MIDLAND MAIL

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

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Number 126, August 2002

THIS IS PROGRESS

You will notice some small changes in the layout of this Midland Mail as I have changed from my trusty old Amstrad to a PC that seems to do everything but make a cup of tea. Everything that is apart from allowing me to left align, centre and right align text on one line. Also I appear not to be able to insert a space of half a line between paragraphs as I have done in the past. Maybe it is because I am not familiar with the word processing package, but it is more likely I need to install something more sophisticated. Over the last few years, I have used LocoScript 3 on my old Amstrad to produce Midland Mail and have found it much easier to use for basic word processing than the Microsoft Word I use at work. However, there should be fewer spelling mistakes and grammatical errors, but I would not like to guarantee it.

ARCHIVES REPROGRAPHICS POLICY

Elsewhere in this issue, Joanne Jones, Assistant Archivist at Heritage Services, Consignia, has kindly described the reprographics policy that will probably be implemented from 26th August. I do urge all those that use what I still insist on calling Post Office Archives to obtain a copy of this policy, and to comment on it. Among the proposals is a ban on photocopying unwieldy volumes such as POST 35. While archivists do have a difficult task in balancing the need to preserve documents against providing access to researchers, I cannot help but feel that this policy will do nothing but bring research in postal history to a standstill. Sadly, it seems that the time has come to transfer Post Office Archives to the Public Record Office at Kew. This would have the following advantages: the PRO has a large and very efficient reprographics department; there is ample space to park a car, so sparing one the nightmare of public transport in central London; and the PRO opens on Saturdays in addition to being open longer on other days of the week.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Our new season starts on **14th September** with a joint meeting, to be held at Kington St Michael, with the Somerset & Dorset, and the Bristol Postal History Societies. Details were distributed with the last edition of Midland Mail, and the completed slip should be returned to John Calladine by 30th August. Then on **12th October** we meet at the scout hut of Saint Germain's Church, Edgbaston when the speaker will be Harold Wilson who will display 'Railways and the Mail'. On **16th November** our meeting will be held in Warwick at the premises of Warwick & Warwick and will be devoted to members' displays of 'The Contents of Letters or Messages on Postcards'.

ENCLOSURES

Enclosed with this issue is a programme for the new season and an updated map indicating the location of St Germain's scout hut where the October and January meetings will be held. It is just round the corner from the church hall where we held the AGM and auction. Also enclosed is a leaflet on the Autumn Assembly of the Midland Philatelic Federation which is being held at Knowle. Please support this event.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Elizabeth tells me that most members have renewed their subscriptions. However, if a cross appears in the margin, it is a reminder to say that yours has not yet been received. Please let Elizabeth have a cheque for £8 made out to the Society at your earliest convenience.

NEW REPROGRAPHICS POLICY AT HERITAGE SERVICES, CONSIGNIA

By Joanne Jones, Assistant Archivist

Further to our announcement in March of this year, we have now completed the review of our reprographics facilities and drafted Heritage Services' new reprographics policy.

Our chief concern during this review has been to ensure that systems are in place to preserve our unique and irreplaceable material for the benefit of both current and future researchers. Consequently, the policy is based on professional best practice and National Preservation Office guidelines. To give some background to the National Preservation Office, it was established with the support of key players such as the British Library, the Public Record Office, the National Library of Scotland, and the National Library of Wales to provide an independent focus for ensuring the preservation and continued accessibility of library and archive material held in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Further information on the NPO, and their photocopying guidelines utilised to draft our policy, can be found at http://www.bl.uk/services/preservation/pcopy.pdf.

As well as our concern to protect Consignia's historic documents, the need to provide Heritage Services' users with reproductions of as much of our material as possible for research purposes, subject to copyright restrictions, has also informed our decisions on reprographics.

To achieve these aims, it has been necessary to make some changes to previous practice, and these changes are outlined below.

Self-service photocopying and copyright forms:
Self-service photocopying will no longer be permitted to ensure that only our experienced staff handle material during the potentially damaging photocopying process. All photocopying will be undertaken on demand where possible. However, on some occasions this will not be feasible, and copies can then be ordered and posted to researchers. Researchers will be required to complete copy order forms with full references, including page numbers where applicable, and to sign a copyright declaration prior to receiving copies.

Restrictions on photocopying material:
The most appropriate method of copying material will be decided by our trained staff according to strict rules, based on National Preservation Office guidelines. Accordingly, photocopying may be restricted to certain types of documents, as it is the most damaging form of copying. However, we will try to offer alternative forms of copying where appropriate, and we will also continue to expand our range of copying methods.

Reprographics charges:
Charges for reprographics services have changed, in line with other UK archive repositories, and are outlined in the table below. We have benchmarked costs of reprographics in seventeen UK repositories, and our new prices reflect the average charge for A4 and A3 copies, enabling us to ensure that our material is preserved for current and future users. If you would like to see a copy of our benchmarking results, please contact our public search room using the contact details below.

	A4	A3
B/W photocopies	40p	40p
Microfilm printouts	30p	30p
Photographs/ Transparencies	Please ask for a quotation	
Postage & Packing	£1.50	

Although photocopying of documents is more limited than previously, we are committed to a programme of widening our reprographics facilities to ensure that we can offer several options for copying to suit the needs of our diverse users, as well as to protect our valuable documents. We have an ongoing preservation microfilming programme aimed at copying our most popular documents, and material that has been copied by this method enables researchers to obtain good quality copies quickly and cost-effectively.

We are also investigating the possibility of purchasing a book scanner to enable more of our large and heavy volumes to be copied safely and easily. As before, the option of commissioning photographs of our documents can usually be offered in cases where the preservation needs of the document prohibit any other form of copying.

The new policy is going out to Heritage Services' users for consultation from 22nd July until 23rd August, so if anyone would like to view and comment on the policy, please contact our public search room using the details below. We will consider every comment made, and may make amendments to the policy based on these comments where appropriate. It is envisaged that the policy will be implemented fully on Monday , 26th August 2002.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for your patience whilst we have carried out this review of our reprographics services. We hope that you will take advantage of the consultation period to give us your views on the new policy. In all our activities, our goal at Heritage Services is to preserve our precious materials for your own use and for researchers of the future, and this policy is aimed at helping us attain this ambition.

If you would like to see and comment on the new policy, please contact our public search room on 020 7239 2570, or email at heritage@consignia.com, and we will be pleased to forward a copy to you.

THE MIDLAND COUNTIES MILEAGE MARKS AND MAIL ROUTES TO LONDON

It was in 1966, with the completion of the fourth edition of our book on Undated Circular Marks, when the Society considered what new co-operative project might be initiated. We decided to undertake a study of mileage marks and, of necessity, the mail routes to London, since it was the 'up' route at any particular time that give rise to the mileage figures on an office's handstamp. We began with an appeal in 'Midland Mail' 96/2 for members to record the mileage marks in their collections and to submit photocopies.

At a meeting of the County Editors held in June this year, the Co-ordinating Editor of the project was asked to prepare a report, notwithstanding oral briefs given at successive AGMs, so that the wider membership might be made aware of progress. After six years, it would not be surprising if some members wondered if a publication date for a 'book of the project' was ever going to be announced. The simple answer is that it is hoped to produce a book - a large book - in time for the Christmas meeting at Burton next year (2003). This can't be a definite promise, as there are still many unknowns, but at least you know our aim!

