



MIDLAND MAIL

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



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Elizabeth Lewis

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NUMBER 50, MAY 1987

When writing to me recently an eminent postal historian commented that Midland Mail is one of the best society publications. So the members can take pride in the fact that it has achieved a feat which often eludes the England cricketers - to score a half century. Much of the credit for this must go to my three predecessors along with a number of regular contributors who responded to frequent appeals from the editor.

It was early in 1976 that the first edition appeared consisting of one side, apparently produced on a spirit duplicator. As one who often wrestled with such machines, I do not envy the then editor. In fact a look back through past editions shows the enormous changes which have taken place in reprographic facilities during recent years. In early editions the illustrations were stuck into each individual copy (surely a labour of love on the part of the editor) or appeared on a separate page. Now with the aid of a word processor it is possible to juggle the text around to fit them in at a convenient point. However when the table on page 7 was turned into gibberish, on altering the size of the margin to allow its transfer from page 6, I would willingly have returned to the John Bull printing outfit of my childhood days. These developments have been a boon to postal historians. Whilst not cheap, they do allow a small print run of quite good quality to be produced at a reasonable price. I wonder if the UDC book would ever have seen the light of day if traditional printing methods were the only ones available.

The pace of change is such that I would not like to predict the possible format of the hundredth issue. But it is worth repeating again what Jon Baker wrote in his first editorial. The success of our Society depends on communication between our members. If every member can make one contribution a year, however small, we then remain an active and growing Society.

Great Britain Postal History

from 1840 to date. County material,

FDCs and the unusual. Send for my latest list.

ROGER HUDSON
36 WEST STREET
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THE MARCH MEETING

Possibly the most difficult, if not impossible, task which your editor encounters is to describe, within the space available, the displays given by various speakers. It would be possible to write a book on the display of "G.B. Military Mail" given by Mac McConnell on 21st March. There can be few campaigns, in which British Forces have been involved during the last two hundred years, which were not mentioned in the course of the display. So in the following account it is not possible to do more than pick out a few items.

Mr. McConnell started with an account, dated 1711, claiming expenses incurred by the British Envoy to Portugal, during the War of the Spanish Succession, in sending messengers with express letters. The remarkable resistance displayed by the Gurkhas was described in a dispatch sent from Camp Kalanga in 1814 by Colonel Mauby to the Earl of Moira. As a result of this, a clause in the peace treaty stated that the Nepalese tribesmen should serve in the British Army.

The correspondence of a John Evans was used to illustrate the next two campaigns. There were a number of covers from the Crimean War showing a 2d. rate to be paid. These originated from the Caucasian part of the campaign and were not sent through the Crimea. We also saw examples of a 3d. rate (this included 2d. for transit through France). Then John Evans went to India where he was involved in the Indian Mutiny, 1857-59. The postal routes and rates of this campaign were dealt with thoroughly. Notable was an example of a 10d. officer's rate, which included 4d. to cover carriage across France.

After discussing items from Sudan Campaign, 1896-8, Mr. McConnell turned to the Boer War. Of particular interest here were examples of prisoner of war mail including letters to St. Helena, and Army T.P.O. postmarks. At the end of the Boer War the state of Natal was almost bankrupt. So to raise funds the government levied a tax of £1 on all males over 10. This caused unrest which culminated in the Zulu Rebellion of 1906. The cause, the outbreak and the campaign itself were all illustrated with postcards. The troops endorsed their mail "On Active Service". This was accepted by the postal authorities in South Africa but not in this country so the mail was surcharged at double the deficiency.

The second half began with a display of F.P.O. handstamps on adhesives overprinted "C.E.F." (China Expeditionary Force) which was followed by material from the North West Frontier Campaign. Amongst many items from the First World War were postcards concerned with the mobilisation of Territorial and Reserve Units; a letter from a British P.O.W. interned in Holland; from South Africa an example of the PASSED BY CENSOR / DOORGELATEN DOOK CENSOR handstamp; covers originating from the Western Desert Force showing the censor number of various Midlands units; a postcard sent, just before the occupation of Salonika, to the British Embassy in Washington which passed through the Turkish Post Office. From the period immediately following the war we saw covers from the Army P.O. in Allenstein and the Upper Silesia Plebiscite Force.

In May 1935 the town of Quetta was completely destroyed by an earthquake. An emergency mail service was set up and marked the letters QUETTA EARTHQUAKE POSTAGE FREE. The example we saw was discoloured since it had been disinfected.

There were numerous items from the Second World War including a letter returned following the fall of France; covers from the British Forces in Iceland; letters endorsed "Substitute Letter Card" which was used from Malta when supplies of Air Letter Forms were lost in the sinking of H.M.S. Breckonshire; covers illustrating the various units from the Midlands in the Far East including P.O.W. mail from the Sherwood Foresters. The last item in this section showed the mark RECOVERED P.O.W. MAIL / FROM EUROPE / RECENTLY RECEIVED / BY BRITISH P.O.

Finally the period of National Service was illustrated by a cover from the R.A.F. tracking station on St. Kilda. In his vote of thanks Ted Coles said that we had seen many rare even unique items. It was an entertaining and most informative afternoon.

THE MAY MEETING

The Annual General Meeting and Auction were held a little later than usual this year on 2nd May. The minutes of the 1986 A.G.M. were read by the Secretary and approved by the members. In her Chairman's report Elizabeth mentioned the publication of the second edition of the UDC book and the preparation for a book on straight line handstamps (see page 9 for details). She referred to the change in editorship of Midland Mail and asked members to keep the Editor supplied with material. The wide variety shown by the visiting speakers was praised. Finally she thanked the officers, John Calladine and all the members for their support during the past season.

The Secretary said that it had been a very enjoyable season with a lot of variety which reflected the wide horizons of members. He hoped we would continue with a varied and exciting programme.

Copies of the audited balance sheet were distributed by the Treasurer who was pleased that last year's increase in subscriptions matched the increased cost in producing Midland Mail. This was exactly as he had predicted. (Will there soon be another Chancellor of the Exchequer?). No increase would be necessary this year. He reported that some of the money in the current account had been deposited with a Building Society (so explaining the recent drop in interest rates).

The Editor reported that Midland Mail for this season would average twenty pages per issue and that he hoped to improve the standard of future issues now that he had mastered the complexities of the job.

Harold Wilson proposed the block reelection of the Officers which was seconded by Steph Stobbs. There was no dissent. Eric Lewis was reappointed as auditor. John Calladine reported that one of his sons, Mr J.J. Calladine would act as the Gloucestershire County Editor. The matter of the Annual Competitions was raised in A.O.B. The committee had agreed that members would talk about their entries, the judge not being present.

After a pause for refreshment, it was time for the Auction conducted by the well known firm of Farman, Lewis and Lewis. The realisations are listed below.

