

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.midlandphs.org.uk



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Chris Jackson supplied this astonishing photograph of the Malvern Post Office staff on the opening day of the new Post Office in 1907, astonishing for the sheer numbers of employees, can you imagine that number employed at one relatively small office today? See page 8 for the report of other displays at WORPEX.

CONTENTS

Page

- 2 – Eric Lewis, RIP, 200th Edition, Directions to 5-Ways
- 7 – The Parcel Post Labels of the Midland Counties
- 10 – The Use of Computed Miles by the British Post Office
- 19 – A Few Snippets Associated with the Mail of Bingham
- 23 – Two Missent to Loughborough items

Page

- 3 – Minutes of the 2018 AGM and Auction Report
- 8 – The May Meeting at WORPEX
- 18 – The Postal Markings of Shropshire - A Review
- 22 – Parcel Post to and from Chatham

Eric Lewis 25th March 1931 to 1st May 2018.

From Malcolm Allinson:

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you that Eric Lewis passed away on Tuesday 1st May. Eric had been a member of the Society since its formation in 1975 and in that time he had, with his late wife Elizabeth, been a moving force in the Society's activities. Eric's greatest and perhaps least visible contribution was, for many years until ill health in recent times, organising the annual Auction. His skill at describing vendor's material was superb and detailed, and his running of the postal bids, "The Book", was an art in itself.

Eric's involvement in the Society encompassed every office, and along with Elizabeth, for a number of years they ran the Society together with great enthusiasm and skill. Eric will be very much missed, as will his displays of material that most of us would only dream of seeing let alone possessing. Eric's funeral on 30th May was attended by many members, from both this Society and from Birmingham Philatelic Society; a fitting tribute to a very popular man.

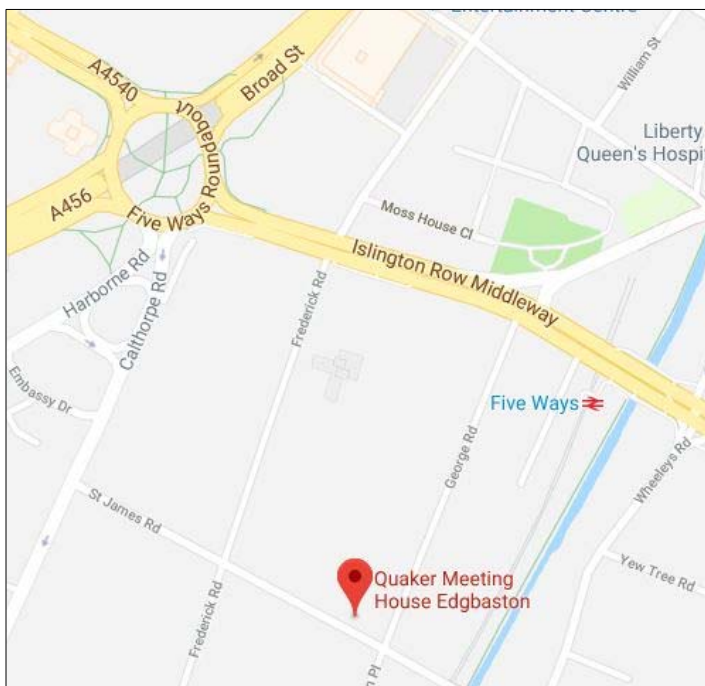
Our thoughts and condolences are with David, Catherine, Sharon, Neil and Eric's grandchildren at this time.

A full appreciation of Eric's life and his contribution to philately will appear in the next Midland Mail

200th Edition of Midland Mail – Coming at the end of October edition. To celebrate we are asking members to email a 300dpi scan to the editor or mail a photocopy if scanning is not an option, of 'My Favourite Cover' with a brief note about *why it is your favourite*, not just a description of the cover. I will do my best to publish ALL responses, the only proviso being that Midland Mail is printed in units of 4 pages! A reminder will go out by email in early September.

Also from Malcolm – Our first meeting of the new season on Saturday 15th September is a display of **Suffolk Postal History** by **Tom Slemmons**. Tom will be visiting from America and whilst over here has kindly agreed to give us what promises to be an outstanding display of a single county covering the postmarks, rates, mail routes, persons and places - something that we all aim for in our collecting. Tom has recently (2017) published a magnificent book entitled *Suffolk Postal History to 1844*, which should stand as an exemplar to collecting the whole postal history subject from a single county.

The meeting will be held at the Friends Meeting Rooms, Edgbaston, BIRMINGHAM starting at 1:30pm. There should be a map on the Society website for directions to the venue or see below for those not on the internet.



For those coming by road the postcode for the satnav is B15 1JP.

If coming from the north head for the Five Ways roundabout and take the Calthorpe Road exit, turn left onto St James Road until you reach the Meeting House. You can't turn right off the A4540 (Islington Row Middleway) onto George Road but you may be able to turn left onto George Road if coming along the A4540 from the south. Parking available but not sure for how many cars.

For those coming by train, Five Ways station is a 3 minute journey, one stop from Birmingham New Street. Turn left out of the station and walk along Islington Row Middleway to George Road, then walk down to St James Road, a walk of a few minutes.

MINUTES of the 2018 AGM and AUCTION REPORT

St Germain's Church Hall, Birmingham was the venue for the AGM on 14th April 2018 with 22 members and 5 visitors present. Apologies were received from Derek Smeathers, Alan Marshall, Martin Scroggs, John Soer and Eric Lewis. The minutes of the 2017 AGM as published in Midland Mail No 195 were accepted as a correct record, proposed by Richard Farman, seconded by Guy Bridges and agreed by members. There were no matters arising.

The Chairman said that meetings had been held in different venues, some regular, some new, chosen to encourage members to attend meetings near their homes. The joint meeting with the GBPS at WORPEX and the Shropshire Postal History Society at Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury were both successful. Cost had been a paramount factor in seeking new venues. Bayston Hill and The Friends Meeting House at Cotteridge, Birmingham had proved suitable, the latter with excellent transport links. As Chairman he was keen for meetings to be held around the Society's main catchment area and asked members for details of possible new venues so they can be assessed for suitability.

The season had seen all meetings bar one using members' own 'home grown' material. The exception was the December meeting when Robert and Sarah Danzig were our guests and members were treated to Robert's great feast of a display of Queen Victoria correspondence at Osborne House – a coup for our Programme Secretary, Richard Farman to whom thanks also go for putting together the programme at short notice. The subjects for other meetings had been immensely varied with attractive, colourful and rare material on show. The Chairman wished to thank everyone who shared their collections with members. The final meeting of the season would be a joint one with the GB Philatelic Society at WORPEX at Perdiswell Leisure Centre in Worcester on 12 May.

The past year had seen much communal effort to bring the Parcel Post Label book to fruition. County Editors had laboured long and hard over several years to collate the information for their counties. The result was a magnificent work which would serve as a benchmark for many years to come and the Chairman thanked the Editors for their hard work and expert knowledge. He reserved his greatest thanks for Martin Scroggs, the Coordinating Editor. Martin's task had been much more than 'coordination' taking responsibility for producing this publication to ever more professional standards. Members owed Martin immense thanks for working unstintingly with enthusiasm and devoting many hundreds of hours to the project while combating ill health. It was a job very well done. He also wished to thank John Calladine, Coordinating Editor for the two previous Society books, who had been an immense help in carrying out many background tasks including research, liaising with publishers and printers to bring the book to life. For being there with advice and experience, John had been a very great help.

