

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.midlandphs.org.uk



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40th Anniversary Edition



Letter heading from Vienna, 1892. See Page 5 for John Scott's report of his display to the 40th Anniversary meeting

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EDITORIAL

My predecessor, John Soer, always had a note requesting articles, large or small, and I am going to be no exception! I would like to have a main article of at least 6 pages for each edition, so if you have something in mind that you have meant to get round to writing, please do so. Winter is approaching, so get out your PCs, laptops, or even pen and paper and give us the benefit of your research. On the other hand maybe you have a comment you would like to share with the membership via Letters to the Editor (see below). So, get cracking, *please!!!*

We welcome new members	Terry Harrison Stephen Heath Julian Tweed John Walker	collecting Leamington Spa, collecting Uttoxeter, GB Express, Late Fee mail & pre-1840 to and from Ireland, Confederate States of the USA & Far East POW mail.
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It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of member Martin Evans and send condolences to his family.

MIDPEX 2015 has come and gone. Your society had a table promoting ourselves, which resulted in three new members. Good work everyone!



Mr President, Mr Chairman and Mr Secretary manning the stand at MIDPEX 2015

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

19th August 2015

Dear Brian Atkins,

This letter is a follow-up to my telephone call earlier today. You had raised the issue (MM 187, front page) of the rather modest proportion of lots sold in the recent Society auctions and asked for comments.

I suggest the root of the problem is that we have a rather small market (the membership), so it is to be expected that many lots won't find a home. An extension of this is that vendors can't know, other than very generally, what buyers might want. If the market were bigger (say a thousand) then the take-up would be proportionately greater. Well, we don't have that number of members; seen in that light the auction does pretty well. But what else can we do?

It is buyers rather than vendors who call the tune. What I propose is that potential buyers should have the chance to list their 'wants' – general or specific – so that potential vendors can respond knowing that there will be a take-up.

I collect Rutland Postal History; it is elusive. I am on all the dealer's lists and they are my main source of supply, ie; they know what I want. I suspect that some members have the odd item of Rutland material they would be happy to dispose of, if they knew I wanted it. So what about a published 'wants list'. Potential buyers could be charged for their entry (£5?), vendors could contact them by telephone or e-mail. What do you (or anyone else) think?

Yours sincerely, Bill Gillham

THE SOCIETY'S 40th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Eighteen members of the Society, together with spouses and friends, assembled at Loughborough on 5th September for the first of two meetings celebrating the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Midland (GB) Postal History Society in 1975. (The second such meeting will be the Christmas meeting at the Museum of Brewing.) The Guest of the Day was John Scott, Immediate Past President of The Postal History Society. It was he who, at 11 o'clock, gave a fascinating and unusual display at the premises of Lovatt House, once the freight headquarters of the old Great Central Railway, a display reported separately in this journal. He also handed everyone present a pristine copy of the latest "Postal History" magazine, hot off the press less than 24 hours before the meeting, and also brought a special 40th anniversary card, from John and his wife Claire, the current President of the Postal History Society, who sadly had to miss the event.

It was at the conclusion of the display, promptly at 12.30, that we all began the short walk to the nearby Loughborough station of the re-born Great Central Railway, the only preserved steam railway with double track throughout. Although it was a diesel enthusiast's weekend, our train was steam hauled – by an LMS "Black Five" for the anoraks' information – and we were to be comfortably housed in the Pullman Bar Car, a carriage attached to the 1.15pm dining train departure from the station (see below). A welcoming cocktail greeted us and as soon as everyone was comfortably settled in plush seating along each side of the carriage, John Scott proposed a toast to the Society, wishing us many more years of successful existence.



If the train ambled its way to Leicester North (and "ambled" may be too frenetic a description of progress), it was only to allow ample time for us all to enjoy the most excellent hot and cold buffet laid on by the GCR. We undoubtedly did full justice to the fare provided and no one could possibly complain of inadequacy. It was probably the very first time the Redditch Mafia had left anything on a buffet table!

It was a great pleasure to see such support, particularly from our indefatigable County Editors, and particular mention should be made of John and Madeleine Hine's presence, having made the journey from Holland especially for this occasion. Our guest speaker, who had travelled from Dorset that same morning, probably felt that he had also been on an overnight expedition and we are most grateful he made the effort on our behalf. We reassemble in December for part two of the party.

Submitted by John Calladine, who, along with John Soer, should be congratulated for organising such a special day for the society. Despite the early start and minor parking problems Angela and I enjoyed it and, judging by comments from others present, they did as well; the day was a great success – Ed.

SOME TREASURES FROM OUR 40th ANNIVERSARY GATHERING



Chris Jackson began proceedings by presenting John Hine with the Jon Baker Trophy



John Scott, our speaker for the day



A Pause in Proceedings, time to examine exhibits



An Onboard Toast to the Society



Everyone present, except for your photographic editor and his assistant

John Scott's account of his display to the 40th Anniversary gathering of the Society

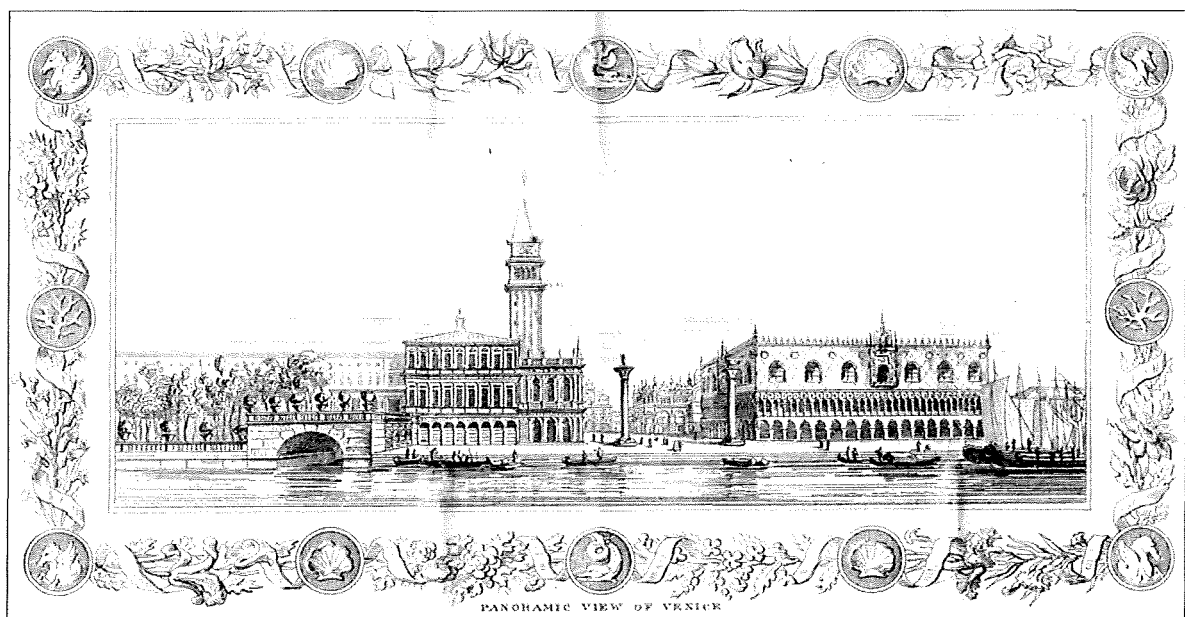
WRITING HOME – THE DEVELOPMENT OF DECORATIVE WRITING PAPER.

I propose to take the subject in chronological order, starting in the late 18th century and ending in the mid 20th century, so that you can see the changes in printing methods, taste and technology along the way. I hope by the end of my display, you will know more about the development of writing paper. Letters will help us answer questions about who was using such paper and why and what the designs can tell us about the social history of the time.

There is no such thing as a totally blank sheet of paper for much of the period; paper was handmade, the evidence of which stands out in the watermark which became more elaborate to identify the maker or even to make a political point. Some years ago I observed that the experts at the London Metropolitan Archive did not record the watermark on the papers which they were conserving but often the watermark is the only evidence that we have as to who made the paper and when. Early watermarks were quite primitive, as you might expect from a craftsman working in a rural mill with bent wire but it was soon realised that the watermark could act as a security device on documents with a financial or legal value and one of the ironies was that the watermark even survived revolutions. During the French Revolution for example they went to huge lengths to eliminate the words 'Le Roi' on the paper duty marks stamped onto the sheet, but the King lived on in the watermark, for paper was far too valuable a commodity to be destroyed even by the most fervent revolutionary. Elaborate watermarks were seen in continental Europe to be an opportunity to promote kings and emperors with Napoleon, portrayed as a Roman Emperor. However the decorative appeal of a watermark is limited and the rest of my display concentrates upon the more visible elements of decoration, the first examples of which appeared in the 1780s as stencilled borders which, by their nature, were probably intended to appeal to the female writer. A hand painted example posted from Aachen in 1814 is a wonderful evocation of the art of the engraver which was typical of the Napoleonic era.

In Great Britain the fashion was for embossing, the first patent for which was granted to John Hancock in 1796. The firm of Dobbs & Company, operating from New Bridge Street in London from 1803, produced a huge range of high quality embossed products with their name discreetly concealed in the margins. Their images were purely decorative purpose or shared the same patriotic fervour as their European counterparts. Later in the century the firm became known as Dobbs Bailey and exported more sophisticated paper widely, even to Italy. Such paper was expensive to buy and the image took up valuable space on the sheet and may well have been too sophisticated to appeal to the mass market. We were masters also of the art of lace paper which had been developed almost by accident by a Dobbs employee, Joseph Addinbrooke in 1834. Examples are so fragile that only rarely would they be entrusted to the post.

More and more people were embarking upon the Grand Tour or visiting spas and seaside resorts. There had been a fashion in continental Europe for visiting cards engraved with images of classical ruins, with a blank space being left for the insertion of the visitor's name. In the absence of postcards or photographs, enterprising publishers started using the engraved plates from such cards to produce topographical stationery to show how sophisticated and well-travelled was the writer. Although it was posted within Italy by an aristocrat the inscription 'Panoramic View of Venice' suggests that the paper was produced with the English visitor in mind. Another engraving shows the Campo Santo in Pisa in 1844 and yet another one has scenes from Siena.