B	5.20	C	0.40	D	0.40	E	0.30
F	0.30	G	0.30	H	0.25	I	0.50
J to Y	0.25 each						
Z	1.25						
AA to EE	0.50 each						
1	4.00	3	3.50	4	3.00	5	3.40
6	2.00	7	1.20	9	2.50	10	0.50
11	0.50	12	4.00	14	8.00	15	4.50
16	5.00	20	3.60	24	14.00	26	4.30
29	1.00	30	1.80	31	2.70	32	1.80
34	0.60	36	3.60	37	1.30	38	0.80
39	1.30	41	0.70	42	1.30	43	1.80
46	2.00	47	0.45	48	2.70	49	0.70
50	4.50	51	2.00	52	1.30	53	5.00
54	2.00	55	8.00	57	6.00	58	3.60
59	15.50	60	7.00	61	4.50	62	5.00
64	3.60	65	1.60	66	1.40	70	3.60
72	8.00	73	0.80	78	2.10	79	5.50
80	5.70	82	2.20	83	0.80	84	4.50
86	0.40	88	4.50	92	2.60	94	1.80
95	7.50	96	8.50	99	2.50	101	12.00
102	0.90	103	0.50	104	3.00	105	1.10
106	0.60	107	8.00	109	3.00	110	2.60
111	10.00	112	3.00	114	1.50	116	1.85
117	1.50	119	5.50	121	2.20	125	1.50
126	0.50	127	1.00	128	1.50	129	1.00
130	1.30	131	2.00	132	2.00	133	2.00
135	2.00	136	2.00	137	2.50	139	1.00
142	3.75	143	3.25				

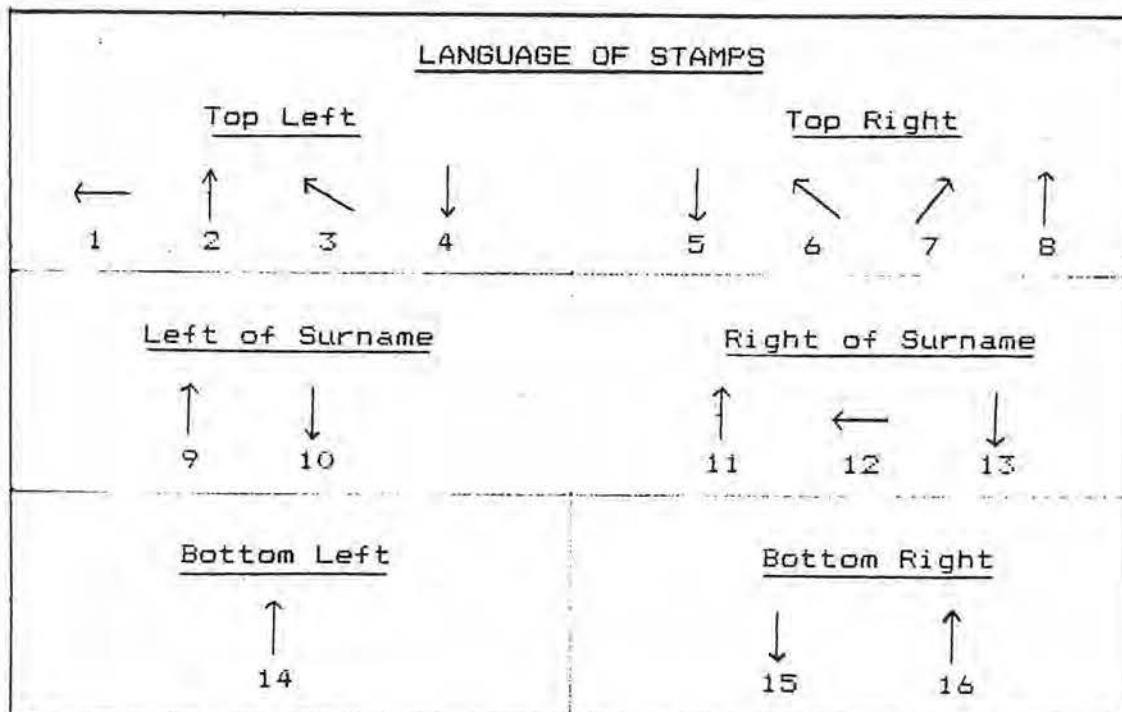
BETWEEN THE LINES

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

No doubt the publication of MM50 will prompt our Chairman or Editor to survey the development of the Bulletin from small beginnings when some of us were too green or too shy to respond to appeals. It has taken more than ten years to reach number 50 since there were times when nothing had been sent in. Now twenty pages or so, full of interest, drop through the slits in our doors five times a year, whether the work is entirely the editor's or half the the membership have been provoked into contributing something. Little by little we learn from one another. Apparently trivial detail can be a missing clue and prompt another to add to the evidence. We might profitably spend time at some of our meetings commenting on what has been in Midland Mail, and not necessarily only recently. There was so much packed into number 49 that there is no need to go back further to illustrate the point at some length!

1) That CDS without date slugs (page 20). Three similar marks from Staffordshire are recorded in "UDC's of the Midland Counties" (revised edition pages 75, 76 and 77), where we called the type ClM to indicate a "dated mark issued to a Money Order Office".

2) The double postcard concealing a secret letter (page 15). Did you notice the adhesive and understand the meaning? It reminds me of a letter I received from one who was not yet sweet sixteen but knew, as I did not, what S.W.A.L.K. stood for - and so did my father! In the days when Valentines were saucy rather than rude, how you affixed a label was more meaningful than today's postcard collectors always realise. How many of these messages are displayed on yours?



1. I love you. 2. Goodbye for the present. 3. My heart belongs to another and I can never be yours. 4. I love you. 5. My heart is given to another, write to me no more. 6. Do you love me dearest? 7. A kiss. 8. Business. 9. Accept my love. 10. I am already engaged. 11. Do you love me? 12. I wish for your friendship no more. 13. Write soon. 14. I long to see your face once more. 15. No. 16. Yes.

3) "Penny Post" stamps were not in the proof books until 1837 (page 6, top). Is that because they were not made of steel, but of brass? Was there any reason that steel impressions were recorded and others apparently not? (Rubbers I imagine began much later). I am still green!