In addition to the publications, Midland Mail, the 'public voice' of the Society was a worthy, quality journal that stood up extremely well to the journals of other national societies. This was in no small part to the Editor, Brian Atkins, to whom many thanks were due.

The annual Auction continued to be a useful outlet for members' duplicate and unwanted material as well as adding revenue to the Society. Although there had been a slight reduction in the amount of material being offered, the work needed before, during and after the auction continued to be undertaken by a few stalwart members. In particular, Eric Lewis spent many hours compiling detailed descriptions of lots, whilst Chris Jackson turned them into the finished catalogue. He wished to thank both for their continued efforts.

He also wished to thank the Committee for their support, variety of knowledge and views, all of which combined to ensure the Society progressed forward for the benefit of members and the hobby in general. John Soer was to stand down as Publicity Officer after many years of trying to cajole philatelic magazines to publish information about the Society, a nigh impossible task with which John had persevered when many would have given up. Thanks were due to John for all his efforts over the years. He also said Mick Gill had come to the end of his second five-year period as Secretary. Mick was always there with information on the general administration of the Society and had provided valuable support. He was sure Mick would not be disappearing from the scene. The Committee was very experienced and meetings were not clouded in secrecy but totally open minded. He believed that this approach stood the Society in good stead, not only on a day-to-day basis but also for the long-term future. Finally he thanked all members for supporting him as Chairman over the past year and asked that they come along to meetings whenever possible so as to make the most of their membership. Acceptance of the report was proposed by Brian Atkins, seconded by John Calladine and agreed by members.

The Treasurer distributed copies of the balance sheet which had been examined by Gordon Hardy. The income was £1,997.41 against expenditure of £1,971.40, a small surplus of £25.78. Membership currently stood at 93, including 3 honorary life members. Subscriptions were a little higher whilst income from advertisements in Midland Mail was slightly lower. Commission from the auction was down 25% although gifts sold at the auction increased 6-fold. Sales of the Midland County Catalogue were well down. As for expenses, room hire was £300 lower, Midland Mail costs

were down and administration costs up £20. Overall, funds stood at £5,929.46, including £850 in prepayment of advertisements in the Parcel Post Label book. Given this he did not propose an increase in subscriptions. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Chris Jackson, seconded by Brian Atkins and agreed by members.

The Treasurer explained that the new Data Handling Act was to be introduced on 18 May 2018. He distributed copies of the Data Handling Agreement which members now had to sign and asked that they be completed and handed in during the afternoon.

The Editor thanked members who made regular contributions to Midland Mail. He explained that when he became editor he was overwhelmed with contributions but these had now slowed and more articles were needed, long or short. He was always pleased to receive articles but asked that those sent by email follow the lay-out requested in the latest issue. Articles sent by regular mail would be retyped and a copy returned for checking before publication. The 200th edition of Midland Mail would be issued in October and to celebrate members were being asked to provide a copy of their favourite cover (300dpi or a photocopy if scanning was not an option) together with a *brief* note about why it is their favourite cover, *not* a description of the cover. He expected to be able to include all submissions, the only proviso being that Midland Mail was produced in units of four pages. Details were in Midland Mail No 198 which he had brought for distribution. Finally, as Bill Barrell had ceased to advertise in Midland Mail he had approached other well known dealers who were only too pleased to take out advertising space.

On behalf of the Co-ordinating editor, John Calladine explained that the Parcel Post Label book had been printed and was a 'stunning job'. It contained much new information on the parcel post service. The book would be sold to members at £24 and to the general public at £30. Member Brian Purcell had kindly agreed to have it on sale on his stand at WORPEX.

There was no report from the Publicity Manager save knowing John Soer always had great difficulty getting the press to report our activities. Alan Godfrey said there had been changes to the leading ABPS personnel, improvements to the website to bring it up to a professional level were ongoing whilst the competition at York was being well supported. The new frames used at STAMPEX had been well received. As to the Midland Federation, there had been changes to the leading personnel. The next MPF meeting would be at the Rugby Fair in November.

As to the elections, the Chairman again thanked Mick Gill for his work and proposed that he be re-elected as Secretary for a further five-year term. This was seconded by Chris Jackson and agreed by members. As there was no volunteer for the vacant Publicity Manager, the Chairman proposed this be held in abeyance until someone could be co-opted. Alan Marshall had decided to stand down as the Nottinghamshire County Editor and had proposed Mick Gill take on the role. This was seconded by Gordon Hardy and agreed by members. Richard Farman proposed all other post holders be re-elected en bloc. This was seconded by Gwyn Hughes and agreed by members. The re-election of Gordon Hardy as Examiner of Accounts was proposed by Roy Summers, seconded by John Calladine and agreed by members.

The Programme Secretary distributed copies of the draft programme for the 2018 / 19 season, viz:

15 Sep	Friends Meeting House, Fiveways, Birmingham	Tom Slemons - Suffolk
27 Oct	Venue to be decided	
2-3 Nov	Stafford Fair	
10 Nov	Warwick & Warwick	Committee Meeting 11am
25 Nov	Rugby Fair and MPF meeting	
1 Dec	Burton-on-Trent	
12 Jan	The Ladybird Inn, Bromsgrove	
19-20 Jan 2019	York Fair	
9 Feb	Friends Meeting House, Cotteridge, Birmingham	
9 Mar	Friends Meeting House, Cotteridge, Birmingham	
13 April	The Ladybird Inn, Bromsgrove	Committee Meeting 11am
11 May	WORPEX	
25 May	Friends Meeting House, Cotteridge, Birmingham	AGM and Auction

The dates of the Stafford, Rugby and York Fairs were for information only. Richard said that the Friends Meeting House at Cotteridge had proved a good venue whilst the Meeting House at Fiveways was handy for trains. An advantage was that both venues could be booked through Cotteridge and the hire costs were acceptable. Subjects for meetings were still to be finalised but the programme would be distributed in good time for the next season.

The Chairman explained that the email approach to voting for the Jon Baker Trophy had paid dividends with 29 votes cast. Runner-up was Ian May for *The Midlands & Internal Air Mails until 1940* in MM194 / 7 and the winner was Brian Atkins for *Shropshire, the Alps, a Railway, a Tunnel to Italy and Beyond* in MM195 / 14.

The meeting closed at 1.45pm and after a short break, the Annual Auction commenced.

