MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.midlandphs.org.uk

President: Alan Godfrey

Chairman:
Gordon Hardy
(01773 856765)

Secretary:
Mick Gill
(01636 672868)

Treasurer:
Alan Godfrey
(01789 765385)

Programme Secretary:
Richard Farman
(01283 566515)

Editor Midland Mail:
Brian Atkins
(01948 258918)
sniktab@gmail.com

Number 215, April 2022



The rare LEAMINOTON square circle spelling error on a 7 May 1891 cover to the USA, see page 6

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Frank Walton RDP FRPSL – Frank sadly passed away on 1st April 2022. A long time member of our society, until recently he had been present at our zoom meetings. He was a specialist in Sierra Leone philately, an international juror, former editor of the London Philatelist (2001-2014) and latterly the Chairman of the Organising Committee of London 2022. He was awarded the FEPA Medal for Exceptional Study and Research in 2014 for his six-volume, *The De La Rue Collection* and in 2015 he signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists. These notes were adapted from The New Midlander, the bulletin of the Midland Philatelic Federation, sent out by Ken Flint.

The Jon Baker Trophy 2020 Presentation at London 2022



When like-minded people meet there is often an exchange of ideas. In this case it was a presentation of the esteemed JB Trophy of our society awarded to the writer that the members consider produced the most interesting, well researched and informative article in the issues of Midland Mail in a particular year. For the year 2020 the trophy was won by **Ian Baker** for his article *Birmingham – The Experimental Receiving House Handstamps 1857-1866* in MM208 July 2020. As Ian wasn't able to be present at the AGM the trophy was presented by our President, **Alan Godfrey**, at a convenient moment at London 2022. Ian was a worthy winner. I am particularly pleased that his article was recognised as Ian proof reads Midland Mail before it goes to the printer. Without him you would be trying to make sense of factual inaccuracies, dreadful mis-spellings and lots of other faults perpetrated by your editor. Give your editor an article on paper and he'll spot the first spelling error in the few seconds it takes Mo Salah to score a goal, put it on computer screen and he will never find it. Thank you, Ian! Votes for 2021 are now welcome; the trophy to be presented at the 2022 AGM in May. Thanks are also due to **Malcolm Allinson** who, I understand, was the willing and very able photographer.

Meeting Dates confirmed for April & May and dates for later in 2022 (one confirmed):

30 April 2022 Cotteridge, 11am Displays of Member's Choice
21 May 2022 Cotteridge, 11am AGM, 1.30pm meeting, County Editors *Early Town cancels 1700 to 1784*

The dates for zoom meetings up to July 2022 are to be found on page 2 of the January 2022 edition of Midland Mail

I hope the confirmed dates & subjects for September to December will appear in the July 2022 edition of Midland Mail.

Provisional dates are: 24 September, Cavendish Philatelic Auction Rooms, Derby
22 October, Friends Meeting House, Cotteridge (**I believe this date has been confirmed**)
12 November, Warwick & Warwick, Committee Meeting 11am
3 December, Burton-on-Trent, Christmas Meeting

If everything works out well, I hope to have brought copies of Midland Mail to the April meeting to save on postage. With the postal increases set to go to £1.05 for second class large, we can save over £20 if 20 people turn up.

Articles - Many thanks to everyone who responded generously to my request for articles, many of which have been included here. Special thanks to those who have not previously written for Midland Mail. **I do need articles for the July issue, so please keep them coming**.

20 April Zoom Meeting – As I could not be present at this zoom meeting and the date of the meeting is so close to the end of the month when Midland Mail is published, the report will not appear until the end of July edition and, of course, the same will apply to the 30 April regular meeting at Cotteridge.

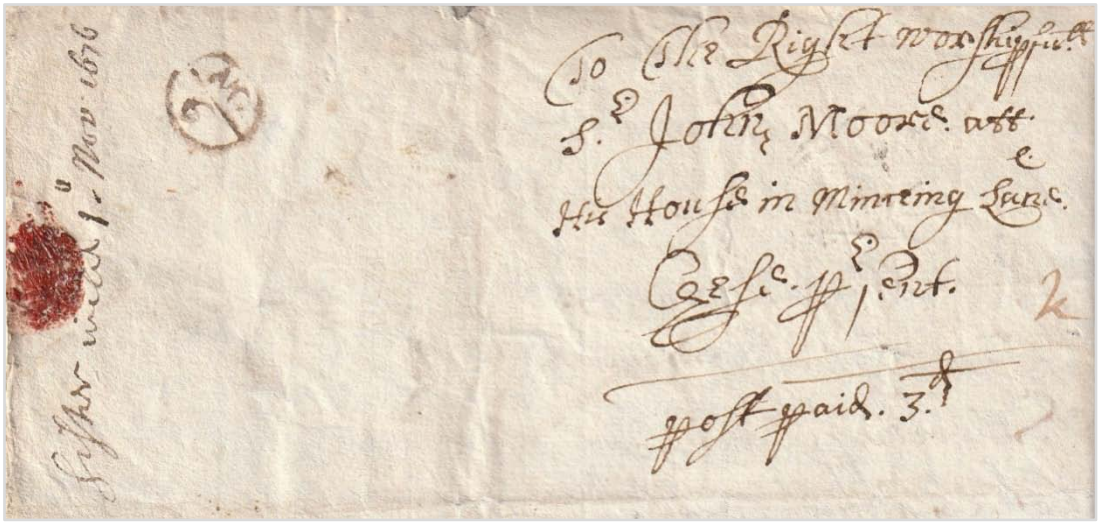
Jon Baker Trophy for 2021 – As of 30 March we have 19 votes and a clear leader (no votes received since 30 March). The result will be unveiled at the AGM on 21 May, so there is still time to cast your vote for the best article in Midland Mail in 2021 by sending me an email or giving me a phone call (see front page), either is fine.

NB - Because of a personal difficulty there was not time to send this edition to Ian Baker for proof reading, any and all errors are therefore mine and mine alone. It will be interesting to see how many emails I receive now!!!

The 16 February 2022 Zoom Meeting when the subject was '*The Postal History of Loughborough*', a display by John Soer with 21 members present. I am indebted to John for this account of his display.

John began by displaying maps to show the location of Loughborough in NW Leicestershire on the road from Leicester to Derby. An early temporary post was provided at Loughborough in November 1584 when Mary, Queen of Scots, was confined at Wingfield, the home of Sir Ralph Sadler. The postmaster at Loughborough received twenty pence a day for taking letters, received from Tutbury, to Witham on the Great North Road between Grantham and Stamford.

Henry Bishop, the P.M.G., announced in May 1660 that he intended to set up a post To Harborough, Leicester and Derby no later than 14 June on the usual post days, i.e. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Towards the end of 1663 Daniel O'Neille, Bishop's Successor, advertised the setting up of a post from London to Sheffield which branched from the Chester Road at Towcester and passed through Leicester, Loughborough and Derby. This document in the National Archives (SP29/88/184) gave details of the postmaster at each stage and the time of the post. From the same source we saw a copy of a timebill of 1667 (SP29/148/107) which was signed by the postmaster at every stage. The 3d postage on a letter sent in 1676 from Long Whatton, about four miles to the northwest of Loughborough, was prepaid. John said this was by far the earliest prepaid letter that he had seen.



Long Whatton to Loughborough, November 1676.

Aletter sent in March 1711 showed a strikeof a handstamp'LOUG / BOROW', while one sent in September 1711 carried a 'LOUGH / BOROW' mark. John said that he found it difficult to believe that the same handstamp (LC 80) remained in use from 1736 to 1771. The example he showed struck in September 1736 could be described as 'fair', but he commented that later examples he has seen were so poor that accurate measurement was not possible.

The 1770s saw the introduction of handstamps with letters 7mm in height; we saw two very good examples from Loughborough (LC 83 and LC 86). After an example of the first type mileage mark we saw the convex mark of Loughborough and the straight line handstamp with letters 4mm high. The last of these was on a letter from Loughborough to Ashby-de-la-Zouch which are about twelve miles apart. However, the charge on the letter was 6d – the rate for 60-100 miles, as the letter was sent via Northampton and Atherstone, a distance of 100 miles. Loughborough used only two different mileage marks – one with the 109 in a box, the other with 109 between lines. This was different from other post-towns, apart from Ashby, in the county which used at least five.

The next section of the display concerned the unofficial receiving offices at Cavendish Bridge and Kegworth both of which used mileage marks showing '109', that of Loughborough. After 1804 both of these places were served with their letters from the south by Leicester for which John gave a possible explanation for. Castle Donington was served with its mail by an unofficial post from Cavendish Bridge. A letter, written at Castle Donington in January 1829, was sent in a bag from Cavendish Bridge to Leicester from where it was struck with the dated, circular mileage stamp and then sent back as far as Loughborough. John said that he had come across covers which carried what appeared to be a mileage removed mark of Cavendish Bridge, but the strikes were so poor that he had been reluctant to record them as such. A letter sent from Donington Park in March 1833 showed a fairly good impression of what was clear such a mark.



Donington Park to Brussels, March 1833 (Reduced to 80%)



Part of the Reverse (Reduced to 80%)

Another unofficial sub-office, Mountsorrel, between Loughborough and Leicester, used a mileage mark, in this case the figure in the box was 98, the mileage of Leicester.

Two Mulready wrappers were the first two items from 1840 onwards. One was sent from Loughborough to Dublin in November 1841; the other to Loughborough from Market Harborough in January 1841. An unpaid letter to Nottingham in November 1840 had the handstruck '2' of Loughborough. Three different '475' hand stamps were used: that issued in 1844; a slightly smaller version issued in 1855 and one in a vertical format issued in 1872.

The first of the duplex marks issued to Loughborough in 1860 was on an envelope from Taylor's Bell foundry which has probably made more bells than any other foundry in this country supplying them to Worcester Cathedral, Evesham Bell Tower and St Paul's Cathedral. Another duplex mark was seen on a postcard sent by Brush Engineering Company. Two types of squared circle hand stamps were used at Loughborough, strikes of the original hammers and the second recut of both were displayed as well as three different 'skeleton' postmarks of 1847, 1850 and 1898, the last of the three skeletons was struck on an envelope sent to Messenger & Co (see Marion Turner's excellent article in MM 212/17 for more detail on the company). I assume that the reason for the return of the registered envelopes from the workmen was for accounting / tax purposes. Among the various strikes shown on the envelopes were registered ovals of Leicester, Birmingham and Rugby Station. This part of the display ended with examples from the Ashby Road office of the registration labels used at Town Sub-Offices: the 'C' type of February 1907 and 'B' type introduced in March 1931. As all the mail appears to have gone through the Ashby Road Sub-Office, it was inevitable that John's next item was an Edwardian postcard on which part of that office could be seen.

