



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



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Number 31, September 1983

Prelude

With space at a premium this month, there is no scope for the editor to spread his wings. Comments, like wings, must be clipped.

A new season inevitably brings hope of good times ahead. We shall do well to improve our promising attendance figures of last season but a belated attempt at a little wider publicity may yet bring us new members. The response to the address verification exercise in the last Bulletin was exemplary: a map on the back page of this issue shows where most of the members live. It necessarily excludes our far-flung outposts in Scotland, Saudi Arabia and New Zealand but the 'country members' are represented in this Bulletin by David Hardwick's fine contribution. Our two member/advertisers have supported us yet again. Perhaps we, in return, might consider our advertisers first when looking for new material.

Full details of the new season's programme follow. Obviously, the Society would hope to see you at some of its meetings but, if you work in the black economy on a Saturday afternoon, even a short item for the Bulletin will warm a poor editor's heart. Please write to:

John Calladine, Dunley House, Cranham. Gloucester GL4 8HQ

The New Season

The first meeting of the 1983/84 season will be on Saturday 10th September at Dr Johnson House, Bull Street, Birmingham, starting at 2.00pm. Committee members are asked to attend a Committee Meeting at 1.00pm.

For the first meeting, members are asked to bring up to nine pages of 'Missent' and 'Too Late' marks. The idea of a unified theme for the displays has worked well on a previous occasion but, if you have no suitable items in your collection, you are unlikely to be thrown out for bringing something else.

The second meeting will be on Saturday 1st October also at 2.00pm. However, this meeting will be held at the Birmingham Midland Institute to coincide with the Birmingham Philatelic Society's annual fair. Our former editor, Jon Baker has ~~been~~ ~~exceeded~~ volunteered to show us something of his (probably vast) collection which has remained hidden under a bushel for far too long. Jon is well known for his illustrated envelopes caricaturing the introduction of second class postage and we hope he can be persuaded to include these and illustrated envelopes of earlier vintage. Certainly there is likely to be something for everyone. Please note the date as there will not be another Bulletin before the second meeting.

The Rest of the Season's Programme

Full details of each meeting will be given in the Bulletin immediately preceding it but the programme is :

10th December (a change of date)	The annual visit to the Bass Museum at Burton on Trent. Richard is again refusing to divulge the name of the speaker until nearer the date. Free beer
7th January	A display by two of our members.
4th February	Our Annual Competition.
3rd March	A display by Michael Champness.
7th April	Annual General Meeting and Society Auction.

Issues of the Bulletin are planned for 10th November, 3rd January 1984, 21st February and 24th April.

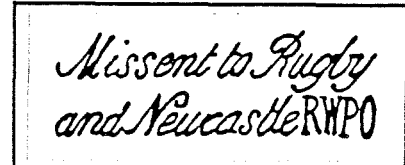
Volume 3 of the County Catalogue

Volume 3 of the British County Catalogue of Postal History has now appeared. Unlike previous volumes, this one is limited to the marks of one city - London, of course. It is the first time that all the known stamps have been listed for the 600 or so offices with early and late dates and in 14 to 18 types each - a possible 10,000 stamps and 20,000 dates in the tabulated section alone ! The new volume, for which Barrie Jay is given all the credit, has 200 pages and is available from Vale Stamps, 21 Tranquil Vale, Blackheath, London SE3 0BU at a cost of £15 + £1 p+p. The publishers make the point that it is, in fact, cheaper per page than Volume 2.

THE RAILWAY POSTMARKS OF RUGBY
AND ITS STATIONS - Part One.

by David Hardwick

The line of rail connecting London with Manchester and Liverpool was completed through Rugby on 17th September 1838 and, from this date on, most mail to and from the town has been carried by train. From early 1838, Post Office clerks began to travel on the railway for the purpose of sorting letters en route. In May 1845 this service was established between Rugby and Newcastle via Leicester, Derby and York and led to the first postmark connecting Rugby to the railways. This is a 'missent' mark (Fig 1) of which two copies were issued, according to Post Office Archives to "Rugby line of Railway to Mail Coach Office" on 26 June 1845. My own copy is of April 1849 and I have seen another of June 1849. I am sure that many other examples exist and would welcome further information on them.

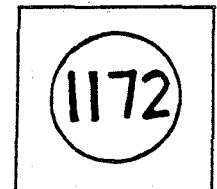


1.



The first postmark of Rugby to incorporate the word 'Station' was, I believe, that issued on 1st February 1870 (Fig 2). However, the purpose of this stamp was probably connected with the telegraph office since it was in January 1870 that the telegraph cable was completed between the station and the post office and this would signify the first

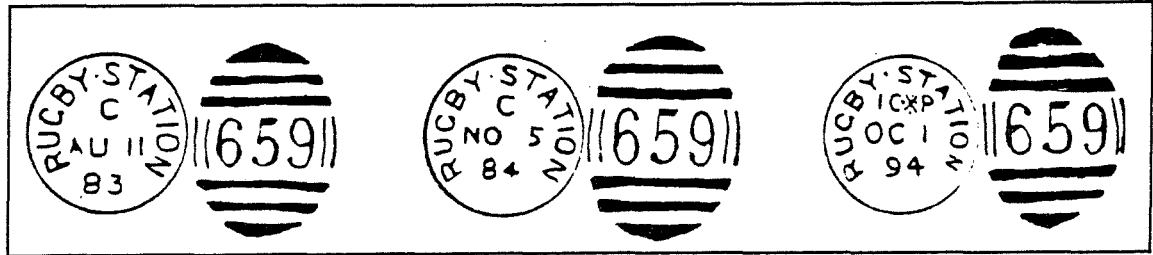
2. need to differentiate between the two locations. It was not long after this, in June 1870, that a numerical stamp with the number '1172' (Fig 3) was issued to the Railway Telegraph Office. I have seen these two marks only in the records of the Post Office Archives.



