

MIDLAND MAIL

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



President: Mr W.J. Calladine

Chairman:
Richard Farman

Treasurer:
Trevor Clewley

Secretary:
Elizabeth Lewis

NUMBER 69, MARCH 1991

When I first joined this Society, it was not uncommon to find a postcard/stamp fair being held on the day of a meeting, at a venue close to the city centre. During the last two or three years there has been nothing of this type. Yet one of the organisers continues to operate regularly in Northampton on a Saturday. Can anyone tell me why a large city like Birmingham cannot apparently support a Saturday fair in the city centre? I suppose that we most hope that the venture at the N.E.C. prospers.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND AUCTION

This will be held on 27th April at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham. The programme for the day is:

- 11.00 a.m. Committee Meeting;
- 12.00 p.m. Lunch break with auction viewing;
- 1.00 p.m. Annual General Meeting followed by auction viewing;
- 2.00 p.m. Annual auction.

CLOSURE OF POST OFFICE ARCHIVES

Post Office Archives will be closed to visitors from Monday 9th September until Monday 5th November. This is to enable the move to be made from Freeling House, on which the lease will expire, to new specially designed accommodation in a wing of Mount Pleasant Letters District Office in Phoenix Place, London E.C. 1.

ERRATUM

No doubt members will have noticed the errors in the third and fourth lines of the table of registration rates in the last issue, but to put the record straight the first part of the table should read:

1.1.1841 -	3.1848	1/-	1d
.3.1848 -	31. 7.1862	6d	1d
1.8.1862 -	31.12.1877	4d	1d
1.1.1878 -	2. 6.1918	2d	1d

THE LOCAL POST PROJECT

Copies of "Local Post Project" questionnaires (and accompanying sheet of illustrations) are being sent to all members with this issue of Midland Mail. As the notes on the back of the questionnaire explain, answers can also be submitted on plain paper. Please don't be tempted to put the questionnaire aside in the expectation that someone else will contribute information. Everyone's help is needed.

News of the project and a request for help from postal historians outside the Society has been sent to the editors of the major postal history and philatelic journals. If you also have friends with relevant material, please enlist their aid without delay. The basic research has gone well - we now need to know of all surviving letters.

J.W.C.

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

This meeting was the occasion of our annual competitions. This year the entrants talked about their entry in one section, whilst the judges worked on another section. This meant that those present saw the post-1840 material first, and the pre-1840 last. However to avoid confusion I will deal with the three competitions in chronological order.

In the pre-1840 competition Harold Wilson showed material from the "London Local Posts", including a 1720 mark of the Temple office, letters from the reorganised Penny Post of 1794, the Twopenny Post of 1801-39 as well as the 3d. rate of the country area. Mike Young's entry of "Worcestershire, 1700-1840" contained a 1713 "EVER/SHAM", a three line "STOW/ER:BR/IDGE and the "4" of Worcester. "Early Bishop Marks" was the theme of Alf Fieldhouse's entry which traced the development of these handstamps in the period 1695-1748. Elizabeth Lewis showed us the handstamps, issued in 1826, of the town receiving offices of the Birmingham Penny Post, including the small boxed 7 of Sandpits used in 1845.

David Hardwick began the post-1840 section with a look at the "Double Circles of Rugby Station", including those of Rugby Station Sorting Office. Included in Harold Wilson's entry of "Experimental Machine Cancellations" were examples of the Pearson Hill types, the first and second Rideout dies, and Azemar cancellations. Mike Young entered a selection of the various types of small UDCs, all from Worcestershire. "Mail from Ships leaving the Country" was Ted Coles' theme; for example we saw mail, from ships leaving London, posted at Dover, Ventnor and Portland. Eric Lewis entered nine sheets of "Birmingham Surcharge Handstamps". Some of these are shown elsewhere in this edition. Finally Chris Beaver produced a variety of "Postmark Errors".

There were two entries in the post-1938 competition. David Hardwick used bag labels to illustrate how the mail of Rugby was carried by the Up Special TPO. We can always rely upon Eric Lewis to come up with something new and fascinating. This time it was "Postal History from the Bus Shelter" which dealt with the Midland Red Parcels Service from 1970, as illustrated by a variety of parcel tickets. Both of these entries showed that it is possible to put together a good display of postal history without spending a small fortune.

The pre-1840 class was won by Mike Young's Postal History of Worcestershire, and the judges commented that only six points separated the entire entry. Mike set new records by also winning the post-1840 class. The modern class was won by David Hardwick by a single point from Eric Lewis. The overall winner was declared to be Mike's post-1840 entry - the small UDCs.

