

MIDLAND MAIL

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



Chairman:
Elizabeth Lewis

Treasurer:
Trevor Clewley

Secretary:
Richard Farman

Number 47, November 1986

My thanks to those members who wrote to me commenting on possible font types for Midland Mail. The pace of technological change is such that no sooner had I posted the copies of the last edition than I was shown details of an improved version of the computer program I had used. I have used this, taking into account the comments made by members, to produce a script which I hope everyone will find acceptable.

In response to my remarks about the use of the N.E.C. for philatelic exhibitions, one member wrote to say that strenuous efforts were made to stage the 1980 Exhibition there, but the move was resisted by the London dealers who were reluctant to move their stocks to the Midlands. Obviously there are no dealers north of Oxford Circus.

The same correspondent mentioned the lack of space devoted to the postal history of this century. This is something which I shall try to rectify in future.

Since so few of the records of local postal affairs are now retained, possibly we owe it to future postal historians to record the changes that take place today. The last paragraph of the article "This Day to Birmingham" supports this comment.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

If the box below contains a red cross, it means that the Treasurer would welcome payment of your sub at your earliest convenience. Cheques for £4.50 should be sent to Trevor Clewley, 127 Queslett Rd East, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2AJ.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The popular and traditional gathering at The Bass Museum, Burton-on-Trent will take place on Saturday 13th December. Richard Farman has arranged a lunch at the Museum - assemble at 12.00 for 12.30. The lunch will consist of Jacket potato, Pie or Pastie, Gateau and Coffee at an approximate cost of £3. If you would like to join the lunch please contact Richard by 9th December. The meeting proper will begin at 2pm and the speaker will be Dr. Frank Bottomley whose subject will be "Free Franks".

A reminder that the meeting on 17th January, at Dr. Johnson House will begin at 10.30 a.m. We are asked to bring 9 sheets on Parcel Posts.

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

Despite the fine weather and other events fourteen members turned up to show and view 9 sheets from the period 1919 - 1939. The displays contained a variety of material, but in the space available it is not possible to pick out more than two or three items from each one.

Harold Wilson started the meeting with a display of G.B. airmails. First of all we saw covers carried by experimental rocket flights in 1934 _ between Scalpay and Harris in the Hebrides, between Lymington and the Isle of Wight and a flight on the Sussex Downs. Also from Scotland we saw first flight covers of the Highland Airways service between Inverness and Kirkwall. A card, dated 11 November 1918, on which was written "Bells of peace are ringing" commenced Mike Young's display. An inflation cover from Germany carried 49 x 4000 D.M. stamps; apparently there should have been 50. John Soer's 9 sheets included an item from each year in the period. Amongst these was an early Pitney-Bowes meter mark. Steph Stobbs showed covers from two Shropshire villages which are described in an article later in this edition. Ches traced the changes in the Coventry machine cancellations during the period 1928 - 1939, from the Universal and Krag machines through the unified die to the introduction of a seven line canceller divided into three parts. Machine cancellations were also shown by Trevor Clewley in the form of early slogans which included the 1922 British Industries Fair, "Cable to Canada" used at Leicester and the "British Empire Exhibition" used in a Birmingham Hey-Dolphin machine.

After the usual pause for refreshment, Chris Beaver treated us to a miscellany which included a Wolverhampton "roller" used on an envelope, and a letter from Jamaica to Oldhill, England which had been sent to Old England, Jamaica. Since Eric wanted to bat last, the penultimate display was given by Elizabeth. Amongst the varied were a 1926 registered postcard, children's illustrated notepaper from 1930 and booklet panes of three halfpence stamps. A cover illustrated with a whisky bottle and carrying a 1d/TO PAY/S.I. mark; a letter posted too late for the 1/2 d. printed paper rate and various inflation covers, one with 300,400,000,000 marks in stamps were items in Eric's 9 sheets which caught the editor's eye.

In his vote of thanks Frank Peach told how in his youth he allowed many items, which would now be of value to Leicestershire collectors, to be destroyed.

THE OCTOBER MEETING

Two of our members, namely John Soer and Chris Beaver, were invited at short notice to give displays for the afternoon. Your Chairman asked Eric to make notes on the first showing which are as follows:-

John Soer commenced the afternoon's entertainment by taking us on a tour through the Leicestershire down what was the old Mail Coach Road which is now the A6. To illustrate the route we were shown a small map enriched with scenes of the county together with a 1720 mileage chart, both beautiful examples of the engraver's art. Our journey commenced at Cavendish Bridge passing through towns and villages with examples of their various marks, stopping of course at the county town of Leicester, with no less than five different mileage handstamps including an example of the first type.

Of particular note to the writer was the way a handstamp of Harborough was divided into two lines causing the second to read "ROUGH", a magnificent strike on a 1741 cover. This was followed by various other marks for the town incorporating the word "MARKET" to read Market Harborough. Undated circles abounded throughout the display mostly good clear impressions in an upright position on the cover, including an example of the distinctive mark of Mountsorrel.

To conclude his display John showed no less than nineteen picture postcards depicting post offices of the county, each matched with a postmark of the village, not such an easy task as it may seem as anyone who has tried will know.

Altogether a most interesting display of the county with comments throughout on postal rates etc. and our thanks are extended to John for putting this material together at short notice.

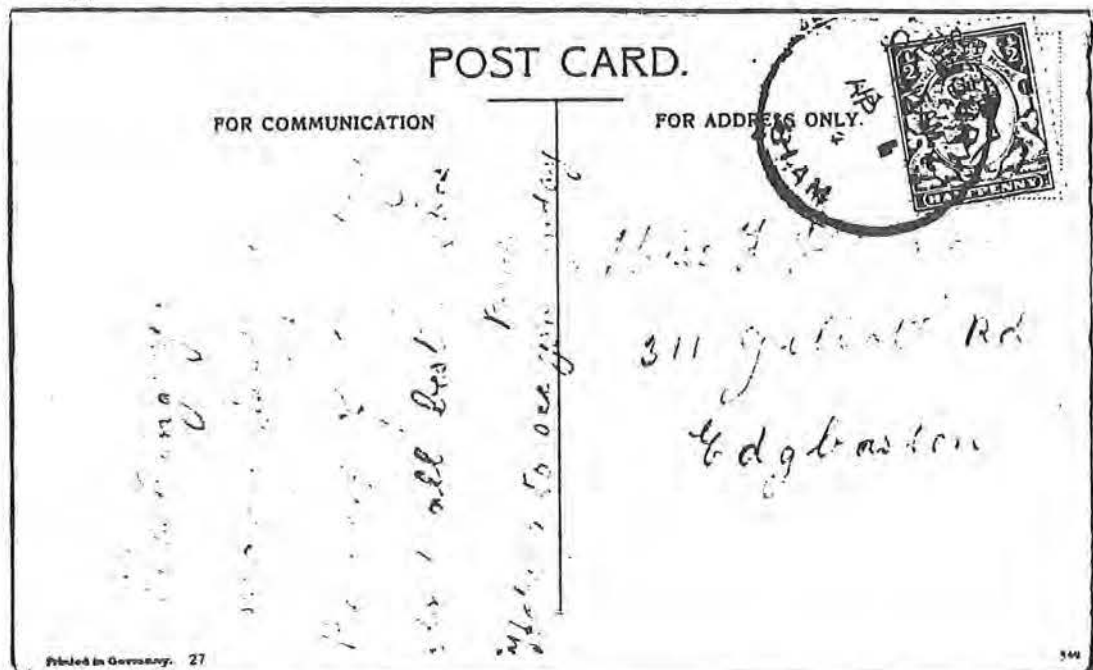
(Editor's note: My thanks to Eric for kindly providing the above notes. I think he makes the display sound better than it was.)