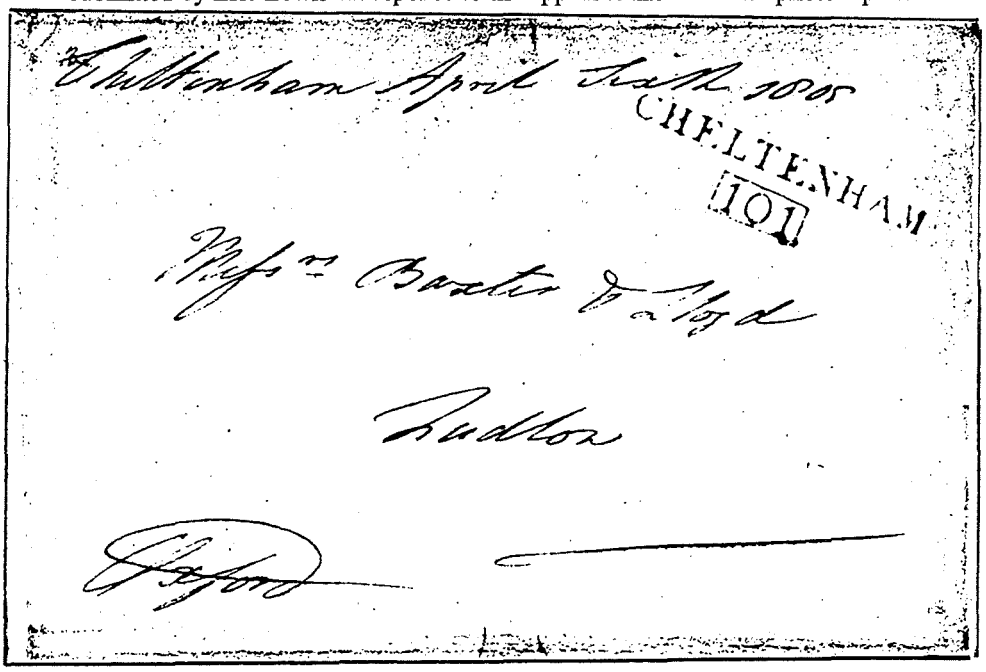
It was always appreciated that preparing a list of mileage stamps and their recorded use would be the most straight forward of the tasks, even if that list considerably amplified the current listing in the British County Catalogue. Much more time-consuming would be preparation of narrative text for each office employing a mileage stamp. To do that required detailed knowledge of the postal route to London throughout the period 1785 to 1840. Unlike many postal history books that provide 'snapshots' of the situation in different eras, we needed continuous knowledge of the route and we needed to relate that information to the mileage stamps in use. It would be insufficient to explain why a stamp issued in, say, 1801 bore the figures it did. We wanted to explain that those figures should have changed in, say, 1811 and why that should have happened. Only then might we have a coherent explanation of why so many stamps were incorrect when the Post Office listed incorrect stamps in 1829. To all intents and purposes, those narrative texts are now complete and lack only the illustrations and sketch maps. One shouldn't use the word "only" without caution; preparation of maps to an adequate standard is no trivial undertaking.

In parallel with the work on individual offices, there has been the broader task of explaining the purpose served by mileage marks, which department of the Post Office needed them, why they were introduced and why they were introduced in 1784. As was the case with other books produced by the Society, expectations that there had been a coherent explanation by one of postal history's gurus were soon dashed. We needed to look anew at the whole subject of mileage marks and without prejudice. If that was a considerable task, a glance at the list of Midland mailcoaches produced by Chris Beaver in 'Midland Mail' 101 will give a first taste of the quality of the information about mailcoach routes gleaned by Chris. Much of this has come from a painstaking study of the quarterly payments to the mailcoach contractors, a daunting task never attempted before. Only by a complete and detailed knowledge of mailcoaches linking the Midlands to London has it been possible to understand the marks used at the individual offices. Like the individual narratives, this part of the project is now almost complete.

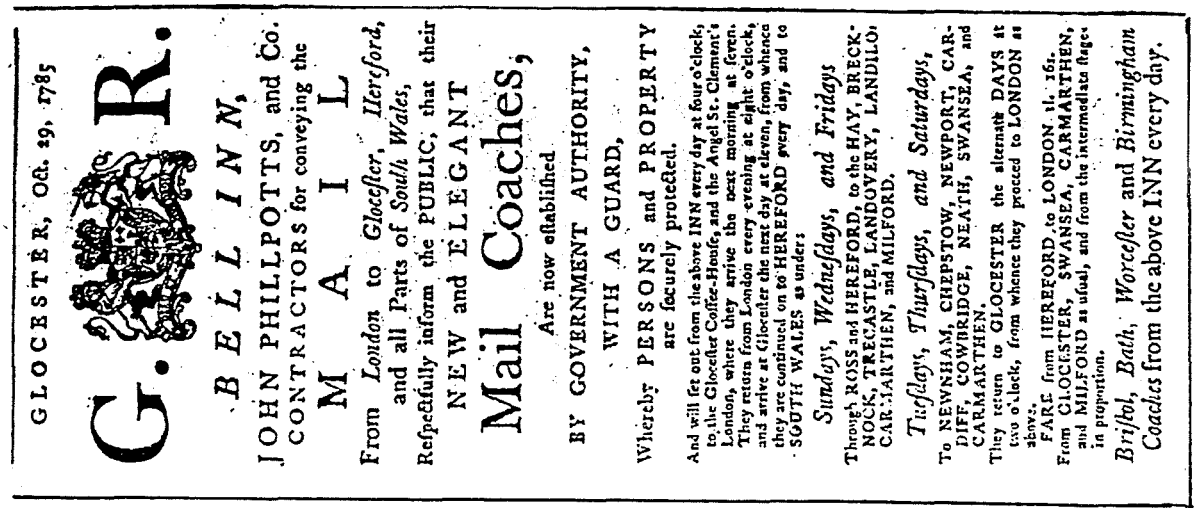
The County Editors are currently assembling their lists of mileage stamps and recorded usage in a single standard agreed form. To these are being added illustrations of each and every mark, where one is known to exist. It has been agreed that the approach will be to use actual strikes and to remove from them all extraneous background but not to 'improve' the marks in any way. Typically, each mark requires twenty minutes of computer manipulation to produce the optimum result. With many hundreds of marks requiring attention, this task will take several more months yet.

With so much of the project completed, attention is now moving to the task of assembling a coherent publication of manageable size. There are, quite literally, hundreds of illustrations of covers, photographs, time bills and maps that could be added at this stage. Decisions are being made about the book's size, colour content, binding and cost. Recent developments in printing techniques, not to mention computer technology, make our previous experience of publication about as relevant as knowledge of hot metal printing. If any computer literate member feels he can help in any way with this phase of the project, he can expect a warm welcome from the County Editors. Who knows, he may be the one who finally makes the publication date a reality?

A fine strike of the third mileage mark of Cheltenham
submitted by Eric Lewis in response to the appeal to members for photocopies.



An advertisement for the new mail coaches in the 'Gloucester Journal' of 1785.



GLOCESTER, Oct. 19, 1785

G. R.

BELLINN,

JOHN PHILLPOTTS, and Co.
CONTRACTORS for conveying the
MAIL
From *London* to *Glocester*, *Hereford*, and all Parts of *South Wales*,
Respectfully inform the PUBLIC, that their
NEW and ELEGANT
Mail Coaches,
Are now eſtabliſhed
BY GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY,
WITH A GUARD,
Whereby PERSONS and PROPERTY are ſecurely protected.

And will ſet out from the above INN every day at four o'clock, to the Glocester Coffee-Houſe, and the Angel St. Clement's London, where they arrive the next morning at ſeven. They return from London every evening at eight o'clock, and arrive at Glocester the next day at eleven, from whence they are continued on to HEREFORD every day, and to SOUTH WALES as under:

Sundays, Wedneſdays, and Fridays
Through ROSS and HEREFORD, to the HAY, BRECKNOCK, TRECASTLE, LANDOVERY, LANDILO CARMARTHEN, and MILFORD.

Tueſdays, Thurſdays, and Saturdays,
To NEWNHAM, CHEPSTOW, NEWPORT, CARDIFF, COWBRIDGE, NEATH, SWANSEA, and CARMARTHEN.

They return to GLOCESTER the alternate DAYS at two o'clock, from whence they proceed to LONDON as above.

FARE from HEREFORD to LONDON 1l. 16s.
From GLOCESTER, SWANSEA, CARMARTHEN, and MILFORD as uſual, and from the intermediate ſtages in proportion.

Briſtol, Bath, Worceſter and *Birmingham Coaches* from the above INN every day.

NEWS - URGENT - BIRMINGHAM POST

By Geoff Wood

When I was a lad in Worcester between 1939 and 1949, on my twice daily trek to and from school, two newspapers, both published in Birmingham, were prominently displayed among so many London giant editions outside my local newsagent's shop. Without pocket money, a free read of the sports pages was unheard in those days. Both papers circulated for some thirty miles in all directions from our Second City, and dad said the Birmingham Post was "for the posh people who lived in big houses" while the cheaper Birmingham Gazette, which graced our living room only on a Saturday and Monday, avidly read for West Bromwich soccer news, was the working man's favourite The Gazette folded in the 1960s so I transferred my allegiance to the Post which caters well nowadays for all classes and interests.

