Pantperthog R.S.O., Nr Machynlleth.

On the reverse, Belcher & Co., of Gloucester remark how difficult it is to communicate with the Llwngwern Slate Quarry. '- we found the telegraph station was 3 miles from you. It could not be delivered so it was sent back to us.'

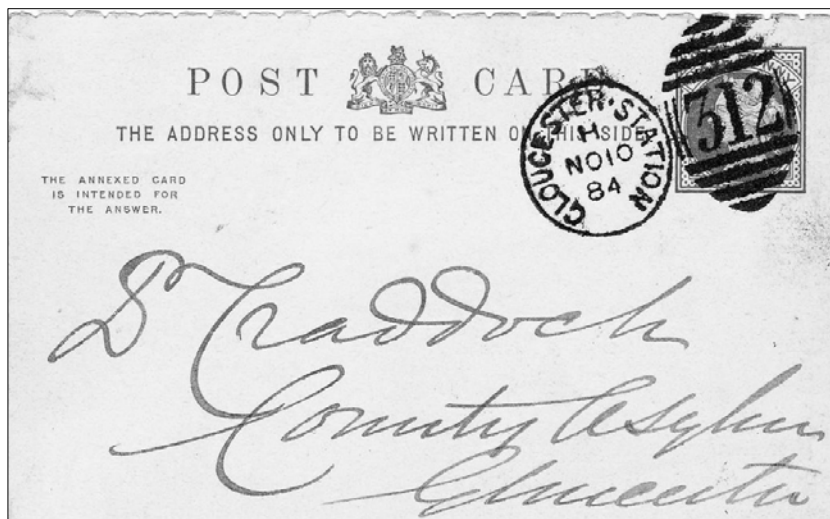


Fig.11, GLS80 latest use 10.11.1884 prior to recutting as GLS100.

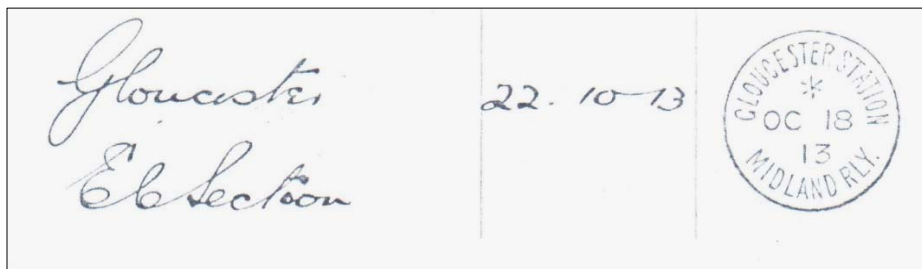
Later Datestamps issued for the GWR and the Midland Railway Companies

Although the Gloucester Station Post Office was closed in late-1886 the individual railway companies continued to use date stamps issued by the GPO for telegraphic duties

Gloucester Central Station served the Great Western Railway and Eastgate Station was for the Midland Railway.



GLS200



GLS202p

GLS200 GLOUCESTER.STATION / GW.R^{LY}
codes seen, A

05.11.1894

GLS202 GLOUCESTER STATION /
MIDLAND RLY
codes seen

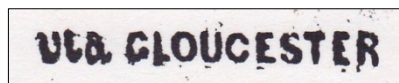
22.10.1913
PIB 49/348

unrecorded in use

Note that this stamp was issued to the EC Section in London (Circulation Department) and was probably intended for telegraphic duties

Instructional stamp

Not strictly within the confines of this listing but certainly of interest is the following stamp used for a short period on letters originating from the south and instructing GPO sorters to despatch mail via Gloucester Station.



GLS300 via GLOUCESTER

10.01 1843

A letter from Bristol addressed to Lydney dated 10 January 1843 is endorsed by a hand struck 'via GLOUCESTER' stamp. It is thought that this instructional stamp was to prevent the old practice of conveying letters from Bristol and the South towards destinations in south Wales (and the Forest of Dean) via the New Passage. This was the normal route over the Severn prior to the opening of the railways with the stamp probably applied at Bristol. The preferred new route from Bristol to Lydney was then by rail from Bristol to Gloucester Station on the Birmingham line and then via Newnham .