A wealth of material from the Potteries was shown by Chris Beaver. He began with a variety of Newcastle-under-Lyne marks including NEW/CASTLE/UNDER (1739), NEWCASTLE/Ur LYNE (1761) and NEWCASTLE/UNDER * L (1771). A letter of 1784 with the 149 NEW/CASTLE UND mileage mark had contained "the other half of the three Bank notes I sent you last night". Then we were shown the Newcastle "squashed circle" (see MM 33/5) followed by a variety of straight line and circular mileage marks. Turning his attention to the Newcastle 5th Clause Post, Chris showed all the receiving office numbers, apart from No. 10 of Etruria which was possibly never used. A cover from the Lane End receiving office in the Uttoxeter Penny Post (Lane End was twenty miles from Uttoxeter) was amongst those which illustrated the effect of the introduction of the Leicester to Liverpool mail coach.

After the break Chris turned to the period from 1840. Notable was the number of Pd. 1 handstamps used at Newcastle, in particular a most distinctive version used in 1840. Also shown was an unusual 2 handstamp with a dot inside the loop of the 2. Further items of note were a Newcastle Staff skeleton used in 1848 and the Whitmore Station U.D.C. The emergence of Stoke as the post town for the area was then illustrated by various dated circles. Chris concluded his display with examples of the Stoke and Burton spoons. In all a most interesting exhibition which must have taken a long time to put together. Our thanks to Chris for doing so.

AN OLDBURY SKELETON

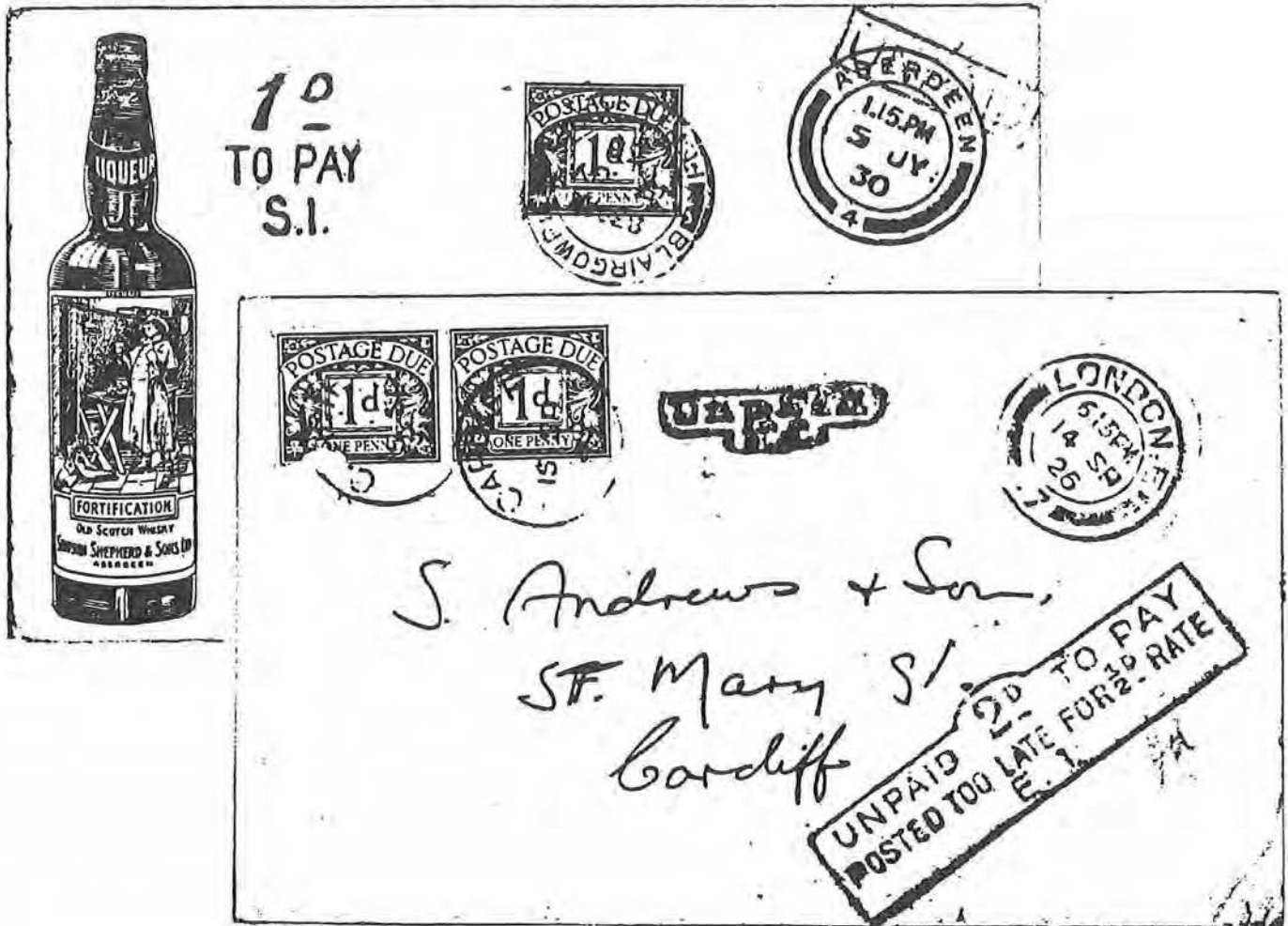
In response to the request for help from Elizabeth and Eric, Chris Beaver has sent this copy of an Oldbury skeleton used 1st April 1914.



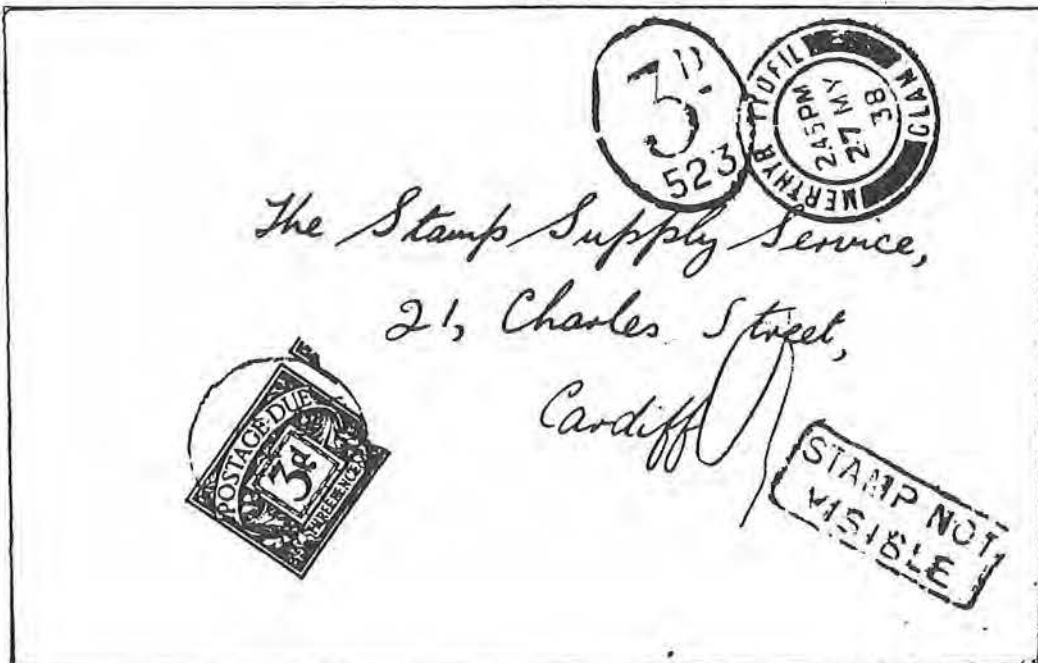
POSTAGE DUE

I am grateful to Eric Lewis for allowing me to publish copies of three items from his display at the September meeting. The first two items were sent at the printed paper rate. The second item illustrates the fact that when this rate was reduced in 1922 a time limit for posting was imposed to encourage early posting.

ld to pay. Not a bad price for a bottle of this nature.