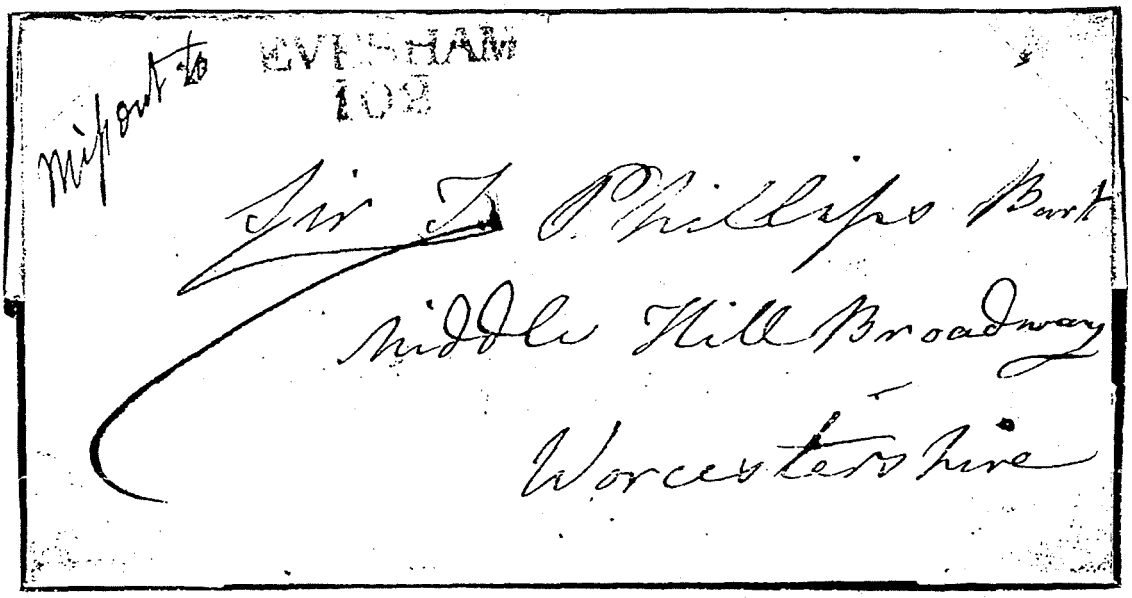
Worcester has two railway stations - Shrub Hill (ex LMS) and Foregate Street (ex GWR). Newspapers by rail? I can vaguely remember stacks of newspapers being loaded on and off trains. But what would have been the contents of the stout brown gummed envelope illustrated below. It measures 9 x 6 ins. (Reduced in size here.) Perhaps a summary form of unsold yesterday's Posts returning from the Worcester area to Birmingham for credit or refund plus the bundled unwanted papers - all for three pence? If untrue about reporters' copy and news from the region hurrying by afternoon train to fill tomorrow's edition of the post ? Feasible. The threepenny stamp is pale green in colour, perforated, measures 41 x 43 mm, unused and reads "Great Western Railway/ 3^{d}/Prepaid Newspaper/Parcel" printed in black. I haven't a clue whether this envelope emanates from the 1930s or perhaps much earlier.



MISSENT TO

By John Calladine

Alan Marshall's example of a manuscript 'Missent to' followed by an NG141 two-line handstamp of Nottingham is certainly early but the practice of using manuscript and a handstamp was not unusual in the 19th century. Examples of letters missent to Sir Thomas Phillips of Middle Hill, Broadway - surely the undisputed 'king of the missent marks' - include the use of circular date stamps, duplexes and anything else that came to hand. The illustrated item, from 1823, is a little less usual in that Evesham has used its mileage stamp but even this couldn't be described as rare.



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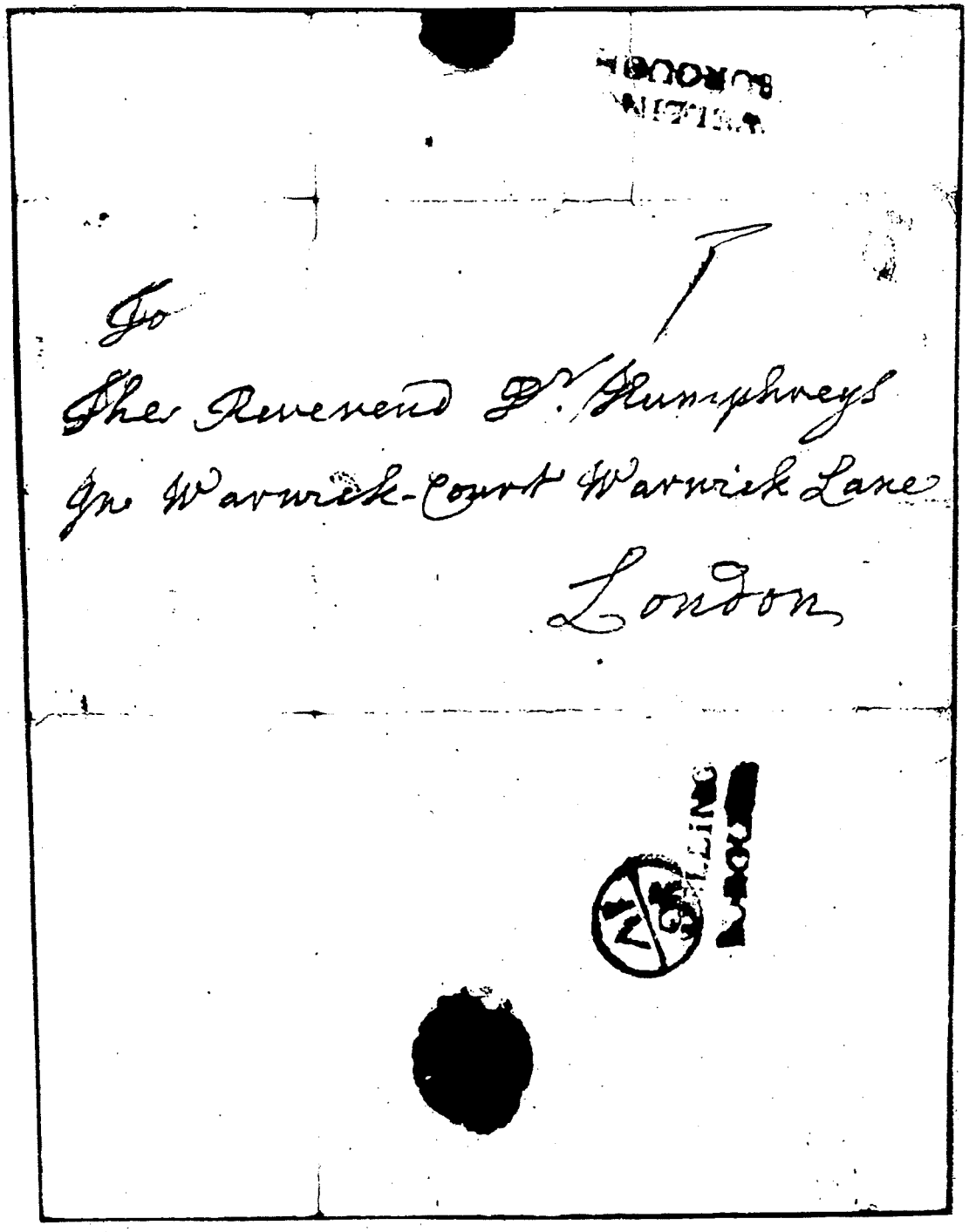
126/7

MORE ON DOUBLE STAMPED

By Derek Smeathers

Following on from Chris Jackson's interesting article (MM 125/13) I have gone through my meagre eighteenth century material and can offer four different items which, unfortunately, do not support the theory that double-stamping indicated no charge on delivery.