Lacking a similar tradition for visiting cards in this country, we produced engravings which filled most of the upper half of a folded quarto sheet. The earliest example recorded by Frank Staff is the 'South View of Worthing taken at sea' in 1832, drawn and published by James Rouse of Fulham for A. Carter at the Library in Worthing. The attribution continues 'where may be had all the interesting views and antiquities of Sussex adapted for scrap books etc', which explains why relatively few sheets of writing paper survive to this day as Victorian households had scrap books filled with headings cut from letters. Unused sheets were frequently bound into books which now are unbound to be sold to collectors as individual sheets. As the century progressed more people made weekend excursions and wanted to write home to show where they had been, often marked with an ink cross as later with postcards. The principal publishers were the London firms of Harwood, Newman, Rock and Simmons who often numbered and dated the printing plates. Over 7,000 numbered views are known from Rock alone but we know little about the artists and engravers responsible for the designs. Surprisingly the printing plates used on writing paper were hardly ever used for anything else, apart from the cards which were sold in booklet form to visiting tourists. While there was an inevitable degree of artistic licence, the details of everyday life which emerge from the quality of the engraving are probably reasonably accurate. One example is the goat cart on the promenade at Brighton, "*what a nice place that would be for the boys to have a run and play about on one of the little four wheeled carriages which you may see in the print drawn by a very grave looking goat with a long beard*". The lithograph of Windsor Castle sent by the Reverend the Honourable Henry Cockayne Cust, Canon of Windsor, to his son in 1837, thirty four days after Queen Victoria's Coronation in the hope that "*it may remind you of your walks in the pretty garden of Windsor castle; the flag is not now flying, it has never been hoisted since good King William was buried; but the young Queen has not yet paid her expected visit*".

The other benefit of topographical writing paper was that, in an age of mass emigration, it reminded you of home. The example with a steam train passing in front of Canterbury Cathedral in 1854 was actually posted from Philadelphia to Cincinnati, eight years after it was published, and the sender draws his wife's attention to "*this handsome view of my native city*". For some the presence of a large engraving reduced the space for writing and the sender of the view of the Royal Exchange posted from New York to Washington in the 1840s is quite frank that "*I write on this pretty sheet my dearest Liz because I scarce have time to say a word to you*". Interiors hardly ever feature on writing paper but there is a lithograph of a domestic drawing room posted from Milan to Florence in 1835. Writing paper of this period is almost always printed in black on white paper with colour added by hand, as on the example sent from Glasgow to Canada in 1849. The elaborate cartouche makes the products of this publisher, Allan & Ferguson, instantly recognisable and was clearly their trademark.

Engraving a plate was an elaborate and time-consuming process and by the 1850s was being superseded by lithographic printing which was much cheaper to produce and could be sold to the masses pouring off the trains and in towns which lacked the attractions of the spa or of the seaside. In Newark two views were published by the same local printer within a decade of one another. The first is a well designed engraving showing the Town Hall whereas the later example has relegated the Town Hall to an indistinct blob and elevated the commercial premises of the printer, all with much less detail. A feature of these sheets is they appear in the smaller notepaper format as opposed to the larger writing paper of the 1830s. When you folded and sealed the latter sheets you had a letter which could be posted after being sealed with wax and addressed whereas the notepaper size was simply too small to be folded without being placed in an envelope. It was not until the Great Exhibition of 1851 that De La Rue demonstrated their new envelope-folding machine which could fold and gum 3,600 envelopes an hour and which spelt the beginning of the end of the larger format sheets. Photography made its mark on writing paper, at first by sticking photographs into an ornate frame, as on the views of the Bosphorus printed in Germany for Moses Shapira of Jerusalem, a Polish Jew who opened a shop there in 1861 catering for the pilgrim trade and who committed suicide in Rotterdam in 1884 after selling spurious antiquities to the British Museum. By 1900 the photographs were being printed directly onto the paper, although the Coronation Note published by John Walker in 1911 still contained a neat photographic miniature of the King and Queen in a blue or red embossed frame neatly tied with matching silk. There was the briefest flourish of chromo-litho printing in the 1890s with the Gruss aus (greetings from) template but in general the age of the postcard had dawned and with it the death of topographical writing paper.

The mid Victorian era saw a dramatic increase in art for its own sake. You could buy paper with a theme appropriate for your purpose or for the day of the week on which the paper was to be used, much of which probably emanated from Italian printers. By now colour printing was coming into its own and George Baxter invented a process which enabled the production of extremely fine colour prints - his aim was to produce art for the masses and the small illustrations which were intended to embellish needle packets were used also enhance notepaper.

The triumphs of the Industrial Revolution ranging from Robert Stephenson's Britannia Bridge, to Brunel's Skew Bridge in Bath and his Great Eastern steamship by Charles Magnus of New York all feature on writing paper of the period. Not that all of these inventions worked - the Aerial Steam Carriage over London Bridge which was patented in 1842 never actually got off the ground as the steam engine was too heavy to fly. The opening of a spectacular new

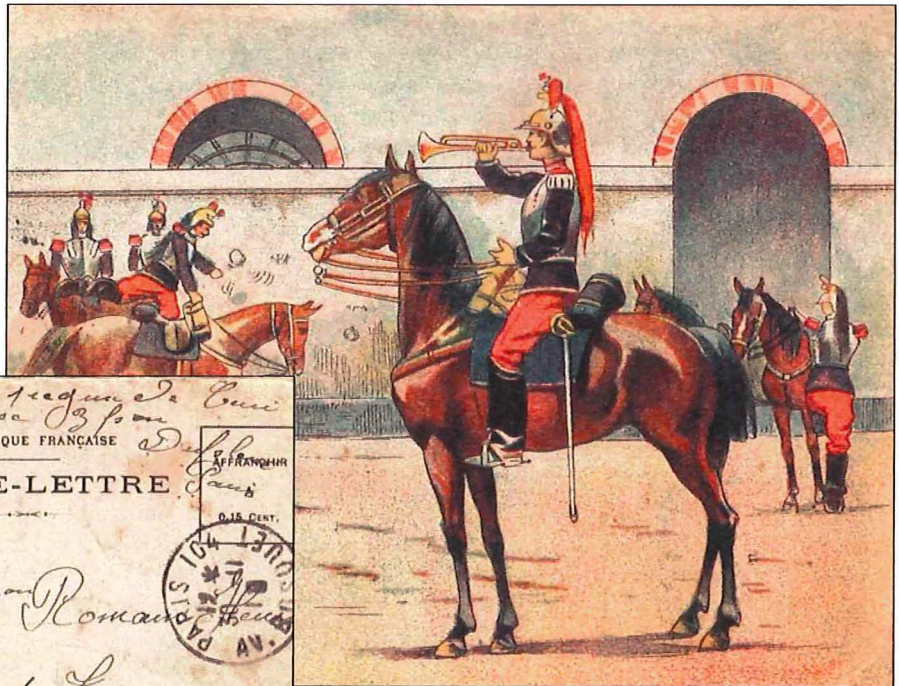
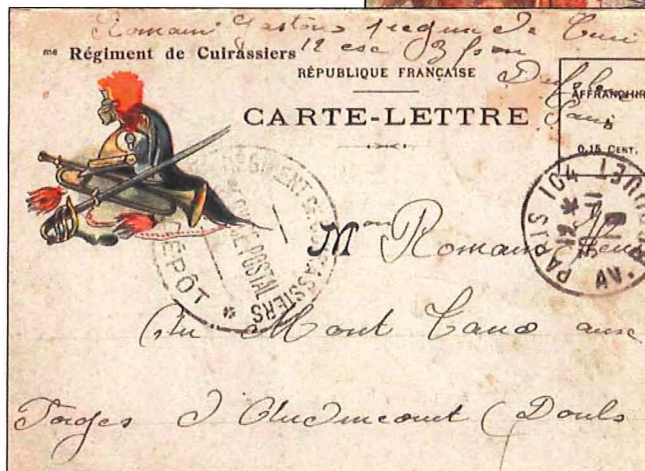
building, such as the Alexandrinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg in 1832, was marked by a very rare and early example of Russian writing paper sent from there to Charleston in the following year. Even a General Election was felt worthy of commemoration and the numbers gathered in front of Brighton Town Hall in 1840 are truly spectacular.

Mourning paper had been printed with black borders since the late 18th century and just occasionally you come across a more elaborate version as on the example from Pisa in 1843 but by the 1870s taste was already changing. On the one hand you had very elaborate and frankly fairly uninspiring but typically late Victorian designs printed in Germany, often with chromo-litho stickers added to make the impact even greater. By the 1890s new trends in design become more evident but the die-stamped address is already making an appearance along with the new-fangled telegraph station and, not long after, the railway station and the telephone number.

Apart from the fact that I would be reluctant to end on such a mundane note, the one group of people writing home who haven't had a look in yet has been the military. The 19th century was not lacking in wars and these were marked both by writing paper for sale to a patriotic public and by designs intended for use by the soldiers themselves. The Crimean War was the first such occasion to give rise to a significant flow of commemorative stationery, the splendid depiction of H.M.S. "Rodney" being sent by a sailor from Bashika Bay in 1853 in which he writes of *"this outlandish uncivilized hole where you see nothing but Greeks and Turks who stink so much of garlic that you can't come within half a mile of them"*. The Indian Mutiny horrified the nation and Rock & Co were not slow in producing a gruesome image of the Massacre at Cawnpore in 1857. In 1862 along came the American Civil war and with it a whole host of patriotic paper and envelopes.

1910 Hinged Letter Card from Paris with message (below, reduced) and colour depiction of armour plated cavalry mustering (Cuirassiers).

Images of card separated here to fit.



This year we are remembering the First and Second World Wars and so it is fitting to end this talk with a few examples, both of patriotic stationery sold in penny packets and comic writing paper designed by Harry Eliot in 1915 and by the French artist Louis Morin, chasing a German soldier through the paper who emerges on the other side. Finally you may remember the large sheets of topographical writing paper of the 1830s - these were overtaken by envelopes in the 1850s requiring smaller sheets of note paper. Ironically the emergence of the air letter was almost a throw-back to the previous century. Not only was there scope for a topographical image but, when unfolded, you have the letter, the image, the address and the stamp on the same sheet of paper as you did in 1832. Even the purpose for using them was similar and the American G.I. writing home in 1944 explains that *"this is a view of Rome in part through an opening of the wall that stands around the entire city. The long white building in the distance is the Italian Capitol, and is to them what the White House is to us in America"*.