Parcel Post labels of some of the sub-offices appeared on the next slide; those from the Head Office were next to be seen. An unusual item was a parcel post label produced in December 1953 by a T.I.M. (Ticket Issuing Machines). Among the UDCs shown was the unusual double ring of Mountsorrel which was issued in May 1837 when Mountsorrel was made an official sub-office. After 1840 this mark was often used in the '476' cancellation. John said that the type C1 handstamp issued in February 1856 was much harder to find for in March 1857 Mountsorrel was made a M.O.O and received a cds. Avery late usage was the type C4 of Sileby used on 3rd February 1860.

The final section of the display consisted of postcards of the village sub-offices, usually accompanied by contemporaneous date stamps. Notable was Woodhouse Eaves with two 'skeletons'.

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The 19 February 2022 Meeting at Friends Meeting House, Cotteridge, Birmingham when the subject was '*Registered Mail or Money Letters*'. Due to a plethora of storms no early trains passed through Whitchurch that day, so I am extremely grateful to **Chris Jackson** for taking notes of the displays.

Clive Jones opened with *'Valuables & Banknotes*' a pre-cursor to the 1841 Registration scheme. The first item was a 1790 notice showing how to send banknotes through the post cut in half and early banknotes from Dudley and Ludlow showed the dual numbering system. A 1790 Money Letter was treble rated as it contained half a guinea. An 1832 incoming Money Letter was charged 5/- with a superb 'REGISTERED round a Crown' hand stamp. Finally an 1837 copy of the notice for 'Transmitting Sovereigns and half sovereigns by post' was displayed. Clive's second half
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continued the theme with a letter with 10/6d enclosed in penny black stamps to avoid sending a half guinea, charged 5/- postage. An 1842 Registered envelope from Edinburgh had a superb cancellation. A series of letters from Ludlow in May 1844 had half banknotes. The display finished with various 6d rate letters.

Stuart Geddes showed *Ross and the Forest of Dean*. An 1834 Dursley to Monmouth letter had contained a £5 note. Registered letters from Cherwell through Gloucester Station, Goodrich and Crowhill via Ross, Bishops Wood, Walford and a censored envelope from Mitcheldean were all shown. An 1880 Drybrook to Hamburg via Gloucester Station had a 4d sage and a ½d bantam. In the second half Stuart showed a *'Pot Pourri*' (his words) including Rugby to Aberystwyth, a Money Letter to Pwllheli with the only Welsh Money Letter hand stamp.

Malcolm Allinson showed a selection of F and G size Registered Letter envelopes from the George V & VI period including an uprated item following the May 1952 increase in registration fee. In the second half, Malcolm showed a series of different Registered Letter and Registered Postal Packet receipts from 1854 to 1899, The display was completed with two wrappings from parcels, each showing a registration label and parcel post label for Calderbridge, Cumberland on 23 December 1953. One piece had 2/- in stamps, the other 2/6, so the general opinion was that they were both registered at the 6d fee (£5 compensation), with one parcel being up to 8lb and the other 11lb in weight.

Chris Jackson showed Registered mail from Worcestershire going abroad. An envelope from Barnards Green to the Caroline Islands in WW1 was returned by the Japanese via Australia arriving back in Malvern 14 months after posting. Letters from Worcester to Malta, France and Australia, the latter with blue crayon AR for Advice of Receipt were followed by a court summons at a 2½d rate and a PUC £1 on a letter used locally in Worcester. In the second half Chris showed O.H.M.S. Sub-Office Official Remittance forms all used within Worcestershire via High Green. The forms were used for sending small amounts to main offices and are only found (to date) within Worcestershire.

Richard Capon showed photocopies of ledgers from Fotheringay showing details of transactions and amount of money transferred in the early 1800's. Richard explained the process of obtaining permission to visit the archives of all the major banks and his experiences in visiting them.

Alan Godfrey started with an 1848 envelope from Stratford to Atherstone with 6d registration paid in cash, followed by 6d paid in stamps on Rugby to London. An 1874 4d rate Coventry to Axminster, an 1880 2d rate Stratford to Broad Marston, an 1881 scrim-lined envelope Leamington to Pitlochry (superb squared circle cancellations), 1853/54 Registered receipts from Warwick and an Alcester to Ohio followed. In the second half Alan showed various anonymous registration labels including posted out of course hand stamps on letters from Coventry to London and Nuneaton. An 1884 Great Alne sub-office remittance from Redditch had an MOSB cancel.

Mick Gill started with a November 1843 1/- fee paid in cash wrapper from Newark to Edinburgh. Two 1849 items from Nottingham to London and Macclesfield had the 6d fee paid in cash. Items to Macclesfield with the 6d fee paid by stamps followed, from Southwell 1850 (3 x 2d blues), Mansfield 1854, three Nottinghams 1854 (each 6d embossed) and Worksop 1855. The display ended with 2d fee items from Tuxford to London (1883) with stamps cancelled by a Newark 541 3VOS and an 1894 registered envelope from Nottingham to Germany uprated with four 2½d Jubilee stamps. Mick's second display comprised items with anonymous registration labels used correctly with date stamps with the date slugs removed, from Tuxford 1910, East Bridgeford 1910, Carlton le Moorland, Newark 1910, Netherfield 1913 and Jacksdale 1965 with a manuscript name. Mobile post office items from the Newark and Notts Agricultural Show with dated anonymous labels followed, one from 1960 but dated '1909' and another with the '1909' amended in manuscript to read 1960. Finally came a 1963 item with the label completed in manuscript.

Gordon Hardy showed an 1846 mss 1/1d Railway cover Leeds to Nottingham, an 1848 Worksop to Bakewell with 6d paid by 3x 2d blue. An Ashborne to Bakewell from 1852 had a 1/- green and a scrim lined 1894 letter to a dentist in Chesterfield had a 'Posted out of Course' h/s and 6d/186 postage due. In the second half Gordon displayed a 1904 Derby to Chapel en le Frith item stamped '*Sheriff of Derbyshire'*, another 1904 item had stamps with 'ARMY P.O.' overprints. A 1974 envelope was from Quarnford, at one time the highest Post Office in the country. He finished with Mobile P.O. from Hackney Horse Show and the Stallion Show both held at Derby racecourse on1957.

Richard Farman started with an October 1792 notice from the Kentish Gazette for the introduction of the Money Letter Service. Two 'Free' letters containing £300 and £1,000 in banknotes respectively were signed by an MP showing abuse of the 'Free' system. A letter to Chelsea Hospital contained a silver shilling and several letters charged double or triple rate due to the weight of a coin. An 1839 letter to Castleton charged 1/2d sent with cash and the first day of the Uniform 4d rate Money Letter charged 1/-. In the second half Richard showed a Compulsory Registered letter from 1868 charged 8d due to enclosed coins. A registered letter from the Accountant General included an Advice of Receipt. An 1884 Registered Army Official and a P.O.W letter endorsed by the commandant where the money contained within the letter was held by the commandant and released to the P.O.W 6d at a time.

The 16 March 2022 Zoom Meeting, when the topic was *Lockdown Write-ups* with a maximum of 17 present.

Toby Mottram began the proceedings with his write-up of Leamington (Spa) square circles, for which Stanley Cohen's book shows a rarity factor of 10 between 1881 and 1910. The reason for putting Spa in brackets is that some of the square circles read LEAMINGTON only and some had SPA added. He divided them into Series with date ranges and codes. Noticeable was a spelling of LEAMINOTON (code 2X) on a 7 May 1891 cover to the USA.

Alan Spencer showed of *Aspects of the Napoleonic Wars in Scotland*. Noticeable among the 8 slides was a 16 August 1817 letter to Sgt McPherson of the 92nd Highland Regiment in Thurso showing a concessionary rate for 'other ranks'. An 1811 entire from Gallegos, Spain to Dalguise, near Dunkeld showed that the 1d rate had been extended to soldiers overseas, it also had a straight-line FALMOUTH. There was also a Conditions of Parole document of March 1812 and an Accommodation Certificate showing where a prisoner was residing in a town.

Richard Capon displayed one 1798 item with a double curved NORTH / HAMPTON addressed to Barnack, near Oundle, charged 5d. Richard wanted to know how the letter reached Barnack, which didn't have a receiving house. Marc Oxley suggested it may have gone via Wansford as it was nearer to that place.

Marc Oxley then put up a 27 September entire from Oxford to London, which appeared to be a 'free' revealing an '*abuse of privilege*'. But had it gone through the post as there were no marks, which included no Bishop mark. His second item was a c.1750 entire to Ludford, near Ludlow franked Ed Foley from Cary Street in London.

Ian May's displayed 4 slides of *Posted out of Course* beginning with a 20 November 1936 cover from Coventry to Manchester with 3 x 1½d brown EdVIII stamps, which had been put into a post box and gained a *Posted out of Course / 233* hand stamp, plus a *3d / 233* for redirection. A 1964 item showed that the *Posted out of Course* stamp was wearing out as POOC had been pencilled nearby, mailed to Switzerland at 3d postage and 1/9 registration. A March 1971 local Coventry cover from Unbrako Ltd., Wages Section, had a *ms* 26p To Pay / 233; 3d postage double to 6d as unpaid plus 20p registration meaning there were 2 x 10p, a 1p and 5p To Pay labels.

Richard Farman illustrated 8 slides including a STOWELL udc from the village of Stonnell, clearly an incorrect spelling and not in the UDC book. Remarkable was a 1¼d UPU card cancelled B02 from Suez, Egypt to Newbury used on 8 July 1875, 7 days after issue. Another Egyptian item was a UPU postcard from Alexandria (duplex A) dated 7 July 1879 to Holland Road, Kensington with a long note from a Turkish Colonel! A 27 September 1853 cover had a ST.MARY'S BRIDGE udc and was sent to Derby Main Office for delivery to the Midland railway. Finally a 5 February 1841 Mulready, stereo A234, from London to Wordsley, near Stourbridge included information about a box on the mail coach.

Having purchased a few reference books, **Marion Turner** had spent lockdown plating 1d reds (good luck with that!). She showed us a 4 September 1841 cover from Leicester to London, which she eventually decided was from plate 16 and a 20 August 1841 cover from Kegworth to Derby with a late use of the Kegworth mileage has a 1d red, miraculously, from plate 5, a great find!