We are most grateful to Alan Cartwright and Bill Garnett of the Derby society for acting as the judges.

THE MARCH MEETING

Some nineteen members gathered on 9th March at Carrs Lane when our guests were John Sussex and Robert Seaman, respectively Chairman and Secretary of BPF, who had come to tell us of the work of that Federation.

John Sussex began the meeting by outlining the activities of the Federation, which he grouped under three main headings - Promotional, Educational and Organisational. Under the first of these much work is done, in promoting the hobby, in conjunction with other bodies such as the Post Office and the NPS. The funding of this is made by the Philatelic Trust and other bodies. The Home Affairs Committee is responsible for much of the educational work. It arranges meetings with Federations and large societies to look at ways of improving exhibits. On the organisational front the Federation is responsible for the competitive side of Stampex, and arranging British participation in international exhibitions. The former costs £30,000 to £35,000 to arrange, thus explaining the recent increase in fees.

The facilities at Charterhouse Street, London, the headquarters of the Federation as well as other philatelic bodies, were described by Robert Seaman who then went on to explain that the major part of the income from subscriptions was used to produce the various publications of the Federation.

The second part of the meeting consisted of displays by Mr Sussex and Mr Seaman. John began with "Mail to and from Madeira". The display consisted of a part of the correspondence of two wine merchants, beginning with a 1699 letter sent from Madeira to Lisbon via Cadiz. We then saw mail from Madeira which entered this country through a number of different ports. Amongst the marks were an example of one of the 1744 experimental "PAID" handstamps of London, "WITHDRAWN SHIP LETTER" marks of London and Falmouth, and a variety of Ship Letter handstamps. The next two sections consisted of mail to Madeira from a number of towns in this country, and of letters sent from the West Indies to Madeira via a variety of ports in this country. Finally we were shown letters from Madeira to Le Havre sent via a number of ports including Southampton, Deal, Plymouth and Falmouth as well as London.

Mr Seaman showed Essex postal history, concentrating on the road to Harwich. We were shown examples of the handstamps used at each of the post towns on the route. From Romford there were a Missent mark and a number of penny post items; a "horseshoe" from Ingatestone; Colchester was represented by marks applied in a variety of colours. An unusual boxed "Penny Post" without the name of the town, which was used at Rochford, caught the eye of more than one member. The final item was a letter of 1591 sent from Harwich to London.

CORRESPONDENCE

Peter Sharp has written:

Re Peter Thompson's Enquiry in Midland Mail 68/12 for information about a Paid Liverpool mark, there is a reference in Alcock & Holland, 1960 edition, pages 236/7 as follows:-

A number of steamers of the Allan Line began to sail between Liverpool and Canada in 1853. The office numbers B.17, B.18, and B27-30 were allotted to certain of these mail packets in 1859.

Single circle stamps soon came into use at Liverpool and became the standard type there. Later specimens are slightly larger in size. They occur in red with Paid above Liverpool.

Mr de Rousset-Hall has written:-

Re your mail train - the general policy is to send short distance mail by road, and one effect of this is that all "local" mail in the South East is roadborne and mail loading facilities at London Bridge and Waterloo abandoned. However what was the NWTPO now starts from Dover, and earlier in the day there is a Tonbridge-Manchester van train chiefly for second class postings.

On the same matter Harold Wilson has written:-

I have contacted Derby P.O. mails section regarding the transfer of mail from rail to road. They inform me that this only occurs at weekends as there is less road traffic about and it avoids delays due to railway engineering work.



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INFORMATION WANTED

Alan Ward has written about the list of registration rates in the last issue. He has in his Evesham collection three of the Notices of Objection to the inclusion of an entry in the list of electors.

All have a 3d. stamp, and were cancelled 24AU75, 25AU79 and 25AU80. That of 1879 was registered but the other two were not. The list of rates confirms that 3d. was the appropriate rate for a registered letter in 1879 and 1880, but not in 1875. Can anyone say if there was a special arrangement for this sort of official mail? Alan also comments that a date stamp was applied on the inside of these forms and asks if anyone can say why that was done.