In this abridged version of John Scott's display, it is impossible to include all the wonderful examples of engravings, lithographs and printed cards that we were shown but I hope you will get a flavour of what was on view - Ed

THE OCTOBER MEETING at ALCESTER

At precisely 1.30pm, Chris Jackson opened the meeting with 21 members present and after a few words from our Secretary, Mick Gill and your editor (pleading for articles again!), the topic of 'The 80s' commenced.

Chris Jackson was first up and showed small Worcestershire udc's, which included Belbroughton, Bengeworth, Fininstall (only known copy), Lower Clent, Eardeston, Harvington, Knightsford Bridge (only known copy), Netherton, Powick, Robertsensend Street and Stourton. Now before you all shout 'they are 1859, 1860s marks', Chris said there were 77 examples, plus 7 different colours which took them to 84 – hence 'The 80s' – ingenious!

John Soer looked at the 80s in each of the previous five centuries. For the 1580s he needed to step back a year to 1579 with a Corsini letter sent from Antwerp to London. The 1680s included a letter from Appleby in 1685 to Jonathan Moore, endorsed 'by Jo Osborn att Blossoms Inn, Laurance Lane', charged 2d and a Bishopmark; second, a London Gazette of 1686 announced a three day a week post to Ashby-de-la-Zouch. From the 1780s came first-type mileage marks of Leicester and Lutterworth, while a number of different duplex marks of Leicester represented the 1880s. The final sheet illustrated the introduction of Facer/Canceller Tables in the Leicester Sorting Office in 1882.

Clive Jones brought Yorkshire towns nearest to the Midlands, beautifully written up as ever: 1781 & 1783 straight-line **SHEFFIELD**, 1785 **160 SHEF / FIELD**, 1787 & 1788 **SHEFFIELD** in a distinctive claret colour, then 1789 **DONCAS / TER 161** mileage and finally 1787 & 1789 **BAWTRY / 153**. For his second stint Clive regaled us with 1881 Sheffield to Cape Colony at 6d rate as the Cape was not in the UPU, 1884 to USA at 2½d, 1881 & 1883 Sheffield to Sweden via Hull at 2½d, one with Ship Letter, 1885 1/6 rate Sheffield to Cape, 1876 & 1886 Sheffield to Milan with Company cachets and 1888 & 1889 Sheffield registered to Leiden and Switzerland. An illustrated letterhead from Huddersfield to Hinckley (Sept 1786) showed Huddersfield's first postmark, addressed to Messrs J Thomas & Co. at Hinckley proving that some Midlands prosperity was based on Yorkshire cloth and wool products

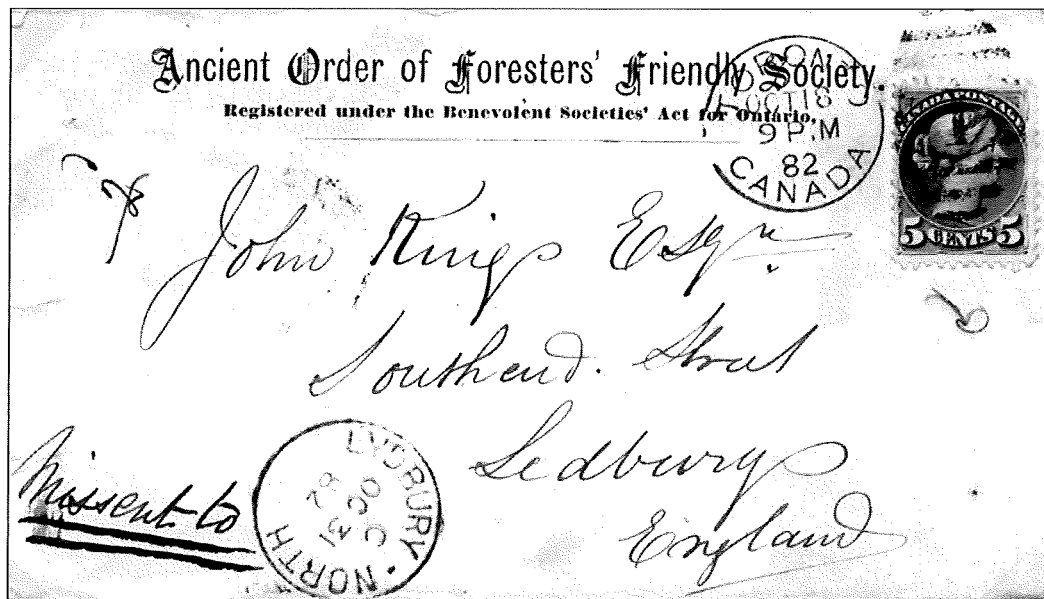
Mick Gill began with a private April 1582 letter from Southwell with a request for another payment of 'pencon'! Another private letter followed of January 1686 from Mansfield to Loscoe, Derbyshire and a December 1780 letter from Doncaster with an additional charge of 2d for delivery from Newark to Southwell. August 1784 had a notice of increased postal rates from the 31st in the London Chronicle and also a **147 GAINS / BOROUGH** to Pontefract endorsed *Turn at Newark*. November 1785 mileage marks of Mansfield and Newark and a December 1787 letter from Alnwick to Claxby in *Linkinshire*, endorsed *Turn at / Grantham*, was turned at Newark where it received a **Mifsent to / NEWARK**, the earliest explicit missent mark recorded. Mick's second effort started with a March 1880 A25 / Malta duplex to Beesthorpe Hall near Caunton –renovated by the gang in Auf Wiedersen Pet. A March 1881 cover had a Worksop vertical duplex and a **LINCOLN SORTING TENDER** and an April 1881 cover had two strikes of a **541 / NEWARK 4VOD** to Cologne (see below). A **541** vertical oval cancelled a registered cover to London in July 1883. 1980s produced a Business Reply Docket completed at Kneesall (July 1981), a Midlands Posta Board postcard of the Penfold Letter box at Budby, still in use, with a **FIRST DAY OF SALE / NEWARK** postmark on 8 SEP 1981 and an OHMS cover to Kneeshall in Dec 1981 which was missent to Eakring. Finally machine cancels of Newark, March and September 1984, one with the date slug inverted and the other with the whole town die inverted.



1881 cover NEWARK to Cologne with the 2½d UPU rate paid by 2 Venetian reds and ½d blue-green

Alan Marshall exhibited two examples of the 1780 45mm x 13mm **NOTTING / HAM** NG139 (British County Catalogue of Postal History, Vols 1 & 2), previously only known in archives. There was a similar, previously unrecorded 1782 45mm x 15mm NG140 mark and two examples, again similar, of 1783 & 1784 44mm x 16mm NG141. There were four examples of the 1785 51mm x 13mm 127 mileage mark, NG143, two having travelled together to London and one with an Edinburgh Bishop mark. He concluded with a 1789 entire with the 127 Horseshoe, NG145, turned at Macclesfield, uprated from Stone to Buxton. Second time around Alan showed 1784 Loughborough, 1785, Loughborough 110 mileage, LC88, 1787 entire personally carried from Nottingham to Strasbourg. He then delved into the 1880s with 1882 Nottingham 583 barred numeral duplex to Leipzig, two 1881 Nottingham 583 3VOS on registered mail, two 1883 Nottingham 3THOS, again on registered mail and finally two 1886 & 1887 Nottingham registered covers to London.

Brian Atkins first attempt began with a 1781 Spalding to Market Drayton with a London *In all* mark. Shrewsbury did not have a 1st – type mileage mark, so Brian showed three examples of the **SHREWS / BURY** marks of 1780, 1784 & 1788. Two types of **141 LUDLOW** marks were shown (1785 & 1788), the latter always a poor strike. A relatively common **142 BRIDGE / NORTH** (1789) was followed by the scarcer **OSWESTRY / 173** (1789) and much scarcer **137 SHIFF / NAL** (1785 on a FREE signed by Henry Bridgman, sometime MP for Ludlow and Wenlock) and finally the **179 ELLES / MERE** (1785), probably issued as Ellesmere became a post town in that year. His second display showed three items between Canada and Shropshire, 1881 Victoria BC to Wrockwardine; 1882 Ancient Order of Foresters' Friendly Society, Toronto to Ledbury with 5¢ black small queen but *Missent to Lydbury North*, near Bishops Castle (see below) and 1883 Ludlow to HMS *Swiftsure*, Esquimalt, BC. Six covers between the USA and Shropshire included an 1889 Boston, Mass to Celestine Eustis at Whitchurch, she of créole decent and a writer of cook books (what was she doing in Whitchurch?) and an 1889 legal cover from Whitchurch to Salem, Illinois at the 2/1 rate, 10 times the single UPU 2½d rate.



The Missent to Lydbury North cover referred to above

Richard Farman showed parcel related items for his two displays. 1884 Parcels Post invoice and Notice of postman to carry parcels, charged 6d for 1-3lbs, 1883 Tamworth luggage label charged 3d and *Please apply to postmaster for loss!* 1886 Knight & Co, London to Romsey, 1886 Paisley to Belfast, 1889 Inland Parcel Post plus stamp for insurance, difficult to find, he said. Finally a Parcel Customs Declaration form, which must have been a parcel of Christmas cards! For his second display Richard began with an 1830 Packet Office Dublin item ordering 6 cases of wine with London & Dublin Parcel Office Notice on Holyhead Packet as a service. Railway Parcel Service on North Staffs Railway before 1883 parcels service. A linen label advertising envelopes for world wide parcel services. An 1897 Ashby-de-la-Zouch parcel piece. Prison Commissioners in Edinburgh with straight-line ROAD BOURNE. He ended with a 1980 piece with a myriad of stamps sent by a bottle collector in Burton to Australia, who got the Australian recipient to send the front back so he could sell it on eBay for £5 – clever!

John Calladine stated that Gloucestershire had 12 offices with 1st type mileage marks and that only Cheltenham and Wotton under Edge had been recorded used in 1784; he showed marks of seven of the 12 offices, Cheltenham (1785), Cirencester (1787 & 1788), Gloucester, Minchinhampton - always badly struck - Moreton in Marsh,

Northleach - spelt "leech", **STROUD / G 105** and Wotton under Edge -with an "E" rather than an "O". His final two sheets showed the Stroud and Wotton marks immediately preceding the mileage marks, the Wotton mark being one of at least seven three-line marks from that office.