4) The excerpts from the Coventry Mercury of 1785 revealed helpful evidence. The report of 1st August (page 13, the boxed item) shows the first Liverpool to London mail coach to have started out early the previous Monday morning, 25th July, so that it was more than half way on its journey when the first coach in the opposite direction set out from the G.P.O. at eight the same Monday evening (according to the notice in the London papers). It has often been supposed that such a new service began from London and there was no up journey until that coach reached the destination. The report of 7th November (page 14, middle) confirms the evidence of the notice in the Daily Universal Register of 10th October that the Holyhead mail coach went through Stone as well as Stafford; within three years it was altered to go directly from Stafford to Woore through Eccleshall. The reference to a Liverpool coach overturned in Wolverhampton cannot, I think, be to the London - Liverpool mail coach, whose route is well attested through Lichfield 1785 to 1837. There could have been a Birmingham - Liverpool mail coach, but if so it did not last until 1789 (Post 97 list of mail coaches, their distances and contract costs). However it does not say that this accident was to a mail coach; as "the coachman and the two outside passengers were much hurt", no mention of a guard is surely significant.

5) Samuel Woodcock's journal extracts (page 16ff - and where did you find this, please Mr. Editor? Editor - One of the unnumbered reports at the beginning of Post 40). No, he was not a new broom. He was one of the surveyors appointed in 1787, and remained in the one district (which came to be called "South Wales") until his retirement early in or just before 1823. Francis Freeling as Resident Surveyor at the G.P.O. had in 1791 collected together the facts concerning the "circuitous routes" by which so much of the mail was conveyed, in order to reduce the resultant overcharging according to distance. The surveyors' returns and Freeling's detailed tables of examples are in Post 96/20 part 1, part of which is published at the end of this article. Much of what Woodcock was doing in 1792 appears to be a follow-up to this, and my impression is that the excerpts show typical attention to detail by a firm and fair surveyor. He was part of the "new establishment" determined to make the Post Office efficient and reputable - I am currently collating evidence concerning the careers of the surveyors who spanned the period 1787 to 1850 and welcome assistance in the search. The Mr. Hart mentioned in the 1812 quotation from the Midland Chronicle as in charge of proceedings as Birmingham celebrated the reestablishment of a direct London mail coach (page 13) is presumably Gratian Hart, who was the Midland District surveyor though Birmingham itself was not I believe his normal responsibility.

6) The non-use of a Printed Time Bill (page 16, para 5) is the earliest specific allusion I have seen to such bills in the mail coach era. Jean Farrugia, the P.O. Archivist, has told me that she has not come across any earlier than the collection of unused ones (Post Ref. Volumes 07) with the date "179 " to be completed in manuscript. An example is shown on the next page. From their heading etc. it is clear that they were printed between 1790 and 1793 and they have the appearance of original samples, including some manuscript corrections and actual errors. For Birmingham to have run out of those to be used on the Bristol mail coach must push their date back to 1790 or 1791. The intended times at Coventry of the London - Liverpool mail coach are down 8 a.m., up 2.25 p.m., cf. the 1785 intention of 7 a.m. down (page 14 top) and the actual first journey 7 p.m. up (page 13, facsimile). Time allowed for the 207 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles was 28 hours 45 minutes down and 30 hours 40 minutes up. There is also a blank Coventry to Birmingham Time Bill for the branch mail coach.

7) Tables of postage rates (page 18, last para.) were discussed by John Harrison, with an example as illustration, in Postal History No. 233 pages 13 to 16, cf. No. 23 pages 22-23 and No. 232 page 6. (Editor's Note - Please see Addendum B at the end of this article.)



General Post - Office.

23

Right Hon^{ble}. Lord WALSINGHAM, } Post-Master
 Right Hon^{ble}. Earl CHESTERFIELD } General

London to Liverpool Time Bill.

		Miles.	Time allowed H. M.	Dispatched from the General Post-Office, the		of	179
				at	<i>March 1st 1841</i>		
				Coach N ^o	sent out	{ With a Time-Piece safe, N ^o to	
Wilfon	—	27	3	5	Arrived at Redborne at		
Ward	—	8	1	0	Arrived at Dunitable at		
Fosfitt	—	18½	2	35	<i>Hutchins King, the Post</i> Arrived at Stoney Stratford at		
					<i>For the Country</i> Delivered the Time Piece safe to		
					Coach N ^o gone forward <i>March</i>		
					To be at Stoney Stratford at Forty Minutes past Two o'Clock		
		40	5	20	Arrived at Coventry at		
				20	To be at Coventry at Eight o'Clock, where Twenty Minutes are allowed for Breakfast.		
Soden	—	12	1	50	Arrived at Colehill at		
					Delivered the Time-Piece safe to		
					Coach N ^o gone forward.		
Burton & Dale	—	15	2	0	Arrived at Litchfield at		
				30	To be at Litchfield at Ten Minutes past Twelve o'Clock, where Half an Hour is allowed for Dinner.		
Miller	—	9½	1	15	Arrived at Wolfley Bridge at		
Morgan	—	12	1	35	Arrived at Stone at		
				15	To be at Stone at Thirty Minutes past Three o'Clock, where Fifteen Minutes are allowed for Refreshment.		
Morgan	—	9	1	10	Arrived at Newcastle at		
Massey	—	12½	1	40	Arrived at Congleton at		
					Delivered the Time-Piece safe to		
					Coach N ^o sent forward		
Wilkinson	—	14	2	0	Arrived at Knutsford at		
Bowman	—	12	1	40	Arrived at Warrington at		
					<i>Perce</i> To be at Warrington at Ten Minutes past Four o'Clock.		
Simpson	—	18	2	30	Arrived at Liverpool the	of	179
		207½	28	45	The Bags to be delivered at the Post-Office, Liverpool, by Twenty Minutes before One in the Morning.		
					Coach N ^o arrived	{ Delivered the Time-Piece safe N ^o to	

The Time of working each Stage is to be reckoned from the Coach's Arrival. Five Minutes for changing four Horses is as much as is necessary, and as the Time whether more or less is to be fetched up in the course of the Stage, it is the Coachman's Duty to be as expeditious as possible, and to report the Horse-keepers if they are not always ready when the Coach arrives, and active in getting it off.

By Order of the Surveyor and Comptroller-General,

C. B O N N O R, Dep.

8) It is not clear what was meant by a "short letter" (page 18, top). Martin Willcocks asked in Postal History No. 231 page 23, and because I passed on some Black Country allusions, I now find myself with his file of examples and some confused possibilities. Can others add to the evidence please.

9) A couple of corrections:

a) There is plenty in Aris's Gazette about the 1812 events (page 13, top). It was in 1785 that apparently no clear record was published at Birmingham concerning the first mail coaches there. b) The "Oxley Update" (page 7, bottom) is meant to record for Penkridge the U.D.C., which we classify as type C2 but Oxley has as his type 11, known only on the letter illustrated and in the steel impression book (1/144). As the text of the article says the only known red 'Walsall/Penny Post' (type 1) is the one on the other illustration, of 1839.

Editor's Note: The errors in the "Oxley Update" are entirely my fault. Due to not thinking about what I was typing, I misinterpreted the manuscript. In the lines beginning Penkridge and Willenhall, please delete "1832" in the penultimate column. Also in the line beginning Willenhall the entry in the "Type" column should be 11 not 2.