Any additions or corrections to this list would be welcomed by the author.

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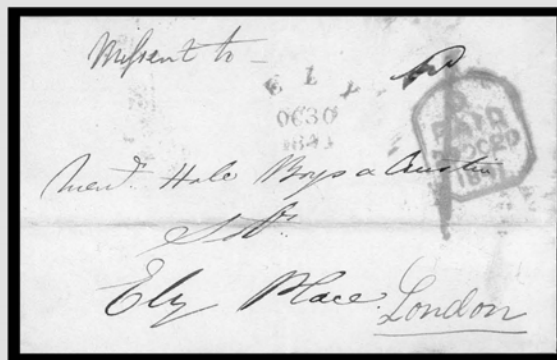


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SHROPSHIRE & MONTGOMERYSHIRE MANUSCRIPT 'L FOR LONDON' MARKS

by Guy Bridges

The manuscript **L** marks found on the reverse of some letters has been written about before in an article by James Grimwood-Taylor (Postal History No 296), where he proves that these marks were placed on the bottom letter of a bundle of letters for London. However it is not mentioned that occasionally other marks can be found along with the **L** marks and illustrated are such covers.

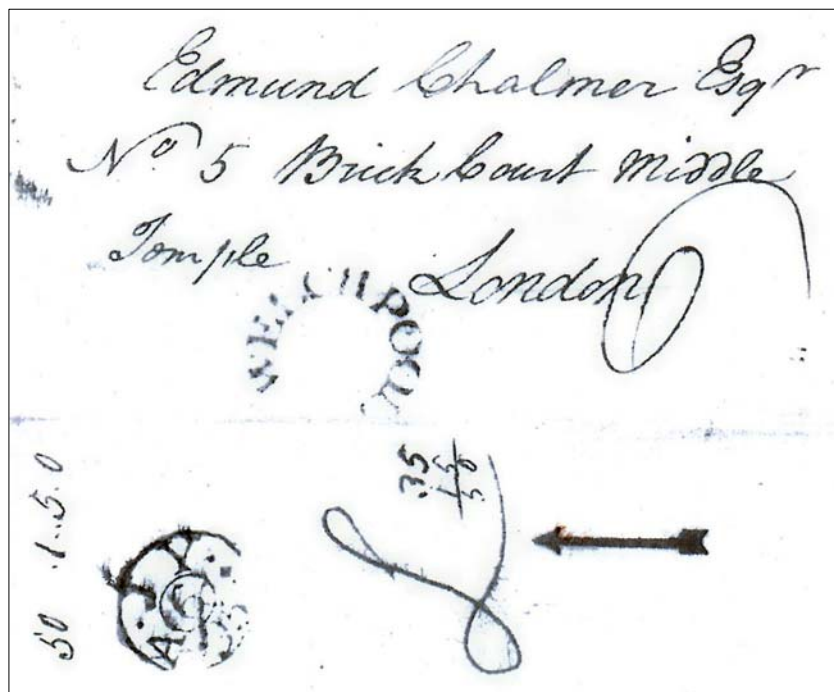


Fig 1, Letter from Welshpool, dated 2nd July 1795 to London with the WELCHPOOL horseshoe (W2632) and £ 35 & 15 / 50 and separately 50 / 1.5.0 on the reverse. It is surmised that 50 relates to the number of letters in the bundle, originally with 35 and 15 added. Multiply the charge of 6d to London (1785 Act) by 50 gives a total of £1.5s.0d to explain the 1.5.0, the total charge of the bundle for accounting purposes.

Fig 2, Letter from Oswestry to Chester dated 19th July 1803 with OSWESTRY / 182 mileage (SH429) and ~~£~~ erased on the reverse and charged 7d for 80 to 120 miles under the 1801 Act. (The 7d charge suggests it went via Shrewsbury and Woverhampton – Ed)

In this case it is surmised that the **L** mark was deleted when it was realised that the bundle was for Chester and not London!