Were they pleased to be supplied with a Postage due stamp?



IMPROVEMENTS AT THE BIRMINGHAM POST OFFICE

I wonder what deficiencies at the Birmingham office led to the publication of the following?

AUGUST, 1869.

THE TOWN CRIER.

Birmingham 11

POST OFFICE REGULATIONS.

[In order to increase the popularity and usefulness of this important branch of the public service, the Local Postmaster is about to issue the following regulations.]

IN order that the public may become familiar with the departure of the various mails fifty more new openings will be made in the windows of the Post Office.

IN order to amuse the small boys who sell *The Echo*, and to puzzle the public generally, one of these boxes will be closed and another opened every five seconds between seven and nine p.m.

IN order to teach the public the dates of the departure of the mails, they will be expected to sort their own letters; and a box will be opened in every window labelled for every town and village in the kingdom.

IN order to increase the interest and excitement in the evening, a crowd of boys will be collected to stand near the windows and block up the holes—especially just before the closing of each mail.

IN order to ensure a better study of the complete postal arrangements, every box will be lettered in small type and in very doubtful language, so that no stranger will be able to find out where to post his letter till the mail is closed.

IN order to facilitate the internal arrangements and to reduce the postal staff every person who posts a letter will be compelled not only to put a stamp on the letter, but to mark the letter itself, and the hour at which it was put into the box, and to mark also the box into which the said letter was put; and, in case of registration, to do all the work himself.

IN order that the public may have every possible inducement to study the times of the arrival and departure of the mails, and in order that strangers and foreigners especially may have the hours impressed upon their memories, a table of the mails will be exhibited at the General Office.

IN order to promote the sale of spectacles, opera glasses, &c., such table of mails will be placed as high above six feet from the ground as may be possible, and all such announcements will be written in the smallest known figures and letters too.

IN order that short-sighted persons may avail themselves of the advantages of exercising their eyes, all such announcements will be placed as far out of the way as possible; and no copy of any such regulations shall be attainable except at the Central Office, and at a height never less than six feet from the ground.

IN order that aged and infirm persons—but such only—may be able to learn the said hours of departure, step-ladders may occasionally be used in special cases, or able-bodied boys may be allowed to mount upon each others' shoulders to read the said hours of departure, and may receive fees for so doing from the aged or infirm.

THE Local Postmaster hopes that when all these arrange-

ments have been duly carried out and approved, the public will have learned something about Postal management, and be able to look after themselves, and to save a great deal of the ordinary routine work on which clerks have been hitherto employed. No local newspaper will—under heavy penalties—ever be allowed to print any announcement of the departure or arrival of the mails, lest the solitary placard at the Central Office should cease to be used.

ECCLESIASTICAL APPOINTMENTS AND PREFERMENTS.

It is understood that the late Rector of St. Martin's, Birmingham, would *prefer* to come back to his former appointment in Birmingham.

It is also stated that the congregation of St. Martin's, being provided for the future, would *prefer* the late rector to remain at Greenwich in the mean time, where he has so much scope for his longitude and latitudinarian sympathies.

Rumour says that the Rector of St. Philip's would *prefer* to live at Leamington.

Later information states that the Bishop of the diocese would *prefer* he didn't, and that the congregation's preference shares with the Bishop.

On dit that the Incumbent of St. Mary's would *prefer* the Rectory of St. Martin's, and also that the Curate of St. Alban's would *prefer* the Incumbency of Trinity.

It is authoritatively mentioned that several local curates would *prefer* holding lucrative livings of their own; this statement must, however, be taken with reserve.

The Vicar of Mud Pool Chapel informs his parishioners that he would *prefer* going out to dinner any day rather than to tea.

The curates of several rich parishes in the neighbourhood would *prefer* future presents to be made in money or marketable jewellery, instead of slippers, bands, antimacassars, and kettle holders, which are generally unuseable, and always unsaleable.

The Curate of Pokey Parish Church would very much *prefer* a decent living to an indecent starvation on forty pounds a year.

It is whispered that the Rector of Birmingham will appoint Mr. Plant weathercock of St. Martin's church.

We have good reason to doubt the rumour that the Chaplain of the Cemetery has appointed Mr. Alderman Manton grave-inspector.

We understand that the Rev. Ollaways Ointment has been appointed Perpetual Cure to the parish Pillwelly.

The Vicar of Whitechurch has appointed Mrs. Sarah Curtchy, pew opener, to wait upon the congregation; and Mr. Nicodemus Nobble, eye opener, to drop upon the sleepy charity children.

The Clerk of the Parish Church of Smelly Hoake has been appointed god-father to all the children who are short of sponsors on coming to be baptised.

The Small Arms Company have declined to make any Minor Canons for Worcester Cathedral, having no small bore that will suit.

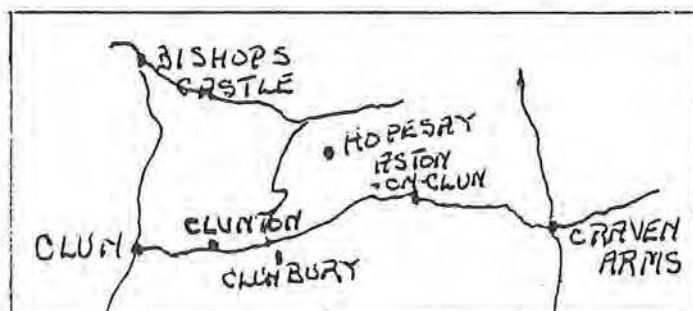
TWO MODERN INCIDENTS

by Steve Stobbs

I sometimes think that we postal historians are missing a great deal by not extending our researches right up to the present day as the two following incidents show:-

CLUNTON

For many years the only mark I had from this village was a skeleton dated 13 NOV 1911. This village is very small, a few miles from Clun in south-west Shropshire. About a year ago I was given a cover clearly postmarked "CLUNTON 23 JA 76. On the back was a note stating that the letter had been sent on the last day that the post office was open. I enquired of some friends, who had a cottage in that area, if there was a post office of any kind in the village. I was informed that "they" had a counter in the village inn for a few hours on a Friday morning. Consequently I arranged for a recorded letter to be sent to me the next time they visited their cottage. Imagine my surprise when the cover came as it was not postmarked "CLUNTON" but "HOPESAY, CRAVEN ARMS". One can only assume that the relief postmistress comes from there and not Clun which is considerably nearer and on the main road connecting the two places.