Prices Realised for the Auction held on 14th April 2018

Items provided for Society funds:

(Top row auction lot, second row selling price)

Lot	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Bid £	8	5	10	13	6	8	16

Auction items: if a number is not present, then that item failed to sell:

Lot	Bid £	Lot	Bid £	Lot	Bid £	Lot	Bid £	Lot	Bid £	Lot	Bid £	Lot	Bid £	Lot	Bid £	Lot	Bid £
2	11	29	8	53	10	76	11	97	8	125	14	145	22	170	8	195	8
3	4	30	10	54	8	77	5	98	9	126	11	148	7	171	11	198	8
4	21	32	3	55	24	78	32	99	3	127	7	150	9	172	17	199	4
6	4	33	6	56	15	79	32	100	8	128	7	151	10	173	7	200	8
7	38	34	20	57	12	80	30	101	6	129	3	154	8	174	3	201	6
8	18	38	12	58	20	81	20	102	11	130	13	155	8	175	3	202	16
10	8	39	12	59	30	82	5	103	9	131	20	156	34	176	3	203	8
11	11	40	4	60	10	83	7	104	12	132	13	157	14	177	7	204	18
12	12	41	16	61	4	84	6	106	3	133	9	158	22	179	4	208	3
13	14	42	12	62	3	85	5	107	3	134	13	159	10	180	3	209	4
15	24	43	20	63	5	86	15	110	4	135	3	160	15	182	3	211	16
17	13	44	19	64	18	88	24	113	3	136	3	161	11	183	3	214	16
18	10	45	20	65	10	89	8	114	7	137	11	162	38	184	3	215	8
19	3	46	11	66	20	90	13	116	7	138	5	163	8	185	3	217	4
21	15	47	15	70	10	91	11	117	3	139	16	164	52	187	4	218	6
22	30	48	6	71	13	92	4	118	11	140	13	165	26	188	11		
23	17	49	14	72	13	93	4	121	5	141	5	166	14	189	3		
25	15	50	17	73	14	94	8	122	7	142	7	167	13	191	8		
27	18	51	15	74	18	95	11	123	13	143	10	168	16	192	13		
28	15	52	38	75	19	96	17	124	6	144	5	169	10	193	16		

Our treasurer, Alan Godfrey, reported total sales of £2,128 (80.3% of lots sold); 30 successful bidders (23 room, 7 postal) and 12 vendors. Commission to the society (including lotting fees) was £249.80 with 7 lots sold for society funds realising £66.00. Many thanks to all those who attended the AGM and auction, donated club lots and bought or sold. Much time and effort goes in to producing an efficient, successful auction. Start collecting lots to sell in next year's auction now!

INCOME & EXPENDITURE and BALANCE SHEET ENDING 31st MARCH 2018

MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2018

INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
2017 £		2018 £	2017 £		2018 £
885.00	Subscriptions including those received in advance	943.99	676.68	Hire of Rooms & Refreshments	350.90
520.00	Adverts in 'Midland Mail'	495.00	1,252.77	Production and Distribution of 'Midland Mail'	1,176.08
412.06	Society's commission on Annual Auction	300.07	41.26	Auction Expenses	55.92
18.00	Gifts to the Society, sold in Annual Auction	144.00	60.00	Speakers Expenses	64.90
383.10	Sales of BCC - Midland Edition	89.00	122.16	Printing, Stationery, Postage and Telephone	142.58
30.00	Donations Received	10.35	25.00	MPF Affiliation Fee	25.00
-	Sale of Pin Badges	15.00	106.25	ABPS Affiliation Fee	106.25
			25.00	MIDPEX 2017 Stand Cost	-
			50.00	Website Expenses	50.00
			(110.96)	Surplus/ (Deficit) of Income over Expenditure	25.78
<u>2,248.16</u>		<u>£ 1,997.41</u>	<u>2,248.16</u>		<u>£ 1,997.41</u>

BALANCE SHEET as at 31st MARCH 2018

	£		£
Accumulated Fund:		Represented by:	
Balance brought forward 1st April 2017	5,053.68	Co-op Bank Current Account	5,990.96
Surplus of Income over Expenditure for the year	25.78	Less Uncleared Cheque Payments	(65.00)
Prepayment - Advertising in PPL Book	850.00	Cash in Hand	3.50
	<u>£ 5,929.46</u>		<u>£ 5,929.46</u>

I have examined the Account Books shown to me and received all information that I have requested from the Treasurer.
 I confirm that in my opinion these figures show the true financial position of the Society at 31st March 2018.

Signed:



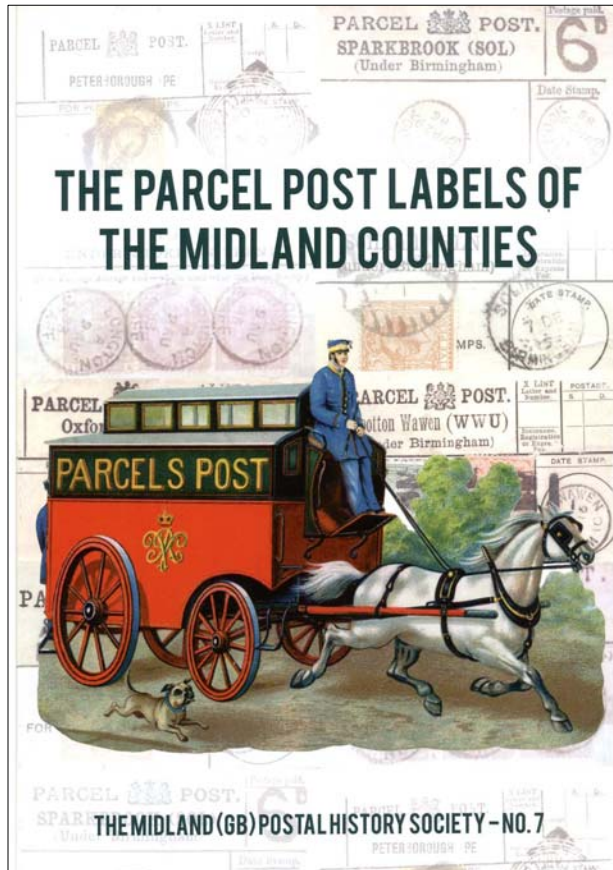
Date:

12-04-18

G Hardy
Accounts Examiner

THE PARCEL POST LABELS OF THE MIDLAND COUNTIES

The seventh of the Society's publications – 'The Parcel Post Labels of the Midland Counties' – was launched at a special lunch in the Birmingham Botanical Gardens on 28th April and went on sale to the wider public at WORPEX. The lunch was attended by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Mrs Anne Underwood, who was presented with a copy of the book by the Chairman of the Society, Malcolm Allinson (see photo below). Before the lunch members and guests had the chance to view displays of labels from several counties.



The attractive hardback book, 270 pages long, covers Birmingham and twelve midland counties and contains details of nearly 4000 labels of which over 500 are illustrated in colour. The very informative, twelve-page introduction covers the background to the use of these labels. Most collectors of county material are likely to have a few parcel post labels and many have contributed to this book, some recording fewer than half a dozen labels and others several hundred. We hope everyone will buy a copy, whatever their specialisation, thereby supporting it and similar future collaborative projects.

Copies of the book are available at a special discounted price for members of £24 plus £4 p&p (if you wish it to be sent to you). Ordering could not be simpler. Just give your name – nothing more is needed – to John Calladine by e-mail (john.calladine@mac.com) or by phone (01249-758148) and a copy will be sent promptly, together with an invoice. We doubt anyone will be disappointed.

Editor's note: I spoke to several people at the Stafford stamp fair all of whom were extremely complimentary about the publication. One person I talked with said that he had been told (by someone who was not present at our conversation, so no names) that it was the best publication of its kind that he had seen.

Other comments: *Greg Spring* (Cavendish Philatelic Auctions) 'I expected something of good quality, but this exceeds my expectations. It's wonderful.....and we are honoured to be associated with it'.

Nick Wraith (collector of all things parcel post) 'It looks like an outstanding publication'.

WORPEX (Worcester Philatelic & Postcard Society) JOINT MEETING WITH GBPS 12TH MAY 2018

The editor is indebted to **Chris Jackson** for this report

The chairman called the meeting to order and announced the death of **Eric Lewis**, all present stood for a minute's silence in memory of Eric. A card of condolence was signed by the members present.