3.

The first station postmarks of Rugby which were definitely used on mail are a 'single circle' postmark and a 'duplex' postmark issued on 11th August 1883. These postmarks were produced to coincide with the introduction of the Parcel Post on 1st August 1883, upon which date the Post Office arranged with the railway company for the provision of a room on the station for the purpose of sorting the mail. When the station was moved to its present site in 1886, the Post Office purchased a piece of land directly opposite the station and erected a temporary office, opened in May, followed by a permanent structure which was opened in October 1897, enlarged in 1906, and which can still be seen today. The first postally used 'Rugby Station' postmark I have seen is a duplex dated AU 23 83 so it seems appropriate to consider the duplex cancellation next.

There are three major types of duplex for Rugby Station depending upon the way in which the time of posting is depicted. The earliest (type 1) has the time represented by a code letter of which the letter 'L' is by far the most common, although the letters 'C' and 'F' are known. This type can be further broken down depending upon whether the year appears below the letters "R" (of Rugby) and "N" (of Station) (type 1A - Fig 4) or level with the "R" and the "N" (type 1B - Fig 5). I believe these two sub-types were in use simultaneously having recorded type 1A used between August 1883 and June 1895 and type 1B used between April 1885 and July 1892.



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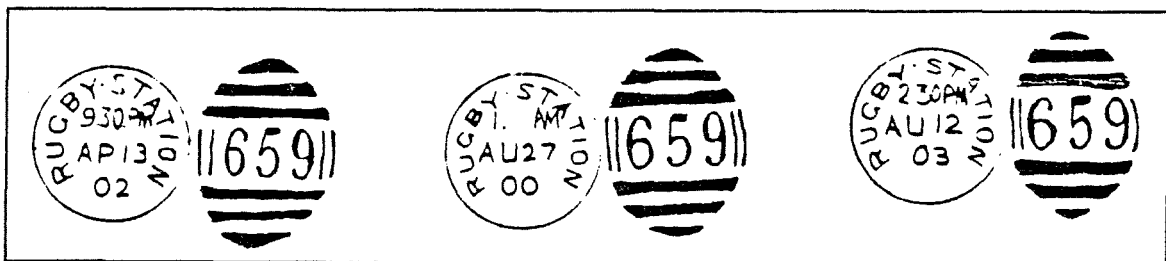
6.

These were followed by a duplex (type 2 - Fig 6) in which the time is represented by a three letter code based upon the following table:

Code letter	:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	M
Hour	:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Minutes	:	00	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55

The hour 1-12 is represented by the first letter, followed by a second letter representing the minutes to the nearest 5. An asterisk follows and the code is completed by the letter 'A' or 'P' representing am or pm. This I believe to be the most rare of the duplex marks having recorded its use only in October 1894, July 1896 and September 1898. In each case, the time code was IC*P representing 9.10pm.

Finally the duplex appeared with the time expressed to the nearest half hour using a twelve hour clock and the addition of either am or pm (type 3). By far the most common time is 9.30pm although a wide variety of different times are known. As with the first duplex, this one can be broken down into sub-types. The first of these appears with the year below the letters "R" and "N" (type 3A - Fig 7) whilst, later, the year is found level with the "R" and the "N" (type 3B - Fig 8). Finally, this duplex can be seen with only one vertical band on the right-hand side of the '659' numeral (type 3C - Fig 9). Type 3A is known to have been used



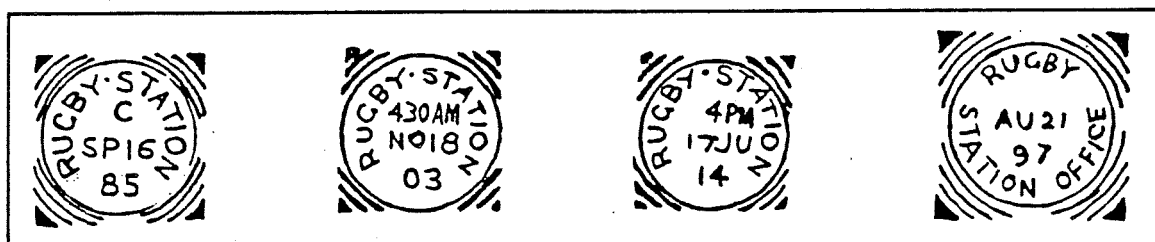
7.

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9.

between August 1896 and May 1904, type 3C between March 1902 and August 1904, whilst I have recorded only one example of type 3B used in August 1904. All the duplex cancellations recorded have been cancelling stamps. I have not seen a single example used as a transit mark.

Soon after the introduction of the first duplex cancellation came a 'squared circle' postmark issued on 17th September 1885. This consisted of a circle with three series of broken arcs surrounding it (type 1 - Fig 10). I have seen this used on 20th September 1885 and it has been recorded used until April 1889. This postmark seems to have been replaced by a squared circle having only two series of broken arcs (type 2). This can be split into two sub-types; type 2A (Fig 11) where the month precedes the day and type 2B (Fig 12) where they are reversed. Since the first is recorded used between October 1903 and December 1912 and the latter only in June 1914, the second would appear to have replaced the first. (Note: According to D.P.Gowen, type 2 was used between October 1890 and November 1914 but, as he did not divide his analysis further, I am unable to allocate these dates to either type 2A or 2B.)



10.

11.

12.

13.