Garrie Naden is interested in routes and rates. He put up three covers and used Google maps walking facility to show possible routes. The first cover was from Penkridge to Leek (24 February 1802), charged 6d for 50 to 80 miles (1801 Act) but which route did it take on the mail coaches? Was it up to Manchester and down to Leek, or down to Birmingham, then up to Derby and across to Leek, or was it up to Stafford, down to Lichfield, up to Derby and across to Leek? It was probably the latter as it was the only route within the 6d range. Routes treated in a similar way were Nantwich to Leek in 1817 (two routes within the 9d charge range) and Brackley to Daventry endorsed *Turn at* (Stony) *Stratford* in 1811, charged 6d for 30 to 60 miles (1805 Act) within the range of the likely route.

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The 19 March 2022 Joint Meeting with the Postal History Society at Cavendish Philatelic Auction Rooms, Derby, with members of each society displaying subjects of their choice. The following PHS members displayed:

Simon Richards - Postal History of Savoy
Steve Ellis - French Transatlantic Mail 1783 to 1857
Gerald Marriner - Channel Islands Liberation
Peter Webb - The India ¼anna postcard
Mark Bailey - Seasons of the Year in Jersey
John Scott - Illustrated Topographical Paper
Steve Jarvis - Air mails from Jamaica to the UK
Claire Scott - Brunei WW2
Graham Mark - Philatelic Dealer Mail WW1
Peter Chadwick - Yarm Postal History

The members of the Midland (GB) Postal History Society who presented displays were:
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Alan Spencer - Canadian Expeditionary Force WWI starting with a postcard from the standing Militia, through to mobilisation, embarkation and training in Britain. Postmarks included a rare Valcartier handstand, only in use for three days. Later items included registered mail; Prisoner of War covers; a cover to a French Liaison Office; items from Salonika and a nurse in Egypt and finally an American who had joined the RAF and was training in Canada.

Greg Spring - Development of Air Mail Routes from Europe to the Far East, 1929 to 1939. Three frames of Imperial Airways, companies that became Air France and KLM developing routes, especially from India to Australia.

Brian Atkins began with two examples of the unofficial post from Shrewsbury to Llanfyllin, which began c.1791 but ceased when the mail coach to Holyhead first ran in 1808, which resulted in the establishment of a little-known and scarce 5th Clause Post from Oswestry in October 1810, 4 examples were shown. This post was converted to a penny post in April 1814 with Llanfyllin given a boxed No2 with several examples illustrated.

Steve Ellis - *French Transatlantic Mail 1783 to 1857*. Steve illustrated several wide-ranging services including Royal Paquebot Service, Private Ships, Neutral Vessels, Warships, Regular Clipper Services, Regular Packet Services. He also showed covers illustrating the 1848 Retaliatory and Restored rates as well as the less common and comparatively little known 1853 Retaliatory rate (3 eastbound and 2 westbound Cunard sailings) when the US Postmaster General thought, wrongly, that the US packets were being discriminated against.

Alan Godfrey, *The Development of Franking Machines from 1912 to the Present*. Noticeable were a Moss machine used in New Zealand and turned down twice by the UK postal authorities and a 1912 Wilkinson 1d machine.

Mick Gill explained that in Nottinghamshire only Newark, Nottingham and Worksop had used missent hand stamps. He began with the only known example of the rare **Missent to / NEWARK.** mark, dated 16 December 1787 on an entire from Alnwick to *Claxby in Linkinshire*, endorsed *Turn at / Grantham*. Examples of the **MISSENT TO / NEWARK** mark followed on items from 1805, 1817, 9 April 1840 and 7 July 1840 (Mulready). An item from 1849 was endorsed *Missent to* with a Newark date stamp. Mick explained there was confusion in the past as to whether the **MISSENT TO / NOTTINGHAM** marks were framed or unframed but an 1838 item clearly showed a frame. An 1825 cover to Halifax was endorsed *Missent to* with a **WORKSOP / 146** lined mileage mark, but an insufficiently addressed and much travelled item from 1853 carried a **Missent to Worksop** mark with a second, illegible line.

Richard Farman showed early Staffordshire beginning with letters dated 1584 privately carried from Penkridge to Blithfield Hall and a 4 March 1594 entire from Leek to the 'Sherriffe of the County of Stafforde'. Also on view was a 1627 small Speed map of Staffordshire. Noticeable was a 1672 letter from London to Stafford which had no Bishop Mark as they weren't in use at that time and a 1690 letter from a coffee house in Lichfield. Finally we saw, again, the earliest known English letter with a provincial town mark, the 1701 BOLTON.

Chris Jackson showed two different subjects on his two frames beginning with Express Mail from Worcestershire, the earliest item a November 1895 envelope from Worcester to Birmingham, the service started in 1891. A December 1904 Redditch to London was cancelled with the M.O.S.B hand stamp and an Evesham to Redditch in April 1908 had a 2d GWR stamp with a *To be handed to P.O. Messenger on arrival* label. Various examples of increasing Express charges were shown. A provincial Sunday Express letter from Redditch to Birmingham in April 1949 was charged 1/6d plus postage; in her book Hilary Welstead stated that she had never seen provincial use of the Sunday Express system. Chris's second board was a comprehensive display of the Worcester Penny Post, including examples of all the different receiving houses and uses both local mail and in the general post.

Garrie Naden The London to Manchester & Carlisle Mail Coach shown on two expertly designed extra large pages combining two A1 sheets to make an A0, equivalent to 16 x A4 pages. Garrie had named the towns at each stage along the route using scans of a relevant mileage for that town; an innovative and thoughtful way of using the available technology for the purposes of a display.

Malcolm Allinson illustrated a selection of Whitehaven (Cumberland) material, starting with the earliest mark from the town, a straight line WHITE/HAVEN, followed by the second town mark, another straight line WHITE/HAVEN but a much larger. A single line concave WHITEHAVEN was seen on a double rated letter to the Bishop of Chester. Straight line and circular 326 mileage marks proceeded a pre-paid hand struck 1 and an unpaid hand struck 2, followed by a Mulready envelope. Finally we saw different types of Parcel Post labels and a sheet explaining the evolution of the TPO route from Whitehaven to Carnforth, extended to Preston, Stalybridge and Huddersfield.

Clive Jones, Julian Tweed and Gordon Hardy also provided displays. Considering the inconsistency of our wretched railway system (my morning journey took me nearly an hour longer than scheduled), I decided to leave early in order to arrive home at a reasonable hour – I arrived on time!! My apologies to those whose displays I missed.

DISCUSSION PIECE - LOCAL POST ROADS in the 18th CENTURY

provided by Ian M. May

Over the last few years the Society has had access to two important maps of English and Welsh mail routes, the Holkham[1] map of about 1735 and the British Library map of about 1770 entitled "A map of the post roads of England and Wales"[2]. Both maps have a variety of types of mail route for which a key is given on the British Library map, but there is no key on the Holkham map.

A number of roads, which are defined as a '*road leading to places where the inhabitants are at the expense of carrying their letters to the nearest post town*', are shown on British Library map. This would appear to imply that mail to the places to which the road led was subject to an extra charge even though some of the destinations would appear to be Post Towns. The initial interest was in the two roads in Warwickshire that ran from the Chester Road, i.e. Coventry to Nuneaton and Hinckley, and Dunchurch to Rugby and Lutterworth. Neither Nuneaton or Hinckley were Post Towns in 1770 and there is a significant amount of evidence that there was local post from Coventry[3] with a charge of 2d. Nuneaton became a receiving house in the Coventry Penny Post in 1810[4] and Hinckley became a Post Town in 1788[5]. The road from Dunchurch to Rugby and Lutterworth is problematic in that both towns had hand-stamps by 1770 and would therefore be assumed to be Post Towns. In reference 5 it is stated that a salary was not paid to a postmaster at Lutterworth until 1789, although the office appears to have been accepted by the Post Office. A number of articles in Midland Mail, e.g. reference 6, state that mail to Rugby was collected from Dunchurch and an additional charge was applied, either an extra 1d or ½d. This charge was allowed because it would avoid any charge on the Revenue, which implied that the postmaster received no payment from the Post Office.

Because the above two roads were not the only ones, defined as above, in the Midlands the others have been listed, in two groups, below. The first group is roads leading from a main post road, and the second group is roads between two Post Towns that are on different post roads. The Holkham map was also investigated and those roads which appear on that map, as well, are indicated. It is noteworthy that the same dotted line is used on both maps to signify these roads.

In order to ascertain if a town was a Post Town the first year of use of a hand-stamp, obtained from reference 7, has been identified and is shown against the relevant towns below.

CHESTER ROAD

Dunchurch to Rugby(1715) and Lutterworth (1750)	Also on Holkham Map
Coventry to Nuneaton and Hinckley (1789)	Not on Holkham Map
Litchfield to Tamworth (1713)	Also on Holkham Map
Haywood to Uttoxeter (1736)	Also on Holkham Map, also road to Stafford
Stone to Cheadle (1787)	Not on Holkham Map
Stone to Leak (1783)	Not on Holkham Map
Owre (now Woore) to Drayton (1713)	Not on Holkham Map why not?
Nantwich to Whitchurch (1707)	Also on Holkham Map

DUNSTABLE TO DERBY ROAD

Leicester to Bosworth (1836)	Not on Holkham Map
Loughborough to Ashby-de-la-Zouch (1795)	Not on Holkham Map
Derby to Ashbourne (1741)	Also on Holkham Map

BIRMINGHAM TO SHREWSBURY ROAD

Shrewsbury to Elsmere (Ellesmere, 1785)	Not on Holkham Map, dotted route to Dolgellau and Aberystwyth from Shrewsbury

GROUP 1 ROADS LEADING FROM A MAIN POST OFFICE ROAD

Editor's note: John Calladine has previously provided information from PO archives about the Cross Post salaries in Shropshire. ***The Bridgnorth and Whitchurch postmasters were paid a cross post salary of £30 from 1703 until year ending 25 March 1714, then £35 until 1721****. The archives also show the Whitchurch postmasters may not have been paid a General Post salary until 1786, when Elizabeth Spencer was in office, her tenure being 1774 to 1793, though the town had postmarks prior to that date.*

OXFORDSHIRE

Bicester to Deddington	Not on Holkham Map

SHROPSHIRE

Wolverhampton to Bridgnorth	Also on Holkham Map
Nantwich to Whitchurch	Also on Holkham Map

GROUP 2 ROADS BETWEEN TWO POST TOWNS.

Of the roads in Group 1 that initiate on the Chester Road those that lead to towns which did not have a postmark are the ones to Nuneaton and Hinckley, Cheadle, and Leek, whilst those to Rugby and Lutterworth, Tamworth, Uttoxeter, and Whitchurch lead to towns with a post mark.