The meeting was attended by 12 members and 2 guests of the society and 10 members of the GBPS, a noticeably smaller number of our members than previous meetings at Worpex. Previously the society has filled the room and displayed 20 boards of material. It is difficult to see the drop in numbers being caused by the change of venue which was only a short distance from the previous one and with much larger parking facilities, which begs the question was the low attendance due to it being a joint meeting?

The Midland (GB) PHS displays were started by **John Soer** who showed mail from G.B. to the Austrian Netherlands 1714-1794. The main route was through Ostend but this varied when wars intervened. When the War of Austrian Succession was happening the route changed to Calais. John showed two 1715 covers from Leeds with no Leeds handstamp and a letter with both Edinburgh and London Bishop marks and one with a circular DAB mark for mail via Brussels.

Gordon Hardy showed Newspaper tax stamp of GB 1712 – 1870. The tax was introduced to pay for the war of Spanish Succession. The original rate was a ha'penny. Gordon started with 3 proofs and showed a whole variety of printings. In 1776 the tax was increased to one penny to fund the American War of Independence and Gordon showed examples of this rate. In the second half Gordon showed Wirksworth postal history. He started with a Bowen map of 1720 followed by a letter of 1678 to London and two examples of letters to Nottingham in 1675. The Penny Post set up in 1812 with Matlock Bath the No 1 and Matlock the No 2 receiving houses. The office had two different handstamps one used for local mail and the other for London mail.

Mick Gill displayed Newington *where the Post Office served a brewery and little else*. Mick showed the Newington UDC in 3 different colours, in red on 16/11/1847, black on 24/11/1847 and blue/green on 17/2/1849. Mick also showed items from the 14th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain which ran from 20/6/1947 to 24/6/1947. Items with official and unofficial labels covered every day of the congress apart from the 22nd (If anyone can help with finding an example Mick would be very pleased.)

Chris Jackson displayed Worcestershire (where else) Post Offices on postcards which all had Post Office Personnel in the picture. He had matched the postcards to items with the appropriate Post Office cancellations. Post Offices of Blakedown, Broad Street, Cookley, Far Forest, Harvington, Malvern (with all the staff outside at the opening of the new Post Office on 1907 – see front page) and Rock.

Alan Godfrey showed the skeleton postmarks of Warwickshire, firstly from the second period 1900-1940, a 1908 skeleton of Shotton was followed by Henley in Arden and Studley. A rubber skeleton from Shrewley in 1914 and a traveller used at the Royal Show in 1931. An Alcester/KG skeleton was on an Alcester Needlemakers envelope. The early period, prior to 1900 was covered with a superb 1841 Leamington and an 1847 Rugby. Stratford on Avon had a skeleton in use from 23rd April 1849 until 3rd May 1849, the period covering Shakespeare's birthday when presumably a skeleton was used to cope with the increase in mail.

Malcolm Allinson completed the afternoon's entertainment with two displays. The first being Bishop Marks starting with one dated 24/1/1661(2), Malcolm explained the reason for the date being affected by the calendar which ran from Lady Day in the 1600s. Scottish Bishop marks were shown and the fact they were made in two parts rather than the single stamp used in London was explained. An Exeter E from 1700 was complemented by a Chester C from 1711, a 1776 letter had both UK and New York bishop marks and the final cover from Paisley to London in 1784 had no less than six Bishop marks due to it having been redirected. Malcolm's second display was of Penny Blacks starting with the Act of 1839 introducing Uniform Penny Postage followed by a silver Wyon medal. Various stamps were shown including plates 1 to 10 and reconstructed M rows of plates 5 & 7 together with examples on cover.

The GBPS members who displayed were:

Howard Hughes – Receiving Houses of Bangor on the Island of Anglesey; Julian Tweed – Late Fees from Midland Towns; Jean Alexander – Upstream and Downstream mail (Tomorrow's Postal History); Ian Harvey – Stamp Booklets with Air Mail labels included 1930 to 1936; and Alan Vaughan – Somerset House unlisted shades.

The GPBS chairman closed the meeting thanking the Midland (GB) PHS for inviting them and expressing the overall enjoyment of members of a good afternoon's philately.



Bill Pipe

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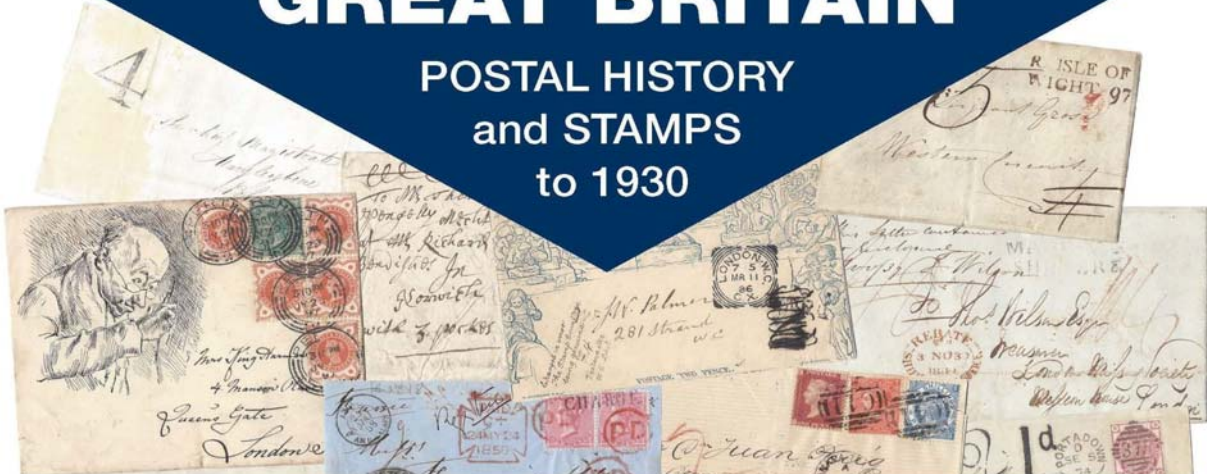
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THE USE OF COMPUTED MILES BY THE BRITISH POST OFFICE.

by Ian M May

When the post was opened for the public in 1635 charging of mail was by distance,^[1] see Table 1. Complete details of all rates during the period discussed in this article are given in reference 1. However, it is important to note that from 1653 to 1784 there were only two bands determined by mileage. An obvious requirement was for distances to be available in order to determine the relevant charge. In 1635 accurate measurements between towns were not available and so the Post Office used “computed miles” which David Robinson^[2] states “*were the best guesses of the Post Office surveyors who were based in London*”.

Table 1, Postage rates for a single sheet in England and Wales. Note: All bands and rates are not included below, full details can be found in reference 1.

1635	1653
Below 80 miles: 2d per single letter	Below 80 miles: 2d per single letter
80 to 140 miles: 4d per single letter	above 80 miles: 3d per single letter
above 140 miles: 6d per single letter	
1711	1784
Below 80 miles: 3d per single letter	Below 80 miles: 4d per single letter
above 80 miles: 4d per single letter	80 to 150 miles: 5d per single letter
	above 150 miles: 6d per single letter

Sussex^[3] gives a comprehensive explanation of the reasons for the need for computed miles in that even after the legal mile being made equal to 1760 yards in 1593 the length of a mile in use continued to vary throughout the country from less than 2000 yards to more than 2400 yards. Sussex states that it was not until John Ogilby, who was to accurately map the roads of the country, was made Cosmographer Royal in 1671 that the standard mile was accepted. Ogilby published his *Britannia* in 1675^[3], based on an “*actual survey of all the direct and principal cross roads in England and Wales*”. In a discussion of computed miles in *The Midland Counties Mileage Marks*^[4] it is stated “*that it would have been perverse for the Post Office to employ computed miles when a better measure existed*”. Whilst this statement specifically applied to the introduction of the first type mileage marks it can be also applied to the period before their introduction when it does seem perverse that the Post Office continued to use computed miles when measured miles were available.