DONNINGTON

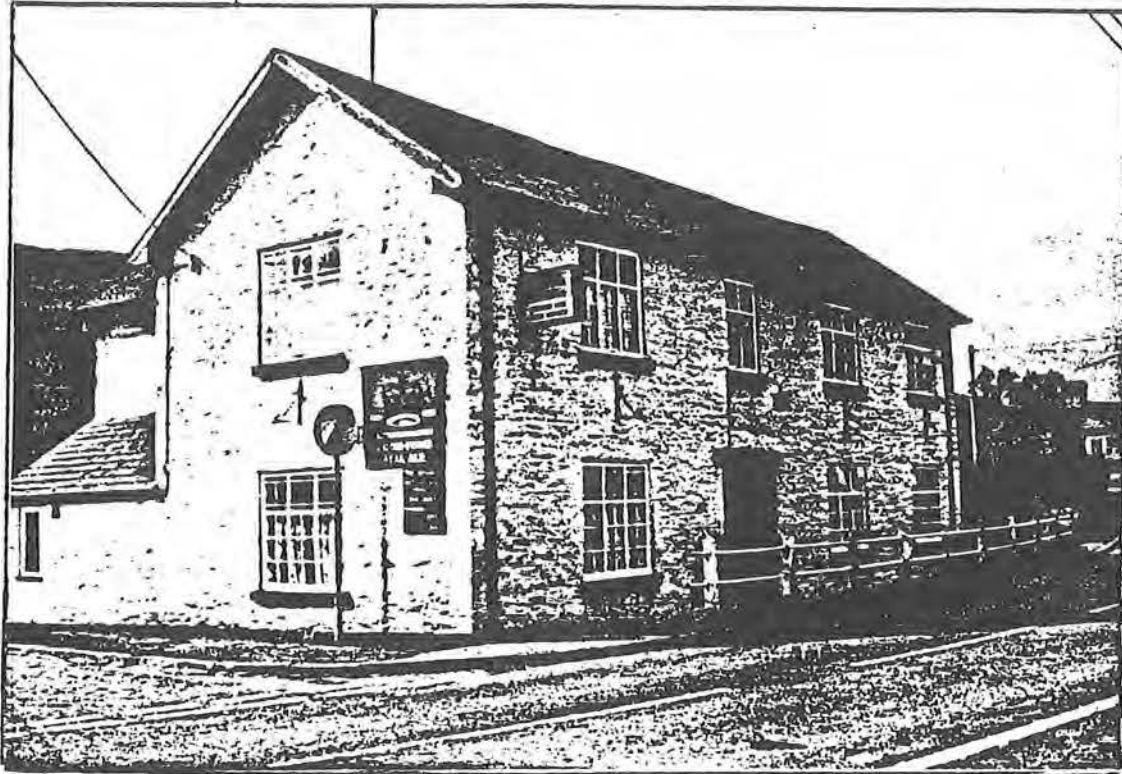
This is a rather larger village, a few miles east of Wellington. At the beginning of World War II, the Woolwich Arsenal was moved very near to this place. In order to house the workers a new estate was built which doubled the size of the village. Incidentally there is a post office in the Arsenal which is called CODONIA, but it is not open to the general public. Two years ago, I came across a postcard bearing the postmark "NEW DONNINGTON" and dated 8th July 1949. Since I could not find any such office in any of my Post Office Guides, a friend and I looked into the matter. After much research the picture which emerged was this:-

The main post office was originally in Wellington Road, Donnington. In 1942 another office, called "New Donnington", was opened on the new estate. Then in 1952 the latter office was made the main office and dropped the word "New" from its name. The former main office was pulled down and replaced by a wooden hut. This office was then named "Wellington Road, Donnington".

Collecting modern postal history can be fun.



A cover posted on 23rd. January 1976 which was the last day that the post office in Clunton was open on a full time basis.



The Crown Inn
Clunton where
the post office
is housed every
Friday morning.



MR. J. A. G. MERRY
19 SUTTON OAK RD
SUTTON COLDFIELD
WARCS

THIS DAY TO BIRMINGHAM

by Rev. C.M. Beaver

"Also this Day, To BIRMINGHAM" - so the G.P.O. announced on Monday 22nd August 1785. The largest simultaneous extension of John Palmer's plan had occurred four weeks previously when the new Mail Conveyances announced included the route to Liverpool. Seven weeks later it was Chester and Holyhead's turn. All three coaches departed from the Swan with Two Necks and travelled along the same road as far as Coventry - or rather Stonebridge. By the first Monday in November the list of "Mail Coaches already established, exclusive of those on the Cross Post Roads" extended to 21, only 3 of which had existed before 25th. July. Who has heard of the one "To Windsor, from the Three Cups, Bread Street"? Modern writers have copied one another's summaries of this frenetic activity ("Birmingham and Shrewsbury" features in the standard form of words) and only two or three sample notices are familiar to most of us.

Aris's Gazette did carry a sentence on 22nd. August: "The London Mail will be brought to this town by the coach for the first time tomorrow". Nothing more, and no report to confirm it happened; not everything did always happen as expected. The same paper confidently stated on 29th. August: "The new regulations for conveying the Irish Mail from London will begin on Monday next through ...Oxford,...Birmingham,...Shrewsbury and along the new road through Oswestry,...Llanwrst,Bangor...to Holyhead...avoiding Conway Ferry"; and on the next Monday announced that it "will begin this day". The Shrewsbury Chronicle, which had made similar predictions at greater length, reported in detail the speeches at a party on the Tuesday to celebrate the first arrival there of a mail coach. Neither paper mentioned that in the event Shrewsbury was the terminus, though a notice in the same Chronicle as the report must mean the plan was altered thus. On the Monday, Londoners had been told "This day to Shrewsbury"

The Daily Universal Register (to become The Times from 1st. January 1788) carried a G.P.O. notice in every number from 19th. July 1785 to the end of the year. Generally it was the same text for a week, once or twice a good deal longer, but there are at least fifteen notices significantly different in detail.

It might be thought that the original Birmingham mail coach would have ceased on the establishment of that to Shrewsbury. The notices prove that this was not so. It might be thought likely that the first was in fact a branch from the Liverpool coach. That this was not so seems to be proved by a rough sketch in Palmer's Papers (Post 96/20/folio 9), unfortunately undated, that has a note attached: "Route of the Liverpool, Chester, Shrewsbury, Leeds and Birmingham Coaches. Consider how they may be better regulated and the Manchester....". Clearly the "Birmingham" existed at the time. Possible alterations are shown for two routes, viz. London - Northampton - Lichfield - Liverpool and London - Banbury - Birmingham - Walsall - Stafford - Chester, neither of which happened, while both the London - Coventry - Birmingham and the London - Oxford - Birmingham - Shrewsbury were to remain on their original routes. What did happen (a little later?) was that the the Liverpool coach remained as it was but that to Chester was altered to the Northampton to Lichfield road from 5th. April 1788.

Documents in the Walsingham Papers (Post 97/VI/256ff) listing mail coaches and their distances and contract prices for 1789 do not include a London to Birmingham coach. So just when it was replaced by a connection between Coventry and Birmingham is not yet certain. Possibly it was 9th. July 1787 on and after which date according to a notice in Aris's Gazette "the London mail coach will be dispatched from hence at 4" so letters were to be in the Birmingham post office by 3 p.m.

A letter of 11th December 1791 from Palmer to John Gottwaltz the postmaster told him that from the next day his letters from London would be sent on the Liverpool coach and transferred to the local coach at Coventry but he should continue to send his London letters by the Shrewsbury - Birmingham - Oxford - London coach.

And from that point the story can be picked up in MM 43/5-8 and 44/12-13. The discovery of Everson's patient research provided clues that stimulated the hope of finding the primary sources now presented, and it is a relief that they fit gaps in the earlier articles without contradiction except for the error of describing the establishment of the Birmingham Auxiliary in 1812 as the first direct link with the capital. One consolation must be that even Everson did not know what had happened a quarter of a century before that, because no one locally had thought to make anything of it at the time. Nor by the way did John Wilson whose "History of the G.P.O. with special reference to Birmingham" was a series of articles published in the Birmingham Weekly Mercury from October 1899; he sensibly collected a set of extracts together and sent the folder to the G.P.O. That has survived in Post 6A/12.

FOR SALE/WANTED

FOR SALE

Mint Sheet of 1957 Talylln Railway Letter Stamps Nos. 7-12.

Realistic offers only please.

WANTED

Genuine Mailcoach Posthorn. Must have Royal Cypher. No reproductions please. Please contact:- Mr G. Parker. 38, Joseph Luckman Road, Bedworth. CV12 8BQ.

GENERAL POST OFFICE.

August 22, 1785.

MR. PALMER having engaged to accomplish his Plan for the Convenience of His Majesty's Mails to all Parts of the Kingdom as soon as possible, Letters for every Part of Great Britain and Ireland, must, in future, be put into the Receiving Houses before FIVE o'Clock in the Evening, and into this Office before SEVEN, in order to prevent the Inconveniences which have arisen to the Public from two Deliveries in London on the same Day, and the sending out the Mails at different Hours on the same Evening.