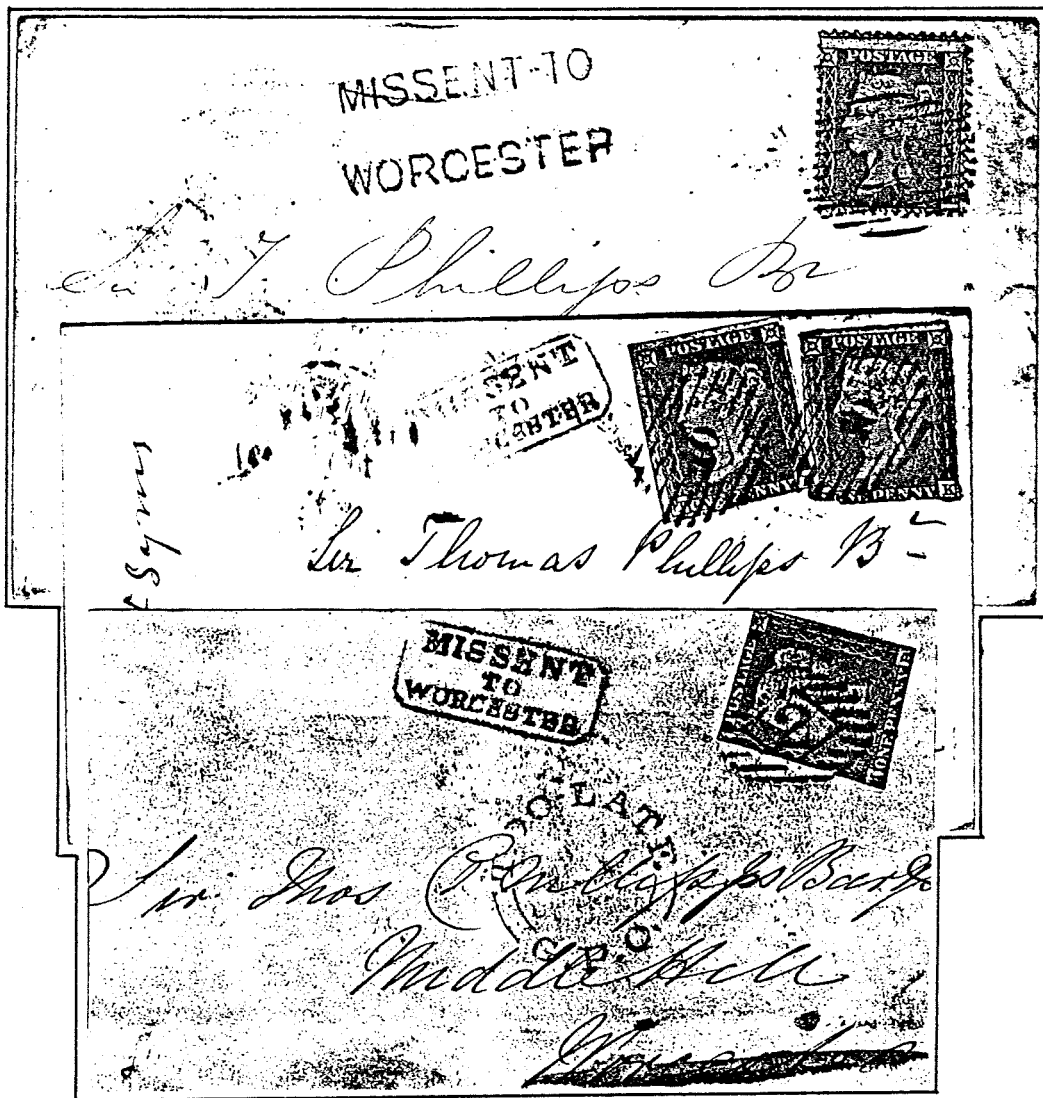
Finally, a squared circle mark was issued with three series of broken arcs but with the wording 'Rugby Station Office' (type 3 - Fig 13) which seems to be scarce and was used only between August 1897 and January 1898.

(The second and concluding part of this article will appear in the next issue of the Bulletin.)



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GREAT BRITAIN POSTAL HISTORY - My list of GB cover material from 1840 onwards contains many interesting and unusual items. Send SAE for latest copy. Wants lists welcomed.

MISSSENT TO SIR THOMAS PHILLIPPS

Collectors of 'missent' marks will be aware that the marks of certain towns crop up with a frequency out of all proportion to the size and importance of the post office. Arguably the commonest of missent marks is 'Missent to Worcester'. There are three different types of this mark and the first is rare. However, the second and third types may be found in many dealers' stocks and must be represented in collections the length and breadth of the land.

No more than a casual glance at a few covers 'Missent to Worcester' will reveal what, at first sight, might seem a remarkable coincidence. With few exceptions, they are addressed to the same person - Sir Thomas Phillipps Bart of Middle Hill. Who was this remarkable man who attracted so many missent letters and where was Middle Hill? Sir Thomas Phillipps was a collector beyond compare: he has also been variously described as one of the most eccentric, cantankerous, preposterous and fatuous men of the Victorian era.