Similarly, of the roads that initiate on the Derby Road those that lead to towns which did not have a hand-stamp are the ones to Bosworth and Ashby-de-la-Zouch, whilst Ashbourne had a hand-stamp.

The road that initiates on the Birmingham to Shrewsbury Road goes to Ellesmere which was not a post town.

An archivist at Post Office Records[8] reported that the postmasters at Rugby, Lutterworth, Tamworth, Uttoxeter, Drayton, Whitchurch and Ashbourne did not receive a salary at the time of the 1770 map.

One possible explanation for the Group 1 roads is that it was a way of providing a 6 day mail service to towns that would only get a 3 day service by the official post office route. The first towns listed for the Group 1 roads i.e. Bicester, Wolverhampton and Nantwich are on 6 day routes whereas the second towns i.e. Deddington, Bridgnorth and Whitchurch are on 3 day routes. It is assumed that an extra charge over the post office rate would be paid for this service.

In conclusion it would appear that the roads in Group 1 were of two types. The first were roads to towns which were not post towns. For these roads it is likely that the delivery would be arranged by the postmaster of the post town from which the road initiated and any income from the charges would pay for delivery and any profits would accrue to the postmaster. It is also likely that a payment would also be made sending mail along the road to be put into the General Post. These additional charges can appear on inward mail, to the collected from the recipient in addition to the General post charge but are less likely to be to be outward mail as they would need to be collected before entering the General Post.

The second type is roads to post towns where the postmaster did not receive a Post Office salary. The charging of mail for delivery along these roads would be similar to that above but in this case it would be organised by the postmaster of the town at the end of the road in order that he had an income.

Please let the editor know if you can add anything in connection to the above

References:

1 A map of the several post roads of England and Wales, Holkham Hall, c1735.
2 A map of the post roads of England and Wales, The British Library, c1770.
3 May I. M., Foleshill yet again, Midland Mail, 93, January 1996, pp.13-15.
4 The local posts of the Midland Counties to 1840, Midland (GB) PHS Publ. No 3, 1993.
5 Soer, J., The Royal Mail in Leicestershire and Rutland, Midland (GB) PHS No 4, 1997.
6 May. I. M., The Rugby additional ½d on London letters, Midland Mail, 190, April 2016, pp.18 -20.
7 The British County Catalogue of Postal History, Midland edition, Midland (GB) PHS No 6, 2013.
8 Personal communication, The archivist, The Postal Museum, London.

THE IMPACT of a CHANGE IN ROUTE in c.1720 on LEICESTER and MARKET HARBOROUGH POSTAL RATES to & from LONDON

by Garrie Naden

In John Soer's excellent article '*More on the use of computed miles*' (Midland Mail 200/23, October 2018), two Leicestershire towns, Market Harborough and Lutterworth, were discussed whose postage charge to London was likely to be impacted by the difference between computed and measured miles at the threshold of 80 miles. From 1660 the postal rate in Britain was 2d for up to 80 miles and 3d for over, rising to 3d and 4d in the Act of 1711 rates that remained in force until 1784.

Referring in that article to Van Langeren's chart of Leicestershire mileages of c.1640, Market Harborough to London was 66 computed miles and Lutterworth was 72. Their measured mileages based on their first type mileage marks were 85 and 90. Examples of letters prior to 1780 show that the lower rate was charged on mail to and from London with computed mileage being used to determine the rates. The 1711 Act did not allow re-measurement of existing postal routes measured in computed miles, so it appears logical that the Post Office had to continue charging at the lower rate for these towns if their routes to London did not change.

Looking at the same Van Langeren map, I wondered whether Leicester was also a candidate for being impacted by the 80-mile threshold as the mileage to London, although not shown, could be deduced as follows:

van Langeren Leics map c.1640:	London-Mountsorrel	85
	Mountsorrel-Leicester	-5
	London-Leicester	80
	or:	
	London-Mkt Harb	66
	Mkt Harb-Leicester	14
	London-Leicester	80

Leicester's mail route to London from 1660 to c.1720 was via Market Harborough and Northampton to Towcester, then down the Chester Road to London. On Van Langeren's map, the route beyond Leicestershire to London is not shown so it is not known whether the 80 computed miles is for the postal route. But another early source of computed mileage is the 1667 Chester Road list of post and bye roads (figure 9 in H. S. Wilson's book on Derby), from which can be extracted:

1667 list		A	B
A - computed miles per list	Leicester	12	83
B - comp miles per list cumul	Market Harborough	12	71
	Northampton	12	59
	Towcester	13	47
	Brickhill	7	40
	Dunstable	10	30
	St Albans	10	20
	Barnet	10	10
	London		

This represents the postal route and at 83 computed miles clearly puts Leicester above the threshold. A further validation of the postal route being above the threshold comes from Ogilby's 1675 maps as follows:

From Ogilby maps 1675		A	B	
A - computed miles per Ogilby	Leicester	5	78	but not postal route
B - comp miles per Ogilby cumul	Great Glen	7	73	
	Market Harborough	7	66	
	Brixworth	5	59	
	Northampton	6	54	
	Grafton Regis	4	48	
	Stony Stratford	7	44	
	Brickhill	7	37	
	Dunstable	10	30	
	St Albans	10	20	
	Barnet	10	10	
	London			
Convert above Ogilby to postal route:				
Replace Stoney Stratford to Northampton			-10	
with:				
Stoney Stratford to Towcester (per van L chart for Northants)			7	
Towcester-Northampton (per van L chart for Northants)			7	
Net impact			4	
Revised mileage to Leicester			82	postal route

The above demonstrates that Leicester's computed mileage for postal charging purposes was 2 to 3 miles above the 80 threshold. Below is an example of a letter dated 1707 during the period of the route via Towcester charged at the **higher rate** of 3d (Leicester to London charged at 3d, then amended to 5d in London, adding 2d for the London to North Crawley leg):

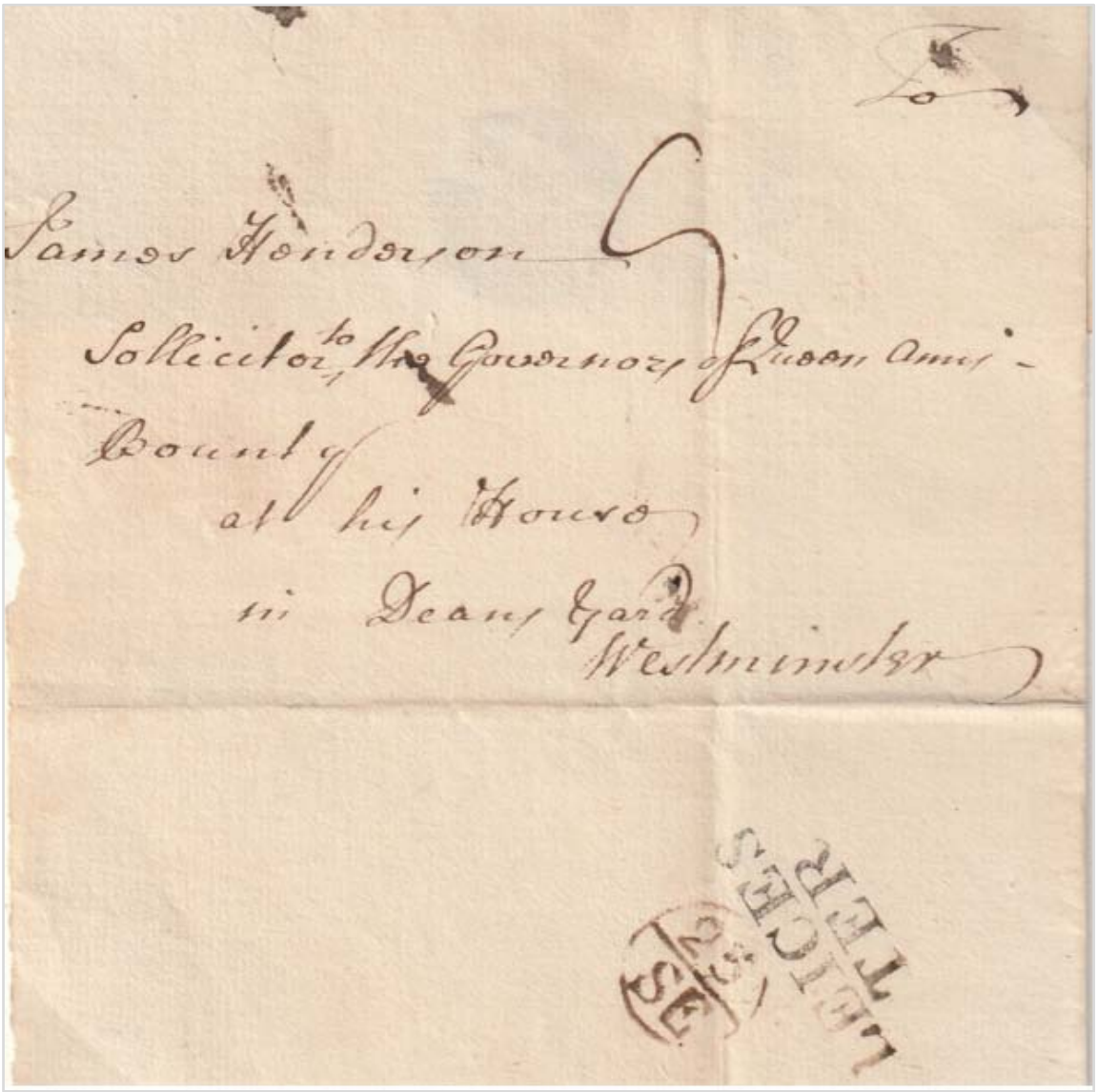


1707: Leicester to London journey charged higher rate of 3d *(letter courtesy of John Soer) (see also footnote 1)*