Derek Smeathers decided to confuse all of us and show his second display first! He began with two UPU postcards from Kettering to Tom Gotch, a successful local artist in Paris. He continued with a Christmas Day 1880 duplex from Wansford, an 1881 cover to Canada showing a quartered British Packet Service stamp, an 1882 Rural Letter Carriers bill from Rushden and a UPU postcard to Holland from Wellingborough. An 1883 Book Post of a small box for books from Henry Cooper, a Northampton bookseller and, continuing the box theme, a lid of a box used as a parcel to Oxford with Thrapston cancel on a Sudborough first-type 1885 label. Three further 1885 items, letter from Earl Spencer in London and a postcard written by Edward Copson, the postmaster at Spratton and a letter from William Connor Magee, the Bishop of Peterborough. It took 5 weeks for an 1887 cover to reach Daventry from New South Wales on the RMS *Austral* but a 1½d postcard from Thrapston to Germany in 1889 was 'out of date' but why no surcharge, Derek wondered? His second go, which was to be his first, started with a 1682 letter to the Earl of Arlington (PMG) at Towcester and a 1687 letter from Stanwick to London 'by *Wellingborow bag*'. Into the 1780s with 1781 earliest **NORTH / AMPTON**, 1783 to Coventry with ½d local charge, 1784 very early **61 TOW / CESTER**, also 1784 with scarcer **69 WELLING / BOROUGH**, two 1785 letters with **67 NORTH / AMPTON** and **76 KETTER / ING**. A letter from Thrapston to Daventry 'by *London*' with 4d changed to 7d. **73 DAVEN / TRY** to Aylesbury via London and 1789 Northampton to Chichester returned with Christmas day Bishop mark.

Paul Bradshaw began with a 1585 document being a record of Manorial Court proceedings under the authority of the Bishop of Durham. Into the 1780s we saw 1784 latest known use of that particular **NORTH / AMPTON**, 1785 entire Northampton to Daventry with 67 mileage mark and 2d to pay and same mark in 1787 to London. 1788 smaller **NORTH / AMPTON** to Sheffield. Turning to the 1880s there was an envelope used on a local bus parcel service, which began in 1881, also 1881 Northampton to Brussels franked 2½d, 1881 Northampton duplex to London and finally an 1882 Brackley duplex to Oxford.



Two of our members were successful exhibitors at the Midland Philatelic Federation Autumn Convention 16-sheet Individual Competition 2015 held at Alcester on the same day as our meeting; both are seen here with their trophies. **Clive Jones** (right) seems a little bemused to be awarded the **Best in Show** for his *Antipodean Trials & Tribulations* (91 points), though having seen his exhibit, I have no idea why he should be at all surprised and Terry Harrison was awarded 88 points and gold for his entry *St Vincent 1861-81 Perkins Bacon Printings*. Many congratulations to both of them. Mention should also be made of Terry Harrison again (silver), Robin Jarman and John Walker (both silver-gilt), Alan Godfrey (gold) and Chris Jackson (no less than two golds). Hearty congratulations to all of them.

THE CHIPPENHAM PENNY POST INTO GLOUCESTERSHIRE

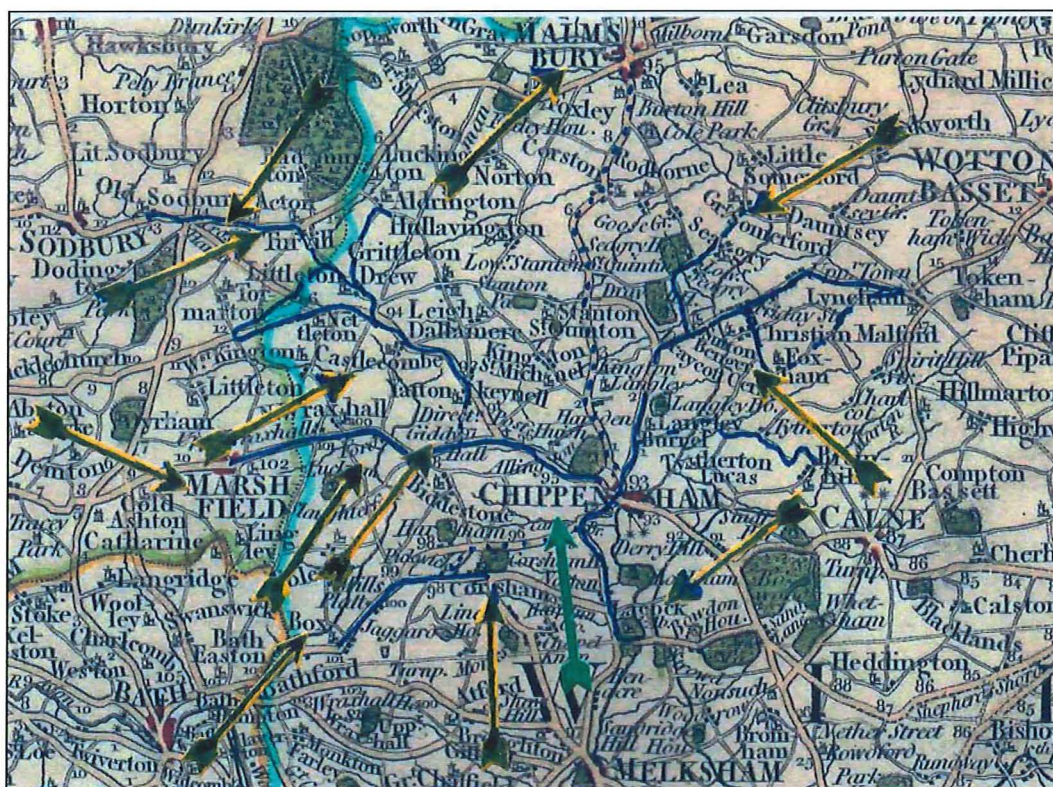
..... AND MORE

by John Calladine

When the Society produced its book on the 'Local Posts of the Midland Counties to 1840', in October 1993, we intended to include not only penny posts that lay wholly within one of our counties but also penny posts that originated in a neighbouring county outside our region that served receiving houses within it. We wrote, for example, of the penny post from Hay on Wye, Breconshire, to Letton in Herefordshire. At that time we were probably unaware that three of the receiving houses of the Chippenham (Wiltshire) Penny Post were, in fact, in Gloucestershire. This piece is intended to correct that omission.

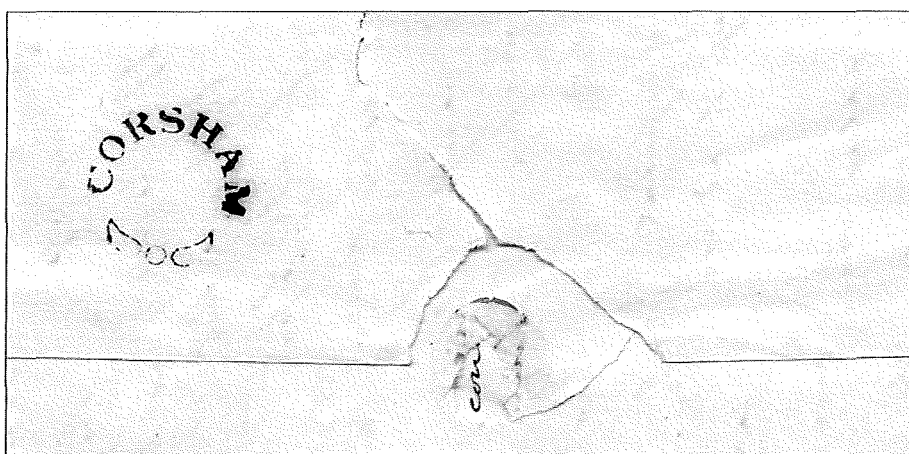
On looking at the published information on the Chippenham Penny Post, it has become apparent that recorded knowledge is sparse and incomplete, reminiscent of the situation in Cheltenham before we began our researches. There is uncertainty as to which numbered stamps were allotted to Chippenham receiving houses and, indeed, no certainty as to either the number of these receiving houses or of their locations. The indulgence of our members is therefore being sought to allow more complete information about the Chippenham Penny Post to be recorded here, even if none of our members, including the author, collect Wiltshire postal history material. The basic source of the listing in the late Geoff Oxley's definitive work on the penny posts, 'The English Provincial Local Posts 1765-1840' published more than 40 years ago, was undoubtedly the returns that the surveyors submitted to the Select Committee on Postage, convened in 1837 and intended to provide Parliament with a full picture of our postal service at a time when the practicability of Uniform Penny Postage was being debated. This was based on the situation prevailing and the receipts recorded in the year to January 1836. The problem with this source has always been that it relied heavily on the memory of the postmasters and surveyors, who may have been in post for only a few years. In particular, references to the date at which a post was established are frequently wrong.

Since the Chippenham area will not be familiar to many, a Cary map of the surrounding district (of about 30 miles diameter) is shown below. To the west, the Gloucestershire county line (shown as a thick green line on the map) is about ten miles distant and to the north, beyond Malmesbury, no more than fifteen miles. Historically, the town is important to postal historians as a significant market town on the main post road between London, Bath and Bristol.



Solid lines are PP routes, dotted lines 5th Clause. Arrows indicated sub-offices and receiving houses

Research at the Royal Mail Archive (as it is now called) confirms the existence of eight branches of the Chippenham Penny Post, serving villages in all directions but less intensively to the east, where the post town of Calne is only six miles along the Great West Road and to the south where Melksham is seven miles away. The first puzzle that confronts a researcher is the status of the historic small town of Corsham, four miles to the southwest of Chippenham in the direction of Bath. Corsham was mentioned in 'Midland Mail' many years ago when the late Reverend Chris Beaver wrote an article on Bilston, Staffordshire, in which he attempted to explain why it was issued with a 'fleuron' undated namestamp, a scarce issue it shared with, inter alia, Corsham. He decided that the issue of fleuron stamps in England was no better than random. In 1803, the inhabitants of Corsham petitioned to have a "regular post office". The likely modest postal revenue, the nearness of the town to Chippenham and the reluctance to load the London Mail with an extra bag led the surveyor to rule out in short order any possibility of post town status. At that time, the inhabitants were sending a private messenger to Chippenham to collect their letters and they were clearly unhappy with the individual undertaking the task. What they wanted was a messenger under Post Office authority who would be based in Chippenham and would bring the mail immediately after the London coach had brought their letters to the Chippenham post office (in the Chippenham bag) and who would wait in Corsham until replies could be taken back to Chippenham. Unsurprisingly, as it was a new postal arrangement, the surveyor failed to consider the use of a 5th Clause Post and it was Francis Freeling himself ⁽¹⁾ who suggested it to the Postmaster General. It was more than a year later, in July 1804 ⁽²⁾, that the surveyor wrote a second minute. The Corsham residents had apparently been less than enthusiastic about paying for a 5th Clause Post, a charge that had to be agreed between the Post Office and the residents, but, appreciating the advantages this new post would provide, eventually conceded. The surveyor proposed a "sub deputy" at Corsham with a small salary of £5 a year. Corsham therefore became a sub post town, not a receiving house in the Chippenham Penny Post. The 5th Clause Post was never converted to a penny post and Corsham can be eliminated from any potential list of numbered receiving houses.