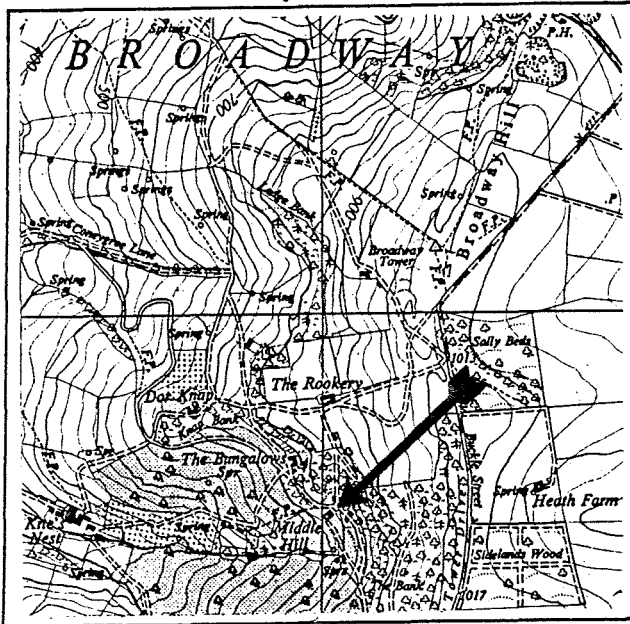
Born in 1792, the illegitimate son of a prosperous Mancunian calico printer, he later used his genealogical skills to claim his descent from Robert, Duke of Normandy and Leofwine, Earl of Mercia. A tiresome snob, he contrived to marry a kinswoman of the Somerset family and, due to the influence of the Duke of Beaufort, was made a baronet two years later in 1821. He was violently anti-Catholic, lived in fear of a Catholic uprising in England, and complained that the Jesuits were tampering with his mail.

However, it is not for his anti-Catholic mania that he is remembered but for his demented obsession with books. It began at school and continued at Oxford but it was in 1818, when his father died leaving him an income of more than £6000 a year, that his ravenous appetite for books and manuscripts was given the financial stimulus it craved. It is said that he had the declared aim of owning a copy of every book in the world. To that end, he treated his family with incomparable meanness and embarked upon the purchase of books and manuscripts with an almost unbelievable extravagance which left a trail of unpaid bills and his family on the brink of bankruptcy for years on end. He was rude, totally inconsiderate and thoroughly vindictive, particularly to booksellers, and the older he grew, the more outrageous became his behaviour. He built up the largest library in Europe and there is no denying that, amongst much dross, he acquired great treasures. Sadly, it was a collection built for collecting's sake and the true state of his scholarship is perhaps best summed up by a contemporary who said he never knew him to read a book or to look beyond the cover save to make notes of its pedigree. Sir Thomas Phillipps was no learned bibliophile - he was a bibliomaniac.

His father had brought him to Middle Hill as a child in 1794. An attractive Georgian house in warm Cotswold stone, it commands an imposing position above Broadway in Worcestershire, overlooking a steep valley just half a mile from the Gloucestershire border. The nearest major post town at the time was Evesham, some six miles to the north west, and letters addressed to "Middle Hill, Broadway, Evesham" or just to "Middle Hill, Broadway" appear to have reached their destination without difficulty. Sir Thomas Phillipps' correspondence was, not surprisingly, very extensive and one surmises that he would have believed he was of such renown that his name, the name of his estate and the county were together more than an adequate address. Thus a mass of letters, principally in the 1840s and 1850s, were addressed to "Middle Hill, Worcestershire" and, apparently just as often, to "Middle Hill, Worcester". Clearly Sir Thomas Phillipps made no attempt to enlighten his correspondents further and one wonders if the postal authorities meekly tolerated the unnecessary trouble his address

caused them or whether their complaints attracted his customary abuse and only served to perpetuate the difficulties. Whatever the truth, 'Missent to Worcester' continued to be stamped upon an apparently endless stream of mail.

In the early 1860s, Sir Thomas Phillipps moved himself and his great library to Thirlestaine House in Cheltenham and later letters are frequently found to that address. This was a large and elegant house, built in 1823 in the classical style, and now forms a part of Cheltenham College. It



was typical of him that, because he had no son and disliked the husband of his eldest daughter intensely, he deliberately allowed Middle Hill to fall into disrepair knowing that the detested son-in-law would inherit it under the terms of his late father's will. Only action by lawyers prevented him from stripping the lead from the roof and ruining it permanently. When he died in 1872, he left his library of books and manuscripts to one of his younger daughters and included conditions in his will which prevented

his eldest daughter, his son-in-law and Catholics from ever crossing the threshold of Thirlestaine House. Such was the burden of maintaining the library in that 86 roomed house in Cheltenham that, in 1885, his daughter succeeded in obtaining a court order allowing the collection to be broken up. It is reported that, nearly 100 years later, parts of the collection were still coming onto the market.

It would seem unbelievable to Sir Thomas Phillipps that he would be remembered more for the letters missent to Worcester than for his staggering collection of books. Letters can be found addressed to him at other locations; to Great Bedwyn, near Marlborough, in the 1830s and to various holiday resorts. Apart from the 'missent' marks, a substantial collection of postmarks of the period can be accumulated from letters addressed to him. But it will be at Middle Hill that he is best remembered. The estate last came onto the property market about two years ago and has shared the fate of many country seats, sub-divided into manageable homes. If the ghost of Sir Thomas Phillipps fails to haunt them, it should for rarely can one man's obsession have been pursued with such flagrant disregard for those near and dear to him. Postal History collectors may even detect a moral.

THE PARCEL DELIVERY COMPANIESAn investigation by Robson Lowe

Last year, Mr Robson Lowe started to re-write the catalogue of stamps issued by Parcel Delivery Companies and, as a result of three chapters published in 'The Philatelist and PJGB', had letters from over seventy readers offering additions and amendments. However, of even more interest to the readers than the stamps themselves, were the company networks. It was found that a company issuing stamps in two towns might have offices or agents in five other towns and so, to complete the picture, it became clear that local directories would have to be examined in reference libraries throughout Great Britain.