15th June 1736. Double-stamped at Wellingborough but unpaid and a 3d charge in black. (Shown below.)
8th October 1788. From Daventry, prepaid 7d (7 written in red ink) but only one strike of the first type mileage Daventry handstamp.
30th August 1789. From Daventry, 'Post Paid' and red 2d but only one strike of the Daventry handstamp.
3rd September 1797. From Brackley. Single strike of the handstamp and Paid 7d in red ink.7



MORE ON DOUBLE STAMPED LETTERS

By Alan Marshall

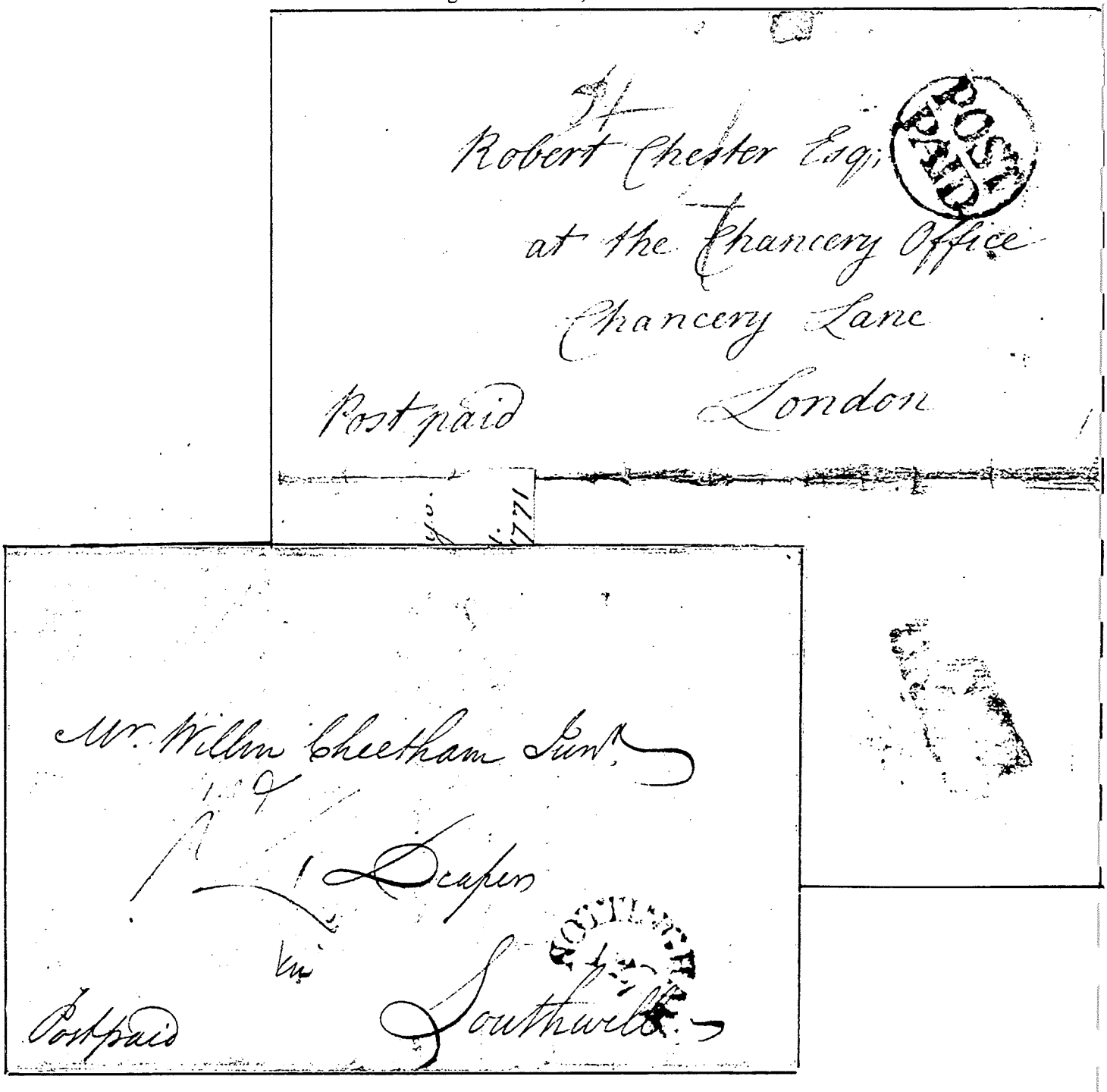
With reference to Chris Jackson's article in MM125 and continuing the double struck 'Free' fraudulent items I can now go one better. A 'Free' from the same Plumbe correspondence dated 9th August 1762 which has **three** strikes of NG 132, one on the front and one on each flap. Chris then asks for pre-paid eighteenth century items that are not double stamped. Yes, Chris I have found three with just one strike.

21st March 1771. Nottingham to London struck with NG 130. Postage Paid 4d.

28th February 1791. Nottingham to Southwell struck with NG 147. Postage Paid 4d.

14th September 1795. Nottingham to Bristol with a poor strike of NG 149. Postage Paid 1/8.