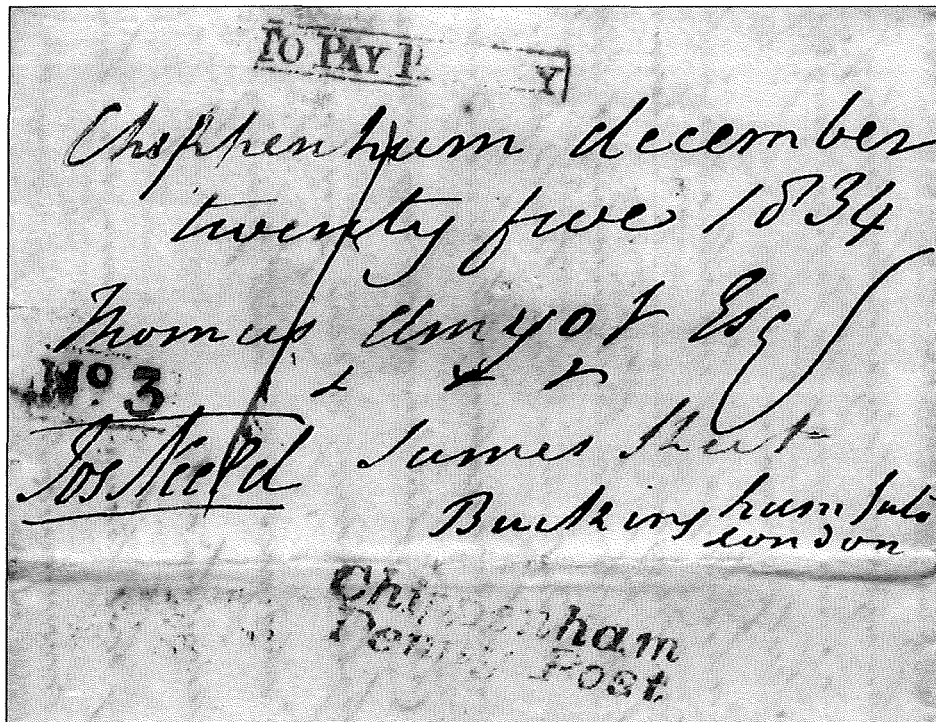
The 'fleuron' hand stamp of Corsham on an undated and damaged letter but almost certainly written in 1836.

The first official penny post from Chippenham was therefore that between the town and Marshfield, via the village of Ford. Marshfield, the first of the Chippenham receiving houses to be located in Gloucestershire, has been the subject of a recent piece in 'Midland Mail' and for many years from the mid 18th century it had received its post three days a week from Chippenham, a ride of ten miles. On 13th August 1814 ⁽³⁾ the surveyor (Mr Aust) wrote to Freeling suggesting the 3-day post be converted to a 7-day penny post. He quoted an expense of £79-7-0 a year for the ride and "receiver's salaries", without being specific, but the mention of multiple salaries is considered sufficient to confirm the existence of a receiver and a receiving house at Ford. There is good evidence that Marshfield used a No.2 receiving house stamp and it is therefore considered certain that Ford was the No.1 receiving house in the Chippenham Penny Post. A letter dated March 1816 from Castle Combe to London bears a 'No.1' stamp and it is logical that any letter written at Castle Combe at that date would have been put into the post at Ford. The penny post was approved as experimental and when, in July 1816 ⁽⁴⁾, the surveyor reported that the income was £3 to £5 less than needed to cover the cost and suggested reducing it from a 7-day post to a 6-day post, Freeling overrode the suggestion and recommended to the PMGs that it continue, still as an experiment, as a 7-day post. Again, on 3rd October 1818 ⁽⁵⁾, the surveyor reported another small operational loss and this time Freeling agreed with the surveyor (Mr Aust) that the post should be reduced from seven days to six at a reduced cost of £69-14-3. The post is specifically described as being "from Chippenham to Ford and Marshfield".

Meanwhile, in 1816, a second 5th Clause Post was established from Chippenham and, like the Corsham post, it had no direct bearing on the Chippenham Penny Post. The ancient town of Malmesbury, ten miles north of Chippenham and close to the Gloucestershire county border, asked to be served from Chippenham rather than from Tetbury

(Glos). Because Tetbury is only five miles from Malmesbury, it was to prove more expensive to set up the new arrangement and, once again, Freeling suggested a 5th Clause Post ⁽⁶⁾. The inhabitants initially agreed to pay a halfpenny per letter but, in September 1816, the surveyor reported ⁽⁷⁾ he had been able to agree a one penny 5th Clause charge. Malmesbury was, like Corsham, a sub-office and never a receiving house. In 1819, its link with Tetbury was restored, also as a 5th Clause Post by a ride from Chippenham, through Malmesbury, to Tetbury.

In fact, a second branch of the Chippenham Penny Post was not recommended and approved until 16th November 1822. A resident of Yatton (Keynell) had sought a better arrangement of the posts and, although the surveyor (now Mr Louis) had not agreed with the resident's own proposals, he proposed the establishment of a penny post receiving house at "Giddyhall" (now Giddeahall), a hamlet between Chippenham and Ford, for which a bag could be made up at Chippenham. From Giddeahall the penny post would serve Yatton (Keynell), Castle Combe, Grittleton and Hullavington. The penny post would be for six days a week but residents of the villages would also be able to collect their letters from Giddeahall on a Sunday. As is usual at the time, the post was established on an experimental basis ⁽⁷⁾ and the surveyor reported again on 10th August 1824 ⁽⁸⁾, giving the first year's results. There had been a loss of £2-11-6, which the surveyor had resolved by reducing the wages of the messenger from £31-6-0 to £28-13-7! The surveyor went further and, noting that the number of letters being left at Ford (further proof of the existence of a receiving house) had been greatly reduced by the opening of the receiving house at Giddeahall, sought agreement to the action taken on 5th July to reduce the salary of the (Ford) receiver from £5 to £2. Because the Neeld family, of local importance, lived at Grittleton, there are several examples of a "No.3" hand stamp on letters from Grittleton, suggesting that this was the stamp allocated to Giddeahall, there being no receiving house at Grittleton.



The No.3 hand stamp on a letter from Joseph Neeld of Grittleton (see above) to London dated Christmas Day 1834.

Attention returned to the sub office of Corsham in 1824. Four miles beyond Corsham, on the main road to Bath and Bristol, is the village of Box. (This is where Brunel built a famous railway tunnel, completed in 1841.) Box was a receiving house in the Bath Penny Post. The London-Bath-Bristol mail passed through the centre of the village but did not stop. The Box letters were taken on to Bath, sorted there and brought back to Box by a Bath Penny Post messenger. On 6th August 1824 ⁽⁹⁾ the surveyor proposed to Freeling that Box would be better served if the Box letters were in the Chippenham bag and taken off the coach at Chippenham. They would then be sent from Chippenham to Corsham by the (5th Clause Post) messenger and, by means of a further penny post messenger, taken from Corsham to Box, where the penny post messenger would deliver letters in the village and in nearby Middle Hill. (We have had at least one other example in the Midlands of a penny post from a sub-office rather than directly from the post town.) The messenger would return to Corsham in time to connect with the return messenger from Corsham to Chippenham. A bag from Bath (and therefore the Bath Penny Post connection) was maintained. Box retained its "No.9" hand stamp from the Bath Penny Post and No. 9 should not therefore be seen as part of the Chippenham Penny Post receiving house numbering sequence which, in 1924, had still only reached No.3. A year

later in 1825 ⁽¹⁰⁾ the Box postmaster was dismissed for financial irregularities and a resident maltster and publican in Box replaced him.

In that same year of 1825, a further branch of the Chippenham Penny Post was proposed. The importance of this new penny post was that it was to introduce not one but two new receiving houses. The minute from Freeling to the PMG is dated 22nd November ⁽¹¹⁾. The proposal was to establish a penny post messenger from Chippenham to Langley Burrell, Kington Langley (across the Malmesbury Road from Kington St Michael), Draycott, Sutton Benger, Seagry (from where the original petition had originated) and Great Somerford. The village of Christian Malford was only a mile from Sutton Benger but not on the same road and the surveyor had proposed a separate messenger from Sutton Benger to that village, who would also be responsible for delivering the letters. Because of that extra work, the receiver at Sutton Benger was to be paid seven guineas a year while a receiver at the other new receiving house, at the end of the ride at Somerford, would be paid a more usual two guineas. (Incidentally, the returning messenger from Somerford was to leave at 3pm in the winter but could safely leave half an hour later in the summer.) If the postmaster at Chippenham was expecting some compensation for the extra work involved, the surveyor firmly struck that nail on the head and said it must await a more general review. On 18th April 1826 ⁽¹²⁾, the surveyor reported a substantial profit in this part of the penny post and it was made permanent.

There are several letters known from Somerford that bear a "No.5" hand stamp. Oxley and other sources confidently allocate the No.5 to Somerford. Only a single example of a "No.4" stamp has been seen (from 1836) and it does not indicate from where it was sent, other than we know the name of the sender, the Reverend W.C.Cotton. Fortunately we learn from another penny post application that he was the vicar of Lyneham. Since Lyneham was added to the Chippenham Penny Post in 1832 (see below) and served from Sutton Benger, we can be confident that No.4 was allocated to Sutton Benger.

The next receiving house and its allocated number are easily resolved. A minute of 1832 ⁽¹³⁾ indicates that the Post Office had for many years wanted to expand the Chippenham Penny Post south to Lacock (the birthplace of practical negative/positive print photography at Lacock Abbey). Their efforts had been frustrated by a Member of Parliament who refused to be included in the delivery. (MPs paid penny postage even with their "free" privilege.) Now they were in a position to go ahead and a service could be provided to Lacock and nearby Notton and to some detached houses en route. The total expense for the five miles ride and a three guineas salary for a receiver at Lacock was expected to be £33-13-6 and the likely return was expected to be £43-0-0. At long last, the Chippenham postmaster was to get some compensation for all the extra work heaped on him over several years and he was awarded what appears to be an extra sum of £15-0-0 a year. Letters from Lacock with a "No.6" hand stamp are relatively well known and Oxley allocates No. 6 to this office.