The inter-city (or international) parcel delivery companies of interest in this investigation are :

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Atlas | 11. Morris |
| 2. Betteridge & Walton | 12. National |
| 3. British | 13. Pickfords |
| 4. Continental | 14. Sanderson |
| 5. Carter Paterson | 15. Sutton |
| 6. Crouch | 16. Van Oppen |
| 7. Downing (American) | 17. Wheatley |
| 8. Fosters | 18. Canadian Express Co. |
| 9. Globe | 19. United States Express Co. |
| 10. Mann's | |

All the companies were operating at some time between 1880 and 1900, sometimes earlier and often later. It is known that Atlas was founded in 1863 and is still operating. Carter Paterson operated from 1887 to 1965, Fosters from 1874, Globe from 1858 to 1920, Pickfords from the 18th century and Wheatley from 1838 to 1915. The last named entrepreneur has created special difficulties because he had his own Globe Parcel Express Co which operated from London to overseas countries and yet he also used Hinshelwood's Globe Parcel Express (Globe Express Ltd after 1897) as his agents in some cities.

The Hinshelwood companies, Globe Parcel Express and Globe Express Ltd, are of particular interest as they issued stamps and advertised their service in 1879 from 29/30 Stephenson Street, Birmingham. However, it is not known when they opened and closed their office or whether there were other addresses. In 1889, they advertised from 5 Lower Temple Street but was this, in fact, the same office as 29/30 Stephenson Street ? Another company,

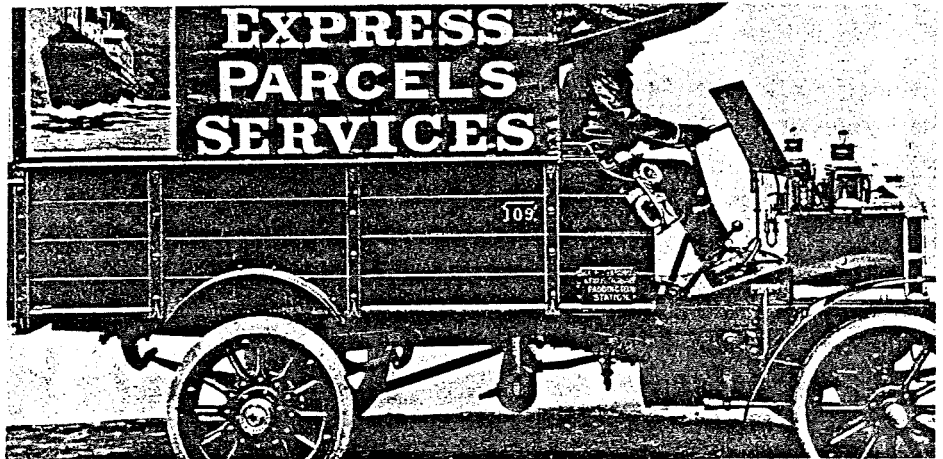
Betteridge and Walton, had a service in Birmingham and Coventry and a third, Sandersons, advertised elsewhere that they had a service in Birmingham. Globe and Foster's had offices in Leicester.

This brings us to the part that members of the Midland (GB) PHS can play. Robson Lowe hopes that volunteers will check the following reference libraries and examine the local directories:

Birmingham	Oldbury
Bridgnorth	Rugby
Burton on Trent	Shrewsbury
Chesterfield	Stafford
Coventry	Stoke on Trent
Derby	Stone
Dudley	Stourbridge
Kidderminster	Stourport
Leamington	Stratford upon Avon
Leicester	Warwick
Loughborough	West Bromwich
Malvern	Worcester

The recommended technique is to begin with a directory for the nearest year to 1840, then every fifth year and, if an entry of interest is found, to work backwards and note when it first appears. There is not likely to be any uniformity in the entries which may be for 'Agents (forwarding)', 'Carriers', 'Delivery and Collection' or 'Parcels'. Some companies only existed for a few years; others are still operating but the majority faded out during World War I or earlier.

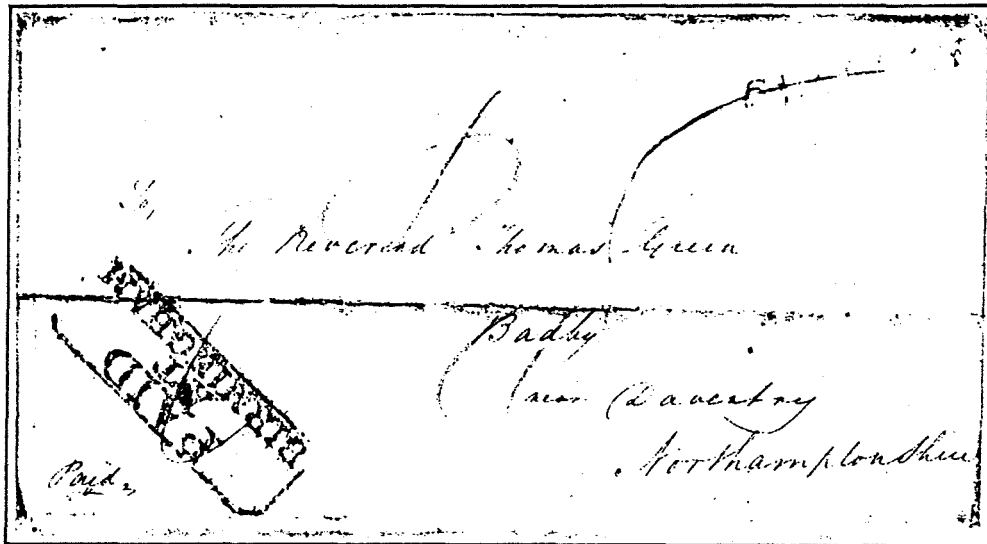
So that some order can be brought to this bit of research, members who are willing to spend a few minutes in their local library are asked to advise our Chairman at the first meeting. It is almost certain that anyone looking in local directories will find other information of value as they usually contain post office details. You might have an unexpected piece of luck: Robson Lowe



had left Leeds library and was stuck at a traffic light when a large 'Fosters - Carriers' van obligingly passed him with the address on the tail board !

