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BULLETIN NO. 10 MARCH 1978

Editorial

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO THIS SUMMER ?

In this issue of the Bulletin is an interesting article by Bob Hunt, a relatively new member from Bedworth, on an intriguing discovery in Nuneaton Library - read all about it. There are probably many such sources of postal history information to be discovered.

During the summer months why not contact your 'friendly local Librarian' or County Archivist to discover what gems in the way of historical documents, post card collections and bric-a-brac they may have tucked away in their records.

It would be extremely useful for 'future researchers' to be able to refer to a list of items of interest relating to Midland postal history which could be made available for study.

The Society could publish such a list provided the basic information is obtained by members ++++++

AGM & AUCTION

Notice of our AGM (Saturday 8th April) and Auction List is enclosed with this Bulletin. Please make the effort to attend if possible - one thing which the Committee require your views is the venue of future meetings. It has been suggested that they take place at the same time and same location as a 'local Stamp Fair' (i.e. similar to our Coventry meeting) in various parts of the Midlands. If you have the date of any such function in your area for next year let the Secretary know. If you are unable to attend the 8th April meeting, then please enter a postal bid for any item contained in the Auction List which is of interest. There were quite a few withdrawn lots in last year's Auction - unless our contributing members can be sure of reasonable interest in items they submit for auction, sources will dry up.

NEW MEMBERS

The following new members have joined the Society since January and are made welcome :

H.S.Wilson
17 Heath Avenue
Littleover
Derby

Dennis Humphreys
231 Edwards Lane
Arnold
Nottingham

continued on page 2

New members contd.

R.A.Flamank
Flat 2 Arden Court
Church Road
Perry Barr
Birmingham

R. A. Parsons
9 Roseburgh Road
Sutton Coldfield
Warwickshire

Lapsed Members (gone, but not forgotten - can you 'chase' one?)

No record has been received of the following members having paid their 1977/8 subscription and their membership is deemed to have lapsed :

P.D.Bidmead	R.D.R.Corser	P. Gray	A.R.Lloyd
C.Robinson	M.Robinson	E. Rust	J.A.Ward
Mrs.N.Ward	G.Whitehouse	R.Trevor	

Membership now stands at 40. (Can we get the half
century next year ?)

FEBRUARY QUIZ

Remember the squiggly marks and Crowns - these come under the overall title of 'Instructional Stamps'. In use from 1800 to circa 1840 in the London area. (Mainly). They were used to amend and change an incorrect charge or cost of posting the letter. This squiggle was used applied over the incorrect charge and the Crown was applied to the cover as an authority to cancel the incorrect charge. The correct charge was applied in manuscript.

Once again first on the ball in supplying the 'correct' answer was Eric Lewis - who gets this month's 'small prize'.

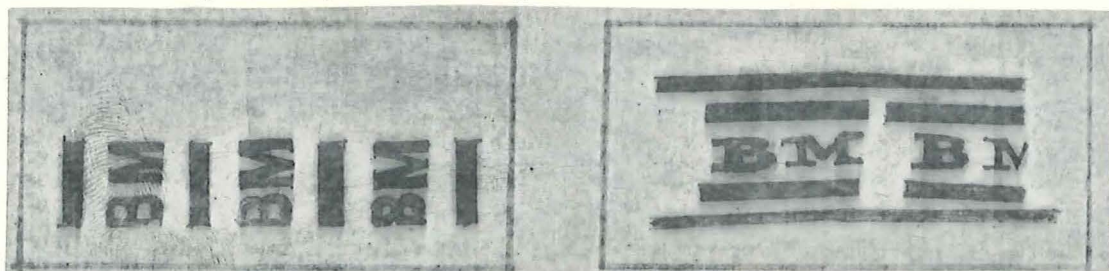
MARCH QUIZ



What do the above marks mean ? Who introduced them ?
When and why ? Answers to Editor.

BIRMINGHAM ROLLER CANCELLATIONS additional note by Eric Lewis

Further to the notes on Birmingham Roller cancellations in the No. 8 December 1977 issue of the Bulletin two 'unknown' different types have come to light - I found one and Ted Coles found the other. These are illustrated below. They were most probably used for parcel cancellation.



Two more Birmingham Roller cancellations

LOOKING IN LIBRARIES

by Bob Hunt

Tucked away in Nuneaton Public Library are two large copies of 'The Favourite Philatelic Album', bulging with facts, figures, postcards, press cuttings, entires etc. all connected with the postal history of Nuneaton and district, compiled by F.A.Lee.