The Letters likewise will be sent out regularly from hence, between the Hours of Nine and Ten in the Morning, so as to reach the most distant Parts of the Town by Twelve at Noon.

Notice will be given in a few Days, when the Mail Conveyance upon Mr. Palmer's Plan will be established to all Parts of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall; as likewise to Shrewsbury, Worcester, and Ludlow, and to Dover.

By Command of the Post-Master General.

ANTHONY TODD, Sec.

The following are the Main Coaches already established.

To Bath and Bristol, from the Swan with Two Necks, Lad Lane, and the Gloucester Coffee-house, Piccadilly.

To Norwich and Farnmouth, through Newmarket and Thetford, from the White Horse, Fetter-lane.

To Norwich, through Colchester and Ipswich, from the same Place.

To Nottingham and Leeds, from the Bull and Mouth, in Bull and Mouth-street.

To Manchester, through Derby.

To Liverpool, through Coventry and Litchfield, from the Swan with Two Necks, Lad Lane.

To Portsmouth, from the Angel, behind St. Clement's Church: And

To Poole, from the Bell and Crown, Ho-born; the Swan with Two Necks, Lad Lane; and the Gloucester Coffee-house, Piccadilly.

Also this Day.

To GLOUCESTER, To BIRMINGHAM,

Through

Through

Southall

Barret

Uxbridge

St. Alban's

Reconfield

Dunstable

High Wycombe

Fenny Stratford

Yettsworth

Stony Stratford

Wheatley

Towcester

Oxford

Dorchester

Witney

Dunbarb

Hurford, and

and

Nothleach.

Coventry.

Letters to and from Cheltenham, will also be conveyed Six Times a Week, by the Gloucester Mail Coach.

The Mail Coach to Gloucester, from the Bell and Tun, Fleet-street: And

To Birmingham, from the Swan with Two Necks, Lad Lane.

THE PEOVER PAPERS
AND THE MIDLAND COUNTIES

From the work of Dr. J.W.M. Stone, M.B.

Part Three

C16 3JUL73 Vol One, p208. To Mr. Lax at Coventry saying that the objections against dispatch in a quarter of an hour and riding 5 miles an hour are frivolous.

C17 3JUL73 Vol One, p215. To Mr. Barber at Stone. Col Whitley will acquaint Mr. Middleton (clerk of the Chester Road) with the complaints of the overcharged letters. As to the person who says that his were paid in London, it is the fault of his correspondent if he pays and does not write 'post-pd' on them. If this is not done the servant that brings letters to the office may put the money in his pocket, but let them be endorsed 'post-pd' and there can be no double payment.

Cd5 8JUL73 Vol One, p222. To Mrs. Newton at Derby telling her that she is dismissed and Mr. Francis appointed.

Cd6 8JUL73 Vol One, p222. To Mr. Bunys at Loughborough informing him that he is to send all mail, post riders etc. to Derby to the house of John Francis.

C18 8JUL73 Vol One, p222. Another letter to Mr. Barber at Stone saying that he is sorry to find that Mr. Barber has turned the Manchester bag again by Knutsford but hopes those wilful persons will be convinced of their error and court him to re-establish the new branch. He cannot approve his proposal of settling out a footpost of his own from Brereton Green, so pray let it alone and see if Lord Gerrard and Mr. Lee can prevail with Maxfield to be more compliable.

C19 10JUL73 Vol One, p229. To Mr. Shugburgh at Daventry offering him the continuance of his employment or, if he would relinquish it, £5 to buy a piece of plate.

Bg3 15JUL73 Vol One, p238. To Mr. Philpotts at Hereford to let him know that he can have his work done for £24 salary and his branches served by a horse post twice a week "& ye 3d by a Market man", and not above 1d a letter demanded for sorting them. Col Whitley requires a clear answer about settling his stages.

C20 15JUL73 To the Mayor of Liverpool saying that he has proposed a correspondence betwixt Ireland and Lancs. by way of Stone where the postmaster has orders to give immediate conveyance without sending to London as was the former custom.

C21 17JUL73 Vol One, p245. To Mr. Barber at Stone telling him to keep a constant account of the Irish letters, paid and unpaid, and those under his cover, and to let them be charged in his daily bill.

C22 17JUL73 Vol One, p245. To Mr. Cranck at Birmingham saying that he has always thought great branches inconsistent with the interest of the office; his is the greatest of all. He has already subdivided all the great branches in the West, but demurs on Mr. Cranck's until he knows if he comes up or not.

C23 22JUL73 Vol One, p252. Yet another to Mr. Barber commenting that he knows not what to say to Mr. Aldcroft (Warrington), being solicited to make the stage at Brereton Greene; also to have a postmaster at Warrington to depend immediately on the office and another at Liverpool. He has no inclination to quit Mr. Aldcroft but must consider the country and office before all private respects. He conceives the post must still go through Knutsford and leave a bag there.

C24 26JUL73 Vol One, p264. He tells Mr. Barber that Lord Gerrard is unsatisfied with his letters passing by Knutsford, and he believes that if Mr. Barber would visit Maxfield he could dispose him to reasonable terms. He finds Eccles (Manchester) inclinable to it.

C25 29JUL73 Vol One, p266. Col Whitley tells Mr. Barber that he sees no reason why Brereton may not be made a stage as well as Knutsford; it is making his riding a little shorter to drop a bag at Knutsford, keeping a letter office there.

C26 2AUG73 Vol One, p277. If any letters go to Mr. Barber from Ireland from those remote stages where he has no account, Col Whitley supposes the best way is to send them to London. He desires to hear what he does in his new branch and (if that alteration be made) whether to continue the stage at Knutsford or Brereton, for Col Whitley is of the opinion Warrington and Liverpool should have dependance on neither.

C27 5AUG73 Vol One, p278. Col Whitley informs Mr. Barber that he has desired Hickes to write to him and Mr. Knight (Dublin) about the Irish letters, there being no reason to charge Mr. Barber with any more than his own stage and the Lancs. branch or, if any be sent to the next two stages, he may charge them as he does by-letters but with the full Irish port.

C28 30AUG73 Vol One, p309. He tells Mr. Barber that he will never find such agreement among the gentry and towns in Ches. as to give him a certain salary for running the post by the new branch; nothing will do it but a moderate allowance from every letter as is used in many places out of the main road.

C29 13SEP73 Vol One, p331. To Mr. Eccles at Manchester. His proposal for the by-letters is too low; the letters to Rochdale (and that way) are worth more and Daventry, Stone and Nantwich have offered double. He expects £6 for them.

C30 23SEP73 Vol One, p343. To Mr. Crancke at Birmingham saying that he has heard from Sir Simon Degg of the Ludlow Office. He wishes Mr. Crancke could compose the business to the content of all.