OLDBURY CRICKET CLUBsubmitted by Elizabeth & Eric Lewis

The cricket season is still with us and what could be more topical than this letter sent from Oldbury, near Birmingham, in 1839 to the Rev Thomas Green at Badby, near Daventry.



Oldbury April 30th 1839

Reverend Sir,

I take the liberty of addressing you requesting your consent to my renting a field (forming a part of your estate) under your tenant at Oldbury who could not give but a negative answer unless he had your consent to such an arrangement.

I am one of the Members of a Cricket Club, the which was established and supported by a number of Gentlemen, with the view to putting down and getting rid of the barbarous practices of Bull Baiting and Dogfighting etc formerly so very common in this neighbourhood, and I am happy to say with very great success, as, instead of the juvenile portion of the community being seen daily nay hourly strolling along the streets unoccupied, and seeking only an opportunity of exciting two or more luckless Dogs to worry themselves for their amusement, they may now be seen occupying their leisure hours, in groups, engaging in the noble and manly game of Cricket, occupying in fact in healthy and cheering exercise those hours which otherwise would be spent in idleness nay in acts tending to debase the mind and this improvement, I feel proud to say, is mainly owing to the example set them by our having established a Club and practising in the very town and I am happy to add that the brutal sports will, with the assistance of our

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magistracy, be soon forgotten, and the odium so long attached to this Town be got rid of.

We are compelled to request the use of your field in consequence of space being so scarce in the immediate neighbourhood
Hoping that you forgive my boldness in addressing you as a stranger and that you will deem the cause as a sufficient excuse requesting at the same time an early and favourable reply beg to subscribe myself.

Reverend Sir,

Respectfully yours,

Thomas Richard Cooper.

Although it is less than clear in the illustration, the letter sheet has a straight line 'Oldbury' handstamp in the top right hand corner indicating that it must have been conveyed by the penny post to Birmingham's main office before despatch to Northamptonshire.

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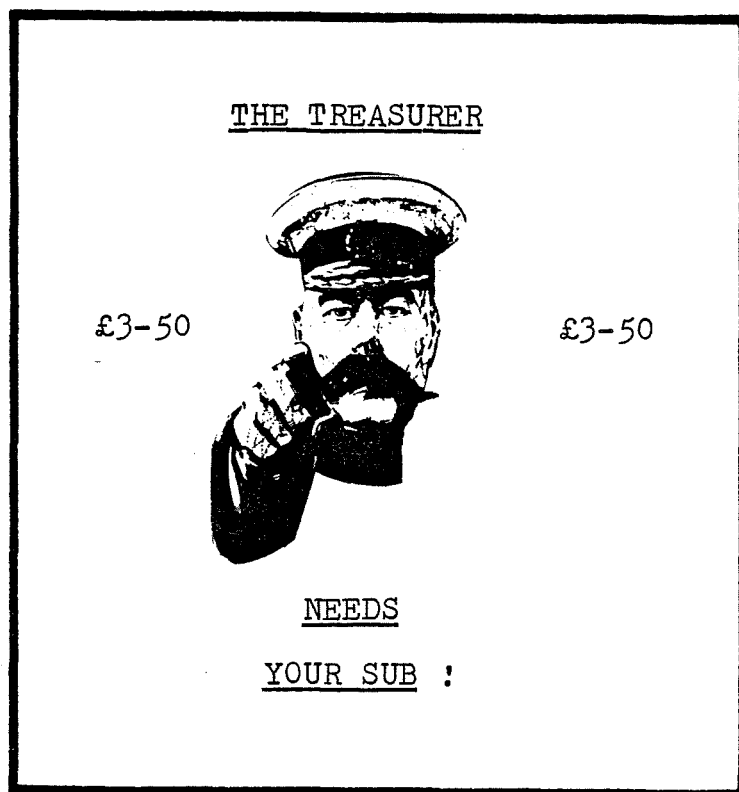
<i>From our stock of Midlands postal history we offer:-</i>		<i>£</i>
WARCKS	1834 Atherstone Penny Post with dotted boxed No.3	30
WORCS	1858 Stoulton undated circle and Worcester side duplex cancelling 1d red star on envelope to Ledbury	16
WARCKS	Cape of Good Hope undated circle in green(solid ring) on Transatlantic cover to New York used as a Bill of Lading,unusual and attractive	30
STAFFS	Stone straight line with joined NE on 1707 entire to London,very attractive	250
WORCS	P.O. registered stationery envelope used for Sub office returns of cash and then refolded and reused on its second journey This one from Callow End with part of the office wax seal remaining.Other sub offices also	40
WARCKS	Rare early 2 line Coventry,unlisted by Willcocks,with BM month over day used only up to 1713 for NO 1	150

Late Use of the Double Arc CDS & UDC

Readers may remember that, following an item in Bulletin No.29 with the title 'A Staffordshire CDS Conundrum', we have been trying to establish the latest known date of use of a double arc circular date stamp or an undated circular stamp.

Apart from Kinver (Dec 65), we have heard of an Albrighton CDS of 26 Dec 59. John Soer now reports three copies of the Ashby-de-la-Zouch CDS from 1860, the latest being 10 November. He has an example of the new 1858-type mark preceding it but no record yet of the old type CDS being used after it was recut in February 1861.