Registered

To Mr. William Green

To Mr. John Byrd



To Mr. John Byrd
Badeley

I hereby give you Notice, that I object to your Name being retained on the List of Persons entitled to Vote in the Election of ~~a~~ Members for the Borough of Evesham

Dated this Twenty ^{fourth} ~~first~~ day of August, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy-^{five}

(Signed) Benjamin Ward

Of 72 Post Street Bengeworth, on the List of Persons entitled to Vote in the Election of ~~a~~ Members for the Borough of Evesham, in respect of Property occupied within the Parish or Township of Bengeworth

1659 SALARIES

In his excellent article "The Start of the Derby Road" (MM62/8), Harold Wilson referred to a set of Post Office accounts in the Bodleian Library (Rawlinson MS A. 64 f2371). Since there are members who do not have Dr Stone's book on the Inland Posts and they pre-date the accounts in P.O. Archives, I am reproducing here those parts which may interest members - the whole of the Chester Road and parts of the Bristol and Northern Roads.

Salaries Allowed severall Postmasters on the Northern Road for a year beginning y^e 25th of March & ending y^e 23th of June 1659 vs^t

Christopher Hall at Barbican	4 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ day	£ 19
Jane Haughton at Waltham	4 0	£ 21
Henry Peach at Ware	4 0	£ 21
John Wilson at Rayston	4 0	£ 21
John Wilson for Cambridge	0 0	£ 14
John Martin for Caxton	4 0	£ 10
James Bayly for Huntington	4 0	£ 10
William Patrick for Stilton	4 0	£ 10
John Millnor for Wisbich	0 0	£ 10
William Collins for Stamford	4 2	£ 19
Widdo Winberley for Southwitham	4 0	£ 10
John Sympton of Grantham	4 2	£ 19
Richard Coppindale of Newark	4 2	£ 19
Abraham Cornish of Nottingham	0 0 - 30 th of ann	£ 7
Thomas Man of Cuxford	4 2	£ 19
Henry Withers of Scroby	4 0	£ 10

Salaries Allowed severall Postmasters on Bristol Road for a year beginning y^e 25th of March & ending y^e 23th of June 1659

Richard Howard at Charing Crofs	2 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ day	£ 11
Edward Beckford at Hounston	4 0	£ 10
Robert Bennett at Maidenhead	4 0	£ 10
Thomas Coats at Reading	4 0	£ 10
Daniel Eyre of Oxford	6 0 & 20 th of ann	£ 35
Humphry Cantrell of Newbury	4 0	£ 10
Onesiphorus Tap of Malbrou	4 0 for Bristol Road & 4 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ for Glosbr Road	£ 30
Samuill Allin of Cirencister	3 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	£ 17
John Donne of Gloster	7 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	£ 37
Widdow Derin of Munm ^o	3 9 $\frac{1}{2}$	£ 17

Salaries Allowed severall Postmasters on Chester Road for
a year beginning 25th of March & ending y^e 23th of June 1659.

Christopher Charteris in Smithfield	4. 0. 8. p ^{er} Day	£. 10
Walter Yorke of Barnet	4. 0.	£. 10
Sarah Sympton of St Albons	4. 0.	£. 10
Robert Hoxon of Dunstable	4. 0.	£. 10
John Yonger of Brickell	4. 0.	£. 10
Danill Eyre of Banbury for the Branch		£. 5
Widdow Farmer of Toftor	4. 0.	£. 10
Widdow Yonger of Darbury	4. 0.	£. 10
Richard Terry of Coventry	4. 6.	£. 20
more for the Branch	0. 0.	£. 6
Robert King of Coleshill	5. 0.	£. 22
Robert Girdler of Birmingham	0. 24 ^h 12 ^h p ^{er} ann.	£. 93
1/2 of all Letters sent vp		
Francis Lyndon of Leichfield	4. 4. for y ^e Road	£. 59
& 160 ^h p ^{er} ann. for y ^e Branch to Darby &c		£. 20
Thomas Challenor of Stone	4. 6. for y ^e Road	£. 20
Thomas Challenor of Stone for the Road to Manchester		£. 20
90 ^h p ^{er} ann. for distributing Letters at Holms Chappell	25 ^h p ^{er} ann.	£. 31
Alexander Green of Manchester	0. 0. 90 ^h p ^{er} ann. & 35 ^h p ^{er} ann.	£. 15
William Booth of Warrington	0. 0. 60 ^h p ^{er} ann.	£. 15
John March of Profton	0. 0. 60 ^h p ^{er} ann.	£. 22
George Gleaus of Nampthwich	5. 0.	£. 20
George Barker of Chester	4. 6. for y ^e Road &	£. 20
30 ^h p ^{er} ann. for his office		
Richard Worrall of Northop	3. 4.	£. 15
Andrew Mills of St Asap	3. 4.	£. 15
Richard Spencer of Conway	3. 4.	£. 12
William Mathewes of Burmors	2. 0.	£. 00
Thomas Swift of Holyhead	4. 6. for y ^e Road	
240 ^h p ^{er} ann. for two Boats for Ireland		

Carryed over to folio 4

£. 535. 4

MORE LOCAL POST MATTERS

Collectors of material from the area of the border between Leicestershire and Warwickshire have known for some time of the covers sent in the period 1810-14 to Edward Mammatt at Measham, which show an extra charge of 1d. The usual explanation is that this charge was levied by the postmaster at Atherstone. However there are two other possibilities that I feel should be examined: that there was an unofficial "delivery house" at Measham where the person made a charge for delivery; that the extra charge was made by the postmaster at Ashby, though I think this is unlikely.