ADDENDUM A

The following is taken from Post 96/20 part 1. Only those entries relating to the Midland Counties are shown. The document was titled: "A list of a few places with the rates of postage as they are compared with what they would be were the letters not sent circuitously." It was dated 10th March 1791. Note that the "Miles Sent" column was not completed for all the routes.

<u>PLACES</u>	<u>MILES SENT</u>	<u>ACTUAL DISTANCE</u>	<u>PRESENT RATE</u>	<u>RATE FOR SHORTER ROUTE</u>
Cardiff - Hereford	100	55	5d.	4d.
Ludlow - Leominster	73	11	4d.	3d.
Ludlow - Prestelgn	87	24	5d.	3d.
Ludlow - Kidderminster	50	22	4d.	3d.
Hereford - Swansea	134	64	5d.	4d.
Banbury - Warwick	59	19	4d.	2d.
Coventry - Banbury	92	27	5d.	3d.
Stratford - Evesham	41	18	4d.	2d.
Bridgnorth - Bewdley	50	16	4d.	2d.
Bridgnorth - Kidderminster	47	14	4d.	2d.
Bridgnorth - Shrewsbury	48	20	4d.	2d.
Bridgnorth - Ludlow	90	19	5d.	2d.
Shrewsbury - B'hops Castle	104	21	5d.	2d.
Shrewsbury - Stafford	54	33	4d.	3d.
Shrewsbury - Nantwich	80	31	5d.	3d.
Shrewsbury - Bewdley	70	36	4d.	3d.
Nantwich - Stone	37	21	4d.	2d.
Stafford - Newport		15	4d.	2d.
Newcastle - Nantwich		16	4d.	2d.
Leek - Cheadle		10	4d.	2d.
Coventry - Lutterworth		16	4d.	2d.
Coventry - Nuneaton		8	4d.	2d.
Coventry - Hinckley		10	4d.	2d.
Hinckley - Leicester		14	4d.	2d.
Coventry - Atherstone		13	4d.	2d.
Northampton - S. Stratford		15	4d.	2d.
Leicester - Uppingham		19	4d.	2d.
Harborough - Rockingham		10	4d.	2d.
Warwick - Northampton		31	5d.	3d.
Chesterfield - Bakewell		12	4d.	2d.
Sheffield - Bakewell		17	4d.	2d.

ADDENDUM B

When reading through the recently published "A Guide to Post Office Archives", I came across reference to "tables of postage rates based on individual towns". On further investigation, I found that one of these was a book of rates of postage from Birmingham (Post 53/13). The title page and the first page are reproduced below. Possibly one of the Birmingham members can say if John Rowe held any position in the Birmingham post office. The table was only filled in as far as the letter N, but probably contains sufficient information to enable a circulation map of Birmingham to be drawn. Incidentally the deliveries of Nottingham and Derby are written on the fly leaves. One final thought - a wall-chart would have been more useful than a booklet in a post office.

A LIST
OF THE
POST TOWNS,
And Principal Places,
IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

Place and County.	Postage.	Where sent.
Aberconway Caernar.	10	London
Abbotsberry Dorsets.	11	London
Abergavenny Monm.	11	London
Abergele Denbigh.	11	London
Aberystwith Cardig.	11	London
Abingdon Berks.	11	London
Acle Norfolk.	11	London
Alcester Warwick.	11	London
Aldborough Suffolk	11	London
Aldborough Yorks.	11	London
Alderney, (Isle)	11	London
Alford Lincoln.	11	London
Alfreton Derbysh.	11	London
Alnwick Northu.	11	London
Alresford Hants.	11	London
Alton Hants.	11	London
Altringham Cheshire	11	London
Ambleside Westm.	11	London
Amersham Bucks.	11	London
Amesbury Wiltshire	11	London
Amptill Bedford	11	London

RATES OF POSTAGE,

From.

Birmingham

TO THE.

PRINCIPAL TOWNS

IN

ENGLAND AND WALES.

NEWPORT:

PRINTED BY H. P. HARRIS.

1893.

UNDATED MARKS OF THE MIDLANDS (OTHER THAN UDCs) USED AFTER 1840

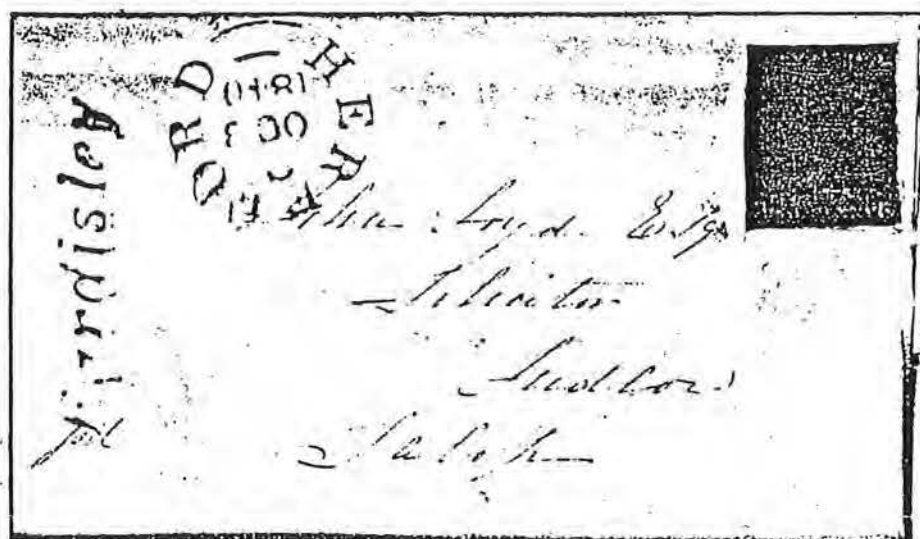
Following the success of the exercise to list the undated circular marks of the Midlands, members may recall that the Society has been attempting to compile a similar (but much shorter) record of the straight line namestamps of the town sub-offices used during the same period. A provisional list (the P/MSL list) was attached to Midland Mail No. 43 in January 1986 and much usage information has now been recorded.

It had always seemed likely that the Society would round off its research at a later date by compiling a further list of other undated marks, the pre-1840 "relics", that survived into the post-1840 period. These would include penny post handstamps, mileage marks and other miscellaneous survivors of an earlier period.

At the last Committee Meeting, it was decided that these two exercises should be combined to produce a complete list of the undated marks of the Midlands (other than the circular marks already recorded) used after 1840. While this decision has the important advantage that it will produce a publication of viable size, it does mean that we can no longer rely on the Steel Impression Books to provide a basic list since many of the pre-1840 relics pre-date that record. Furthermore, in the new publication we need to illustrate each and every different mark as there are so many minor variations. If you refer to the P/SML list of January 1986, you will see that this is so.