John also has a Coalville UDC of 23 Jul 59; not quite as late as the previously reported Harborne-Heath of 12 Sep 59. Is this the final word? Let's hope it isn't ...

Books that may interest you - 6.

As revealed in the last issue of the Bulletin, Ted Heath has supplied a new listing of recent books on postal history and postcards. Because a few books from his previous list have still to be included, an extended entry is being included overleaf.

If you are impatient for the whole list, please send an SAE to the editor who will forward it without delay.

SCOTT FH Royal Tour Cancellations, Cachets and Adhesives. Published December 1981, hardback, 48 pages & 120 illustrations. £4-00 from Harry Hayes, 48 Trafalgar Street, Batley WF17 7HA.

SEDGEWICK W & WARD R Postal History of Goole, Hawarden and Selby. May 1981, 100 pages, illustrated. From Yorkshire Postal History Society, 48 Banner Cross Road, Eccleshall, Sheffield S11 9HR at £4-50.

SUSSEX Vivien J The Norwich Post Office, 1568 - 1980 (its postmasters, services and postal markings). 109 pages, postmarks illustrated. Details from the author c/o Michael Jackson Ltd or at 10 Colne Road, Coggeshall, Colchester CO6 1SX. Obviously recommended :

WHITNEY JT Isle of Man Stamps and Postal History. Published 5 July 81, 300+ pages, 1200 illustrations. £20-00 + £1 p+p from Dr J.T.Whitney, 75 Church Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet, Essex. Part 1 covers postal history.

AUCKLAND B and OXLEY GF Penny Posts of Scotland. 54 pages, illustrated. From Bruce Auckland c/o W.Carson, 33 Kyle Street, Ayr KA7 1RS at £5-00.

BATTEN AGM (editor) The Post Office Militant, 1899-1902: the Anglo-Boer War. 155 pages, illustrated, paperback. Articles originally published in 'St Martins-le-Grand'. Price not known. Try Brackenber, Wych Hill Way, Woking.

BENHAM K (compiler) The Village Undated Handstamps of Yorkshire. May 1982, 52 pages, 38 illustrations. £2-00 from Ronald Ward, Yorkshire Postal History Society, 48 Banner Cross Road, Eccleshall, Sheffield S11 9HR.

GOODBODY AM Railway Sub-offices of Great Britain. December 1982, 32 pages, 21 illustrations, hardback. £3-00 from Railway Philatelic Group, Stable Beck, Grasmere, Ambleside CA22 9PX.

HOLMES DB Air Mail - an illustrated history 1793-1981. 240 pages, 250 illustrations (some in colour). Published by Crown Publications; Columbus Books in September 1982 at £21-00.

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STAMPS AND POSTAL HISTORY of GREAT BRITAIN 1660-1982

Learned Members of the Midland Postal History Society may perhaps raise their eyebrows at the prospect of a small firm offering postal history and stamps over such a long period as some 300 years and being so broad as to include not only usual town and county material but also more specialised subjects such as Maritime, Railway & Military postal history to the specialised shades of Ed. VII stamps. Certainly no-one can be a specialist in all such fields but this will have two advantages to the collector (i) for the general collector a wide spectrum is offered in a single list & (ii) the specialist will spot the rare and the obscure which we have missed and as sales are at fixed prices will still be able to pick up a bargain. Send for a post free list to:

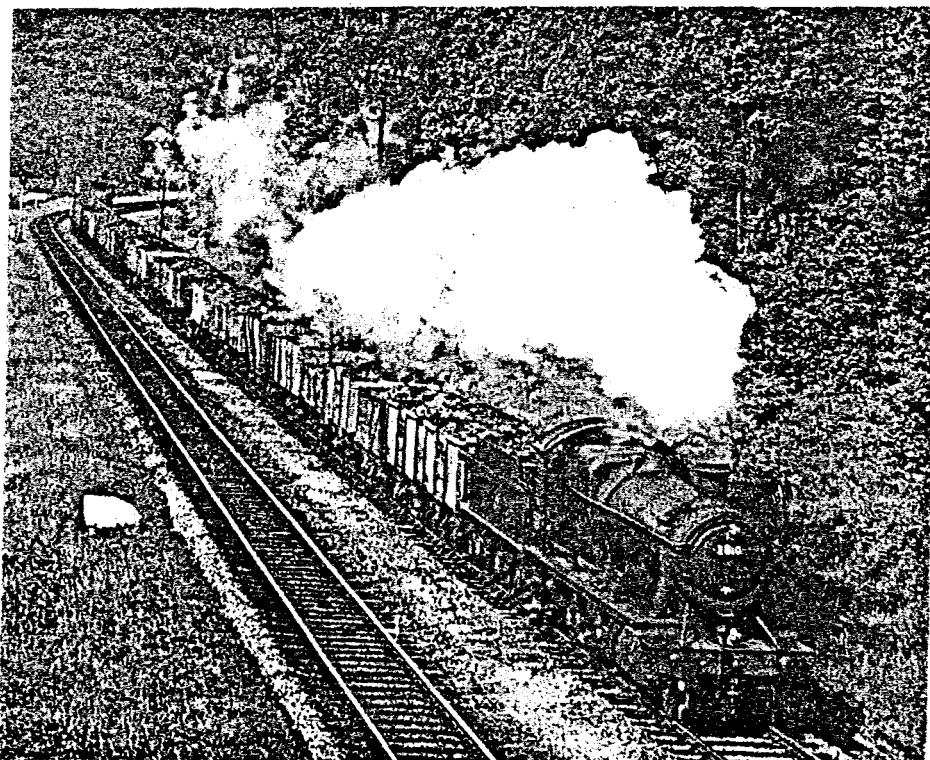
NES

NEW ENTERPRISE STAMPS
P.O. Box 10, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 6FJ

NES

John Soer contemplates.....