On page 18 Robinson^[2] summarises how the Post Office made use of computed miles, even after accurately measured miles were available, as: “*...until 1711 only computed miles were allowed; from 1711 until 1765 computed miles remained in use for established post roads, (remeasurement was not allowed under the 1711 act) but measured distances were often used for any new post roads.*”

The relevant section from the act^[5] regarding the requirement that existing post roads be not remeasured, with the Author’s underlining, is:

“And for the better reducing all miles in both the said kingdoms throughout all the post roads within one hundred miles distance from the said chief offices, and in the cross roads now settled, or hereafter to be settled, to one and the same measure and standard; and for preventing disputes touching the same; be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall and may be lawful to and for such person and persons as the postmaster general for the time being shall appoint, to measure, or cause to be measured, by the wheel, all roads, except such roads where stages are already settled; and that such person or persons so to be authorized, shall cause fair surveys or books to be made for each of the said kingdoms; one of each whereof to be left with her Majesty’s postmaster general in London”.

Robinson then states that: “*From 1765 remeasurement of the existing post roads was allowed, and rate changes accordingly. In Scotland all changes were adjusted on 5 January 1784, no exact date has been found for England and Wales*”.

The relevant section from the act^[6] regarding the requirement that existing post roads could now be remeasured, with the Author’s underlining, is: “*And, to the end that all letters or packets may be charged with postage, according to the rated distance they are respectively carried by the post, and for preventing all disputes touching the same, be it*

further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall and may be lawful to and for such person and persons as the post master general for the time being shall appoint, to measure, or cause to be measured, by the wheel, all the post roads which are now settled and established, or which shall hereafter be settled and established, in any part of the kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, and other the British dominions.”

Finally Robinson states: “From 1784 only statute miles were used and these measurements were shown on the newly introduced ‘mileage stamps’ for England and Wales.”

Thus after 1784 the computed mile was definitely not in use, although a possible exception of the use of a computed mileage on a first type mileage mark will be discussed later, but what is of interest is the date when the use of computed miles, at least on the Chester Road, was discontinued. Robinson refers to a printed broad-sheet^[7], the full text and list of towns is available in Raguin^[8] as item MR8401, which gives “A list of post towns in Scotland, with the distances in English miles, from Edinburgh, and the rates of postage with which they are to be charged from 5 January 1784”. This appears to mark the end of the use of computed miles in Scotland. However, Robinson was not aware of any similar notification of the date of the end of the use of computed miles in England and Wales and neither is the Author.

It does seem perverse, as suggested in reference 4 that the computed mile should be used rather than measured miles once these were available. However, that both computed and measured miles co-existed is shown in the mileage charts in the road atlases of the era^[9]. It can be seen that the relationship between the measured mile and the computed mile varied from about 1.15 to 1.3 measured miles to a computed mile, Fig1.

THE ROAD FROM LONDON TO HOLY-HEAD	
Containing 208 Comp. Meas. AND 269.4 Meas. Miles (16 1/2 from Strand in Cornhill LONDON)	
Comp. Meas.	Meas. Miles
to Barnet	10 11.7
S ^t . Albans	20 21.5
Dunstable	30 34.2
Brickhill	37 43.7
Stony Stratford	42 53.1
to Evesham	50 60.3
Dunstable	60 72.7
Dunchurch	66 80.7
COVENTRY	74 92.1
to Evesham	82 103.5
to Evesham	92 114.9
to Evesham	102 126.3
to Evesham	110 140.7
to Evesham	126 162.1
to Evesham	140 176.5
to Evesham	150 190.9
to Evesham	160 205.3
to Evesham	174 223.7
to Evesham	184 241.1
to Evesham	201 260.5
to Evesham	208 269.4

Fig 1, Bowen E, Britannia Depicta or Ogilby improved 1731, Reprint Britannia Publications, Tiverton, 1979^[9]

The use of measured miles for charging would have meant an increase in the revenue for some mail. In order to ascertain what the effect on revenue would be likely to be it is necessary to consider the difference between a distance determined by computed miles and that by measured miles and also the bands used in rating mail. In England and Wales there were two bands of postage for mail based on mileage from 1653 to 1784, that carried up to 80 miles and mail that was carried beyond 80 miles. Using the Chester Road as an example Dunchurch is 66 computed miles but 80.7 measured miles and Coleshill is 82 computed miles but 103.5 measured miles. So based on these mileages the mail affected would be that travelling 80 to approximately 100 measured miles, this mail would be charged at the lower rate if computed miles were used. In 1784 an additional band was introduced for mail travelling over 150 miles (Table 1), so at this time had computed miles still been used an additional significant amount of mail would have been undercharged. Scotland had different bands and rates, details of which are given in Robinson^[2].

The only post town affected by the change from computed to measured miles for mail to and from London that actually lies on the Chester Road was Coventry at 74 computed miles and 92 measured miles. Rugby whilst not on the Chester Road was also affected as it received its mail via Dunchurch, on the Chester Road, at 66 computed miles and 81 measured miles. Rugby was about 4 measured miles from Dunchurch. Coleshill at 82 computed miles was just outside being affected by the change from computed to measured miles. A study of a significant number of covers from Coventry and Rugby to or from London or travelling through London from the 17th Century and up to

1761 have all been charged at the rate for less than 80 miles, see Figures 2 and 3. Whilst those to or from Coleshill were all charged at the rate for more than 80 miles, see Figure 4.