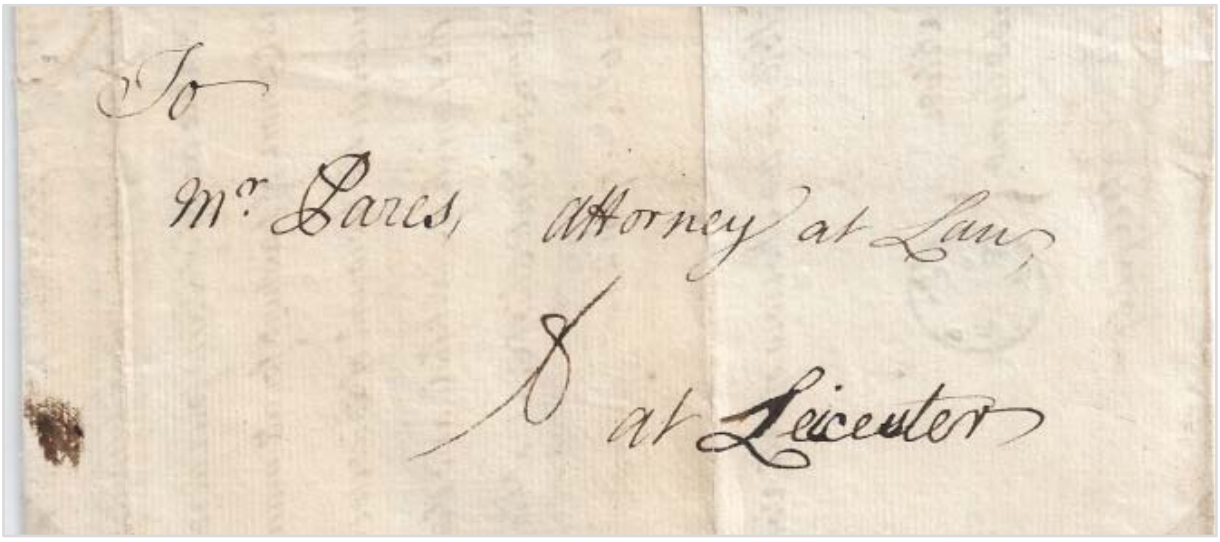
From c.1720, the route from Leicester to London was changed at Northampton, instead of going across to Towcester, a more direct route was taken through Newport Pagnell and Woburn to join the Chester Road lower down at Dunstable then on to London. Ogilby's 1675 maps cover Leicester to Northampton and Dunstable to London, but not Northampton to Dunstable, so for that part I have referenced van Langeren's c.1640 mileage charts for Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire:

London-Leicester via Woburn c.1720-85		
London-Dunstable (Ogilby 1675)	30	
Dunstable-Newport Pagnel (van L chart for Beds)	14	
Newport Pagnel to Northampton (van L chart for Northants)	12	
Northampton-Leicester (Ogilby 1675)	24	
Total	80	postal route

This shows a distance that is bang on 80 computed miles! But a review of many London-Leicester letters in the period 1720-1780 shows no deviation from the higher 'above 80 miles' charge of 4d. Here are a couple of examples:



Above: Leicester to London 1752 charged higher rate of 4d *(letter courtesy of John Soer)*



Above: London to Leicester 27th July 1768, one enclosure, charged 8d, double the higher rate of 4d

Alan Robertson's table of postage rates on page 57 of his book *Post Roads, Post Towns and Postal Rates 1635-1839* suggests the cut off is between '80 miles and under' and 'above 80 miles'. So at 80 per my calculations above, why didn't Leicester qualify for the lower rate to and from London after the change in route? The most likely explanation is that the Post Office used a computed mileage for the new route that was over 80 miles. Looking at the c.1735 Holkham map, which is about 15 years later than the route change, it shows the following:

Leicester to Northampton	24
Northampton to Newport Pagnell	13
Newport Pagnell to Dunstable	15
Dunstable to London	30
Total	82

This seems odd - a more direct route to London is adopted, but the computed mileage hasn't reduced compared to the route via Towcester. The part of the route that changed was between Northampton and Dunstable, comparing to measured miles clearly shows it was a shorter route:

Northampton to Dunstable	via Towcester	via NP & Woburn
Computed miles	28	28
Measured miles	38	34

The more direct route is 4 measured miles shorter, even in the early 18th century changing a route for a more direct one should have indicated that the computed mileage should reduce. In this case that would be by 2 or 3 miles, taking the new route's total computed mileage down to 80 or 79.

However even if the revised computed mileage did not exceed 80, there is some evidence that although the 1711 Act did not permit re-measurement of existing routes, new routes did use measured miles (David Robinson 'For the Port and Carriage of Letters' page 18). What qualified as a 'new route' is not clear, the revised Leicester to London route was unchanged for two thirds of its path, only Northampton to Dunstable was new, but it would certainly suit the Post Office to classify a change in part of a route as making the whole route 'new'. In which case, if Leicester's measured mileage of 99 (based on its first type mileage mark) or similar distance had been used to determine the rate, it was clearly way above the 80-mile threshold.

Using the above logic of re-measure based on change of route, why was it not applied to Market Harborough? With a computed mileage of 66, the town was well within the threshold for the lower rate, but in c.1720 the same change of route as for Leicester above applied, allowing the Post Office to re-measure at circa 85 miles. This was well above the 80 threshold and could have justified an increase to the higher 4d rate. But examples of letters in the period 1720-80 show that the lower 3d charge continued to be applied.

Did Leicester have a case for a lower postal charge from c.1720 after the change of route? I would conclude not. There was certainly a case for challenging the Post Office's measurement of computed miles from 82 to a figure at or below the threshold, but the Post Office would most likely have countered that by saying that the change in route gave them the right to re-measure and keep it at the higher rate. Did Market Harborough get a good deal? Almost certainly yes, as their rate could have been increased to the higher one after c.1720 if a re-measure had taken place.

John Soer confirms that he hasn't come across any evidence of the townsfolk of Leicester protesting at the higher rate, it is probably fair to say that by c.1720 they had been paying it for 60 years and were used to it. It is also fair to say that the townsfolk of Market Harborough kept quiet and happily continued paying the lower rate for the next 60-odd years. Maybe even some folk in Leicester found an inexpensive (less than a penny a letter) way of getting their London mail to and from Market Harborough.

A final thought, if only the original postal route had gone from Northampton to Stoney Stratford instead of Towcester from 1660, Leicester might have enjoyed a penny less on its postal charge to and from London for the next 120 years!

References:

1) 'Britannia Depicta or Ogilby Improv'd: being a correct copy etc' by John Ogilby, 1730 copy of 1675 maps, Gale ECCO Print Edition based on high quality scans of original works
2) Midland Mail Number 199, 'The Use of Computed Miles by the British PO' by Ian May
3) Midland Mail Number 200, articles 'Computed miles and John Ogilby' by John Calladine and 'More on the Use of Computed Miles' by John Soer
4) For the Port & Carriage of Letters (1990), David Robinson
5) The 'Holkham' Map c1735 (of the Post Roads of England & Wales), re-printed by the MPHS
6) History of the Post in Derby 1635-1941, H.S.Wilson

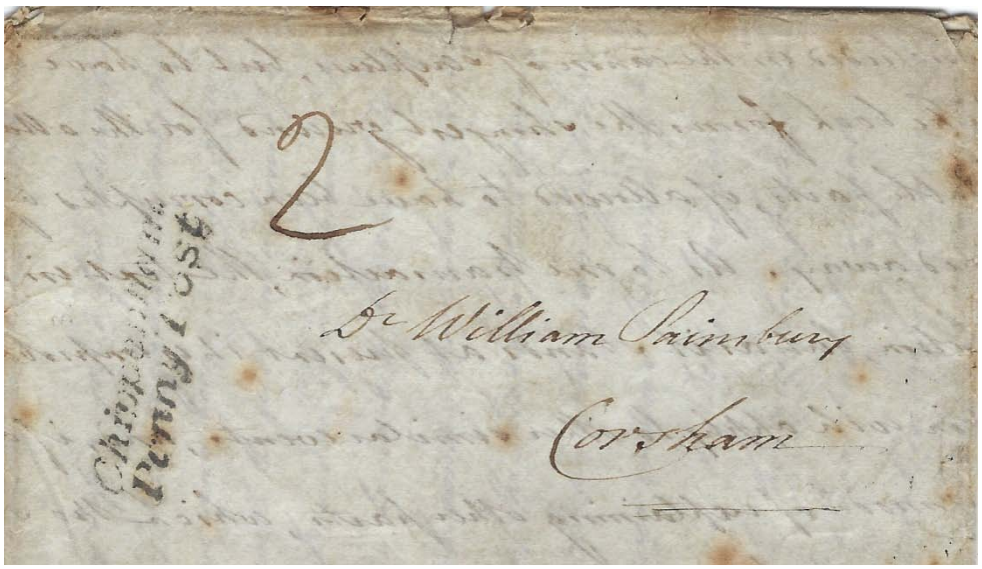
Footnote:

1) This letter of 1707 throws up an interesting question on the route it took to reach its destination. It is addressed to North Crawley near Newport Pagnell and includes a manuscript *by way of London.* At this time Newport Pagnell was served from Leighton Buzzard on the Chester Road (Bucks section of CC Vols 1&2 2nd Edition); the Chester Road was certainly much closer than the North Road to the east. Why the letter went down to London through Leighton Buzzard to return by the same route is not clear. My only suggestion is that as Newport Pagnell was not a post town on the Leicester to London route, it had to be sent to London first to be put into the Newport Pagnell bag going north. Any thoughts on this from readers are welcome.

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RATES FOR LOCAL LETTERS IN PENNY POSTS to ANOTHER PENNY POST

by John Calladine



Ian May's article in MM214 touched on an interesting aspect of the penny posts that arose several times when the Society's 'Local Posts' book was being prepared, particularly at offices where the penny post route began at a sub-office, rather than at the post town itself. For example, what postage was being charged on local letters that then passed through the sub-office to a distant receiving house? Examples of
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local letters seem to be quite scarce and it is therefore fortunate that Ian has been able to provide a number of examples showing that, prior to 1837, a charge of 2d was made in some Midland penny posts for a local letter while another charged only 1d to carry a letter a greater distance.

Coincidentally a rather shabby letter was offered on the internet recently that adds something to the story. It was from the Chippenham Penny Post which, while not strictly in our Midland area, had three of its receiving offices in Gloucestershire (A full account of this penny post was given in MM188/11 because it seemed it had never previously been adequately researched). What was attractive about the item on offer was a '2' charge marked on the front. This and a Type 4 Chippenham Penny Post handstamp appeared to be the only postal markings.The date written inside the letter was 23rd September 1831. It was described by the seller as a "long letter" and that proved to be something of an understatement. The second page is about 14 inches x 10 inches and folded five times. Every inch was closely handwritten, some of it cross-written. It was not immediately obvious where the text began and ended but it was apparent these were the writer's comments on a single chapter of a book on natural theology! This may seem irrelevant to our subject of local posts but the signature was unclear and the sender's address, "Draycot", ambiguous.