Measham was on the route of the Atherstone to Ashby-de-la-Zouch post which was introduced in 1794. At the time it was included in the delivery of Ashby. However a report of 1801 implies that bags were made up at Atherstone for the villages on the route, though letters could only be posted at the two post towns. If such bags were made up then surely they would have been left with a villager at each place, as it seems unlikely that the rider would have called at each of the major houses near his route. If the extra fee was levied by the postmaster at Atherstone then it should also be found on letters to other villages on the route. The ones that are most likely to have survived are those sent to Gopsal Hall near Twycross. Unfortunately those that I have seen come from a later period, so I would be pleased to hear from any members with letters sent between 1794 and 1815 to places such as Sheepy, Temple or Twycross, even if they do not show an extra charge.

James Grimwood-Taylor has kindly allowed me to reproduce a copy of a letter sent in 1798 from Nottingham to Stretton-en-le-Fields which is a little over a mile from Measham. This also shows an extra fee of 1d. Also the "d" is written in a similar style to that on the other covers so all three could have been written by the same person. In fact I cannot recollect seeing the abbreviation for the pence on any other letters. At a first glance it seems that the letter was delivered from Ashby, but it would have been sent through Atherstone (note the 6d. rate for from 60 to 100 miles though Ashby is only 20 miles from Nottingham) so it is possible that the 1d. was added either there or at Measham.

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NEW MARKET

62

Go/

B

E. Mammatt Esq^r

Measham

Near Atherston
Leicesterhire

H

Edmond Mammatt Esq^r

Measham

Atherston

3

W. J. Hall

Mr Eglington

Stretton-en-Arld

near

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

3

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE RURAL POST MESSENGER

I came across this document, which is reproduced by permission of P.O. Archives, in the papers dealing with Sunday deliveries which I used in a previous issue. It appears to date from 1863.

INSTRUCTIONS to the Postmaster of relative to the RURAL POST to

1. The undermentioned Allowances for this Post, will commence on and from the annexed dates.

Date of
Commencement.

Messenger's Wages

per Week, or £

per Annum...

Salary of Sub-Postmaster at *

Do. Do. at *

Do. Do. at *

* For special duties to be performed by the Sub-Postmasters, see Memorandum on the back of the Form.

The following Persons are appointed to the Situations:—

Foot Messenger

Sub-Postmaster at

Sub-Postmaster at

Sub-Postmaster at

2. The Messenger's delivery must commence where the Letter Carrier ends. He must deliver letters at every house within 70 yards of his walk, described below, and at every house in the villages through which he passes, whether within 70 yards or not, unless otherwise ordered by the Surveyor.

3. Single houses, out of a village, at a greater distance than 70 yards from the prescribed route, are to be considered beyond the Messenger's delivery, unless specially included.

4. The following is the route to be taken by the Messenger on the outward and inward journey; the hours stated are those at which he is due at the principal points on each journey:—

<i>Outwards.</i>		Hours.	Minutes after.	<i>Inwards.</i>		Hours.	Minutes after.
Leave	at			Leave	at		
Arrive at	at			"	"		
"	"			"	"		
"	"			"	"		
"	"			"	"		
"	"			"	"		
"	"			"	"		
"	"			"	"		
"	"			Arrive at	"		
				<i>On Sundays.</i>			
"	"			Leave	at		
"	"			"	"		
"	"			"	"		
"	"			Arrive at	"		