Who is or was Mr. Lee? All I know is that if he is still alive he must be a very old man. He apparently lived in Ansley Road, Nuneaton and appears to have compiled the collection in the 1940's and 1950's, although the latest press cutting in one of the albums is dated 1961. In one of the volumes is a picture of Mr. Lee with his wife in 1924 - so if he is still alive he must be of great age. There is no clue in the volumes as to how or when the Library took possession of them.

Some of the material is not really relevant to a postal history collection - penny red and penny lilac variations, photographs of old Nuneaton etc. but that is far outweighed by material which is relevant. Press cuttings are most useful because some of them are not even in the Library's own files.

The collection includes a number of Nuneaton private meter marks, slogans etc. all of which have been cut from envelopes. This I suppose does not really matter too much - even if some of the items are nearly fifty years old - but what did concern me is that he cut up a number of envelopes bearing unpaid or underpaid and other markings together with cut postcards with local sub-office cancellations. Although this sort of material is regarded as less important by some collectors - it can be most difficult to obtain and is an important part of the continuing story of local postal history.

There is much of interest in the volumes, though no apparent great varieties and rarities. Oldest items being photocopies of 17th century letters sent to Arbury Hall (Nuneaton's local stately home).

One item was of much interest being a cover dated 4 December 1901 bearing a 1d lilac cancelled with a Nuneaton double ring CDS at 1.15 am on the 4th. It also bears a QV 1d green on the opposite end of the cover also cancelled 1.15 am (Late Fee). Between the two is a Nuneaton (Sorting Office?) thimble CDS for 2.30 am. The cover was addressed to Atherstone where it arrived the same day being backstamped at 4 am. (So much for our present first class post). Incidentally this is the only local Late Fee cover I have seen. Perhaps fellow members know of more ?

I am sorry to say that there appears to be a few items missing from the collection. Considering the trouble the Library staff took to keep the two volumes locked away - I can only assume that at some time in the past these items may have been removed by a collector.

Let us trust that nothing else disappears or the Librarian may feel reluctant to let postal historians and collectors see the work at all.

Why not telephone your local Librarian to see what he has got stored away ? List any 'finds' and let me have a note of them.

Editor.

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OFFICE NUMBERS

by Derek Smeathers.

In 1844, the post office introduced a system of identifying their main offices by numbers and handstamps using these numbers were brought into use to cancel adhesives on letters. In these days of computers, we all seem to be 'just numbers' and so collectors take these office numbers often without giving any attention to them - whereas they make a most interesting study, especially when it is remembered that they have been used on certain types of instructional stamps even up to today.

The original 1844 list was actually four lists, one each for London City, Scotland, Ireland and England/Wales, and is this last that these comments concern, with particular reference to the County of Northamptonshire.

The chief towns of the day received their numbers in the 1844 list, e.g. Kettering (414), Oundle (601), whilst some of the up-and-coming communities also had numbers allocated to them in this category we can include Weldon where the famous Northamptonshire building stone was quarried, and Weedon which had been transformed by the new railway in a busy junction.

Such places had become centres of activity and demanded postal services of their own control. There were also certain tiny places which had a number, not because of their size or importance, but because they happened to be in a suitable position to act as a mail distribution centre where there was no large town. Byfield thus became number 738 which incidentally was over twice the number of its inhabitants.

The list was revised from time to time, in 1856, 1858, 1874 and a major amendment in 1885 when many places in the U.K. had changes made. Rockingham, which was originally 652, changed to H.13 for example. In 1892, another revision saw numbers allocated to fresh places which had previously been only sub-offices. K.85 was given to Kings Sutton on the edge of the County, and Rushden which had hitherto been a sub-office to Higham Ferrers had now outgrown that town so much that it was given number L.03 thus achieving its independence ! Only five numbers with the prefix L were used.

Over the years, these numbers slowly faded out of cancellation marks but have continued in many instructional stamps and can often be seen to this day. However, many more changes have been made and it is a good exercise to check a few of these modern numbers against the original 1844 list. Many remain the same, for example Northampton is 570 and Wellingborough is 838, but Rushden mentioned above is today using 661 - a number that had changed three times before the turn of the Century, and seems to be a 'utility' number.

As a further complication, after the issue of a 'modern' list in 1924, some offices began using identity letters on their documents and I have seen some registration slips showing Northampton as NH in the 1920's, when it might have been expected that 570 would have been shown.

Now that we have post-code numbers to confuse us still more, is it not a good time to make a collection of these old office-numbers whilst the covers and cards are still to be had ? It might bring to light more changes that happened in your own area of interest, and that could be the plug to fill a hole in postal history a few years hence.

PHILATELIC TERMS

By Alan Spencer.