It seemed likely, from the content, that the writer was a priest and research revealed him to be the rector of St James' church (previously All Saints, then St Peter's) at Draycot Cerne, a Grade II church deconsecrated in 1995, now looked after by the Churches Conservation Trust. The rector's name was the Reverend Henry Barry and he held the office from 1812 until 1850. In an era of near-compulsory church attendance, Henry Barry preached to an average congregation of 15; it is therefore no surprise that he supplemented his meagre income by also holding the rectorship of nearby Upton Scudamore or that he had ample time to write long theological letters. However, links between the church and the wealthy Long family at Draycot House made this a more attractive living than initially appeared.

What is of particular interest to us is that the church and rectory were about 3 miles north of Chippenham and on the messenger's route of the fourth branch of the Chippenham Penny Post that ran to Great Somerford, established provisionally in November 1825 and made permanent on 18th April 1826. Receiving houses Nos. 4 and 5 were on this branch but beyond Draycot Cerne. There is no apparent sign of a receiving house number on the letter. We can be reasonably sure, however, that it was carried from Draycot Cerne to the post office in Chippenham by the Chippenham Penny Post, hence the handstamp.

Turning now to the addressee, he was a Dr Sainsbury in Corsham. He was a medical doctor, not a theologian, and he lived in Pickwick, one of the most affluent areas of Corsham. He practiced in Corsham for many years and died in 1839 at the age of 81. Corsham is an ancient town, four miles south-west of Chippenham. At the suggestion of Francis Feeling himself, Corsham was linked to Chippenham by a 5th Clause Post in 1805, provided with a sub-deputy not a receiver, issued with a "Fleuron" handstamp and never converted into a penny post. The letter of interest therefore passed from a Penny Post to a 5th Clause Post and did not enter the General Post at any point. In all respects, it was a local letter.

There only remains to decide what we think is the most likely reason for the 2d charge. Although it is a double letter, that did not affect the charge in a penny post. In most circumstances, in 1831, it would have been a 2d charge because it was a penny post letter that did not then enter the General Post. From 1837, as Ian indicated, a 2d charge in those circumstances would have been illegal. However, one might like to believe the 2d charge comprises 1d in the Chippenham Penny Post from Draycot Cerne to the Chippenham main office and a second 1d in the Chippenham Fifth Clause Post to Corsham, for which pre-payment was not necessary because it had been agreed with the residents. There is no 5th Clause handstamp because Chippenham never used one.

A NOTTINGHAMSHIRE PARCEL POST UPDATE



Mick Gill writes:

Sutton (under Retford)
An unlisted E2 dated 06 NOV 1916

Mick states the SUTTON / RETFORD rubber is a violet colour. The printed copy Mick provided didn't pick up that colour.

My scanner often won't pick up green or blue, the scans producing blackish copies. Anyone explain this, apart from I have a rotten (new!!) scanner?

OWEN ROTARY CONTINUOUS IMPRESSION RUBBER PARCEL CANCELLATION

by Mick Gill



In September 1907 William S Dunker of the South East District Office, London, suggested the use of a rotary device for parcels which both cancelled stamps, named the office and gave a date. A trial of a device made to Dunker's specification was held from 24 February to 1 April 1908 but it was rejected as it could not be used on tie-on labels, uneven surfaces or stamps not in straight lines. In 1936 other rotary cancellers were given an extended trial in London and Birmingham with further trials taking place in 1938 in several others offices.

Towards the end of 1959 rotary rubber cancellers made by James Owen Ltd of Stroud, Gloucestershire, were trialled for six months at Cardiff, Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham, Reading and Taunton. Each gave a continuous impression as the rubber cylinder revolved. However, the cancellers were expensive to produce and the additional cost was not considered justified. Nevertheless they were not withdrawn and continued in use for some years.

An example of a Nottingham Owen rotary continuous impression rubber cancellation used on 11 June 1964 has recently come my way (see left).

PARCEL POST UPDATES

Two more Nottinghamshire Parcel Post updates from Mick Gill



RADCLIFFE-ON-TRENT C2a - 11 MAY 1901 - EKD by two years

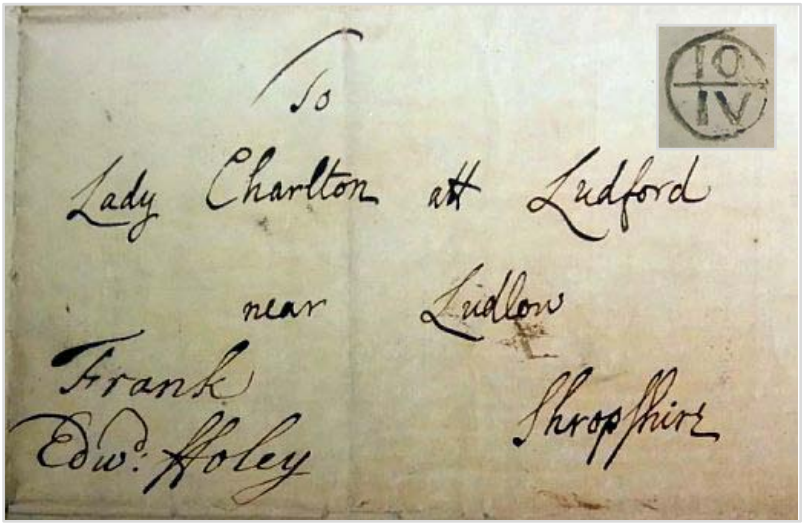


Nottingham (Hyson Green) E2 - Unlisted - 6 OCT 1917

AN 18th CENTURY PUZZLE SOLVED BY 21st CENTURY TECHNOLOGY

by Marc Oxley

I bought this entire from eBay and thought it dated from around 1750. The vendor hadn't put a picture of the contents up on the site. So all I had to go on was the address, Lady Charlton at Ludford near Ludlow, Shropshire; the name of the person who had franked it, Edward Holey, and the 15mm 10 / IV Bishop mark, so it dated from 1717-1750 according to Robson Lowe. The letter, dated June 10, is from Cary St. London on laid paper but has no watermark.



The front of the entire with superimposed Bishop mark

It was signed by the son of Lady Charlton, '*Your most dutifull and obedient son F. Charlton*' and the cartouche in the red seal on the back was of the Charlton family. F Charlton was the 4th Baronet, Sir Francis Charlton (1707–1784). The 2nd Baronet was also Francis but he died in 1728, the 3rd Baronet taking the title on his death with 'our' Francis becoming 4th Baronet in 1742, on the death of his father, so the letter predated that. The 3rd Baronet, the sender's father and husband to the recipient, is mentioned in the letter (sending her sons best wishes to him on the return from his expedition) so he was still alive when it arrived.

The Charltons and the Foleys were related through marriage as the 4th Baronets Mother was a Foley and members of the Foley family are mentioned in the letter. I realised it was franked by Edward Foley not Holey (the F written with a typical 18thc flourish), who had represented Droitwich as an MP from 1701 -1711 when he gave up his seat to his brother. When his brother died in 1732 Edward was re-elected at the Bye-election held on the 15th April 1732. So, he could Frank letters as an MP from that day on. Edward Foley was the uncle of the sender, (being brother to his Mother, Mary Foley), who lived at Cary St in London, where he died on April 4th, 1747. In the letter Francis sends his love to his sisters. On researching the family, I discovered his sister Elizabeth was married on the 12th October 1732 to Edmund Lichmere MP (1710-1805). She would presumably have left the family home to live with her husband as he was a man of independent means. So, she was still living at home when the letter arrived at Ludford in June of that year.

The letter also mentions large quantities of port wine which may have been ordered for the Wedding Feast, '*18 pounds for the Hogshead of red port & 8 pounds for the half Hogshead of white, the Waggon leaves on Saturday and there shall be a great deal of care used in the placing them in the waggon*' (To avoid damage due to the awful roads). So I had a date of 1732 for the year that Edward Foley was re-elected to Parliament and Elizabeth Charlton was married.

The letter goes into a lot of detail about a lawsuit which had been taken out against the 3rd Baronet by a family member. I was confused as to the identity of '*My Lady*' mentioned but after doing more research, I established that the 2nd Baronets second wife, Lady Mary, did not get on too well with his eldest son and heir; it was she who had taken the action against other members of the family. Details of the lawsuit referred to in the letter were found in the Shrewsbury County records office. They have a digital version of the correspondence associated with the complaint, corroborating many details in the letter; reference to named individuals, a complaint by *My Lady* about rights to Herbage, and the fact that the disagreement was between close family members.

The suit had been presented to the Court on the Easter Term 4 George 11 1731, which postdates June 10 1731 by a week. A response to the Court proceedings would have taken some time, the best part of a year I would guess, but not any longer than that for fear of compromising the decision. It was finally settled out of court.

The final piece of the jigsaw came when I deciphered the receivers mark in Hugh Feldman's book, *The Letter Receivers of London*, SH Sarah Harvey was the letter receiver for Cary St between 1731 & 1734. So, taking all that into consideration and the fact that Edward Foley was elected in 1732 and Elizabeth was married in October of that year; Tuesday June 10th 1732 is the date for the letter, beyond reasonable doubt in my opinion.

EARLY & LATE USE OF POST OFFICE NUMBERS AS CANCELLATIONS IN ENGLAND & WALES

by Gerald Griffin

Collectors of British Victorian stamps will be aware that many of them have been cancelled with a number replacing the Maltese Cross, used as an obliterator until the middle 1840s. Here I try to give a potted history of the origin of the number cancellations and illustrate how they remained in use far after the Victorian era.

Post Office numbers were introduced, because, as Henry[1] states, there were concerns over postage fraud from 1840 when postage stamps were first issued. Rowland Hill found evidence of employees failing to obliterate stamps and reusing them; ink was also being removed from cancelled stamps so that they could be used again. While culprits were caught, fraud charges were largely unsuccessful because the Maltese Cross was too ubiquitous to pin point exactly who had perpetrated the crime. Postmasters were thus instructed to frank the date on the cover '*as a proof of the time of its receipt*'.