Neither Oxley nor Dr Siggers records a No.7 handstamp at Chippenham. The likelihood must be that, if it ever existed, it would have been issued to Castle Combe but previous authors have been so convinced that No.3 belonged to Castle Combe that they may have overlooked it. No receiving house was established at Castle Combe until 1832. A resident of the village of Nettleton complained that he was being charged 6d for delivery of his letters (over and above General Postage). In a minute of 25th October 1832 ⁽¹⁴⁾, Freeling advised the PMG that Nettleton and other villages could be served by the Chippenham Penny Post if a receiving house were opened at Castle Combe and a messenger sent from that office. The surveyor's detailed proposals involved the Giddeahall messenger taking the letters to Castle Combe, where another messenger would undertake a six and a half mile circuit from Castle Combe to Littleton Drew, Burton and West Kington, returning via Nettleton. The Castle Combe receiver would be paid two guineas a year and the Giddeahall receiver would now be paid five guineas. Letters from any of the above villages should carry proof of a No.7 handstamp but none has yet been seen.

In the same year of 1832, an application for a penny post from Calne to Lyneham was refused. However the surveyor had an alternative plan ⁽¹⁵⁾ whereby the Chippenham Penny Post from Sutton Benger to Christian Malford could, with advantage, be extended to "Clack" (now Bradenstoke) and Lyneham and return to Sutton Benger via Foxham, a distance of about six miles. The increased cost would be £15-2-0 and, as Lyneham and Clack were currently paying 6d for delivery and Foxham paying 4d, the surveyor was confident the additional cost would be covered. No new receiving house was created.

The penultimate expansion of the Chippenham Penny Post was one of the more fascinating. It followed the line of Maud Heath's Causeway, one of Wiltshire noted archaeological sites ⁽¹⁶⁾. There can be few less obviously interesting archaeological sites than this because it is just a footpath four and a half miles long, all but a short stretch now simply a pavement alongside two roads. However, it becomes more interesting when it is appreciated that it is privately owned, more than 500 years old and maintained by an unbroken line of trustees since 1474. The story goes that Maud Heath was a poor market trader who each day brought her eggs to sell in Chippenham, walking along a route that passed through frequently flooded water meadows. She carefully saved some of the pittance she earned and, at

her death, was able to provide enough money to build a footpath, raised above the meadows, enabling those who followed after her to walk “dry shod to Chippenham”. In 1838, Lady Lansdown of Bowood raised a 40 ft monument to Maud Heath with a life-size figure of the lady, dressed as she would have been in the 15th century with a simple bonnet and a basket of eggs. It is a romantic story but completely untrue. Maud Heath was a wealthy widow who endowed the footpath with the income from property in Chippenham that her appointed trustees were thereafter able to use to maintain the footpath. Undoubtedly, for more than 300 years, wooden piles driven into the ground raised the footpath over the river meadows at Kellaways. It was not until 1811 that 64 stone arches were built to take the footpath, not the adjacent road, 5 feet above the water level of the Wiltshire Avon. In the 1980s, each arch was taken down and rebuilt. As recently as 2012, during floods, Maud Heath’s causeway was the only means of crossing the river in that area.



Maud Heath’s Causeway

A petition for a penny post in this area was made in May 1834 by the vicar of Tytherton, the Reverend R. Edwards. The surveyor suggested a year’s experiment and commented to Francis Freeling that he knew the Reverend W.L. Bowles of Bremhill, noted eccentric and less noted poet, sent to Calne daily for his letters and his correspondence was considerable. Tytherton and Bremhill are the villages at the distant end of Maud Heath’s causeway but lie east of Chippenham and a casual observer might think it more sensible for a penny post to have left the town in that direction but, no, the surveyor’s plan was to follow Maud Heath’s causeway and to leave Chippenham in a north-easterly direction and serve Langley Common, Kellaways, Tytherton and Bremhill, leaving Bremhill in the afternoon. For the messenger’s duty, he recommended an allowance of 10/6 a week, £27-7-8 per annum. In his minute to the PMG ⁽¹⁷⁾ dated 15th August 1834, Freeling confirmed that the sum recommended was solely for a messenger but he wrote of “a safe place of deposit for the answers”. If this implies a receiving house, the only suggestion that one may have been established is the reference to “Bromhill” in the surveyor’s return to the Select Committee on Postage. A letter has been seen of February 1837 written from Tytherton to Newbury that bears a Chippenham Penny Post stamp but no receiving house stamp. While this may suggest there was no receiving house, it is not conclusive.

The final expansion of the post came in 1836 when a significant rearrangement of the local posts was made. The minute to the PMG was dated 11th November 1836 ⁽¹⁸⁾. In lieu of the penny post ride from Chippenham to Marshfield via Ford, a new ride was to be established, through Acton Turville, to Badminton, Cross Hands and Chipping Sodbury. (Cross Hands is where the route crossed the present day A34, just short of Old Sodbury, and the Cross Hands Inn is where the Queen became stranded during a snowstorm in 1981, the landlords giving her their room for the night.) Thereafter Marshfield was to be served by a foot messenger who would meet the Chipping Sodbury ride at what was termed “the cross road”, four miles out of Chippenham, and therefore very close to Giddeahall. Marshfield was now somewhat disadvantaged in that letters had to leave 40 minutes earlier in the late afternoon. There was already a receiving house at Cross Hands, part of the Bath and Cirencester Penny Posts, and this now also joined the Chippenham Penny Post (the second Gloucestershire receiving house), retaining its “No. 11” handstamp. The residents of Sodbury, who had previously been served by the Bath-Cheltenham mailcoach, agreed that the link with the mailcoach should be abandoned and their letters circulate through Chippenham. The surveyor

confirmed the continued existence of a receiving house at Ford (salary two guineas) and that the ride from Giddeahall to Yatton Keynell and beyond would continue. (A new piece of information was that the Gideahall receiver delivered letters at Biddestone.)

At the same time, a new receiving house was opened at Acton Turville, the third Gloucestershire receiving house in this penny post, whose purpose was to supply West Kington, Littleton and Nettleton in lieu of the messenger from Castle Combe and at the same rate. Since the Castle Combe receiving house was established solely for the purpose of sending a messenger to those villages, it may not have remained open. If the Acton Turville RH was given a number, did it assume any receiving house number Castle Combe may have had? This was at a time when receiving house numbers were being abandoned and type 5 penny post hand stamps issued to some. Oddly a "No. 8" stamp is known on a letter bearing a Chippenham Penny Post handstamp. However the letter is from Bath to London dated September 1828. It does not bear a Bath Penny Post stamp but should it have done? The evidence would suggest "No. 8" is a Bath receiving house. Was it missent in the Chippenham bag towards London rather than in the London bag? If so, when it reached Chippenham, was it realised that it should have a penny post stamp if it were to be correctly charged and was one added at Chippenham? We may never know but we can certainly disregard it as either a Castle Combe or Acton Turville stamp. In fact, there is yet no proof that the Chippenham RH numbers ever exceeded No. 6, excluding No. 9 and No. 11 that were 'inherited' from other penny posts

Examples of Chippenham Penny Post receiving house hand stamps have proved elusive and it is not possible to give any reliable period of use for individual stamps. Four types of penny post hand stamps were used at the post town. The best available usage information being Type 1 1815-1822, Type 2 1825-1828, Type 4 1831-1835 and Type 5 1837-1839. Corsham had a 'fleuron' stamp (see above).

HANDSTAMPS OF THE CHIPPENHAM PENNY POST RECEIVING HOUSES

Post town: Chippenham

Sub-offices: Corsham, Malmesbury

Receiving Houses: Ford, Marshfield (Glos), Giddeahall, Sutton Benger, Great Somerford, Box, Lacock, Castle Combe, Acton Turville (Glos) and Cross Hands (Glos).



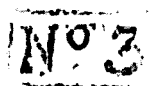
(1816)

Probably **FORD**

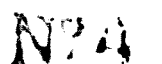
(1821)

MARSHFIELD (Glos)

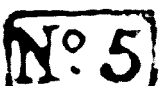
(1839)

MARSHFIELD (Glos)

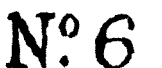
(1832)

Probably **GIDDEAHALL**

(1836)

Probably **SUTTON BENDER**

(1835)

GREAT SOMERFORD

(1835)

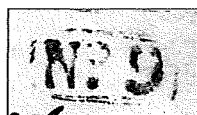
LACOCK

No recorded handstamp

CASTLE COMBE

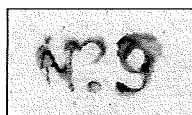
No recorded handstamp

ACTON TURVILLE (Glos)



(1836) (as used in the Bath Penny Post but possibly at Bitton in the 1830s rather than at Box.)

BOX



(1838) (as used in the Chippenham Penny Post)



(1844) **CROSS HANDS (Glos)**

REFERENCES:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. Post 42/46M/1803 | 10. Post 42/140/1825 |
| 2. Post 42/325/1804 | 11. Post 42/185/1825 |
| 3. Post 42/170/1814 | 12. Post 42/185/1826 |
| 4. Post 42/172/1816 | 13. Post 42/768/1832 |
| 5. Post 42/356/1818 | 14. Post 42/821/1832 |
| 6. Post 42/ 187/1816 | 15. Post 42/823/1832 |
| 7. Post 42/418/1822 | 16. 'Dry Shod to Chippenham' Kay S.Taylor (2012) |
| 8. Post 42/424/1824 | 17. Post 42/579/1834 |
| 9. Post 40/421/1824 | 18. Post 42/554/1836 |

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The important help of two postal historians who responded to an appeal in the Newsletter of the GBPS is gratefully acknowledged. Mike Osborn of Essex pointed the way to some obscure existing material but Mr Eddie Weeks of Surrey went further and photocopied all material available to him. Without his help, the allocation of receiving houses numbers to established receiving houses would have been impossible. As always, members of our society made an important contribution, John Hine providing his customary encouragement and Martin Scroggs both the Cary map and invaluable help with the postmark illustrations.