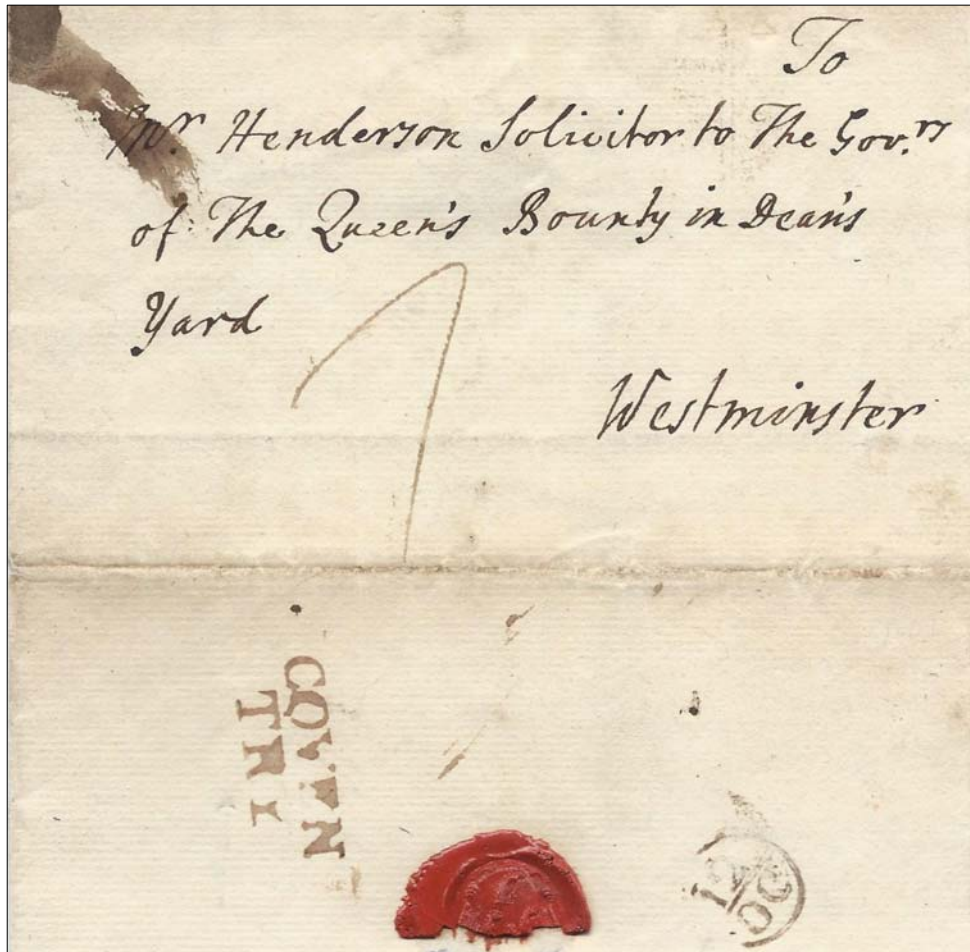


Fig 2, COVEN / TRY (WA78) to London, 11 October 1741, charged at 3d for less than 80 computed miles.

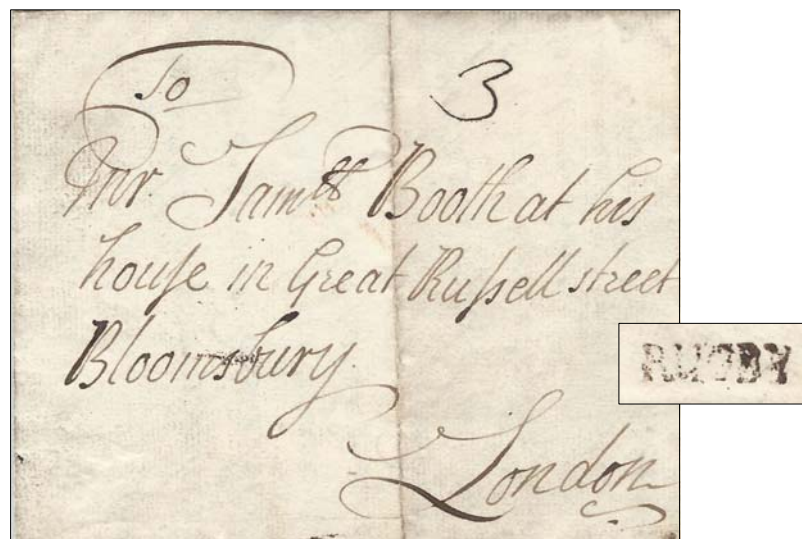


Fig 3, RUGBY (WA223) to London, 28 December 1734, charged at 3d for less than 80 computed miles.

The earliest date identified for mail from Coventry charged using measured miles is 30 December 1778, see Figure 5. It would have been expected that measured miles would have been used at Rugby by the above date but the date on the item from Rugby to Morpeth via London, 21 January 1779, see Figure 6, has been charged at 3d to London, the rate for less than 80 computed miles. It is possible that the change in policy had not been conveyed to the Rugby office at this time. Sussex^[3] suggested that the change to measured miles possibly took place between 1668 and 1671

and therefore assumed the use of computed miles would be restricted to the five post roads, the Yarmouth Road, the Plymouth Road, the Welsh Road, the Chester Road and the North Road. However, as the use of computed miles has been shown above to have continued until about 1780, it is likely that computed miles were used on other Post Roads for charging mail.

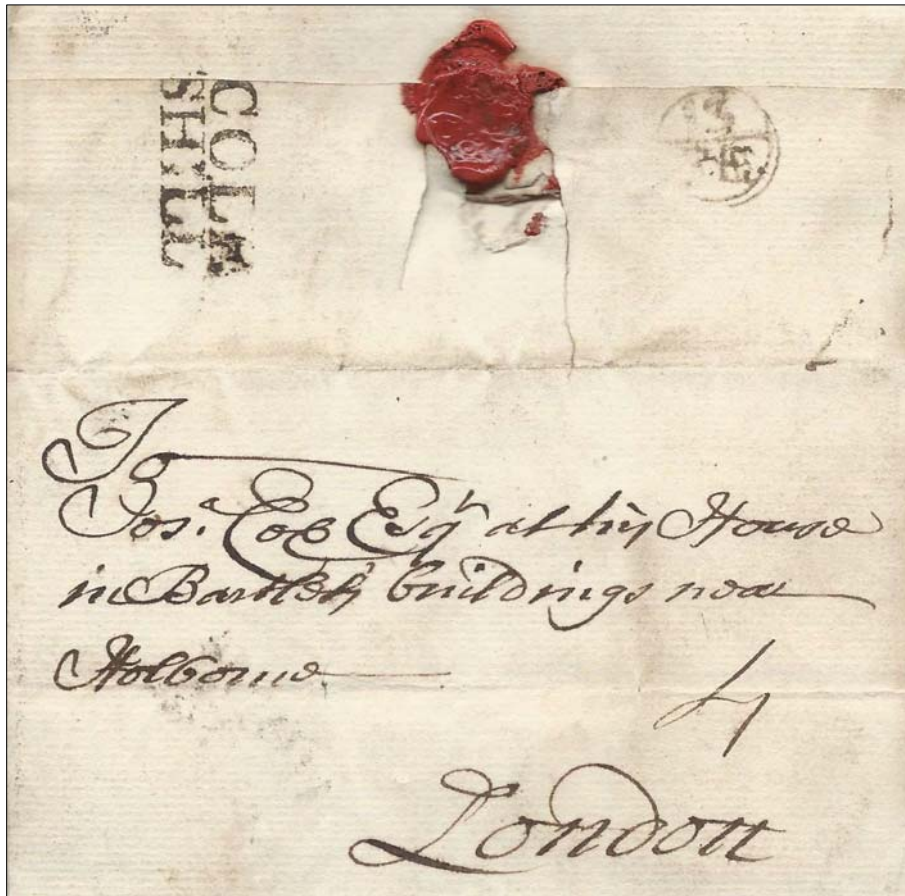


Fig 4, COLE /SHILL (WA57) to London, 11 February 1750, charged at 4d for more than 80 computed miles.



Fig 5, COVEN / TRY (WA85) to London, 30 December 1778, charged at 4d for more than 80 measured miles.

On page 81 of Howard Robinson, *The British Post Office - A History*^[10], it is stated that "Warwick, Stratford and several adjacent places petitioned in January 1697 for a more efficient service. They were being served from Coventry, but desired a post from Banbury, because it was nearer to London and would result in making single

letters from London 2d rather than 3d". No doubt Robinson took the above from Joyce^[11] who added that "Warwick, according to the computation of those days, was sixty-seven miles from London". It is also of interest that Joyce goes on to state that "The postmasters-general desired to send the letters direct; but even so simple a matter as this they were not competent to decide for themselves. A change of route involved a reduction of charge; and a reduction of charge might affect the King's receipts. Before, therefore, the route could be altered, the King's assent had to be signified through his appointed ministers". Warwick is about 7 computed miles from Coventry so the total computed mileage from London via Coventry is 81 computed miles and 107 measured miles! Banbury was served by a bye post from Towcester on the Chester Road, and it is assumed that mail for Warwick would have come via this route. Warwick via Towcester and Banbury is 74 computed miles and 96 measured miles. It is assumed that Joyce's mileage from London to Warwick is via Aylesbury and Buckingham rather than the Chester Road. There was a post road through Aylesbury and Banbury by 1756^[11], which would have been 67 computed miles but, because of the petition mentioned above, it is unlikely that it would have been operated in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.