A NEW BRANCH OF POSTAL HISTORY ?



Postal historians are well acquainted with Ship Letters, TPOs, Airmail and even Tin-Can Mail. The Guinness Book of Stamps mentions letters being carried by bullocks, camels and reindeer. However, I offer the following in the hope that it will excite interest in an hitherto unrecorded aspect of postal history.

Whilst researching the Postal History of South Bedfordshire, I came across, in PMG Minutes, the following entry for 5th May 1853 concerning the establishment of a Day Mail to Luton and Dunstable:-

"..... the bags to be conveyed by the Coal Train. The Agreement with the Railway Co. entitles the P.O. to do this without additional expense."

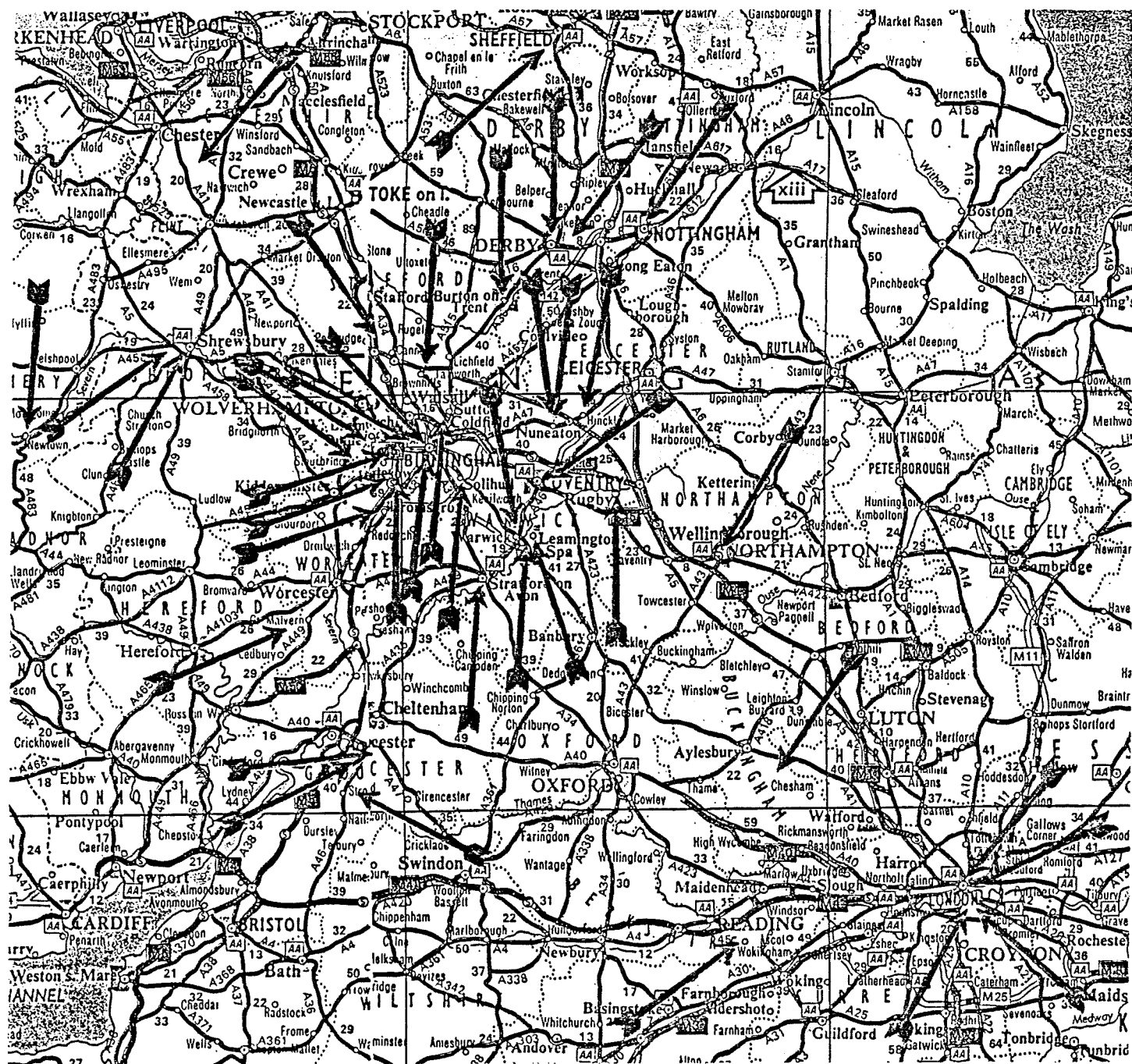
The coal train referred to was from Leighton Buzzard. Items carried by this method will be very rare and obviously command a premium at auction for an entry, under Luton, for 11th November 1853 reads:-

"The Day Mail to use the new passenger train from Leighton Buzzard to Dunstable giving an earlier arrival."

Since the mining industry is still extensive in the Midlands, possibly members can provide details of similar instances. Failing this, maybe the Worcestershire members (or the Hon. Sec.) can tell us if the mailsacks were ever carried with the hopsacks?

Tailpiece

If you ever wondered where our members live, now you know !



The Next Bulletin

The next issue of the Bulletin will appear on 10th November. It features, among its many delights, the concluding part of 'The Railway Postmarks of Rugby and its Stations', a newly discovered minute on the final issue of penny post handstamps and 'A Tale of Two Cradleys', a look at two villages in Worcestershire - or were they ? If you hope to receive a copy, please don't forget to pay the new season's subscription to our Treasurer just £3-50.