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AN EASY WAY TO UNDERSTAND JAPANESE POSTAL HISTORY

by Derek Smeathers

I acquired the postcard shown in Fig 1 over 10 years ago, but could not discover the significance of the black manuscript hieroglyphics.



Fig 1, 1893 UPU postcard (full size) Peterborough to Tokyo.

Soon afterwards, I spent a very wet Christmas walking on the Canary Island of El Hierro and one of our companions mentioned casually that he was learning Japanese at Bristol University. In an equally casual way, I asked him if he would like to translate the markings on my card and he agreed, so I sent him a photocopy of the card and another cover from the same correspondence, with similar markings. His reply gave the following explanations of terms.

Kanji – the more complicated characters, taken from Chinese representing an idea (so they are ideograms).

Katakana – simpler, more angular characters, representing phonetic syllables, used to transliterate foreign words.

Romaji – Katakana syllables written in western alphabet; for example 'My name is Bruce' is Burusu Keizu in Romaji, ブルース ケイズ in Katakana.

He confessed that he had consulted a friend studying Japanese at Sheffield who kindly overprinted a copy of my card using the above terms. Fig 2 shows the result – the black hieroglyphics were written in Kanji, probably at Tokyo post office to guide the postman (in 1893 very few Japanese postmen could read English writing). The blue is the equivalent Katakana, reading '18 Nagata Chou', which was an area of Tokyo where the 1893 Meiji Government was based, so it is possible the addressee was an official or advisor to the Government. The September 1893 cover has been similarly overprinted (Fig 3), the Katakana in red, showing the change of address to read '16 Tsukiji', which is an area of Tokyo now well known for its fish market and amazing sushi restaurants.



Fig 2, the 1893 card showing the Kanji in black and the Katakana overprinted in blue (overprints and card reduced in size).

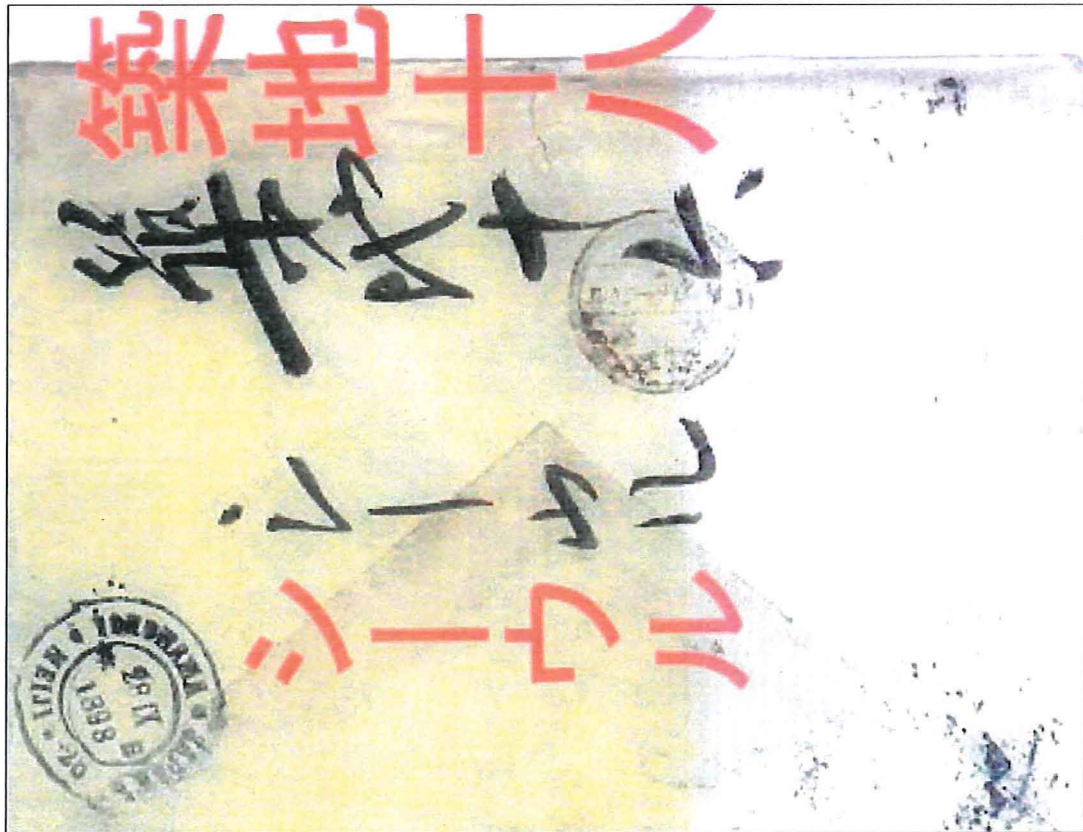


Fig 3, Reverse of later cover showing Kanji again in black but the Katakana, this time, in red

So, there you have it. The easy way to understand Japanese postal history is to go walking on El Hierro during a very wet Christmas. I can recommend a very good treatment for trench foot!



Birthday card from John and Claire Scott of the Postal History Society to the Midland (GB) Postal History Society, which reads *Best wishes for your 40th anniversary and for many more to come.*

A RESPONSE TO THE MOUNTSORREL ARTICLE IN MM 187 / 20

by Alan Marshall

The article on Mountsorrel by Richard Farman in MM187 / 20 alerted me to highlight a few anomalies / misunderstandings concerning Mountsorrel postmarks, initially disappointment for Richard's hoped for unrecorded 476 of Mountsorrel. Parmenter lists this 1844-type barred numeral in his latest catalogue as recorded from 24 Oct 1844 to 29 Nov 1855 increasing the recordings of 19 Aug 1845 to 13 Feb 1854 listed in John Soer's Leicestershire & Rutland catalogue. John shows the 476 barred numeral, classified D1, as having 4 bars on the top and bottom. On the other hand, Parmenter's illustration shows 3 bars on the top and 4 on the bottom. Both examples shown by Richard are similar to Parmenter's, as is a mourning envelope to London dated 3 Nov 1844 (close to the earliest Parmenter date, see Fig 1). This item displays the double circle Mountsorrel in black (recorded 14 / 4 / 1838 to 19 / 8 / 1845); it also carries the only recorded udc in bright blue of COSSINGTON, alongside a LOUGHBOROUGH cds in black.

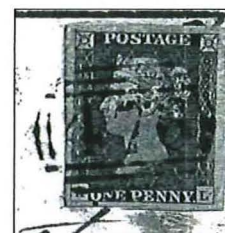
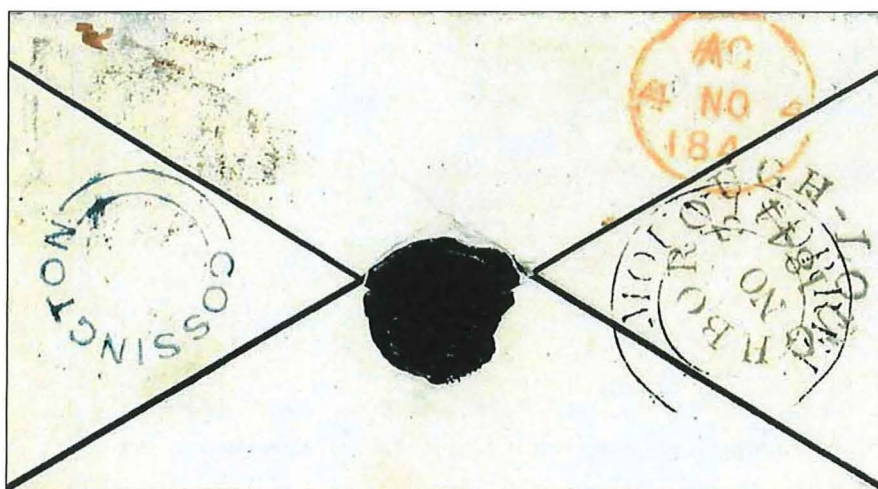


Fig 1, Mourning Cover to London 3 Nov 1844, 1d red imperforate cancelled 476 of Mountsorrel.

Parmenter states the 476 only occurs with the MOUNTSORREL double-ring udc. However this claim is disproved by a 476 cancelling a mourning envelope which has the 25mm MOUNT-SORREL double-arc cds on the reverse (see Fig 2), recorded 20 Mar 1857 to 5 Nov 1873. Not only does it increase the record of 476 by 18 months to 4 May 1857, it doesn't have the MOUNTSORREL udc.



Fig 2, Mourning cover to Leicester 4 May 1857, 1d red 'star' cancelled 476 Mountsorrel.

Both 476 cancels presented as black & white copies.

Also noteworthy is that the MPHS catalogue records the latest use of the MOUNTSORREL udc as 4 May 1857 in blue, the same date as the Mountsorrel cds on the second item, which is a more greenish than blue strike as is the Loughborough cds. The Leicester cds is in black. It would appear that the MPHS date might be in error unless there is a recorded / known ownership of this date. If not, then the date of Richard's second item becomes the latest recorded date of 11 Feb 1857 of the udc. Returning to the 476 1844-type strike, the second example shows 3 bars on top and bottom. It is not suggested that this is a different stamp as use at Mountsorrel would not have warranted more than one stamp, so, with comparatively limited use, was the very small bottom bar broken off rather than worn off?

AN UNRECORDED LOUGHBOROUGH '2' MARK.

by Clive Jones.

From 10th January 1840, mail posted without the Uniform Penny Postage being paid attracted a surcharge of two pence. Many offices had a special hand stamp for this purpose, although for Leicestershire, only Loughborough is recorded with such a mark (LC 101), which is known used between 8th November 1840 and 30th August 1842.