As a result of the Committee's decision, members are now asked to submit to the Coordinating Editor, John Calladine, photocopies of any post-1840 undated marks that they have excluding UDCs and marks on the P/MSL list. If the date is not apparent from the photocopy or if you have other examples of the same mark, please pencil the date(s) on the reverse. We are still keen to hear of further usage of the P/MSL marks but, in those cases, it is only necessary to quote the P/MSL number from MM 43/15 -19.

It is anticipated that this exercise will terminate on 31st December 1987. However, it would be very helpful if members were able to find a few minutes to devote to this during the summer "close season". No one will have more than a dozen such marks - will they?



Script type Eardisley used in October 1840

how to post franked mail

These instructions have been designed to assist the Post Office to deal with your franked mail in the most prompt manner possible. We ask for your co-operation as any failure to comply may cause correspondence to be unnecessarily delayed.

1. FRANKED MAIL SHOULD UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES BE POSTED LOOSE IN PILLAR BOXES.
2. Franked mail should always be handed over the counter of the Post Office specified in the licence, unless arrangements have been made for the Post Office to collect where the numbers warrant it. Special envelopes are obtainable from franking machine suppliers for posting franked mail into a nominated posting box. Prior authority for this method of posting must first be obtained from the Head Postmaster. They should be posted in time for main evening collections (5.30 p.m. – 6 p.m.). Correspondence posted later may possibly fail delivery next day (1st class) or the appropriate second class service.
3. Franked impressions should be clear and complete.
4. They should show the actual date of posting. The licence explains how to claim a refund from the Post Office for incorrect impressions.
5. Franked LETTERS should be:
 - a Arranged with the address facing the same way.
 - b Secured in medium-sized bundles.
 - c Separated from mail bearing postage stamps only.
6. Separate clearly labelled bundles or bags are required for:
 - a First-class letters (labels are obtainable from
 - b Second-class letters. (Storekeeper 021-644 8161/2
 - c Items bearing postage stamps as well as franked impressions.

NOTE: The terms "first-class" and "second-class" apply to inland mail (including mail to the Irish Republic). All overseas mail should be included in first-class bundles or bags; exceptionally, large postings of overseas surface printed papers should be handed in separately.
7. LETTER PACKETS if posted in sufficient numbers should also be separated into "first-class" and "second-class"; and the bags or containers clearly labelled.
8. PARCELS must be kept separate from letter mail
9. Please make a daily entry on the CONTROL CARD, whether the franking machine has been used or not. The card must be sent to the Post Office named in the schedule on the last working day (Friday or Saturday) of each week.
10. Please show a return address on your envelopes – it will enable the Post Office to return unopened any sealed mail which cannot be delivered. The return address may be incorporated in the slogan block on your machine.

METER-FRANKED MAIL IRREGULARITIES

by Mr. R.L. Woodward-Clarke

Meter franking, hated by stamp collectors and generally ignored by postal historians has been with us in this country since 1922 when the Post Office authorised Pitney Bowes Postage Meter Company to sell their machines in the U.K. Two years earlier, in November 1920, meter franking machines had been approved for international use at a meeting of the U.P.U. in Madrid. Increasingly, since those early days the Post Office has encouraged meter franking, by licensing other suppliers of the machines and advocating their use, until today meter franking accounts for at least two thirds of all postings.

Meter franking is understandably very popular with the Post Office for it saves them a great deal of work as the initial stages of sorting the mail are done by the customer. Metered mail needs no cancellation, and the customer has to "face" all the letters and separate them into first and second class bundles. The Meter Control Unit (Quality of Service Team) at Birmingham MLO have taken this preparation of mail by the customer one step further by requesting large users of meter mail to use special trays, supplied by the Post Office, into which is placed specially selected metered mail. The only mail placed in these trays are post coded items from which have been eliminated (i) all extra thick or extra thin envelopes, (ii) envelopes which contain hard objects, (iii) envelopes with sellotape attached and (iv) awkward sized envelopes. They are all faced, and in an inverted position (so that when the trays are up-ended at the sorting office the mail is the right way up). After a preliminary check for any possible irregularities the mail is ready to go straight to the post coding desks. As a "reward" for this extra work by the customer the "Quality of Service Team" promise that their mail will receive priority "whenever possible".

To ensure that the staff of the customer's mailing room know what is required of them the Post Office supply meter users with a notice "How to post franked mail" (fig.1). If any of the conditions are not met the Post Office promptly reminds the customer with a post card detailing the irregularity (fig. 2).

Meter Franked Mail Posting Irregularity	Post Office
The mail you posted tonight was/had:—	
☒ INCORRECTLY DATED 16-3-87.	DATE BIRMINGHAM 12 17 MCH 1987 STAMP METER CONTROL UNIT Quality of Service Team Birmingham MLO B1 1AA
☐ 1st/2nd CLASS IN RED/GREEN POUCH	
☐ MAIL NOT FACED AND/OR BUNDLED	
☐ POSTAGE OVERPAID	
☐ INDISTINCT IMPRESSIONS	
☐ POSTAGE UNDERPAID	
☐ ORDINARY MAIL MIXED WITH METER	
☐	
Please give this item your attention on future postings	
Correct Presentation Helps Speed the Mail	

fig.2

Item 4 on the instruction notice is the one most frequently transgressed; either the date on the machine is not changed on the following day or the wrong date is set. The Post Office is particularly sensitive about the dating of mail and goes to great lengths to inform the recipient that the sender has made a mistake. The most common way of correcting the date is to pass the item through a cancelling machine as if it were franked with adhesives (fig 3). Liverpool and Chester have used a special die in the slogan position for this purpose (fig. 4). Incidentally, both of these offices have used this special die in error to cancel adhesives! Manchester uses another special die to point out any incorrect presentation which could cause delay (fig. 5). Many offices use either a steel or rubber handstamp to show the correct date of posting (figs 6 & 7). Two offices, Pontypool and Sutton-in-Ashfield, have been known to use their registered handstamp for this purpose (fig. 8), a rather misleading use as the item was not registered.