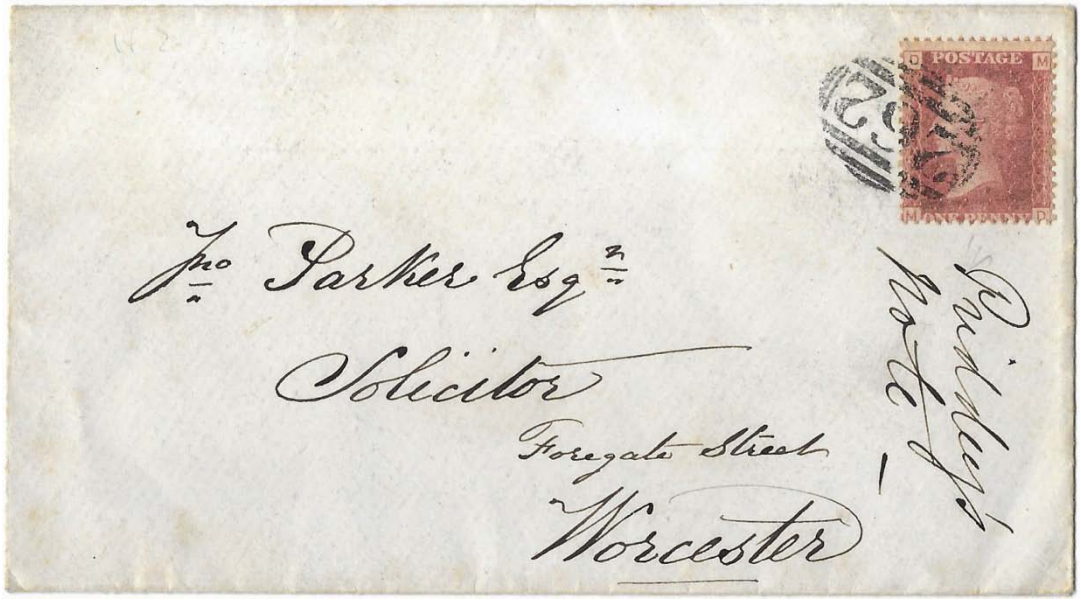
Various measures were discussed to add further accountability and a proposal by Mr Francis Abbott, a senior G.P.O. clerk, to give each Post Office a number was adopted. There were separate lists of numbers for London, Scotland, Ireland and England and Wales combined. Because the same numbers were used across these regions, they were of different designs to denote where the office was situated. There is some argument amongst authors as to whether the lists were allocated simultaneously or phased in over time. Brummel[2] reports that the first Post Office number allocations were rolled out in 1844, when the Post Office instructed postmasters to obliterate the stamp with their office number. Henry tells us that the obliterators sent out to each office were originally made of wood and came into use in 1848. This is clearly wrong as there are many examples of covers with numbers in 1844. If the obliterators were made of wood, they did not work very well as most of the early ones I have do not show a clean strike unlike this 1844 cover from Settle (696).



The early covers in my collection all show a date stamp, which suggests that Postmasters widely adopted this requirement, shown here as an insert, it being on the reverse of the above cover.

The introduction of Duplex cancellations

The labour intensive use of two separately applied cachets, one to denote the receiving office number and another to record the postage date continued on mail across England and Wales until 1853, when various trials were organised of ways to combine both the Post Office number and the date in a single action, now known as a duplex. Although over one hundred and forty Post Offices in England and Wales were involved in the trials, most were not and they continued to use a separate date and number stamp after 1853. It seems unlikely that all Post Offices started to use the post-trial duplex at the same time. Whitney[3] suggests they were generally adopted in 1857. I have several examples of separate office numbers and date stamps used after this date including the Droitwich (262) cover dated 1866 (see next page).

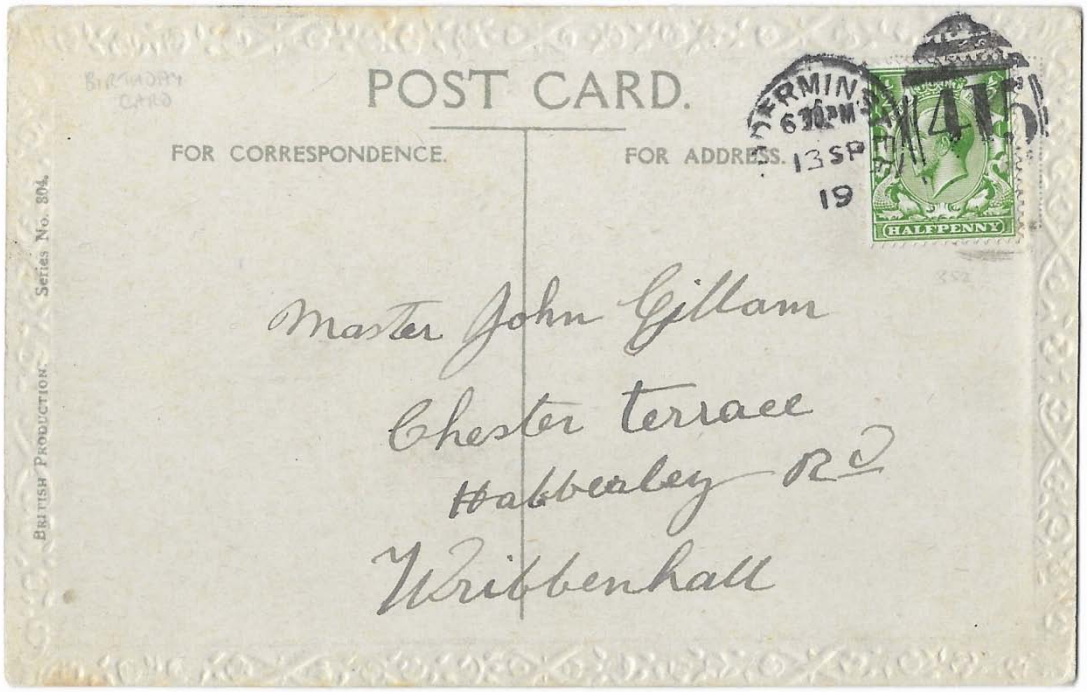




This is not an isolated example on a penny red either. The latest use of the original number obliterator that I have is on a penny lilac stamp from Wakefield (831). Unfortunately this is on a single stamp that has lost its cover but it must be dated after the 1d lilac's introduction in 1881!

Late use of Post Office numbers as cancellations in England and Wales.

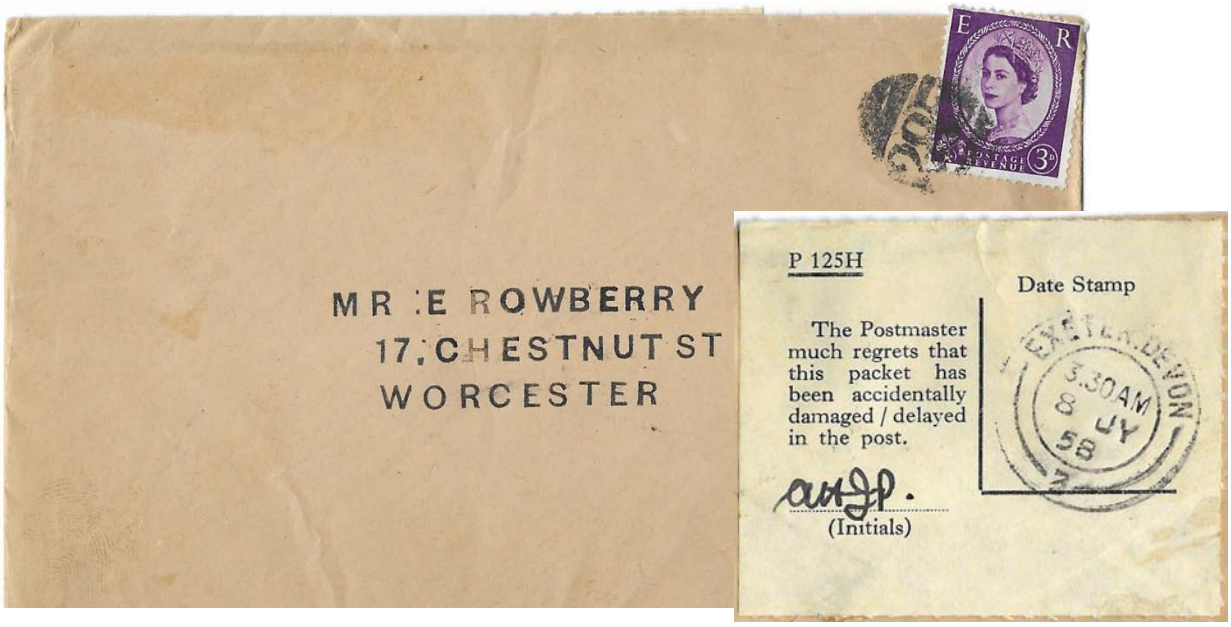
Duplex cancellations started to be superseded by squared circles of various designs around 1880 (Brumell[2]). These carried both the date and post office name in a single design. Brumell maintains the duplex was gone by 1906. I am not sure if he is referring to post office policy or historical fact, there are many examples of duplex cancellations after this date. Many different numbers in duplex form can be found on mail from the Edward VII reign and a few from that of George V. I have not seen a duplex used on mail from a later reign (perhaps someone can let me know if any exist). This postcard from Kidderminster (415), was posted in 1919. Parmeter and Smith[4] report that this was the last year a duplex was used for this town.



These authors are an excellent reference for these last used dates. Some of these are from the 1920s, for example, Sevenoaks (697) in1921, Portsmouth (625) in 1926 and Kimbolton (416) in 1929. It seems likely that in the larger offices such as Portsmouth the duplex would not have been the normal form of cancellation at this late date.

Post WW2 use of numbers as cancellations:

Post Office numbers used as cancellations can be found on bulk mail until decimalisation in 1971. These can appear as 3VODs. Because they are bulk mail and do not carry a date stamp, the covers are difficult to date precisely in most cases. The mail charge lists give us 'within' dates if we assume the cover carried the minimum weight. Very occasionally a precise date can be identified when there has been a problem, as there was in this Exeter (285) cover, which carries a dated P125H form reading 8 July 1958 on the reverse as below.

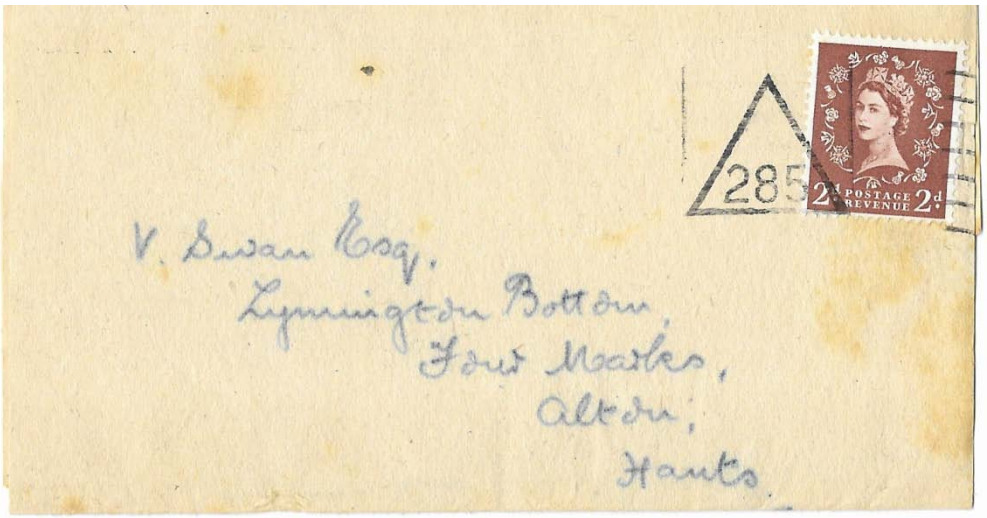






These late 3VODs come in two forms; with or without brackets beside the numbers. Left Maidenhead (492) comes with the bracket and the Spalding (727), without it.