Fig 6, RUGBY to Morpeth via London, 21 January 1779, charged 3d to London for less than 80 computed miles.

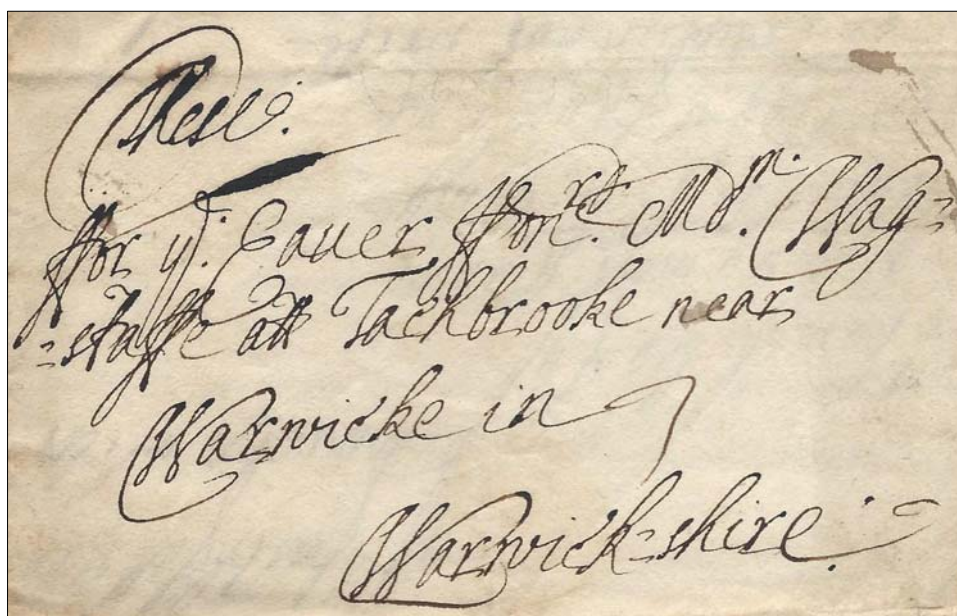


Fig 7, London to Warwick, 4 July 1696, charged at 3d for more than 80 computed miles.

Figure 7 shows an item sent from London to Warwick, 4 July 1696, charged at 3d for more than 80 computed miles which would have travelled via Coventry. The petition was obviously successful as Figure 8 shows an item sent from Warwick to London, 3 May 1706, charged at 2d for less than 80 computed miles, which would have gone via Banbury. The recipient, as a Member of Parliament, was entitled to free mail, but the Warwick office would not have marked it “free” this being the responsibility of the London office which cancelled the charge. Computed miles were still being used in 1768 as can be seen from the item shown in Figure 9 which is mail from Warwick to Antwerp, 28 June 1768, pre-paid at 3d for less than 80 computed miles for carriage to London. By this time there was a slightly shorter route via Aylesbury and Buckingham at 67 computed miles and 96 measured miles^[4]. However by 1776, see Figure 10, measured miles were being used as seen on the item from London to Warwick – redirected to Nottingham, 28 June 1776, charged at 4d for more than 80 measured miles. The redirection appears to have been at the Post Offices initiative as no additional charge was raised.

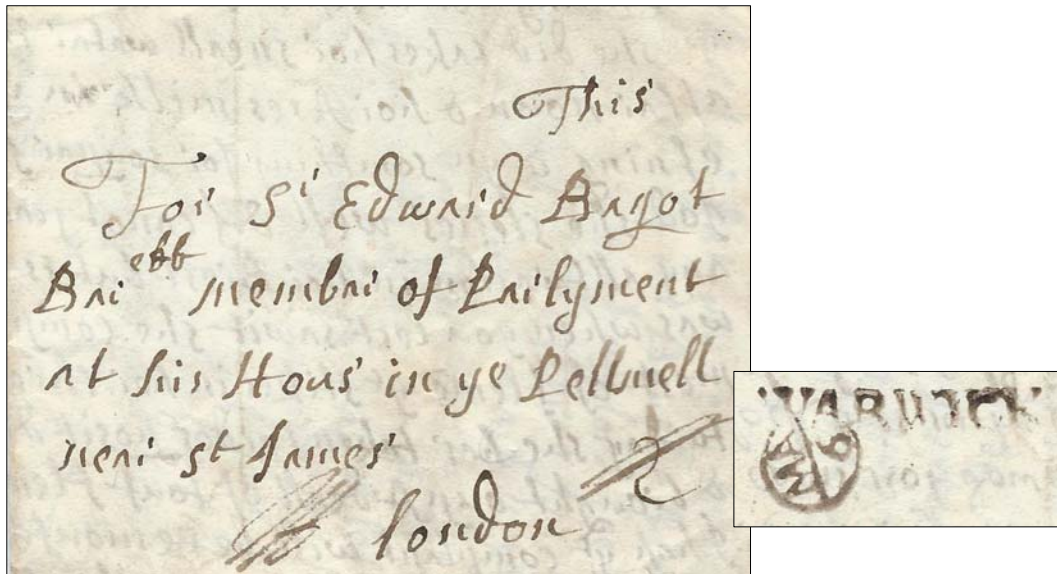


Fig 8, WARWICK (WA369) to London, 3 May 1706, charged at 2d for less than 80 computed miles, the charge has subsequently been cancelled as the recipient was entitled as an MP to free mail.



Fig 9, Warwick to Antwerp, 28 June 1768, pre-paid at 3d for less than 80 computed miles for carriage to London.

One of the myths about computed miles is that the errors on the first type mileage marks were due to the use of computed miles. This is patently incorrect as the errors are all relatively small, whereas the difference between computed and measured miles is significant. However, there is often “an exception to the rule”. Raguin^[8] and

Haslam and Moreton^[13] give details, extracted from The London Gazette, August 6-9, 1683, of a “Direct Post from London Uxbridge, Wiccombe, Beconsfield, Thame, Oxford, Woodstock, Enston, Chipping Norton, Morton in Marsh, Evesham, Worcester, Kidderminster, Bewdley, and Ludlow, and that there is a Branch of that Post to Shipston upon Stower, Campden, Stow i'th'Would, Alcester, Henly in Arden, &c.”. It is almost certain that computed miles would have been used. The mileage to Enston from reference 8 is 57 computed miles and 70 measured miles. The mileage shown on the first type mileage mark for Enston is 60^[4] and it is possible that the computed mileage was used in this case! The Author is grateful to Martin Scroggs^[14] for bringing this to his attention.



Fig 10, London to Warwick, redirected to Nottingham, 28 June 1776, charged at 4d for over 80 measured miles.

It is possible that a number of the above offices on post road described above to Worcester and Ludlow may have benefited from the use of computed mileages leading to the lower postage rate.