5. The hour of his arrival at the end of the walk and the hour he leaves on his return journey must be entered by the Messenger on the Letter Bill, independently of any entry to be made by a Sub-Postmaster.
6. Letters for houses beyond his delivery must be left at one of the Sub-Offices, or at any house on his walk, where he may be directed to leave them by the persons to whom they are addressed.
7. He is not allowed to deliver an unpaid letter until it has passed through the Head Office, nor must he deliver a stamped letter handed to him for a place on his walk until the stamp has been defaced at a Sub-Office.
8. He must not, on pain of dismissal, make any charge as his own perquisite upon the delivery or collection of any letter whatever, whether on his regular route or beyond it.
9. The Postmaster will give him full instructions as to the delivery of Letters, especially those that are Registered, and he will call the Messenger's attention to those Rules in the Book of Instructions, a knowledge of which is essential to the proper performance of his duties.
10. He must blow a horn or a loud whistle, to let the Public know of his coming, especially on his Inward walk.
11. He is required to sell stamps along his route, and to purchase from the Postmaster each morning a sufficient number of stamps to meet all demands. He will pay for these stamps before he starts, and the Postmaster will allow him the full commission of one per cent.
12. On his Inward walk, the Messenger must call at each Sub-Office for the letters which may have been posted there, and he is also required to receive, on his road, all letters which may be handed to him for the Post, whether paid in money, unpaid, or stamped. If persons should object to purchase stamps from the Messenger and affix them to their letters, the Messenger can take the letters with the postage in money, and must affix stamps to the proper amount, when he gets to the end of his walk. He cannot be required to register any letter handed to him for dispatch.
13. If there be a Wall Box or Pillar Box on his route which he is required to clear (special instruction being given in each case by the Postmaster), he must be very careful not to clear it before the proper hour, as painted on the Box. It is his duty to see that the Box is in proper repair, and to inform the Postmaster if such should not be the case.
14. The letters which he takes out loose must be counted and their numbers entered in the Bill by the Dispatching Officer. On the inward journey those collected at Sub-Offices, not having sealed Bags, will be counted and the numbers entered by the Sub-Postmaster in the proper space on the Messenger's Bill; and the Messenger must himself count those which he takes from Wall Boxes or receives loose from the Public, and properly enter the numbers on the Bill. The Postmaster will sign the Bill when he has satisfied himself that the entries are correctly made.
15. He is strictly forbidden to carry or deliver any circulars or letters of any description which have not been regularly posted, or to assist in any way in the carriage or distribution of any newspaper that is not passing through the Post; and he must take care that he does not attempt to evade this Rule by carrying such letters or newspapers as parcels.

16. It will be the Messenger's duty to convey any Private Letter Bag, duly authorized, to be left at any place on his route, and he will be entitled to the customary Fee of 10s. 6d. a year for its conveyance.

17. He must not employ another person to perform any part of his Duty. He may, however, obtain occasional leave of absence from the Postmaster, and he will then be required to provide a proper Substitute. When the Messenger absents himself on plea of illness, the Postmaster should satisfy himself that he is unable to work. In all such cases, the Substitute is to receive the full wages of the Messenger. The Substitute must, of course, make the Official Declaration, and whenever a Substitute is employed, the circumstance must be noted specially on the Letter Bill.

18. In the event of any misconduct on the part of the Messenger, if a Postmaster finds that he disregards his admonitions, he will not fail to report the circumstances of the case to the Surveyor, and if the Messenger should arrive at the Head Office in a state of intoxication, so as to incapacitate him from a proper discharge of his duty, or otherwise so seriously misbehave himself as to make his suspension necessary, the Postmaster will suspend him, and report him immediately.

19. The Messenger must be made thoroughly to understand the regulations herein laid down; and when he has carefully read them he must sign the acknowledgment below.

20. The Postmaster will preserve this Form, and shew it to the Messenger whenever he requires to see it for his guidance.

Surveyor, General Post Office,

the _____ of _____ 18

I have read these Instructions and understand them. I am aware that I am not allowed to employ any person to do any portion of my duty, nor to absent myself from duty without permission from the Postmaster; that I am not to deviate from the route laid down for me; that I am not to deliver letters beyond the Official boundary pointed out to me; and that I am liable to be dismissed if I make any charge whatever on the delivery of any letter for my own perquisite, or if I carry or deliver any Letter, Circular, or Newspaper, that has not been duly posted.

Signature of Messenger.

TWO BIRMINGHAM ITEMS

My thanks are due to Eric Lewis for sending copies of two items from his competition entry on "Instructional Marks of Birmingham". The first shows form P.1120H and the accompanying letter. This form was attached to letters by postmen when they were unable to collect the postage due. In this case the instruction at the bottom of the label does not seem to have been carried out.

The second shows the distinctive '2' used at Birmingham for a short time in 1845. Though the letter was marked 'Paid' no adhesive was applied. Did the office boy pocket the penny rather than buy a stamp when sent to post this letter?

No. <u>83</u>		P.1120H	
Postage due on	Letters		
or other Postal	Packets sent		
34	5		
Please send the amount due with this paper by first post.		Mr Cook Barclays Bank Treasury Dept. Goldsmere Row, HAM. Birmingham.	