(To be continued)

FOR

POSTAL HISTORY

ESPECIALLY

G.B. (County)
MARITIME
TRANSATLANTIC
and some FOREIGN

CONTACT

Michael Jackson (Philatelists) Ltd.
LONDON INTERNATIONAL STAMP CENTRE
27 KING STREET
LONDON WC2E 8JD

01 836 2748 - 24 hr service

ADVANCE POSTING AT CHRISTMAS

This scheme was first tried at Rochdale in 1902. The correspondence, which the sender wanted to be delivered on Christmas Day, could be handed in at the post office up to 22nd December. This mail was then sorted but not delivered until the 25th. In 1903 the scheme was extended to a number of other towns including Coventry, Leicester, Shrewsbury and Walsall. It was not a success as can be seen from the following minute (35/8224/1904):

"....It will be observed that with one or two exceptions - notably Manchester - the returns are very disappointing, and the majority of the Surveyors are of the opinion that the arrangement is not one of material benefit to the service. In the circumstances there seems to be little or no advantage in continuing the experiment generally and, I submit for your consideration whether it is worthwhile proceeding with it any further. There can I think be little doubt that comparatively few persons trouble much whether their Christmas Cards are delivered on Christmas Day, or a day or so before, or even a day or so after, so long as they satisfy their consciences in having sent their greetings. Indeed many probably prefer to receive them a day or so before Christmas Day, so that any oversight on their part can be rectified. It is manifestly to the interest of the Department as regards the disposal of the cards to get them delivered as soon as possible before Christmas Day, and, on the whole, it is better to train the public mind as far as possible in the direction of early posting without arranging for the cards to be kept in the Post Office until Christmas Day rather than to lead the public to look to the Post Office to frame a system of advance posting with a guarantee that delivery will be effected only on Christmas Day. Such a system unless carried out generally could not well be effective, and, if carried out generally, the result would be far less satisfactory than under the existing arrangements.(!) Want of space for storing the letters and the large number of temporary hands required on Christmas Day would constitute some of the main difficulties. Work on Christmas Day is moreover, paid for at special high rates, and from an economical point of view it is therefore undesirable to increase it. Much correspondence also would doubtless be left over until Boxing Day when all attendance is paid for Extra, so that a man who had to work full time on the Bank Holiday would receive two days instead of one days pay."

This was followed by the surveyor's reports which included:

Coventry The experiment met with little success. I am of the opinion, nevertheless, that generally the plan is a good one, and unless it has proved equally unsuccessful at the other towns, I would propose to give it a trial next Xmas at Reading.

Leicester Although Mr. Harnett states the relief afforded was scarcely perceptible, I am strongly of the opinion that the experiment was so far successful that it should be tried again next Christmas and I should like to try it at Derby also.

Shrewsbury It cannot be said to have been a success, but, when better known, the arrangement may prove of considerable service. (Postmaster)

Walsall It cannot be said that the experiment was a success. In fact it is considered that the comparatively small number of letters posted under the scheme could have been dealt with in the ordinary way. The approximate cost was £7 for which expenditure no advantage was gained.

Consequently in 1904 the scheme was confined to those towns where it had met with a measure of success. Of these Leicester was the only one in the Midlands. Even so it was not used there in 1905-07. Prior to 1905 only local letters were accepted, but in subsequent years they were accepted for delivery in all parts of the country.

A report on the 1908 results said that there was any sort of success only in Manchester and Liverpool. Although the numbers there were large they were only a small percentage of the whole Christmas posting, 7.2% and 4.4% respectively.

At Leicester of the 51,000 items about 30,000 were for local delivery. The postmaster thought that little advantage was gained on the Christmas Day delivery.

After 1909 the scheme was abandoned.

Number of Letters posted under "Advance Posting" Scheme.

	1903	1904	1908
Coventry	4920		
Leicester	15222	14605	50998
Shrewsbury	884		
Walsall	11618		

I wonder how many of the Shrewsbury items have survived. If I comment on their scarcity, I suppose that certain gentlemen will prove to have half a dozen of them.

BY WAY OF WOORE?

With reference to the item in the last Midland Mail Dennis Salt writes: "....Godby's Map of his District dated February 1814, is much nearer the date of your letter and in my view a much more reliable map so far as his District is concerned. It shows Nantwich as the only Post Town between Chester and Stafford; Tarporely, Woore and Eccleshall being shown as Receiving Houses. Ashley Heath (from which Market Drayton was served) is not given any status at all. I believe Market Drayton sent a Foot Messenger to meet the Mail Coach at Ashley Heath (Loggerheads) to deliver and collect its bag of mail, which was probably made up at Stafford. The distance from Wrexham via Chester to Stafford and back to Market Drayton via Ashley Heath is 79 miles, which should be 8d. But the early mail coaches to Chester ran via Stone to Woore, and some years later it was changed to go via Eccleshall and Loggerheads to Woore. I suggest that the Deputy at Wrexham did not have an up-to-date list of Post Towns showing the charge to Market Drayton, and he calculated the distance as over 80 miles."

I believe that Dennis is substantially correct, although I am a little doubtful about his final point. However, as I shall show in a future article, postmasters certainly did make errors.

EVERSON'S WITNESS TO CROSS POST DEVELOPMENTS

by Rev. Christopher Beaver.

The volume of evidence compiled by Everson entitled "The Post Office in Birmingham 1550-1924" deposited in the Archives of Birmingham Library (see MM 45/12) includes several allusions to the development of cross-posts in the Midlands during the 18th century as outlined by our editor (MM 46/3ff) and there are allusions to routes, frequencies and times, some of which may be related to Dennis Salt's deductions (Postal History No. 228) concerning post night and bye night mails.

OXFORD - WORCESTER, OXFORD - (?) COVENTRY

There is a 1753 notice from Oxford (quoted from "Three Centuries in North Oxfordshire" by M. Sturge Henderson). Since other existing posts are not mentioned, it appears to be announcing an extension of a six-day post, already established between London and Oxford, on to Worcester, and also a three-day cross-post connecting that between Bristol and Oxford with the Chester Road at Coventry. The notice states:-

"Mail leaves Oxford every day, except Monday, at 2pm for Woodstock, Enstone, Chipping Norton, Shipstone-on-Stour, Worcester and Herefordshire, and on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 2pm for Stratford, Banbury, Warwick, Coventry, Ireland, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and all Staffordshire, Lancashire, Salop, and all North Wales, with Kendal in Westmoreland."

The first of these appears to be close to the route of the London to Ludlow post settled in 1683 (Postal History No. 171), but through Shipstone not Moreton-in-the-Marsh; it is probably for the sake of brevity that neither Chipping Campden nor Evesham is included. The second does not appear to be mentioned by Ralph Allen (His Narrative, Appendix 2), and if Philip Allen does not refer to it either perhaps it only lasted a short while. The route of the bye-night mail between London and Chester through Oxford, Worcester, Bromsgrove, Birmingham etc, which Ralph Allen shows to have been established as a through connection in 1755, was altered in 1758 to Oxford - Stratford - Birmingham (Postal History 228 pl3). The notice of that change makes no mention of an alternative post from Oxford to Stratford, Coventry etc. and the days would have coincided; it can therefore be supposed the Oxford to Coventry post had ceased in 1755 when much of its purpose was superseded by new provisions. One further observation on this Oxford notice: the 2pm departures suggest a speed, stops included, of a little over 4 m.p.h; the posts were due to leave the G.P.O. at 2am, so had covered little more than 50 miles in 12 hours. (It should be noted that one part of Allen's narrative suggests that the route through Oxford and Worcester to Birmingham was made a six-day post in 1746/7.)

BIRMINGHAM - KIDDERMINSTER

The Birmingham to Kidderminster cross-post was announced at Birmingham by the surveyor George Hodgson in Aris's Gazette:-

"The Post Master General has ordered a post six days a week between Birmingham and the towns of Dudley, Halesowen, Stourbridge, Kidderminster and Bewdley. Letters put in before 10pm from 5th January each night, except Monday, will be forwarded the following morning. Letters from these towns will be delivered out each morning except Wednesday. Also letters from Worcester and places beyond in the Great Cross Road and its branches will be delivered out at the same time every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning, and their answers must be put into the office by 10pm on those nights as they will be conveyed to and from Kidderminster at the expense of the Revenue and the messengers at present employed will be discontinued."

Presumably the messengers had not been authorised to carry letters to and from towns as far as Kidderminster, whose Birmingham mail would officially have been routed previously through Bridgnorth. It may surprise that this new post did not provide a six-day connection with Worcester and beyond. However Ralph Allen does not mention converting the part of the Great Cross Road between Chester and Bristol into a six-day post and towns such as Kidderminster and Bridgnorth are not on the 1763 list of places having a six-day post from London. It seems that it remained a three-day road until at least 1769; Birmingham to Bristol was a three-day post until the introduction of a mail coach on 6th July 1787 when it became daily.