fig.3

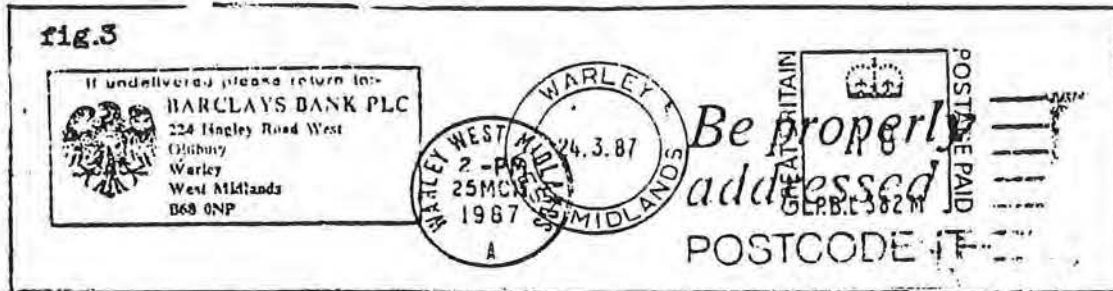


fig.4



fig.5

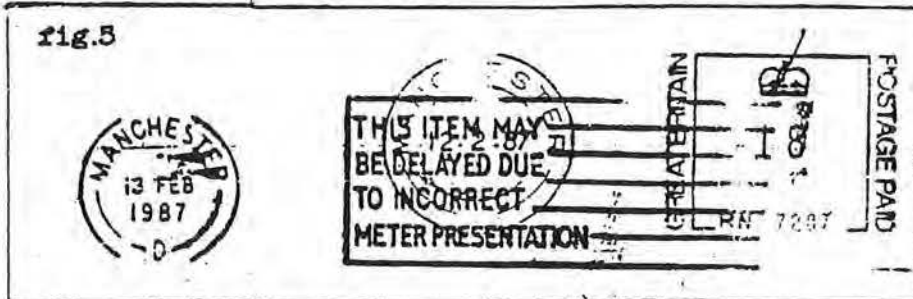


fig.6



fig.7



fig.8

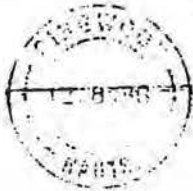


A number of offices use a special handstamp which is quite specific about the mistake made by the sender (figs. 9 - 11). These handstamps differ in shape, size and wording from office to office, and seem to be procured locally by each postmaster and not issued from a central source. They have been seen used on mail from the following offices:

Bournemouth Derby Grantham Leicester Newquay Nottingham
Porthcawl Runcorn Sleaford Tonbridge Truro Warrington

Meter mail bearing franked impressions which are unclear or incomplete (item 5 on the list of instructions) can be penalised not only by being delayed, but by having a postage due levied (fig. 12). The handstamps used in these cases seem to be fairly standard although Nottingham used one in 1978 reading "Liable to postage surcharge/Imperfect meter franking".

fig.9



FRANKING ME WITH AN
INCORRECT DATE
HAS MADE IT APPEAR THAT
I'VE ARRIVED LATE
Date Posted

fig.10

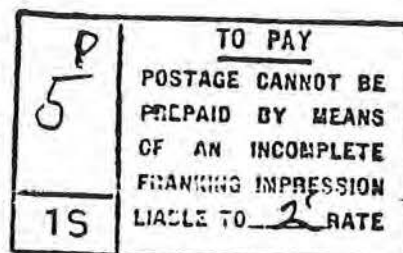


**ACTUALLY
POSTED ON
- 3 MAR 1987
INCORRECTLY
DATED BY SENDER**

fig.11



fig.12

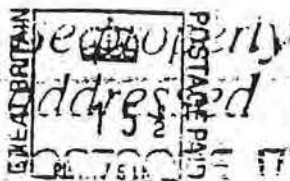
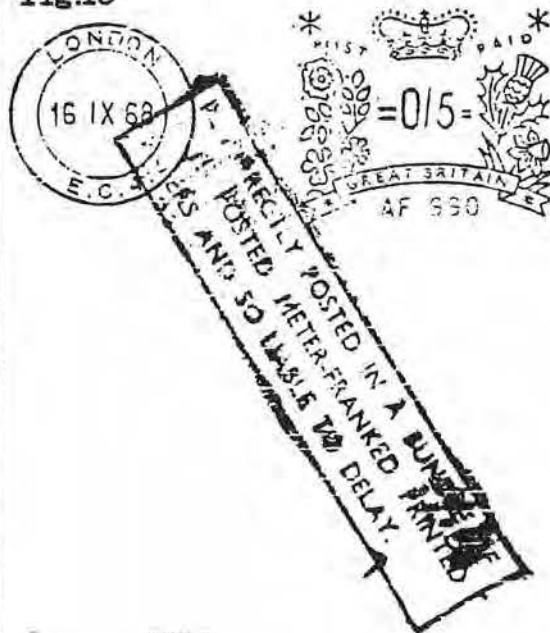


Failure to separate first and second class mail (item 6) may also attract a special handstamp but they appear to be used rarely and I have seen only four examples in twenty years of collecting (figs. 13 - 16). The label for second class mail is printed in green on light green card; the first class label is similar but printed in black on red card.

Refunds of franking machine impressions made in error can be obtained by use of form P862, but 5% of the amount of postage impressed is deducted from the refund.

There are a number of other aspects of meter mail collecting and I hope the foregoing gives some idea of the interest to be found in this the most common form of postal history being made today.

fig.13



CAUSE OF DELAY
DUE TO FOUND IN
MIXED BUNDLE OF
1st & 2nd CLASS METERS

fig.15

Postmaster
BANK STREET
25, Post Office
Grangitewell
Sunderland



INCORRECTLY POSTED IN A BUNDLE
OF METER-FRANKED 1st CLASS
LETTERS AND SO LIABLE TO DELAY

fig.14

fig.16



INCORRECTLY INCLUDED
IN BUNDLE OF 2nd CLASS
METER CORRESPONDENCE.

"WRITE SOMETHING EVERY POST."

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

She generally did, and so did he, whenever he was out of town. Normally they met frequently, for it was only six miles from his home in the heart of London to hers at Streatham. There he was always welcome, home from home with every comfort. Apart the familiar handwriting was like the familiar voice at the other end of a phone, expected every morning or at a predictable time on a predictable day. In this case he didn't mean every day apparently, nor even six times a week.

This is not the place to investigate the intimacy of Dr. Samuel Johnson and Mrs. Hester Thrale. Like the word "post", as any lexicographer could demonstrate, "intimacy" has a rich range of usage. Suffice it to say that this lexicographer, widowed in his early forties, was already fifty six when the friendship began in 1765, that Henry the husband shared in and heartily encouraged a tripartite relationship, that when he died in 1781 some expected a marriage, and that the Doctor was not approving when she wrote from Italy three years later to disclose plans completed for a different match. They did not correspond further. He burned all her letters he could find and some diaries, and died the same year still refusing to speak of her. She produced "Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson", an admiring account devoid of rancour, within a year or two. James Boswell's "Life", the research for which was a labour of love, did not emerge until 1791; the estimation of it as a classic began in the 1830's. In truth he never knew their subject as intimately as she.