In the November issue of 'The Bulletin' was the commencement of a glossary of Postal History terms. Whilst this is an admirable project I feel that it is perpetrating a degree of confusion in the 'grey' area between Postal History and Stamp Collecting. Let us look at five terms which can mean similar things:-

- Adhesive - a label intended to be put on letters or postal packets to indicate that postage has been paid or is due.
- Stamps - by stamp collectors and the general public this term has the same meaning as adhesive. It is only amongst postal historians that it has another meaning i.e. a postal marking.
- Postmark - any mark applied to postal items in order to cancel the (stamps/adhesives) and/or record the date and origin of transit through the mail service.
- Cancellation - a postmark applied to the (stamp/adhesive) to indicate that it has been accepted as payment for delivery of the postal item.
- Obliteration - a mark specifically employed in defacing (stamps/adhesives).

It can easily be seen that there is a need for standardisation of terms amongst dealers, stamp collectors, postal historians, auctioneers and magazine publishers. Is it necessary to have so many terms? Surely we only require 'Stamp' (i.e. a label) and 'Postmark' to convey our meaning, the other terms being superfluous. Such an arrangement would eliminate the present confusion especially amongst newcomers to the hobby.

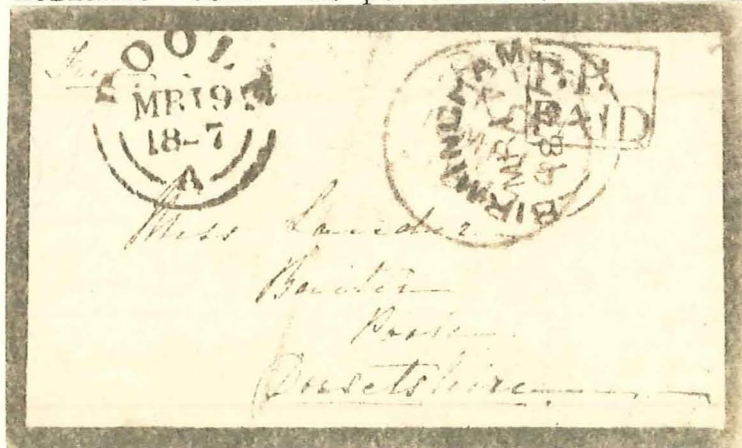
BIRMINGHAM ITEMS TO LOOK OUT FOR

No.4

By Eric Lewis

The postage on letters posted without adhesive stamps in the 1840's was normally indicated in manuscript. Occasionally a paid handstamp similar to the Birmingham Penny Post handstamps but of a different size and without a village numeral was used at Birmingham's main post office. This handstamp may only have been used when adhesive stamps were not available as it is very rarely seen.

The example illustrated below is on a mourning envelope dated 1847 and is one of the two that I have seen. This mark is mentioned in Alcock and Hollands' book "The postmarks of Great Britain and Ireland".



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CORRESPONDENCE

8, West Road, Spondon DERBY DE2 7LB. Feb.2nd 1978.

Dear Editor,

Many thanks for the recent arrival of the Bulletin No 9 and congratulations on another interesting issue.

First of all I must try and have a shot at the February Quiz and dealing with your posers from left to right, numbering same 1 to 4. My answers are:-

No's 1 and 2 were marks put on top of charge marks which were incorrect, such charge marks being altered to the correct charge. They were in use at Head Offices and were sometimes accompanied by No's. 3 and 4 which are Inspector's or Examiners' marks showing that such alteration to the charge mark was official. Originally the Crown marks were only in use at London, Dublin and Edinburgh.

Secondly I come to Mr. Chester's article on "Measuring Postal History Handstamps". Is there a mis-print here? I ask this because Mr. Chester states - to the right of his Coventry illustration - "taking the serif into account". I can only conclude that the word "not" has been omitted before the word "taking" since I am sure Mr. Chester will agree that in measuring seriffed handstamps, the serifs are ignored. What would R.M. Willcocks say to including the serifs !!?? I am not at all sure, either, that the base of the 9 in Coventry 91 should be included - I would measure to the base of the 1. I am not acquainted with the Shadowgraph, but I am dead against using an instrument which could cause distortion - we have enough problems with distortion of handstamps caused by bad application, or used on uneven surfaces, and we don't want another source of distortion.

How I agree with Alan Spencer's view that the contents of old letters are often just as interesting as the postmarks, etc. The contents are part of Postal History and Local History. HGRE is an example from a cover bearing the Overseal Penny Post handstamp plus an Ashby-de-la-Zouch cds of 06 27 1843 with a manuscript 1 in red. Addressed to Mr. M. Hawksworth at Ashby a Mr. Wm. Bradley writes from Netherseal on that day as follows:-

Sir,

I beg to make known to you that Botham has this day sold all he can move from the premises at Seal, the Bricks he has sold to Jos. Youmans - at Seal - and the Beams and other wood to Mr. Palmer - at Seal - and all the Garden Stuff and other things - and as left Seal - if you will make the Above restore the Bricks you will oblige - or you give me leave to take them - Tom Proudman knows what Palmer his. Botham as Give us all the slip and I think it hard to be laughed at by all the village.