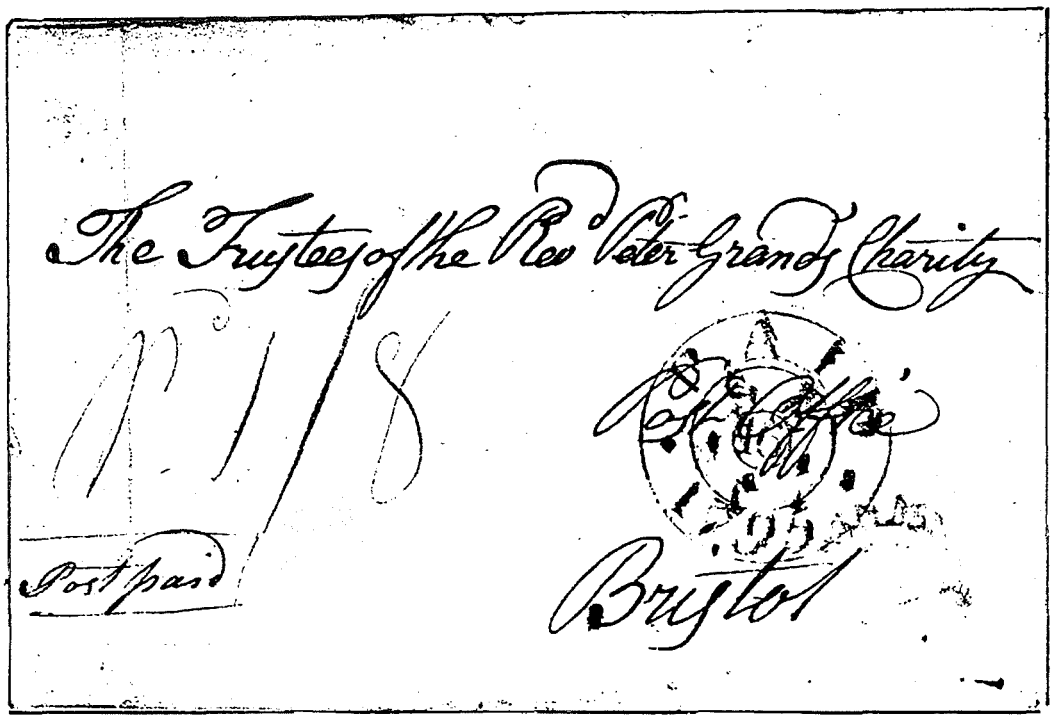
Nottingham to London, March 1771

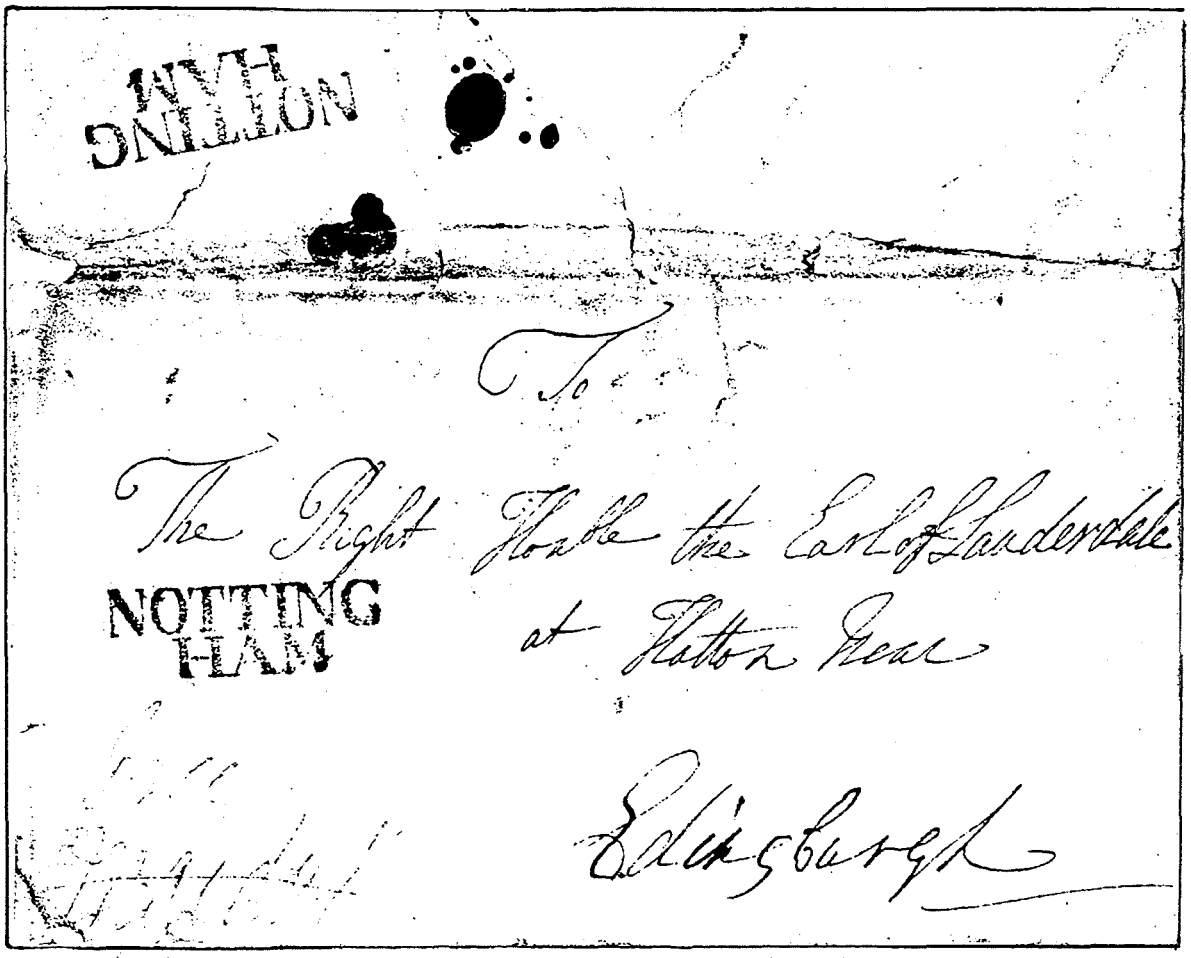


Nottingham to Southwell, February 1791.

126/9

Nottingham to Bristol, September 1795.



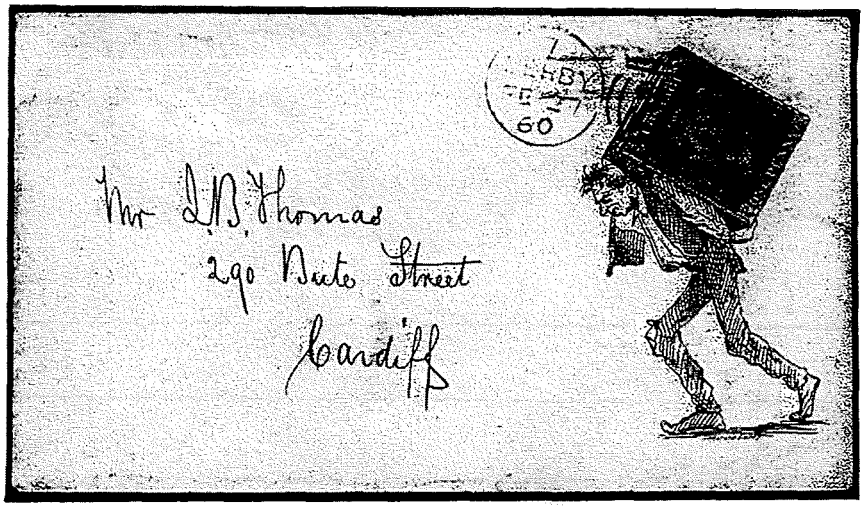


An undated 'Free' item double-struck with NG 132.

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MAIL BY RAIL IN THE MIDLANDS (Part 2)

This article deals with the area in the South Midlands served by the Great Western Railway and covers the period up to about 1849. At the start of 1839, the area with which we are concerned was served by three mailcoaches from London - those to Gloucester, Stroud and Worcester. The first ran through Hounslow, Maidenhead, Henley, Oxford, Witney, Northleach and Cheltenham. On the first part of its journey the Stroud coach followed the same route until it branched off to the south of Oxford and then ran through Abingdon, Faringdon, Fairford and Cirencester. The Worcester coach took a different route out of London, passing through Uxbridge and High Wycombe on its way to Oxford from where it went on through Woodstock, Chipping Norton and Evesham.

One town in Oxfordshire was sending its mail to London by 1839. An order of 8th November 1838 (MM108/12) states that the bag from Banbury would arrive in that from Brackley. The Brackley bag was taken by the ride from Oxford on to Towcester and Blisworth from where it travelled on the railway from Birmingham. There is no mention of how the bag to Banbury was carried.

Construction of the railway line from Paddington to Bristol commenced in February 1836, and by February 1839, the line was open as far as Twyford. By July 1839, the surveyor had completed his plans for putting the mail coaches to Stroud, Gloucester, Bristol and Bath onto the railway. However, the demand made by the railway company was "enormous compared with the present cost of the mail coaches", so the idea was abandoned for a while. Then, in August 1839, when the contractors for the above mail coaches were asked to quote for working the mail coaches from Twyford, the Stroud contractors refused to put their mail coach on the rails, the Bristol and Bath contractors demanded respectively four times and three times "as much as we pay at present". The Post Office decided that it was not worth going to the expense of setting up rides in connection with only the Gloucester coach so it was decided to defer the matter until the following year, and notice was given to end the contracts.

Meanwhile, an agreement had been reached for the GWR to carry between Paddington and Twyford a day mail for Cheltenham at a cost of £500.16.0. p.a. This ran for the first time on 17th December 1839, carrying bags for Windsor, Maidenhead, Reading, Henley, Nettlebed, Benson, Oxford, Witney, Burford, Northleach and Cheltenham.

A minute of 16th January 1840 records that the Post Office had accepted the railway company's offer to carry the four mailcoaches between Paddington and Twyford for the sum of £5.5.0 each way. (It is not clear if this was per coach or for all four.) A further minute mentions a report (alas, no longer extant) detailing the effect of placing the western mails on the railway. An order of 4th February states that on and from that evening the Bath, Bristol, Gloucester and Stroud mails were to be carried on the Great Western Railway as far as Twyford.

The line was completed as far as Reading early in 1840 with Reading Station opening to the public on 30th March. The Reading Mercury of 25th April 1840 states that the mail from London will be carried by rail from 1st May 1840. This fits in with a minute which records that the contractors had been given notice to quit on 30th April. Yet, it was not until 25th May that the P.M.G. was recommended to authorise an allowance of £3.3.0 a day for the conveyance of the Bath and Bristol mails between Twyford and Reading. The minute went on to say that as regards the Gloucester and Stroud mails it was a question of whether it would be expedient to send them from Steventon in June or from Faringdon when the railway reached there in July. It is not clear if all four mails were taken as far as Reading or if this applied only to the Bristol and Bath coaches.

The carriage of mailcoaches on the railway was not without danger. A minute of 11th April 1840 records that the Bristol mailcoach had caught fire and in future it was to be covered with a tarpaulin. A month later there was a similar involving the Bath coach. In November 1840, a minute authorised the payment of 1s.6d. A week to the "*station men on the Great Western and South Western Railways for taking care of the tarpaulins used to cover the Mail Coaches..*"

The line from Reading to Steventon opened on 1st June 1840. On 11th June it was stated that the GWR was prepared to carry mails to Steventon (at the time there was no station at Didcot) , and , two weeks later, they would charge £9 for each trip between Paddington and Steventon. It should be noted that Bath and Bristol coaches continued to run from Reading on their usual route through Newbury etc. as is confirmed by a minute of August 1840 about trains waiting at Reading: "*...trains should not be dispatched from Reading Station without the Bath & Bristol Mails when the Coaches are in sight ...*".