The letters Samuel sent to Hester survive. An immense amount of what he ever wrote and said has been reproduced, the letters word for word - the inside that is, not the out. Our specific interest is confined to those written between 1770 and 1781 which can be shown to have been written at Lichfield. He stayed in the town for varying periods in eight of those years, sending at least forty two letters to Streatham, including one to Mr. Thrale. The chief purpose was for Samuel to see his stepdaughter, Lucy Porter, who never went to London; his wife, many years his senior, had been married before and he himself had no children. There were plenty of friends in his home-town. Often he stayed awhile with the vicar of Ashbourne, a contemporary of both school and Oxford days. For what we would call holidays, the trip to the Western Isles with Boswell is well known, but usually it was with the Thrales - to Bath or Brighthelmstone, and once to Paris. They were very generous to him, and could afford to be for Henry was a wealthy brewer as well as at one time an M.P.

In MM 48/8 reference has previously been made to five of these letters. Attention centered on one written on Tuesday, 1st August 1775, which begins: "I wonder how it could happen. I forgot that the post went out yesternight and so omitted to write. I therefore put this in the bypost and hope it will come." It looked as though at that time what Johnson called "the post" went only on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday evenings from Lichfield up to London (and similarly down three times a week), but since 1770 it had been possible to send letters by another route on certain days. Would other letters confirm the apparent reluctance to use the "bypost" or provide evidence that the "post" did become six-day along the direct route by the Chester Road at some date prior to 1785?

Here then the evidence which the search adds. Thirty four out of the forty two letters are headed with dates which turn out to be one or other of the three post days. Two of the remainder are likely to be mis-dated: on 10th June 1775, a Saturday, the letter (after referring to delays - "neither your letters nor mine seem to have kept due time") says "I will write you a longer letter on Monday", but the next two are headed the 11th and 13th. It isn't just that there is no allusion to a change of mind, more importantly he would have needed a very good reason to write on a Sunday and would have felt obliged to apologise. Sir Joshua

Reynolds was presumably less strict; he "readily acquiesced" in Johnson's dying wish that he would "never use a pencil on a Sunday" and that would surely include a pen as well as a paint brush.) Assuming then that these letters should have been dated the 12th and 14th, we have seven written on a Monday, fourteen on a Wednesday, and fifteen on a Saturday.

There is none written on a Friday, plainly because such a letter would not have been delivered in London until Monday morning, and a Saturday letter (written after the next post arrived) would do the same. The nearest thing to a recurrence of writing two days running (apart from August 1st and 2nd, 1775) is indicated in a Thursday letter, of 24th June 1779, betraying some urgency - "Though I wrote yesterday to Mr. Thrale, I think I must write this day to you". Two other Thursday ones, in 1772 and 1777, are in effect to say "Arrived safely: write to here". There remain two Tuesday letters, in 1771 and 1781, in which no explanation is apparent for not writing on the Monday or Wednesday of those particular weeks. Of course they may have been penned in the evening, knowing the next day would be fully occupied.

The evidence is consistent with the theory that the Chester Road did remain three-day until 1785. It also suggests that when Samuel (on 17th June 1775) asked Hester "Write to me something every post, for on the stated day my head runs upon a letter", he did not expect more than three a week, franked though they may have been.

A couple of references to the difficulty of planning when you would be where are of interest; it was still the early years of coach travel. At the beginning of a route perhaps you could book in advance; elsewhere you could not be sure when you might get a seat. In 1771 Samuel wrote "My thoughts are now about getting to London. I shall watch for a place, sometimes full and sometimes vacant", yet he didn't leave until six or seven days afterwards. Ten years later it was a case of news not catching up with him for a week: "Your Oxford letter followed me hither with Lichfield put upon the direction in the place of Oxford and was received at the same time as the letter next after it." Still, he doesn't seem to have minded the journies - there are no complaints of the roads, upturns or robberies. His farewell visit to Lichfield was when he was seventy five and failing, only a month or so before his death in December 1784; no letters to Hester Piozzi of course, but those he did write were on 'post' days. He did not have the pleasure of travelling on or even seeing a mailcoach on the Chester Road, nor did he go to Bath that year.

For POSTAL HISTORY

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NOTTINGHAM RURAL POSTS

The following is a list of the proposed posts detailed in the revision of rural posts under Nottingham in 1857 (Post 14. Ref. 228, p.186ff.). Although the documents are dated 14th May 1857, it is probable that the changes were not effected until the following year since Oxton was not transferred from Southwell to Nottingham until 16th November 1858. Apart from the fact that very little of Nottinghamshire has so far appeared in Midland Mail, the main reason for publishing this particular example is that it shows most of the methods of distributing the mail, which were used at the time, in rural areas. Although they were subject to many alterations, as the amount of mail increased, the main outline of the rural posts of the late 1850s lasted for over fifty years, if those of Leicestershire are typical. The name of each post is followed by the names of the places served and the method of distribution.

Nottingham - Ilkeston

Old Radford, Wollaton, Trowell, Ilkeston (Cotmanhay, Little Hallam, Kirk Hallam).

By mail cart daily. Second mail on six days to Ilkeston by railway. Deliveries daily by the sub-postmasters.

Nottingham - Eastwood

Cinderhill, Nuthall, Watnall, Kimberley, Newthorpe, Moor Green, Eastwood, Langley Mill.

By mail cart or omnibus daily. Sub-pmrs to deliver daily. Second mail on weekdays.

Nottingham - Papplewick

Basford, Bulwell, Hucknall, Linby, Papplewick.

By Midland Railway. Sub-pmrs to meet the trains and perform the deliveries.

Nottingham - Forestville

Freesland, Forest Grove, Hyson Green, New Basford, Sherwood Hill, Forestville.

By outskirt messenger daily who will collect in the evening and perform a second delivery on weekdays.

Nottingham - Oxton

Carrington, Mapperley (Woodthorpe, Sherwood, Woodville), Arnold, Calverton, Oxton.

By horse post. Delivery in each village by sub-pmrs daily.

Nottingham - Lambley

Colwick, Carlton, Gedbury, Lambley.

By foot messenger to deliver in each village except Carlton where sub-pmr delivers.

Nottingham - Bulcote

Burton Joyce (Stoke Bardolph, Bulcote).

By Midland Railway to and from Nottingham. Sub-pmr of Burton Joyce to meet the trains and deliver.

Lowdham - Gunthorpe

Lowdham, Gonalston, Hoveringham, Caythorpe, Gunthorpe.

By foot messenger from Lowdham who delivers all the letters six days a week. The bag conveyed to and from Nottingham by railway.

Nottingham - Bottesford

Radcliffe, Holmespierrepoint, Saxondale, Bingham, Whatton (Aslockton, Scarrington), Elton, Bottesford.

By mail cart. The delivery in each place performed by sub-pmr.

Plumtree - Stanton

Keyworth, Wysall, Willoughby, Widmerpool, Stanton.
By foot messenger. Branch post three days a week.