2

Mrs. Jackson Esq
 Solicitor
 Lichfield

Paid

CANCELLING AT SUB-OFFICES

Some time ago I was asked when sub-offices began to cancel stamps on letters etc. I had to admit that I did not know, but thought it was about 1907. The actual answer is that it depends on the status of the sub-office. The following extract is taken from the Post Office Circular of 4th December 1906. Note that it only applies to Branch Offices and Country Money Order Sub-Offices.

Obliteration of Postage Stamps on Correspondence.

At Branch Offices and at Country Money Order Sub-Offices at which letters for despatch are stamped on the back, the postage stamps on all letters, post-cards, halfpenny packets and newspapers for despatch should, from the present time until the end of February next, be obliterated with the ordinary metal date stamp. No other date stamp impression will be required either at the Sub-Office or at the Head Office.

Postmasters should issue the necessary instructions to their Sub-Postmasters, and should see that the work is properly performed. The arrangement may also be extended to parcels in the case of any Office at which the number of parcels posted is so large as to render the relief afforded at the Head Office appreciable.

If the Postmaster is in doubt whether the duty can safely be entrusted to any particular Office he should consult the Surveyor before issuing the necessary instructions.

Extensions of this trial were announced in the Circular in October 1907 and December 1908. Then in the edition for 20th June 1911 it was announced that this arrangement was to be made permanent as it had worked satisfactorily not only at Country Sub-Offices but also at many Town Sub-Offices where it had been introduced in respect of parcels. The instruction went on to say that as Non-Money Order Sub-Offices were being supplied with an indelible black fluid suitable for obliterating postage stamps with the rubber climax dater there was no reason for restricting the practice to Money Order Offices. So all sub-postmasters were to obliterate before dispatch any stamps on mail whether handed over the counter or taken out of a letter box. However if a Head Postmaster felt that nothing was to be gained by requiring Town Sub-Postmasters to cancel stamps on packets other than parcels then that course of action was to be taken.

The two postcards opposite show the change taking place at Claybrooke in 1906-7. However in my collection there are at least ten covers sent before 1906 where the stamp was cancelled at a village sub-office, of these Billesdon appears to have "jumped the gun" by at least eight years. I wonder why.

G.B. POSTAL HISTORY

ALSO: Some Foreign, Ephemera, Post Boxes - etc.

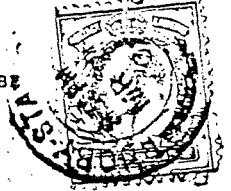
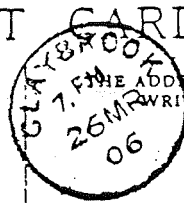
Wants Lists - for specific items or for general
interests - will receive my personal attention

JIM HAMMOND

5 Staverton Rd, Daventry
Northants. NN11 4HL.
Tel. Daventry (0327) 71842

POST CARD.

For Inland Postage ONLY, this space may now
be used for Communication



Dear Sir,

J. S. A. BECKETT, Claybrook.

Send is improving
well, I have not re-
ceived my letter yet
hope you have not for-
gotten it, had a letter
from Aunt M. J. this
morning. She is coming
next week, little going
home in 10 days. Love to all
none sick & are well.

Mrs G. H. Dean

Arthurworth

Tilmarsh

Northants

Claybrooke
Saturday
Aug 1904

POST CARD.

Writing space for inland use only.

THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE
WRITTEN HERE.

Dear Lottie -
he shall be very
pleased if you will
come on Thursday
next & stay over
Sunday - you could
send your baggage
by Boyes - Excuse any
in great haste for Post.
Hope your dear brother
Lottie love Auntie Gal.

Miss Lottie Bailey
Church Street
Lutterworth.



Mr. J. H. Shakespear,
79. High Street
Leicester

MAILCOACH ACCIDENT AT GREAT GLEN

What follows is taken from the Leicester Chronicle of 3 March 1827 I have reproduced this more or less verbatim for the detailed account gives a fascinating picture not only of the operation of mailcoaches but also the conduct of an inquiry.