I have not been able to find in Post 35 any details of the changes caused by this extension , but entries in Post 14 can give some indication as to what happened:

> 22nd June - Wallingford to be a post town (the bag is to be given to the Gloster guard). Benson no longer a post town - the letters are to be sent to Wallingford.
>
> 23rd June - Nettlebed no longer a post town. The letters are to be sent to Henley whose bag will in future be enclosed in the Reading bag. (Payments for a Henley & Nettlebed messenger started on 22nd June.)

It seems probable that Wallingford received its mail through Wallingford Road Station, now Cholsey and Moulsford. It seems to have been the practice of the GWR to put the word 'Road' after the name of a place when the station serving that town was some distance away.

From Steventon, the Cheltenham day mail ran through Abingdon, Oxford, Witney, Burford, Northleach and Andoversford. By April 1841, The Stroud mail went on the railway as far as Faringdon Road (later Challow) which had been reached in July 1840, and from where the mailcoach ran through Faringdon, Lechlade and Fairford. The Gloucester mailcoach ran from Steventon through Oxford, Witney, Burford and Cheltenham.

By January 1841, the railway had reached Hay Lane - eighty miles from Paddington. This only affected the Bristol mail. A minute of March 1841 states that the GWR were prepared to carry a guard with the Bristol mail bags to and from Hay Lane station for £2 per day. This was a short-lived measure for with the completion of the section between Chippenham and Bath on 30th June 1841, the line was open between London and Bridgewater. McDermot in his 'History of the Great Western Railway' states that the roads from Hay Lane to Cirencester were in such a bad state of repair that they were almost impassable and consequently the whole of that branch of the traffic used Faringdon Road.

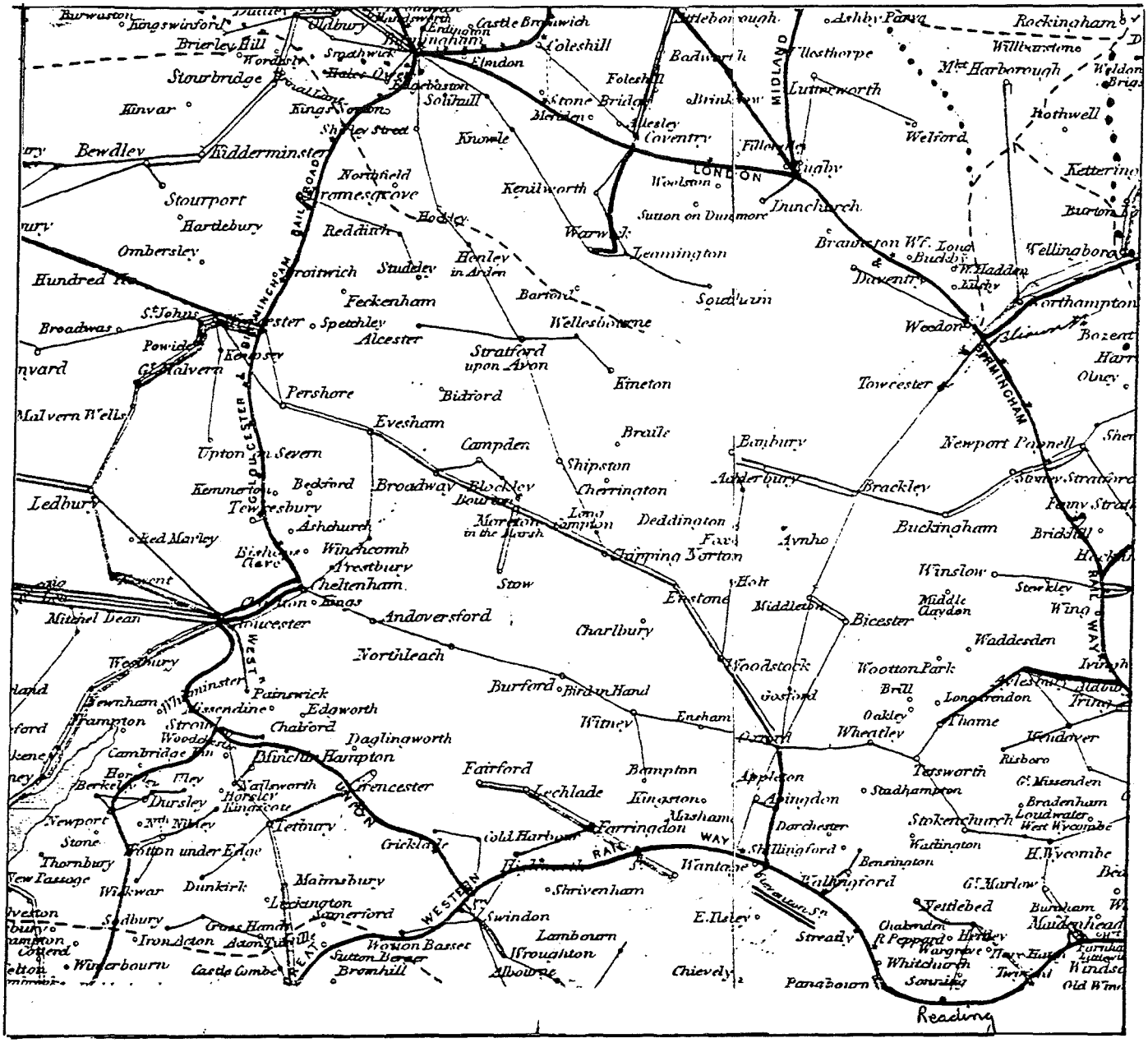
On 24th June 1841, it ws announced that the GWR were prepared to carry mail between Swindon and Cirencester from 26th June. The Stroud mailcoach was withdrawn on 28th June and it was ordered that letters for Faringdon, Highworth, Faiford, Lechlade and Stroud were to go with the Bristol mail (See MM110/8). The withdrawal of the Gloucester mail coach did not take place until 16th July (Also see MM110/8).

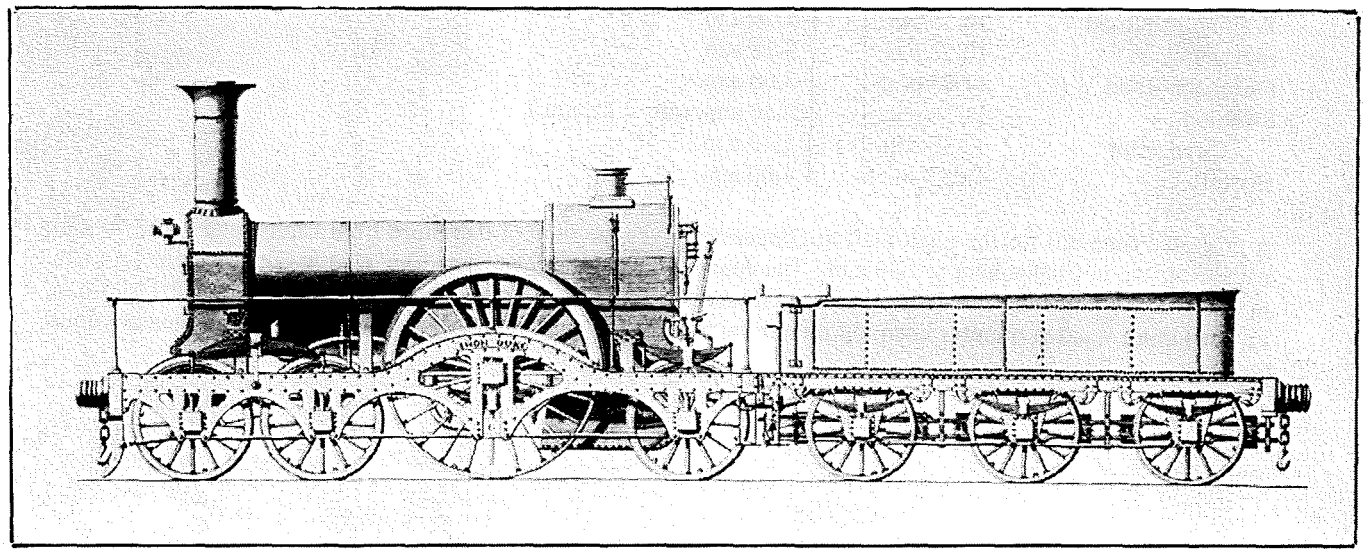
Mr Rideout had earlier reported that he would be prepared by 16th July for the acceleration by railway to Cirencester of mail to Gloucester, Cheltenham, Carmarthen and Aberystwyth. In fact, he had made extensive preparations as early as April. They can be summarised:

- A branch mailcoach from Cirencester to Gloucester and Cheltenham through Chalford and Stroud. Later documents show that there were two coaches one of which ran to Gloucester and Cheltenham, the other to Stroud.
- Faringdon, Lechlade and Fairford to be served by a ride from Faringdon Road. These places were also on the route of the Oxford - Cirencester mailcoach (introduced on 1st May 1840) which carried letters from the North.
- The introduction of a double ride between Steventon and Oxford, one connecting with the train from London, the other with the train to London.
- The introduction of a day mailcoach between Steventon and Oxford.
- The introduction of a pair-horse mailcoach between Cheltenham and Oxford serving Ensham, Witney, Burford, Northleach and Andoversford with both night and day mails as well as bags from the North and West
- The retiming of the ride between Oxford and Banbury so as to give the latter place two more hours to reply.
- The withdrawal of the Oxford-Abingdon ride and one of those between Oxford and Bicester.
- To discontinue the Oxford - Newbury ride. This had been intended for some time as widespread changes had made it redundant.
- Withdrawal of the Cheltenham day mail coach.