Some bulk mail from pre-decimalisation carry the Post Office number in a triangle. While in many cases a wavy line is used to obliterate the stamp, in some cases the triangle does the job instead! The Exeter (285) magazine or newspaper sleeve dates from between June 1956 and October 1961, if posted at the minimum weight.



The 'eagle eyed' amongst you will have noticed that Exeter (285) used both the 3VOD and triangle for bulk mail. There may be other post offices that did the same.

References:
1) The History of Postmarks of the British Isles, Henry, 1909

2) British Post Office Numbers 1844-1907, Brumell, 1946

3) Collect British Postmarks by Dr JT Whitney, 1980

4) Post Office Numbers. Numerals used in England and Wales and abroad 1844 to 1969, John Parmenter and Ken Smith 2003 (PDF saveable through the GBPS website).

Bill Pipe

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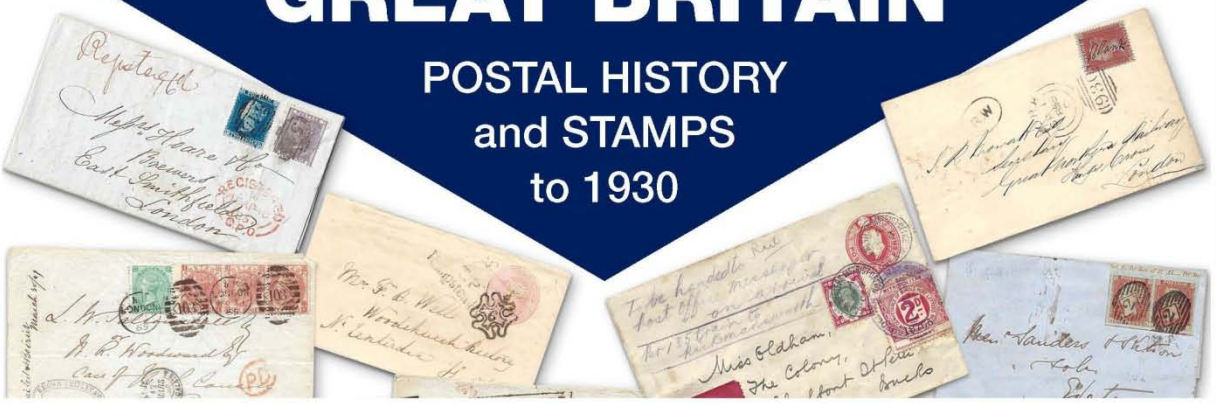
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WALTON-LE-WOLDS POST OFFICE

by John Soer



Although an official post to Walton-le-Wolds from Loughborough started in November 1947, a sub-office did not open there until 1899 when Mrs Mary Phipps was appointed on 17th June. The above card which shows the post office of Mrs Phipps was posted in 1903. The sign above the door on the right advertises the premises as belonging to William Phipps, a grocer. Over the years the office has occupied a number of different sites. From 1979 until its closure on 18th March 2008 the office was run by Mrs Rhoda Norvell from her home on the Loughborough Road

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Bryan Jones has informed us that a new post office has opened in Solihull, situated in a convenience store almost opposite the exit from the Shirley Railway Station car park. Haslucks Green Rd runs from the Stratford Rd at the point at which the now demolished Powergen Office block stood through towards Whitlocks End with this post office about halfway along its length. There was until about 4 years ago an earlier post office in Haslucks Green Rd, located in the Co-op store, only a short distance from the Stratford Rd end. A (first day) cancellation is attached.

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From **Mick Gill: A Parcel Post Label, an unlisted B2**. The original receiving house, which opened in 1854 under Alfreton was named Hucknell. In 1873 control passed to Mansfield and on 1 March 1878 the name changed to Hucknell Huthwaite. On 1 December 1894 the office was renamed Hucknell-under-Huthwaite but it changed, yet again, to Huthwaite on 27 June 1907. On 23 April 1953 Sutton in Ashfield, under Nottingham, became a post town and on the same day Huthwaite was transferred to Nottingham and the address changed to Huthwaite, Sutton in Ashfield, Notts (Information from Ken Smith's Nottinghamshire Post Offices). 1/- paid for an 11lb parcel from 1 Jun 1897 (GBPS website).

LEICESTER PENNY POST

by Marion Turner

In the County Catalogue published in 2013 only two dates are listed for the *Leicester Penny Post* (LC62), with receiving houses at Wigston and Great Glen. The hand stamp was issued on 18 September 1839 and listed in the BCC with rarity F. It was therefore quite a surprise to find one on a dealer's website earlier this year (Fig 1).

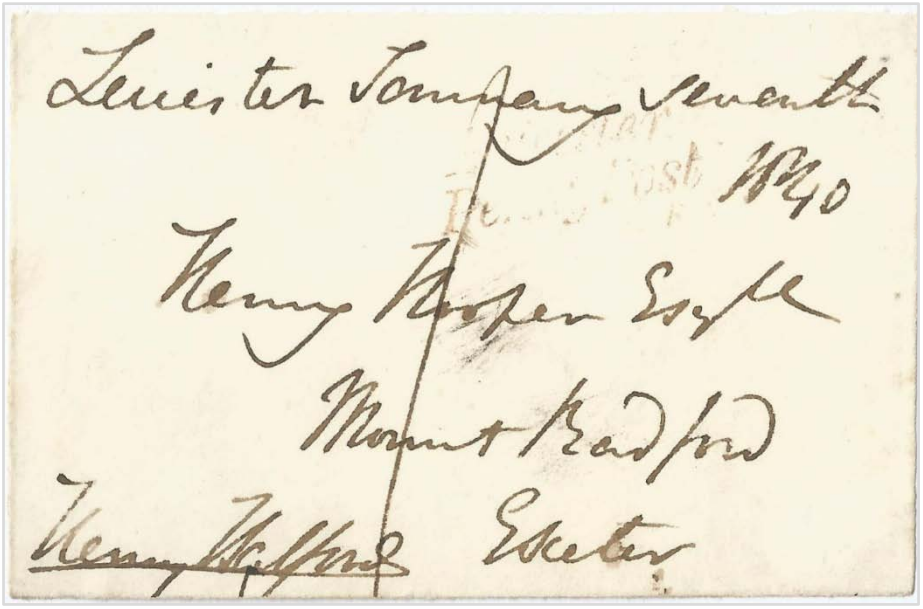


Fig 1

The strike is very faint, which was certainly a reason for hesitating about its purchase, but good strikes with red ink from Leicester are hard to find. The Free front, charged *m*/s1 for conveyance in the penny post, was sent by Henry Halford, MP for South Leics, to Exeter on 7 January 1840, this late use being just three days before the end of the Free franking system on the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage on 10th January 1840.

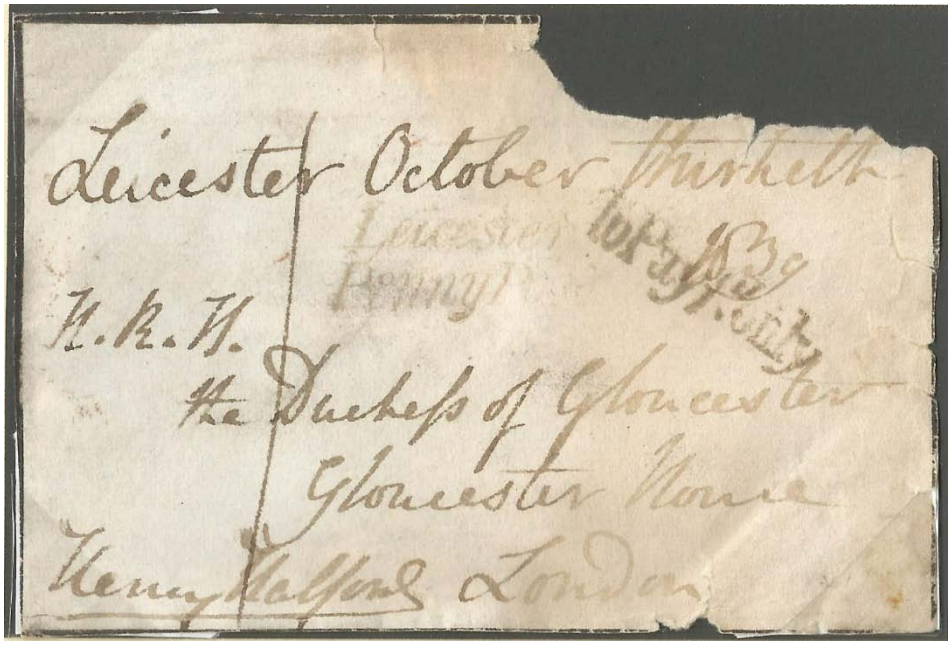


Fig 2

A second item, though damaged, was included in the price (Fig 2); it is so fragile that I dare not remount it. However the strike is much clearer than Fig 1 but through damp etc., the colour has become more brown than red. The 13 October 1839 date is clear to read, just a few weeks after the issued date of 18 September. This mourning Free frank, also sent by Henry Halford, is addressed to H.R.H the Duchess of Gloucester in London, where it received a nice strike of the **To Pay1^{D} only** (L818b) listed used in brown for that one year!

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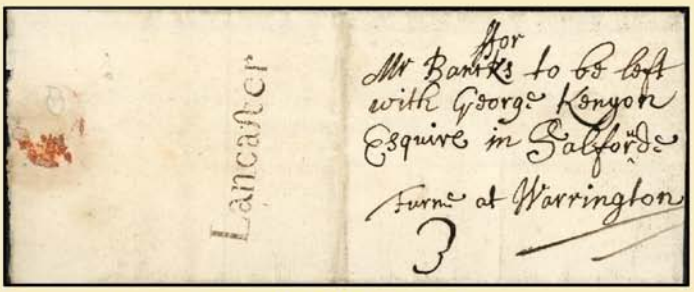












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