BIRMINGHAM - DERBY

Rather longer notice was given to the people of Birmingham concerning the post to Derby. The arrangements sound complex since it was not to be a six-day post; unfortunately all timings and days of return from Derby were left unspecified. On 28th June 1770 Hodgson announced that to accelerate correspondence between the Chester and Great North Roads and their branches, a post was to run from Birmingham to Derby through Lichfield and Burton-on-Trent every Sunday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday as soon as the mail from London arrived, and on Tuesday early in the morning. From 6th July letters for Lichfield, Burton....Hull were to be sent from Birmingham by this post on the days stated. The letters for (Yorkshire and the North East) by this branch, or by way of Manchester etc. (i.e. via Lichfield not Derby for places in the West Riding ?) on the same days, and by Coleshill on Wednesday night as usual, and for Leicestershire by this post on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings (N.B. not Friday), and as usual (by Coleshill ?) on Sunday and Thursday nights.

There are problems of interpretation of this notice beyond those suggested by the questions in parentheses. It is apparent the new post was five times a week and left Birmingham in the morning as early as possible, on the four stated mornings provided that the mail from London had arrived. The likely time of arrival in Birmingham of the London mail would have been approximately 2am, but it seems to be implied that the Tuesday mail would be likely to leave Birmingham earlier than on the other days. Now the mails in question must have left London early on Saturday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings, that is to say the bye-nights plus Wednesday (= "Tuesday night", a post-night). One question is by what route or routes the London mail arrived; another is why it was necessary to wait for it. There would seem to be logic in waiting if it came on the Oxford and Stratford route, but not if it came by Coventry and Coleshill, for the main road continued to Lichfield and transfer of mail from towns on the central part of the Chester Road to the new cross-post could have been effected there. Dennis Salt has shown the assumption by Howard Robinson and others that the Chester Road was six-day by 1756 to be incorrect, and no evidence has yet been seen to indicate such a post along it before the introduction of the Liverpool and Chester and Holyhead "Mail Diligences" in 1785. Contrary evidence includes the fact that Coleshill does not occur on the lists of post towens, having a six-day connection with London, published in 1755, 1761, 1763 or 1782. Lichfield is only on the last of these lists, so is likely to have become six-day in 1770. (Holyhead and other North Wales towns are also on the 1782 list only.) It may be the post on the Chester Road was still three-day in 1770 therefore, but it does look as though the post from London through Oxford and Stratford was four-day. Possibly there was a heavier amount of mail from London on Tuesday nights as a result of a largely "blank" day on Sunday. Incidentally the notice does show the Birmingham office did not enjoy an equivalent Sabbath privilege. It was restrictions on Sunday working at the G.P.O. which determined so many six-day rather than daily postal connections.

BIRMINGHAM - COLESHILL

There remains to be discussed one further notice put in Aris's Gazette by Mr. Hodgson, that of 2nd April 1774 which has been quoted in the article introducing Everson's volumes (MM 45/12, 2nd para.) This clarifies that Birmingham was still receiving its mail from London by a distinct route on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays - called the bye-days in the notice. It is not stated why it "will certainly arrive much earlier and more regularly than for some time past" The notice would surely have made the fact plain if in future (on and after 8th April) the mail would come as on the "post-days" via Coleshill. It seems more likely to mean new contracts and shorter stops than a change of route, at least at the Birmingham end. What it could imply is that on those three days, to the annoyance of the public, the mail had been arriving late (perhaps in mid-morning; possibly mid-afternoon if the average speed of the post boys was more like 3 m.p.h.), whereas at some time in the past it had normally arrived as on the post-days in time for delivery in the town at say 7 or 8 a.m. In the same notice Coleshill is mentioned as the place of connection to which two additional posts will be sent to effect a six-day service between Birmingham and the North and (weather permitting) Ireland. (Was this also the means and date by which London achieved a six-day connection with Holyhead etc?). It is probable that on the other four days this particular connection was also made at Coleshill.

By this date Birmingham had cross-post connections with most parts of Britain and Ireland, and a large proportion of its mail was no longer routed through London. The evidence Everson collected does not solve any of our editor's particular problems. Rather it adds to the complexity of the emerging picture. It encourages some tentative deductions and further research. No wonder those outside the Post Office were not expected to understand. Palmer's Plan was ridiculed as simplistic interference. Perhaps Everson was wise not to attempt to add any interpretation to the records he discovered and transcribed.

Editor's Note:- As an addendum to this article, I have reproduced, by permission of P.O. Archives, the 1775 list of towns receiving a six-day post. On this I have marked with a cross those towns that are not on the 1768 list; also I have underlined those towns of particular interest to members. The absence of Coleshill from this list suggests that the post on the Chester Road was not six days a week. Possibly the Holyhead mail used the Chester Road on the post-days and the Oxford - Birmingham route on the other days. Incidentally Wokingham (Oakingham) is on the 1768 list but not that of 1775.

Great Britain Postal History

from 1840 to date. County material,

FDCs and the unusual. Send for my latest list.

ROGER HUDSON
36 WEST STREET
WARWICK
CV34 6AN

GENERAL-POST-OFFICE, April 5th, 1775.

His Majesty's Postmaster-General have been pleased to establish a Daily Post, Sunday excepted, to and from this Office, and the following Towns; and the Places in their respective Districts.