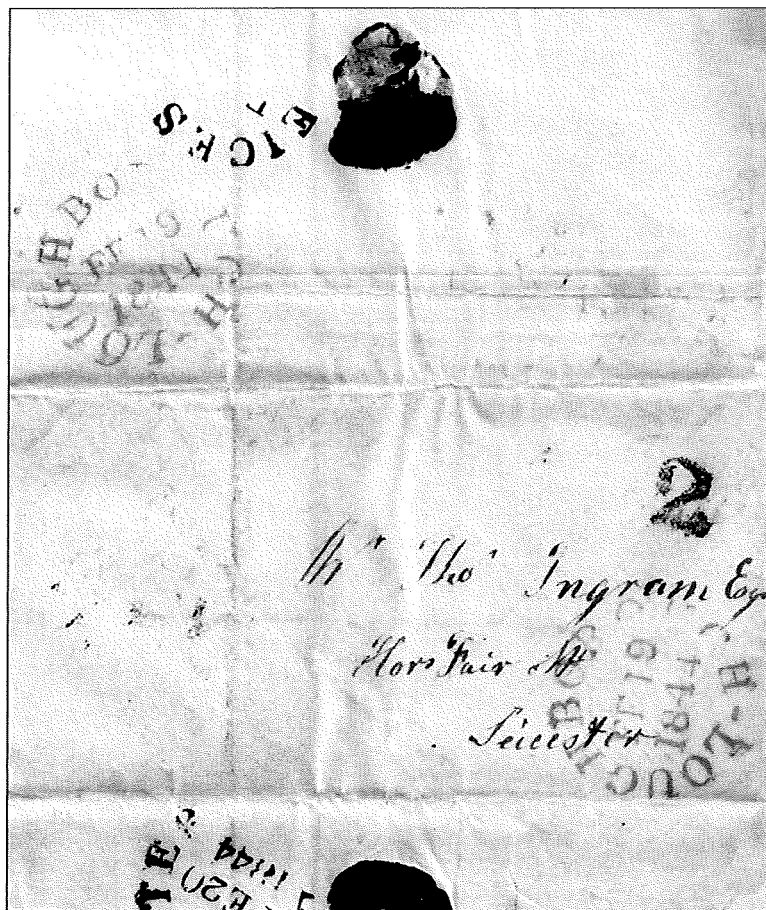


Fig 1, Loughborough 2 on an 1844 letter to Leicester

A further example, as shown, is different to that illustrated in the Midland County Catalogue, and measures 9 x 9 mm. It is used on 19th February 1844, on an unpaid letter addressed to Leicester, arriving there the next day. The entire was written at Barrow (upon Soar) on 17th February and complains bitterly about probate and a lack of receipt of money. Perhaps the lack of a postage payment was designed to underline the sender's dissatisfaction!

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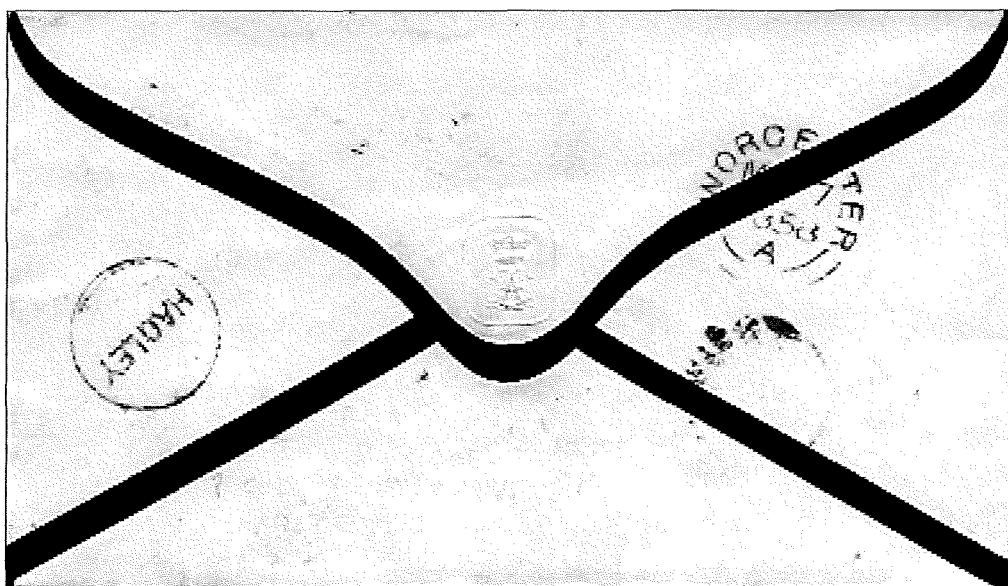


THE "MISSING" UNDATED HAGLEY

by John Calladine

It was at the WORPEX meeting in May that the "missing" UDC of Hagley, a sub-office of Stourbridge, was first mentioned. A nine sheet display (see MM187/8) included a number of coloured Hagley C1 type UDCS and its first circular dated mark but the report noted that a type D4 UDC, with the name of HAGLEY across the diameter, was issued in February 1858 and is unrecorded in use. The report continues "This is unsurprising because a dated stamp of similar form, the first of three, was issued on 30th March." The precise date of issue of the D4 UDC was, in fact, 20th February, allowing just 38 days at best for it to have been struck.

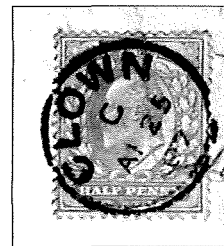
Similar situations have arisen elsewhere in the Midlands and we usually have little hope that the missing mark will ever be found. In this case, however, an eagle-eyed member spotted the sale 'on line' of a Stourbridge cover dated 16th March 1858, with a sideways duplex mark, addressed to Powick, a village near Worcester. On the back of the envelope was a Worcester CDS for 17th March, a Powick C4 UDC (in black ink) and, also in black, a splendid strike of the "missing" Hagley UDC. We should never give up hope.



Peter Martin writes from Singapore that he contacted Ken Smith after he had bought a postcard with a Barrow Hill NO 27 1906 postmark, whereupon Ken replied that it was a new postmark to him and Peter asks if any members have seen it. It fills a gap between the 1876 and 1991 that he has and does anyone know when it was issued?



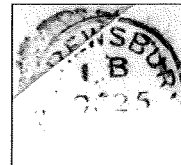
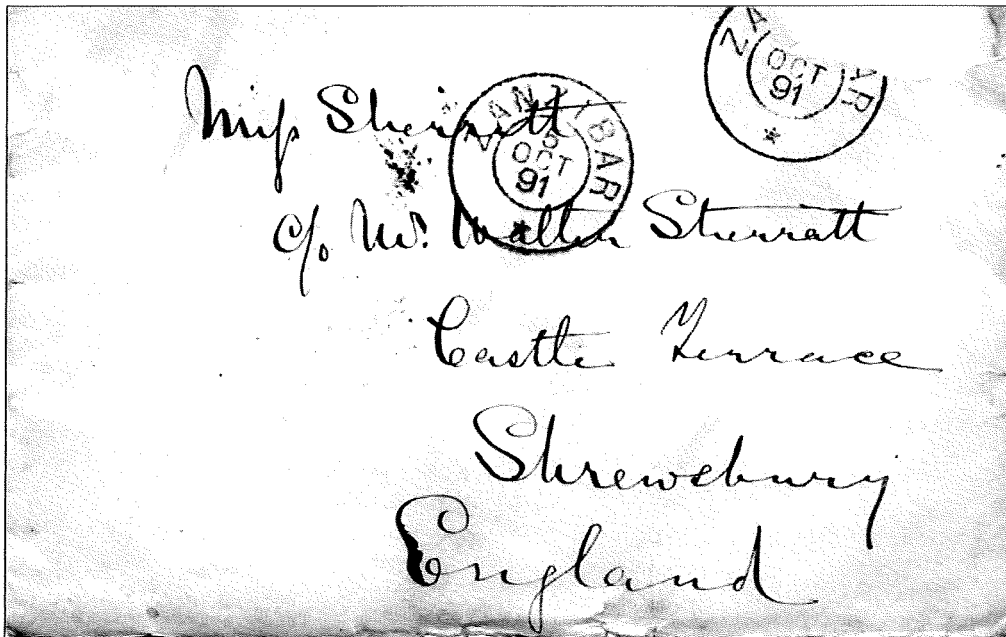
He also writes that he has a CLOWN postmark from 1907 and one from 1915 and is still looking for 19th century ones or ones from around 1937 when they added the 'e' on the end. The earliest he has is 1904. If you see a CLOWN contact Peter!



John Darnell - Farewell

Secretary Mick Gill advises that member John Darnell has had to resign from the Society due to deteriorating sight and health. John wishes to record his appreciation for the kindness, help and encouragement given to him with his collecting interest of Retford, Nottinghamshire during his 10 years of membership. He trusts that the Society will long continue to provide such an excellent forum for all postal historians.

ZANZIBAR TO SHREWSBURY, BUT WHO WAS WRITING?



The cover was picked up in Zanzibar by the *Rio-Grande*, a French Messageries Maritimes mail ship on the Réunion to Marseilles route, on 5th Oct 1891. The *Rio Grande* had left Réunion on 26th September and arrived at Marseilles at 4am on 23rd October 1891 via Madagascar and Zanzibar. The cover reached Shrewsbury late on 25th Oct 1891.

The stamp has clearly been removed and the cover has been cut down at the top by approximately three-quarters of an inch, which, I think, is enough space to accommodate a French stamp. Stamps of India were used in Zanzibar for 20 years from 1875 to 1895. There was also a French post office in Zanzibar from 1889 until 1894 and as a little research has indicated that the double circle ZANZIBAR is found on French stamps but not on Indian ones it is likely that the cover had carried a French stamp. But who was writing a letter in 1891 from Zanzibar to Shrewsbury? Believe it or not, there is a link between Zanzibar and Shropshire in the form of a woman by the name of Mary Ann Harriet 'May' Allen (Dec 1835 to May 1921). May (as she was known) Allen was a member of the large family of Archdeacon John Allen, vicar of Prees in north Shropshire. She studied nursing and in 1875, at the age of 40, when the majority of woman from her background at that time were in other situations, she asked her father if she might go to Africa with the Universities Mission to Central Africa. He agreed and it is reported that she arrived at Zanzibar on the *SS Punjab* on 12th December 1875 with two hand-picked Shropshire nurses Sophia Jones and Emma Durham. She left Zanzibar in 1887 to found a school in Cairo and ended up at Mount Carmel, Haifa, Palestine before returning to live in Bristol in 1909. She may not have written the letter but I feel sure that someone linked to her was writing from Zanzibar to Shrewsbury in 1891!

Reference: Zanzibar, May Allen and the East African Slave Trade, Yolande Brown, Eleventowns Publishing, (2005)

THE SOCIETY'S 2016 ANNUAL AUCTION

Please consider placing any of your unwanted Postal History items into our annual auction. We badly need more vendors. Items you wish to sell can be handed in at the November, December or January meetings or sent to Eric Lewis NO LATER THAN THE 9TH JANUARY at 27 Rathbone Road, Smethwick, B67 5JG.

Please do not re-submit any of your unsold lots from the 2014 or 2015 auctions but they can be entered for the 2017 auction, preferably at a lower reserve price.