Although the dates of the withdrawal of the mail coaches as announced in London are stated above, it should be noted that the notice given to the contractors of the Steventon and Gloucester expired on 24th July 1841. Another source gives the date of the change as 27th July.

Routes in 1845





Gooch's (2–2)–2–2 i.c. *Iron Duke* locomotive: Great Western Railway

PROPOSED TIMES

FARINGDON ROAD - FAIRFORD

Faringdon Road	3.15 a.m.	10.30 p.m.
Faringdon arr	4.02 a.m.	9.43 p.m.
Faringdon dep	4.32 a.m.	9.13 p.m.
Lechlade	5.25 a.m.	8.20 p.m
Fairford	6.00 a.m.	7.45 p.m.

OXFORD - STEVENTON (NIGHT)

Oxford	9.15 p.m.	12.30 a.m.	1.15 a.m.	4.35 a.m.
Abingdon	10.00 p.m.	11.45 p.m.	2.00 a.m.	3.50 a.m.
Steventon arr/dep	10.30 p.m.	11.15 p.m.	2.30 a.m.	3.20 a.m.
Train from London	10.50 p.m.		Train to London	3.18 a.m.

(DAY)

9.00 a.m.	1.45 p.m.
9.45 a.m.	1.00 p.m.
10.15 a.m.	12.30 p.m.
Train from Bristol	10.55
Train from L'don	12.20

OXFORD - CHELTENHAM

Oxford arr/dep	12.30 a.m.	1.15 a.m.
Oxford dep/arr	12.35 a.m.	1.10 a.m.
Witney	2.01 a.m.	11.44 p.m.
Burford	2.55 a.m.	10.50 p.m.
Northleach	4.08 a.m.	9.37 p.m.
Andoversford	5.06 a.m.	8.39 p.m.
Cheltenham PO	5.45 a.m.	8.00 p.m.

These times do not agree with those in the chart on the next page where it appears that all, apart, from Witney were served through Cheltenham. However, the times shown here are taken from a later report and are also shown on a projected timebill with the contractors names in place.

OXFORD - CIRENCESTER

Oxford	9.00 a.m.	6.30 p.m.
Faringdon	11.08 a.m.	4.22 p.m.
Lechlade	11.56 a.m.	3.54 p.m.
Fairford	12.26 p.m.	3.04 p.m.
Cirencester	1.30 p.m.	2.00 p.m.

OXFORD - BANBURY

Oxford	3.00 a.m.	8.30 p.m.
Woodstock ar/dp	4.00 a.m.	7.30 p.m.
Woodstock dp/ar	4.30 a.m.	7.05 p.m.
Banbury	7.00 a.m.	4.45 p.m.

OXFORD - BICESTER

Oxford arr/dep	4 35 a.m.	9.15 p.m.
Oxford dep/arr	5.00 a.m.	8.30 p.m.
Bicester	6.45 a.m.	6.45 p.m.

ABINGDON - WANTAGE

Abingdon ar/dp	3.50 a.m.	10.00 p.m.
Abingdon dp/ar	5.00 a.m.	9.20 p.m.
Wantage	6.40 a.m.	7.40 p.m.

Note: The arr/dep times for Oxford and Abingdon in the above tables are the times of arrival from and departure to Steventon.

PADDINGTON - BRISTOL

Paddington	8.55 p.m.	5.20 a.m.
Reading	10.10 p.m.	4.00 a.m.
Wallingford Road	10.35 p.m.	3.36 a.m.
Steventon	10.50 p.m.	3.18 a.m.
Faringdon Road	11.05 p.m.	3.00 a.m.
Swindon	11.30 p.m.	2.35 a.m. (arr. 2.25 a.m.)
Cirencester	12.35 a.m.	1.40 a.m.
Bristol	1.05 a.m.	1.00 a.m.

A projected time-bill for the night mail to Gloucester gives the time of departure from Cirencester as 12.45 a.m. with an arrival in Cheltenham at 2.30 a.m. The coach left twenty minutes later, arriving in Gloucester at 3.14 a.m. In the opposite direction, the departure from Gloucester was at 10.38 p.m., arriving in Cheltenham at 11.25 p.m. The departure was ten minutes later and the arrival at Cirencester station was at 1.20 a.m. No intermediate times are given.

Shown below are the present and proposed times of the arrival and departure of the London letters in Mr Rideout's report of 28th April 1841.

	ARRIVALS		DEPARTURES	
	PRESENT	PROPOSED	PRESENT	PROPOSED
ABINGDON	11.40 p.m.	11.45 p.m.	2.35 a.m.	2.00 a.m.
ANDOVERSFORD	4.05 a.m.	5.00 a.m.	10.00 p.m.	7.15 p.m.
BICESTER	6.45 a.m.	6.45 a.m.	10.00 p.m.	6.45 p.m.
BURFORD	2.25 a.m.	7.50 a.m.	11.52 p.m.	5.40 p.m.
CRICKLADE	7.30 a.m.	5.15 a.m.	6.00 p.m.	8.40 p.m.
ENSHAM	8.00 a.m.	5.52 a.m.	4.46 p.m.	7.38 p.m.
FARINGDON	12.10 a.m.	4.02 a.m.	2.00 a.m.	9.43 p.m.
FAIRFORD	1.32 a.m.	6.00 a.m.	12.40 a.m.	7.45 a.m.
LECHLADE	1.02 a.m.	5.25 a.m.	1.13 a.m.	8.20 p.m.
NORTHLEACH	3.25 a.m.	6.00 a.m.	10.52 p.m.	6.18 p.m.
OXFORD	12.20 a.m.	12.30 a.m.	1.45 a.m.	1.15 a.m.
WITNEY	1.40 a.m.	6.41 a.m.	12.36 a.m.	6.49 p.m.
WANTAGE	8.10 a.m.	6.40 a.m.	5.45 p.m.	7.40 p.m.

The ride between Banbury and Oxford was withdrawn in August 1842 as the inhabitants wanted more time to answer their London letters, and to this end they were prepared for the mail to the West to be delayed. Thus, a ride was established from Woodstock to Banbury, connecting at the former place with the 'Steventon and Birmingham mail coach'. This enabled the London bag to leave Banbury much later - at 8 p.m.

The Worcester mail coach was withdrawn on 6th July 1842 (See MM110/9). This necessitated:

- The introduction of a mail cart between High Wycombe and Oxford through Stokenchurch, Tetsworth and Wheatley;
- An extension of the Birmingham and Chipping Norton mail coach onto Oxford and Steventon (this was probably withdrawn in July 1843);
- A post from Cheltenham through Winchcombe to Evesham (mail from the North was still to circulate by the Worcester to Moreton in Marsh ride;
- The establishment of rides between Chipping Norton and Broadway and between Spetchley and Pershore.

[Editor's Note: I wonder if I read correctly the entry for withdrawal of the Worcester coach - MM110/9. Surely the Banbury bag would have been in the Woodstock as in the entry for 5JUL1843 in MM111/2.]