Nottingham - Bunny

Ruddington, Bradmere, Bunny.
By foot messenger delivering all the letters except Ruddington.

Nottingham - Awsworth

Bobber's Mill, Whitemoor, Bilbrough, Strelley, Cossall, Awsworth.
By foot messenger delivering all the letters except at Bobber's Mill and Strelley.

Nottingham - Barton

Wilford, Clapton, Clifton, Barton.
By foot messenger delivering all the letters six days a week.

Nottingham - Beeston Fields

New Lenton, Old Lenton, Lenton House, Lenton Abbey, Beeston Fields.

Nottingham - Attenborough

Beeston, Chilwell, Toton, Attenborough.
By Midland Railway. Sub-pmr of Beeston to meet the trains daily and deliver.
Second delivery to Beeston six days a week.

THE UNDATED CIRCULAR MARKS OF THE MIDLAND COUNTIES

At the February Committee Meeting of the Society, it was agreed that our UDC book should be revised in the autumn of 1988. A number of improvements are planned including a new section under each county detailing changes of sub-offices' post towns that occurred during the UDC period. This information is currently contained in footnotes to the Office Lists but research in Post Office Archives has provided more extensive and precise information.

Unlike the 1986 Revised Edition, members are to be given the option of buying revised pages of individual counties (plus a revised alphabetical index) if they do not wish to update the whole book. The 1988 Edition will also introduce the UDCs of Gloucestershire which will be incorporated into the book between the lists of Derbyshire and Herefordshire. Since this (and other changes) will have a major impact on the numbering of the book, it is likely that a block of page numbers will be reserved for the possible future addition of Oxfordshire. However, members need have no fear that the new numbering will cause serious difficulty since the original page numbers will be retained in parenthesis following the updated page number and both numbers will appear in the index. For example, if the first page of the Herefordshire Office List becomes 32, it will be shown as 32(20) and the index listing of, say, Woolhope would be 33(21).

The draft Gloucestershire UDC list, as compiled from the Steel Impression Books, is now ready. Anyone who is prepared to offer usage information is invited to ask the Coordinating Editor, John Calladine, for a copy of a list of known stamps on which usage details can be recorded. A special postcard is also available for submitting usage details to the Coordinating Editor.

AN UNUSUAL TIME CODE ?

In about 1894 the time of cancellation was shown in code in the various datestamps. Most offices used the telegraph code, or something similar, in which both the hour and the five minute periods were denoted by letters of the alphabet. Morning and afternoon were denoted by A and P respectively. In fig. 1 the time denoted is 5.30 a.m.



Fig. 1

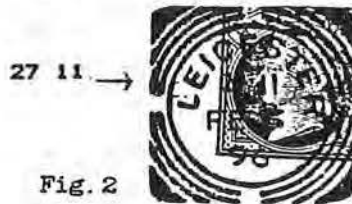


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

At Leicester an unusual code consisting of two numbers appeared in the "squared circle" handstamps - fig.2. The earliest example I have of this code is not in a "squared circle" but in a double cancellation - fig. 3. Here the second number is at right angles to the first. The latest example is from 28th February 1896. So far the numbers I have come across are:

2 20	10 20	11 27	13 18	13 20	13 27	14 27
17 19	17 26	18 23	18 33	19 33	21 26	21 31
22 23	23 18	24 28	25 11	25 18	25 27	25 29
26 11	26 13	26 15	26 16	26 18	26 23	26 30
26 31	26 33	27 11	27 15	27 18	27 31	28 30

Obviously these figures cannot refer to the time on the twenty four hour clock. My own guess is that the first part is a code for the time and the second part is the number of the stamper. At first I wondered if the initial digits corresponded to the various dispatches as the 1894 Kelly lists thirty dispatches of mail from Leicester each day. But this would mean that cancellation of the adhesives took place after the sorting which, as far as I am aware, was not the case. Surely the frequency with which 25, 26 and 27 occur is significant and it is possible that they denote cancellation during the evening peak period. I would welcome details of any other examples of this code, and any comments members care to make.

BOOK REVIEW

A GUIDE TO POST OFFICE ARCHIVES compiled by Jean Farrugia. From Post Office Archives, Freeling House, 23 Glasshill Street, Southwark, London SE1 0BQ. 131 pages, £5 (inc. postage). Cheques payable to The Post Office, please

This publication is an absolute "must" for anyone intending to visit P.O. Archives, even experienced researchers. As time spent there always seems to pass very quickly, it is most useful to be able to look at what is available beforehand. I have been made aware of material which I did not know existed (see page 8).

After an introduction to P.O. Archives there is a section on how to carry out research there. The book is then divided into ten sections such as Financial, Inland Mails and H.Q. Files. Within each section there is a description of each of the classes which come under that heading. There are a number of useful appendices including instructions on how to find Glasshill Street. (Unless you are an experienced alpinist, heed the warning about the Borough tube station.)

An excellent publication which I would like to see followed by volumes giving a detailed listing of the most commonly used Post classes.

JULY - JL, JY OR JU ?

Can anyone tell me if the Post Office has an official abbreviation for July? The postmarks obtained from a number of Leicestershire post offices, one Saturday morning last year, show that a variety of plugs are in use. Incidentally I wonder for how long the Ratby and Primethorpe handstamps have been in use.

TAILPIECE

At the time of compiling this edition, it seems that it might be appropriate to include the following part of a circular, dated 17th March 1857. The penalty stated in the two Acts of Parliament was a fine of £100. At the time a letter carrier's wage would be in the region of 12/- to 15/- a week. Civil servants were not entitled to vote until 1868.

To all Postmasters, Sub-Postmasters, Postmasters' Clerks, Letter Carriers, Letter Receivers, and others, employed in the receiving, collecting, or managing the Revenue of the Post Office.

**INTERFERENCE IN ELECTION OF MEMBERS
OF PARLIAMENT.**

As a General Election is about to take place, I am directed by the Postmaster-General to remind you that no Postmaster, Clerk, Letter Carrier, Letter Receiver, or any other Person employed in the receiving, collecting, or managing the Revenue of the Post Office, can either vote or interfere in any manner whatsoever at an Election for Members of Parliament, under the severest Penalties, as laid down in the Acts of 9 Anne, cap. 10, section 44; and 22 Geo. 3, cap. 41, section 1: extracts from which are annexed; and I am desired by His Grace to state that any Officer of the Post Office, guilty of this Offence, will be instantly dismissed the Service, in addition to being subjected to the Penalties inflicted by Law.

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

This will probably appear in early September. It will contain details of the next season's programme, and if the article on Nottingham Rural Posts is well received, two other cities will receive the same treatment. In the meantime, spare a few moments from mowing the lawn to send an article to:

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