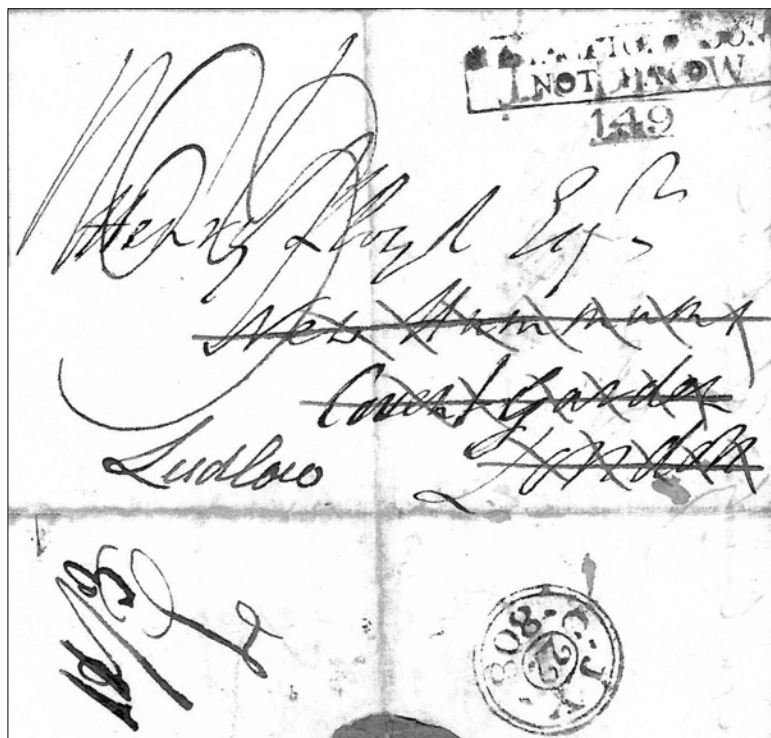
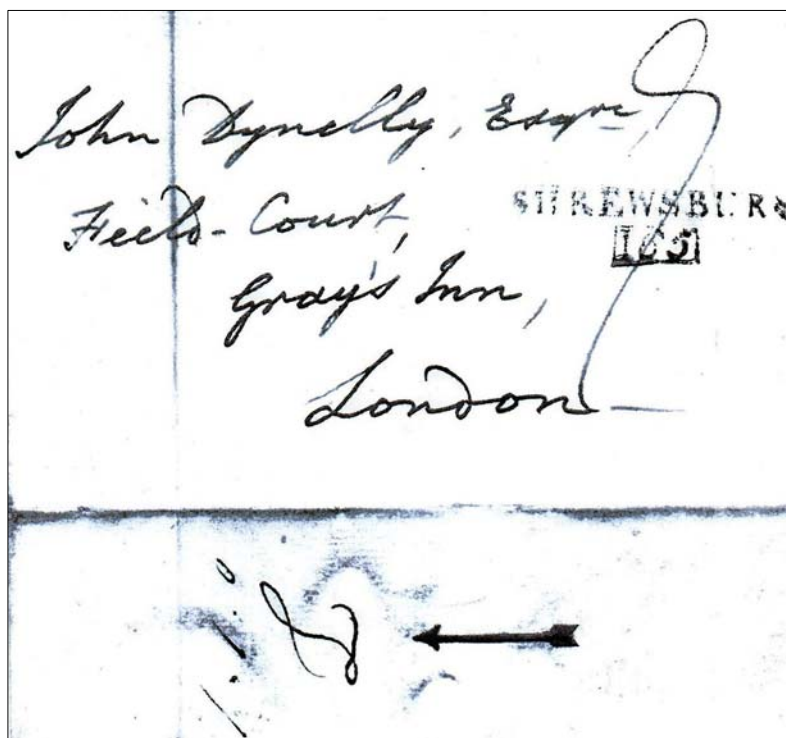


Fig 3, Letter dated 20th July 1808 to Henry Lloyd, New Hummums (a coffee house), Covent Garden, London with the LUDLOW / 149 mileage (SH250). The reverse shows £ / 11/3 being 15 letters at 9d (1812 Act), thus 11/3 the total for the bundle.