On 12th June 1844 the branch line from Didcot to Oxford opened; it was first used to carry mail on 24th June. A minute of 4th June states that the weight of the London bags would make it necessary to use the line to carry the direct posts (night and day mails) to and from London. A mail cart from Steventon would suffice to carry the bye correspondence as the weight of the letters would be very much smaller. It is not clear if the bye letters did in fact go to Steventon ; it is certain that the second ride from Oxford to Steventon was retained to carry the mails from the West which, a later minute states, weighed on average 30lbs. Another consideration was the fact that it would have been expensive to put on a train between Didcot and Oxford in the early hours of the morning.

A mail cart from Abingdon Road station (later Culham) carried the night and day mails to Abingdon. It was not until 1856 that the small branch from Abingdon Junction to Abingdon opened.

Strangely there was no direct road from Oxford to Didcot in 1844, only a footpath to the Oxford - Wantage road. Such a road was constructed in 1845 but, in the following year, it was decided not to send the Steventon ride to Didcot as the distance to the latter place was greater.

On 19th January 1845 a pair-horse mailcoach, fitted to the up and down mail trains, started to run between Oxford and Worcester. As a result the ride between Chipping Norton and Broadway was withdrawn. Also, the circulation of Evesham changed as shown in the entry for 20JAN1845 in MM111/2. The circulation of Pershore also changed in the February but six months later both Evesham and Pershore reverted to their former circulations. I can find no reasons for this.

A Mr Waddell offered in April 1848 to operate a coach between Oxford and Worcester in conjunction with the day mail for freedom from tolls. We can assume that his offer was accepted for an entry in Post 14 for 3rd June states that from 5th June a day mail was to be made up for Woodstock, Enstone, Chipping Norton, Moreton-in-Marsh, Broadway, Evesham and Pershore.

A minute of July 1849 states that the line between Didcot and Oxford was no longer to be used to carry the night and day mails. The ride from Oxford through Abingdon to Steventon was to be made a double one as before. No reason for this is given. Why the weight of the London bags necessitated the use of the railway in 1844 but not in 1849 is not clear.

The line from Kemble to Gloucester carried both night and day mails from its opening on 12th May 1845. No details of any changes in the riding work are given. Although the line had originally ended near to Cirencester, the extension of the line from Swindon through to Gloucester started at Kemble from where a branch line then ran for the four miles to Cirencester. No details of any changes to the riding work are given, but it is certain that the coaches from Cirencester to Gloucester and Stroud were withdrawn.

The final part of this article should strictly have appeared in Part 1 as the line concerned eventually became part of the Midland Railway. However, since it was originally constructed as a broad gauge line I will deal with it here. I refer to the railway between Gloucester and Bristol which opened on 8th July 1844. As a result of the use of the line, the mailcoaches from Bristol to Gloucester and Stroud were withdrawn and the following posts introduced:

- A footpost from Gloucester to Painswick;
- A double ride from Stonehouse station to Stroud;
- A double ride from Berkeley Road station to Dursley;
- A double ride from Charfield station to Wooton-under-Edge;
- A ride from Stroud to Dunkirk through Woodchester, Nailsworth and Tetbury;
- A footpost from Dursley to Uley and Kingscote.

The only changes in the circulation of the London letters appear to have been those for Uley and Kingscote (MM111/2).

References: Numerous minutes, too many to list here, in Post 35 were consulted. If any members would like the particular reference for a piece of information, please get in touch with me. Two major sources used were Post 30, ref 49 and Post 30, ref 67.

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MIDLAND POSTMASTERS, 1894 - 95

The following list updates the information given in MM125/10ff. It is taken from the Establishment Books from 1894 and 1895 and shows the appointments made in those two years or towards the end of 1893. Again, it is interesting to note how many years service in the Post Office were needed before an employee could aspire to an office of any importance.

TOWN	POSTMASTER	FIRST APPT	PRESENT APPT	SALARY £
Bakewell	S.G. Price	1875	1 Aug 1894	130
Belper	R. Chandler	1874	1 Jan 1895	125
Berkeley	Miss M. Ford	1894	17 Jan 1895	75
Bilston	W.F. Chappell	1866	1 Jan 1895	180
Brackley	C.F. Ward	1882	1894	120
Coventry	E.S. Adams	1857	28 Oct 1893	500
Dudley	A. Wallington	1860	22 May 1894	335
Leek	J. Armstrong	1862	1 Dec 1893	185
Leominster	W.H. Powell	1871	11 Dec 1893	170
Lichfield	W. Howe	1863	5 Jan 1894	450
Northampton	J. Milton	1864	7 Oct 1893	525
Oswestry	C.H. Chellew	1863	14 Jan 1895	285
Rugby	A. Boyd	1856	14 Jan 1895	350
Tenbury	R.C. Bull	1881	1 Sept 1894	130
Wallingford	C.H. Honeysett	1873	29 Dec 1893	160
Witney	Miss A.W. Clarke	1892	8 Sept 1894	150

ROYAL POSTS, 1634

The information below is taken from a document in the Public Record Office (SP 16/274/37). It is headed; "*Extraordinary Stages for posts laid by John Wytton* [?] *Deputy Post M^r^ of the Court for convaying of Packetts during his Ma^ts^ continuance abroad this Summer 1634.*"

Apthorp

£ s d

A Constable layd post there for 6 days 00-12-00

Beuvr Castle

The constable layd post there for 5 days 00-10-00

Welbeck

The constable layd post there for 7 days 00-14-00

Nottingham

The Mayor layd post there for 6 days 00-12-00

Licester

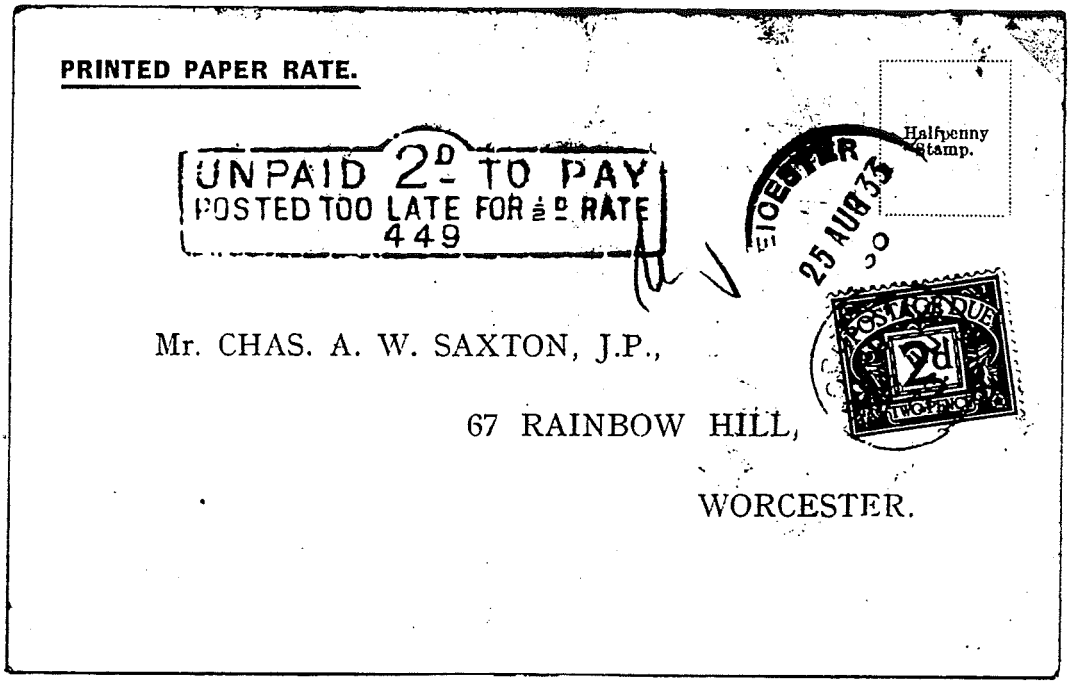
The maior layd post there for 3 days 00-06-00

Tetbury [Tutbury?]

The Consable layd post there for 6 days 00-12-00

AN UNPAID PRINTED PAPER RATE ITEM

To qualify for transmission at the Printed Paper Rate items had to be posted by 4.15 p.m. after which time a further ½d was charged. The card illustrated below was posted too late for the ½d rate and so was charged 1d. As the card had been posted unpaid this fee was doubled.



THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

It is hoped that this will appear by early November. It will contain one major article but there is room for much, much more. So please send contributions, large or small, to:

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