I remain yours Respectfully,

Wm. Bradley.

I have a Kelly's directory of Leics. for 1876 and there is no mention of anyone named Hawksworth, but it would appear that he may well have been a solicitor.

Yours Sincerely,

Frank Peach.

BIRMINGHAM RUBBER DATE STAMPS

by Ted Coles

These datestamps are much scarcer than the 'skeleton' datestamps and appear, in the main, to have been used by the very small post offices. Those I have seen are listed below. I am sure there are many more and I would welcome additional information.

There are basically two types of datestamp: Type One containing only the name of the Post Office and Type Two with the branch office in a straight line below the Post Office name

<u>Post Office</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Colour</u>
Barston, Birmingham	17 May 29	Black
Curdworth, do.	24 Dec 17	Black
Fen End, do.	4 Aug 14	Black
Furnace End, do.	21 Dec 11	Black
Hollywood do.	17 Dec 13	Black
Lapworth do.	4 Mar 18	Black
Lapworth Steet/Hockley Heath Birmingham	? ??? 12	Black
Lowsonford do.	7 Aug 12	Black
Ward End do.	2 Sep 03	Violet
Woodgate do.	29 Jan 19	Black

DEAR SIR

by Alan Spencer

For 40 years following the defeat of the Jacobite forces at Culloden the Highlanders were forbidden to wear the kilt or bear arms, except in the service of the Hanoverians. The Highland Regiments were formed, cautiously at first, to meet the requirements of Britain's military expansion throughout the world.

In 1771 Kenneth Mackenzie was allowed to buy back his Grandfathers, the Earl of Seaforth's, estates which had been forfeited in 1745. King George III also restored his Earldom. In return Mackenzie in 1777 to raise a regiment of troops and in 1778 he enlisted 1130 men as the 78th of Seaforth Higglancers. Thus was created a fine regiment that has served in many gallant actions.

The following letter was sent from Fortrose on 12 March 1778 (it has a straight line FORTROSE postmark):

'In consequence of an embarkment of 500 men of Lord Seaforth Regt. which is to take place on 2 April you are desired to send to Headquarters every man you can possibly spare from recruiting service & without delay Direct your answers to the Commanding Officer of Ld. Seaforths Regt.

Fortrose

I am Sir

your most Obedt

& most humble servt.

Jas. Finney Adjnt.

Ld Seaforth's Regt'

The sequel to this letter is that the regiment MUTINIED at Leith prior to embarkation to India and was badly affected by the outward journey.

Circa 1978. Some of the descendants of these spirited men from Scotland are still 'mutinous'. SNP Ed.

Bulletin Issue

Next issue of Bulletin will be sometime in August giving details of next years programme and meetings. But during the intermediate time try your hand at an article or item of interest for publication in a future Bulletin. If not - introduce a new member

NOTICE OF AGM

Saturday 8th April

Commencing at 1-30 pm

held at our usual meeting place Midland Institute
Margaret Street, Birmingham (followed by Auction)

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM held 30th April 1977
3. Any matters arising
4. Officers Reports : Chairman
and Secretary
ELECTION/OFFICERS Treasurer
Bulletin Editor
5. Location of next Years' meetings
6. Any other business

CONGRATULATIONS are due to Stephen Stobbs and 'Ches' Chester for forthcoming honour to be paid them (for which they rightly deserve). Of which more anon.

INFORMATION SOUGHT

Our member G.Parker (29 Johnson Road, Bedworth) seeks some information regarding the earliest Warwickshire skeleton mark (30 mm). He has one dated 1896. Has anyone an earlier example ?
Information direct to Mr. Parker please.

SOCIETY 'COMPETITION'

Our thanks are particularly due to Eric Lewis for the skilled work he carried out in wood carving to produce a Society Plaque (designed by Jon Baker). This was presented to Alan Spencer on his exhibit being judged as the most suitable to be displayed representing the Society at next Midland Philatelic Federation Exhibition.

WANTS AD

Bill Mason (16 Larkfield, Eccleston, Nr. Chorley Mancs) wishes to purchase postmarks of, and postcard views of SUTTON COLDFIELD and surroundings. He is also interested in RAILWAY POSTCARDS - and is willing to exchange or purchase any that you may have tucked away.

FINAL REMINDER

If you cannot attend the AGM and Auction, send in a postal bid. 10% commission goes to Society Funds. (It may help in keeping your subs down next year**)
(Bulletin Editor, 13 Station Road, Hinckley, Leics)