However it seems Mr Lloyd had returned to home, so that the letter was redirected back to Ludlow and the London Inland Office had struck POSTAGE TO LONDON / NOT PAID over the Ludlow mileage, the original 9d charge was amended to 1/6 to pay the original postage and the postage back to Ludlow.

Fig 4, Cover from Shrewsbury to London dated 27th July 1815 with SHREWSBURY / 165 mileage (SH648) and 1.1.0 / £ on the reverse.

A similar process to the cover in Figs 1 and 3, the correct 9d charge (1812 Act) has been multiplied by 28 to give a total of £1.1s.0d, meaning there were 28 letters in the bundle for London that day.



It would seem logical to conclude that the manuscript marks on the bottom letter in the bundle for London were to assist in the completion of the Way Bill for the letters to London with the postage value of the letters put in the London Bag.

Please note that all the covers illustrated in this article have been reduced in size to accommodate them on the page – Ed.

PARCEL POST – A UNIQUE CANCELLATION?

by Derek Smeathers

In these days of profitable parcel post business and loss-making letter mail, there is a revised interest in parcel post among postal historians, in spite of the frequency with which we find parcels cancelled with poor, often illegible, date stamps and damaged adhesive stamps. The hope was that the adhesive was placed on the label and cancelled on the pad, and *then* put on the parcel itself to avoid damage and illegibility. One popular date stamp in the era of the labels was the so-called ‘square-circle’, various types of which were used by many post towns.

Peterborough had a square-circle with the inscription PARCEL POST added to the town name and to my knowledge no other post town in Britain had a similar hand stamp. It has a long period of use, from 2nd November 1895 (on a single stamp) to the latest on a label dated 26th October 1912; they are not uncommon. An inexperienced dealer may offer this ‘unique cancel’ at prices over £100, whilst another dealer may offer several examples at £15 upwards, much as any other label these days (is this true any more? – Ed). The code letter varied from A right through to V, and often upside down or sideways. I have yet to find one in any other colour than black.



Fig 1, Code J, 4d rate paid for 2lb from 1st June 1887



Fig 2, Code A, again 4d rate for 2lb parcel weight

THE JON BAKER TROPHY

Some articles selected from the last 4 issues of Midland Mail can be found below for your consideration for the **Jon Baker Trophy** but if you feel another article is worthy of your vote, please let me have your nomination. Hand the slip provided with this issue to me at either of the next two meetings or send me an e-mail or regular mail by 31st March.

John Hine	Gloucester Station – 1842 to 1886 in MM 185, January 2015
Derek Smeathers	Peru to Northampton in Wartime using air, road, rail and sea, MM 184, November 2014
Guy Bridges	A Journey through Montgomeryshire & Shropshire to Worcester in 1805, MM 184, November 2014
John Soer	Wickwar's Mail, 1856, MM 184, November 2014
Alan Godfrey	Ruhleben Camp, MM 183, August 2014
John Soer	Mail on the Midland Railway and its constituents, 1840-1875, MM 182, April 2014
Ken Smith	Midland Post Offices opened or closed during 2013, MM 182, April 2014

A big ‘thank you’ to all who have provided me with feedback on the last few issues of Midland Mail. As I have stated a couple of times, this is a learning experience for me and I will take into consideration all constructive advice. I have been wondering if too much emphasis is placed on reports of meetings and too few articles. I understand that not everyone can attend meetings and those that cannot might like a report of what happened, let me know your thoughts! In the meantime, articles long (preferably!) or short can be sent to Brian Atkins, 1, Mount Pleasant, Ruabon, Wrexham, LL14 6DT or e-mailed to sniktab@gmail.com using WORD and Times New Roman 10pt with top margins of 2.54cm and side margins of 2.2cm, which keep the continuity of the issue. Many thanks.