Abingdon.	Colsterworth.	Hertford.	X Newbury.	Stoke in Norfolk.
X Alresford.	X Congleton.	X Henley.	Newcastle upon Tyne.	Stone.
X Amphill.	Coventry.	Hereford.	X Newcastle under Line.	Stourbridge.
Annan.	Croydon.	X Hitchin.	Newmarket.	Stratford in Avon.
Appleby.		Holkham.	Newport-Pagnel.	Stroud, Gloucestersh.
Ashburton.	Darling.	X Holm's Chaple.	Northallerton.	X Sudbury.
Attleborough.	Darlington.	Holt.	Northampton.	X Sunderland.
	Dartford.	Holyhead.	Nottingham.	X Swaffham.
	Daventry.	X Hounslow.	Northwich.	
X Baldock.	Deal.	Howgen.	Norwich.	Tadcaster.
Banbury.	Derby.	Hull.		Taunton.
Barnard's-Castle.	Dereham.	X Hungerford.	Oxford.	Tedbury.
Barnet.	Donaghadee.	Huntingdon.		X Tetworth.
Barnsley.	Doncaster.	Huthersfield.	Penrith.	Thame.
Bath.	Dover.		Petersfield.	Thetford.
Bawtry.	Dumfries.	Ingatestone.	Plymouth.	Thorne.
Beccles.	Dunstable.	Ipswich.	X Plympton.	Tiverton.
Beaconsfield.	Durham.	Ireland, by R. & S. to & from Post Office	Poole.	Tunbridge from Maidstone to Maidstone
X Bedford.		Ilsworth.	Portsmouth.	Tuxford.
X Bewley.	East Grinstead.		Preston.	X Twickenham.
X Biggleswade.	Enfield.	Kelvedon.		
Birmingham.	Enstone.	Kendal.	Queenborough.	X Uckfield.
Bicester.	Epsom.	Kelwick.		Uxbridge.
Bocking.	Exeter.	X Kidderminster.		
Bradford in Yorkshire.		Kingston.	X Ramsbury.	Wakefield.
X Braintree.		X Knutsford.	Ramsgate, from Maidstone to Maidstone	X Wallingford.
Bridgewater.			Rawcliffe.	Walfall.
Brighthelm-stone, from Maidstone to Maidstone	Fairford.	Lancaster.	Reading.	Walsingham.
Bristol.	Fakenham.	Leatherhead.	Retford.	Ware.
Bromley from Maidstone to Maidstone	X Farnham.	X Lechlade.	X Ringwood.	Warrington.
Brough.	Farringdon.	Lebbury.	Ripley.	Warwick.
Burntwood.	Ferrybridge.	Leeds.	Rochdale.	Watford.
Burroughbridge.	Fevertham.	Leicester.	Rocheater.	Watton in Norfolk.
Bury St. Edmund's.	X Foot's-Cray.	Lewes.	X Ross.	Wells in Somerset.
Burnham in Norfolk.	X Froom.	X Litchfield.	Rotherham.	Wells in Norfolk.
X Burfelem.	X Gainsborough.	Liverpool.	Roydon.	Wellington in Somerset.
X Burton upon Trent.	Garitang.	Loughborough.	Rumford.	X Welwyn.
	X Gatehead.	Lowelloff.	X Rumsey.	Wetherby.
Calne.	Gerrard's-Crofs.	X Luton.	Ryegate.	Whitehaven.
Cambridge.	Gloucester.	Lynn.		Wigan.
Canterbury.	Godalmin.	X Macclesfield.	X Salisbury.	Wight, Isle of
Carlisle.	X Godstone.	X Maidenhead.	Sandwich.	X Winborn.
Caxton.	X Gosport.	Maidstone.	Saxmundham.	Winchester.
Chatham.	Grantham.	Manchester.	Sevenoake from Maidstone to Maidstone	Windham in Norfolk.
Chelmsford.	Gravesend.	X Manningtree.	St. Alban's.	Windsor.
Chatterfield.	Guildford.	Mansfield.	Sheffield.	Wingham in Kent.
Chester.		Margate, from Maidstone to Maidstone	Shipston upon Stower.	Witham in Essex.
Chichester.	X Hales Owen.	Market Harborough.	Shifnal.	Wolverhampton.
X Chippenham.	Hallifax.	X Marlborough.	Shrewsbury.	X Wooburn.
Chipping-norton.	X Halled.	Marlow.	Sittingbourn.	Woodstock.
Chorley in Lancashire.	Hampton-Court.	X Midhurst.	Southall.	Worcester.
Cirencester.	Hampton in Gloucestershire.	X Monmouth.	Southampton.	Workup.
Claremont.	Harborough.		Stafford.	Workington.
Clay.	X Harwich.	Namptwich.	Stamford.	X Wycombe, High.
Cobham.	Haslemere.	X Nettlebed.	Staines.	X Wycombe, West.
Cockermouth.	X Hatfield.	Newark.	X Stevenage.	
Colchester.	X Havant.		Silton.	Yarmouth in Norfolk.
Colnbrook.			X Stockport.	York.

A Mail is dispatched from London to Edinburgh, and from Edinburgh to London every Day, Wednesday and Sunday excepted; as also to and from Morpeth, Alnwick, Belford, and Berwick; and a Post is established Six Times a Week between Edinburgh and Aberdeen, Glasgow, Greenock, and the intermediate Towns.

Letters are sent from hence on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays for Arundel, Bighthelmstone, Petworth, Steyning, Shoreham, Wisbich, Grayes, Newport in Shropshire, Peterborough, Spalding, Boston, and Louth, and return thither on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Like-wise on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays to the Devizes, Melksham, Trowbridge, and Bradford in Wilts, and return on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

To Bridgenorth every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, and from thence every Day.

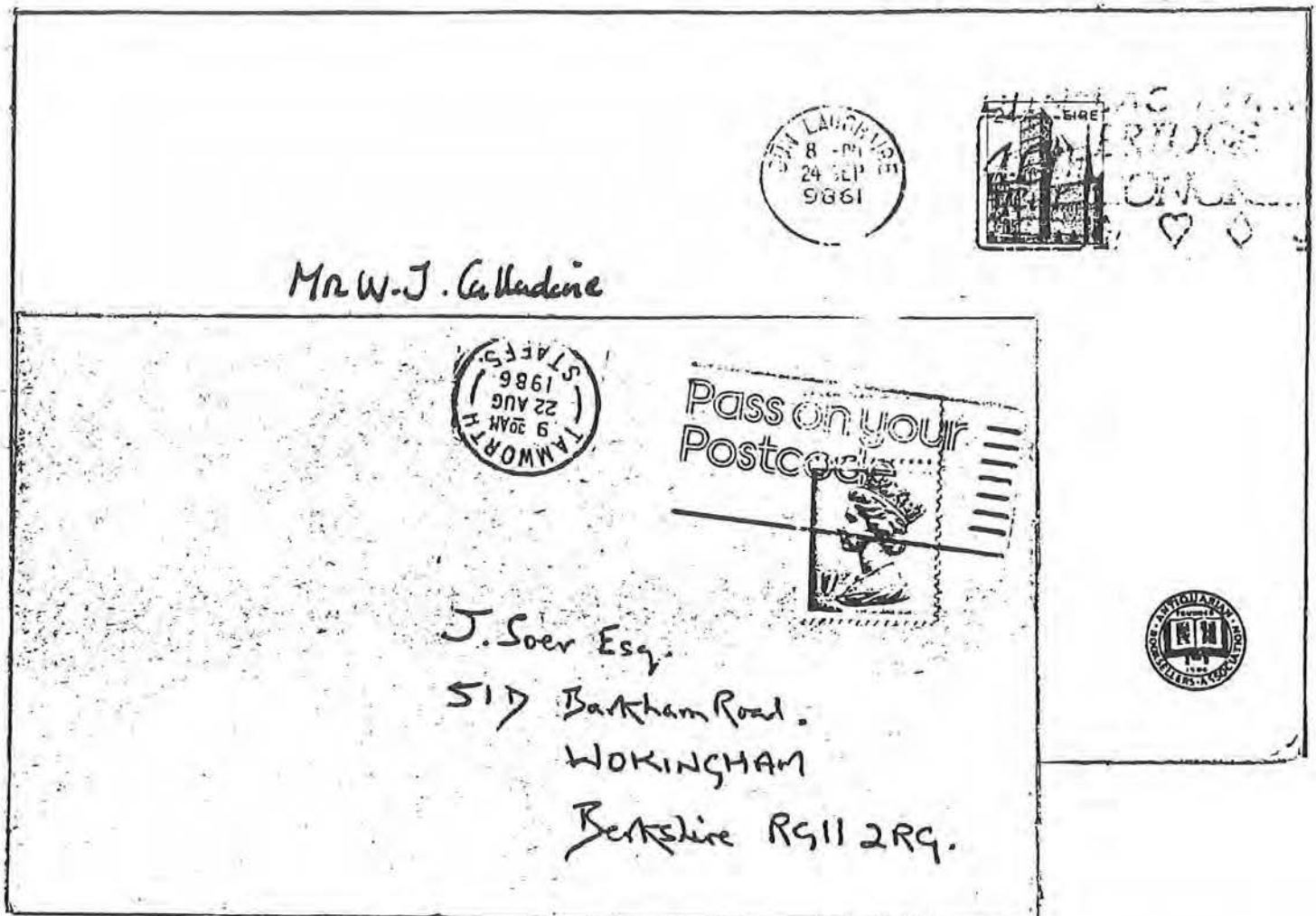
And to Somerton, Ilminster, Chard, and Axminster, every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and back every Day.

By Command of the Postmaster-General,

ANTH. TODD, Secretary.

TAILPIECE

John Calladine has sent the envelope which contained the only order for the UDC book so far received from Ireland. Just to show that anything the Irish can do the postmen of Staffordshire can do even better, I have added one of my own.

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

This is due in January 1987. It will include reports on the Shrewsbury and Burton-on-Trent meetings as well as the comparison of the 1807 circulation maps which had to be held over from this edition. All articles to:-
John Soer, 51D Barkham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG11 2RG.

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