"MAIL COACH ACCIDENT.- A most shocking catastrophe, the consequence of the extremely quick mode of travelling adopted by the mails at the present time, took place at Great Glenn on Sunday night last. We allude to the melancholy death of a highly respectable solicitor of Manchester named G.F. Bury, who, in the vigour and prime of life was cut off from his family and connexions, by being upset in the Manchester mail, while pursuing his journey to London, on some professional business which was due to come before the House of Lords this week. It seems that in order to maintain the great speed required by the General Post-office, high mettled horses are sought for and obtained at almost any price. One of this description (we understand, lately the property of a gentleman of the Melton Hunt), was among the number which drew the mail, on Sunday night. On the preceding evening, this animal, on arriving within a short distance of the Oadby toll-gate, suddenly turned off the road, and, had it not been for the activity of the guard, would most likely have upset the coach. Fortunately, however, this was prevented, but the mail experienced some interruption. It is somewhat singular, that on reaching nearly the same place, the following night, another of the horses set off at full speed, and inducing the others to follow its example, defied the utmost efforts of the coachman to arrest its progress, till, on coming to the sharp turn of the road, in front of Mr. George Cooper's house, at Glenn, the coach was upset. There were four inside, but no outside passengers, at the time of the overthrow, two of whom escaped with trifling injury. The other passenger, Mr. Andrew Castles Howden, a Writer to the Signet, at Edinburgh, was not so fortunate. Sitting in front of Mr. Bury, he fell upon him, and received so much injury, that he was not able to quit his bed from Sunday night till Wednesday, when, it was hoped, he would resume his journey by easy stages. The coachman (Mellish) was still more seriously hurt, but he is considered out of danger, and is doing very well. The coroner went to Glenn, on Monday, to enquire into the melancholy affair, but Mr. Howden and the coachman being too unwell to give their evidence he deferred the inquest till Wednesday last.

Accordingly, about eleven o'clock. Mr. Meredith arrived at the Greyhound inn at Glenn, where a very respectable jury was sworn, who proceeded to take a view of the unfortunate deceased. The corpse appeared to be that of a man about thirty-two years of age, of a healthy and rather robust habit of body, and five feet eight or nine inches in height.

On returning to the jury room, George Jones, who was guard to the mail, on the night in question, was sworn and examined. He deposed that, after setting out from the Three Crowns yard, Leicester, the horses proceeded at a steady, regular pace; but soon after passing the toll-gate, a little beyond Oadby, where he bade the keeper good night, he perceived the mail was going quicker than usual, and hearing the coachman say something, which he suspected related to the horses having set off, he attempted to get over the roof of the coach, to render him some assistance, but was not able to do so. He then got down behind the mail for the purpose of running to the heads of the leaders, but, fearful that his lameness, from a previous hurt, would prevent him running as fast as usual, he resumed his seat. Soon after, for they were travelling at a tremendous rate, the near hind wheel ran up a stone,

near Mr. George Cooper's garden wall, when he was pitched on the ground and remained in a state of stupor till he heard the coachman ask for him, when he got up, and went to look after his passengers, three of whom had, by this time, been got out of the coach, and the fourth was lying under it. The coach, after striking the stone, appeared to him to have run for several yards on the two off wheels, before it fell among the rails on the right hand side of the road, in front of Mr. Cooper's house. The coach box and the top of the mail were broken to pieces. The latter was quite separated from the mail. The coach being raised, Mr. Bury was dragged from beneath it, and conveyed on a chair into Mr. Cooper's house, where, he understood, he died a few minutes afterwards. He had been guard of that mail for 18 years; but had never travelled with the same coachman before, as he had been off the road all week from illness, during which period, he understood, Mellish had driven the mail. He had however, gone with the same horses before, two of which had ran the same stage for 18 months, and the others for about six or eight weeks only. As the coachman was a stranger to the road, he had pointed out to him where the hills lay, and also, the different turns of the road. This was before they had reached Oadby gate. Before then he had driven rather too slow, and he had told him to push on the horses. He thought he had become alarmed; but he considered him quite capable of driving the horses. From what he had seen of them he thought any regular coachman might drive them with security.... The former coachman (Fisher) had never had any difficulty in driving them.

The Coroner here stated, that in consequence of the delicate state of health of Mr. Howden, who was upstairs, he would suggest that only the foreman should go with him to take his disposition. After about twenty minutes he returned, and read the deposition of Mr. Howden: That soon after the mail quitted Leicester, the deceased who was then riding with his back to the horses, requested him to change places with him, which he did; that the deceased did not like the restive appearance of the horses; that the coach went very steadily till they got past the Oadby toll-gate, when he (Mr. Howden) put out his hand to unfasten the door, with a view of jumping out of the mail; that the deceased caught his hand, and implored him not to do so; that he had no conversation with either of the other passengers, who appeared to be asleep; and that, shortly after, the coach went over, and he became insensible.

The Coroner next repaired to the room where the coachman lay, inviting the jury to accompany him, and observing that the same delicacy was not necessary towards him as to Mr. Howden, as the injuries he had received, were chiefly upon his chest, and not in the head, as in the case of Mr. Howden.

Joseph Mellish, being sworn, deposed that he was 27 years of age, and had been a coachman seven years. He had driven the Hamersham, Buckinghamshire coach, the Independent Magnet Coach from London to Bristol; & the Reading coach, of which he was a part proprietor. He came to drive the Manchester mail on Wednesday, since which period he had driven it four or five times. Mr. Bishop had previously let him drive the Leicester Union, in order that he might see the road. He was engaged to drive the mail from Market Harborough to Kegworth. On Sunday evening, he left the Crowns yard at Leicester, to drive to Harborough. Asking if all was right, and hearing someone reply "yes", he drove out of the yard, but finding some of the passengers were left behind, he stopped after going a few yards, took them up, and proceeded on his journey very steadily till they got through Oadby toll-gate, (where the guard blew his horn) when, on rising the hill, the horses broke into a gallop and went up the hill at that pace. He endeavoured to stop them,

and partly succeeded in doing so, especially three of them, when he broke the reins of his leaders, and they set off again in a gallop. He then kept the wheel horses back as much as possible, but they went on at a great pace till they arrived at the dangerous turn near Mr George Cooper's house, when not being able to keep the horses on the off-side of the road, the proper way in turning a corner, the coach struck the causeway, and swung over, at a rapid rate, upon the rails in front of Mr. Cooper's house, upon which he was thrown, and lost his recollection for a short time. If the reins had not given way, this would not have happened, as he had got the horses steady except one, before they broke. If capable, that moment, he should not have the least hesitation in mounting the box, and driving them. The night before one of the horses (a wheeler) had shyed near the same place, owing to the horsekeeper having neglected to put on the bluff, but it afterwards went very steadily. Before he began to drive the mail, Mr. Bishop showed him the horses, and said, if there were any among them which he did not like, he would replace them by others; but he did not consider them unsafe; if he had, was it likely he should have ventured his life with them?

Mr. John Marriott, surgeon, of Kibworth was next examined. He deposed that having received a very pressing request by Mr. Cooper, to attend the deceased, he rode over to Glenn as fast as possible, but found that the deceased had breathed his last some minutes before he saw him. On examining his head, he found a few slight bruises, not serious; but the bowels bore marks of great pressure, and there was a contusion on the viscera, which had terminated in his death. Mr. Howden had received a violent blow on the head, but there was no danger to be apprehended from it. The coachman was the most injured of the two, but by being bled copiously, inflammation had been subdued, and he was then going on quite favourably."

The remaining witnesses, the toll-gate keeper and the contractor, Mr. Bishop, added very little to the story. A vet valued the horses at about £40. The report then went on:

"The Coroner ... observed to the jury there could be but one opinion as to how the deceased had come by his death, namely by an accident. The Coroner then pointed out the nature of deodands, which in cases like the one before them, were passed on the proprietors of horses or coaches, which had led to the death of individuals. If they were of the opinion that so much care had not been observed by the coachman as was requisite, they would then mark their sense of the occurrence, by such a fine as met the case. If they thought every possible care to avoid the event which had taken place, had been observed, and that nothing criminal was attributable to anyone, they would perhaps think a mere nominal fine of one shilling would be all that was necessary; and on this point, he would direct their attention to what the guard had said of the coachman whom he had described as going too slow than otherwise in descending the hill, just before the horses became unmanageable. ... If the post-office, or the government, would insist upon coach contractors running the mail at the rate of 10 or 11 miles an hour, they ought to give some security to the public...

The Coroner then left the jury to consider their verdict. After half an hour's consultation, one of their number said, 'We return that the deceased was killed by the overturning of the coach; and order a deodand of £5 to be laid on the coach, as it fell on the man.' Some of the jurors, afterwards, however not seeming to agree as to the way in which the deodand should be levied, another consultation took place,

and it was finally recorded, that one pound should be imposed on the coach and one pound on each of the horses.'

Two weeks later the same paper reported a further accident though the cause was different.

"The London and Manchester mail was again upset on Wednesday evening last, at Hathern Turn, a short distance from Loughborough, on its way to the Metropolis; there were two or three passengers inside, and a female outside, all of whom happily escaped without experiencing any material injury. The accident is said to have occurred in endeavouring to pass by the Regulator coach, and the coachman not having sufficient room for the mail to pass, caused it to go too near the side of the road, when it lost its equilibrium. Very little delay was occasioned by the accident, and the passengers proceeded with the mail, which had only one of its lamps broken; no culpability whatever is attached to the coachman."