One of the objectives in writing this article was to attempt to determine a date when the change from computed to measured miles took place, in particular, on the Chester Road, whilst it has not been possible to determine an exact date it is likely to be at some time around 1780, probably just before. It would be useful if other relevant mail could be looked at in order to provide further information regarding the date of the ending of the use of computed miles. However, this is not the only post road that was affected. Figure 11 from David Robinson's book^[2] gives some indication of the extent of the effect of the change from computed miles to measured miles. By considering mail from each of the post roads it would be possible to determine the dates at which the change from computed to measured miles took place. Way-letters, ie those travelling between two post towns on a post route but not to or from London, and cross post mail would have likely been affected by the use of computed miles.

It is interesting to speculate why these dates are not known; the suspicion is that it is because as long as rates depended only on one mileage used to differentiate between them only a relatively small amount of mail would be affected.

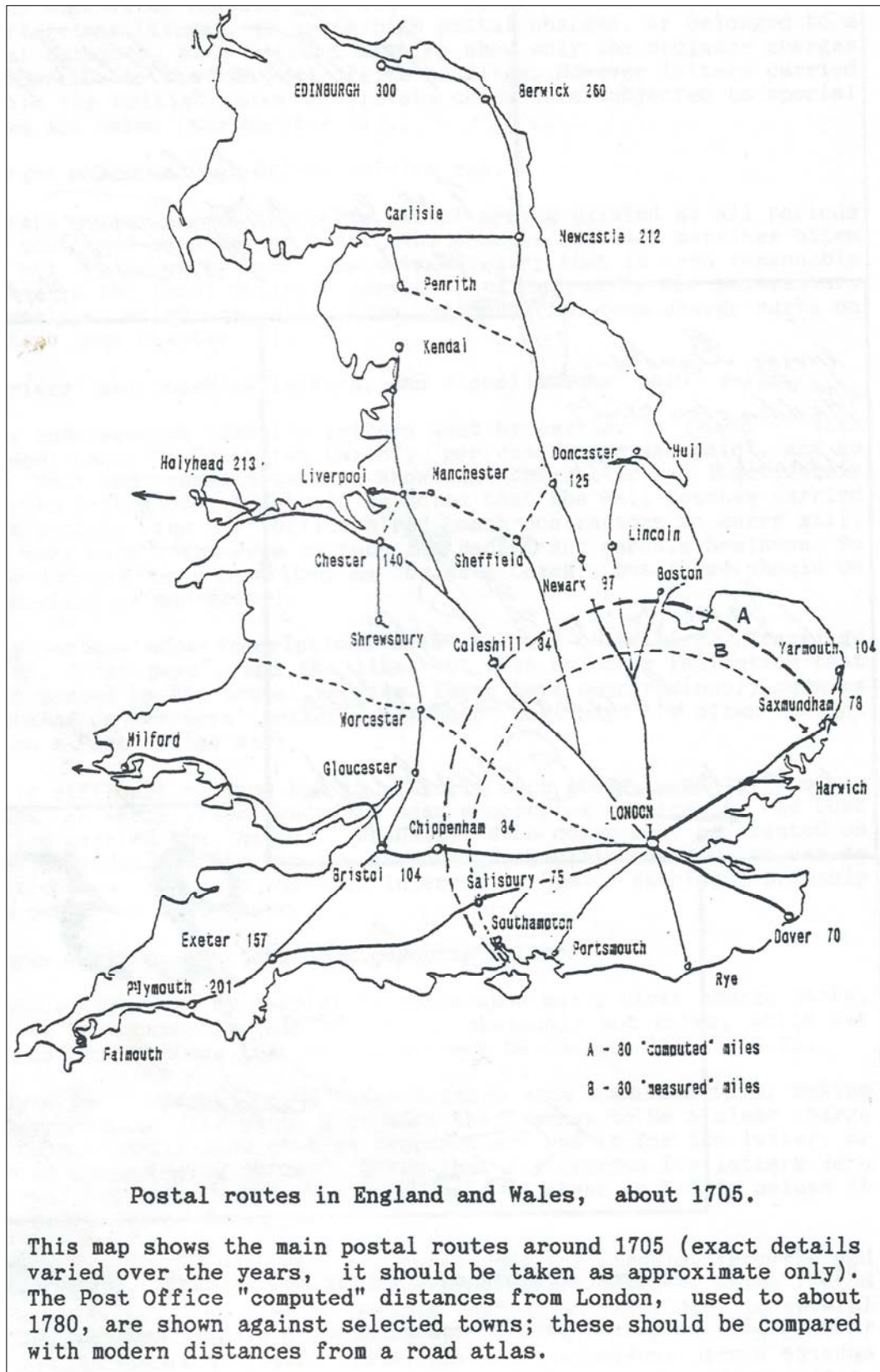


Fig 11, Postal routes in England and Wales showing computed and measured miles from London (reproduced with kind permission of L. Robinson).

Addendum

After the article above had been written and prepared for Midland Mail I obtained a copy of the Holkham Map, discovered by the archivist at Holkham Hall, Norfolk, which appears to date from 1735 or early 1736 and shows the

complete postal system at that time. Whilst none of the conclusions reached in the article are invalidated the map does add some further support in that along each of the post roads the mileages shown are computed miles. The article also mentions that by 1756 that post to Warwick would have come via Aylesbury and Banbury. This post road was first started to Buckingham via Aylesbury in September 1685^{[8][13]}. The Holkham Map shows that by 1735/6, i.e. 20 years earlier than mentioned in the article, this road had been extended through Banbury to Stratford on Avon with a bye post via Wellesbourne to Warwick. This 'begs the question' when did this extension commence?

Acknowledgement: The Author is grateful to Ian Baker for some useful comments on an early draft of this paper.

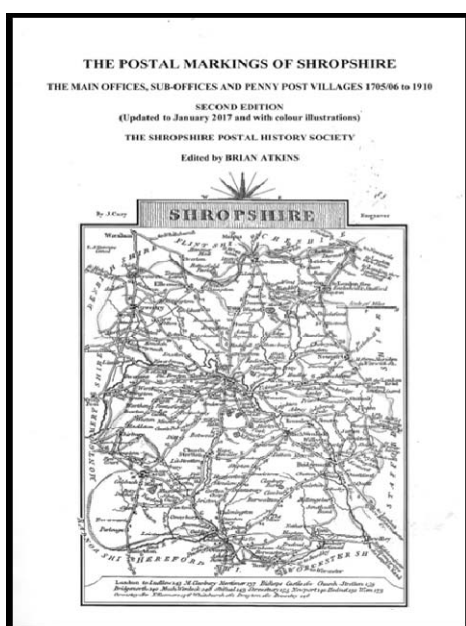
Ed. The Holkham map is still available from the Society see <http://www.midlandphs.org.uk/pages/publications.html>

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- 1 <http://www.gbphs.org.uk/information/rates/inland/england-and-wales-1660-1801.php>
- 2 Robinson D., for the Port and Carriage of Letters, Published by author, 1990.
- 3 Sussex V., How long is a mile? pp 17 – 20, Postal History, 238, 1986.
- 4 The Midland counties mileage marks and mail routes to London 1784 – 1840, The Midland (GB) Postal History Society, 2005.
- 5 Act of Parliament. 1711 9 Anne Cap 10, enacted 1 June 1711.
- 6 Act of Parliament. 1765 5 George III Cap 25, enacted 10 October 1765.
- 7 A list of post towns in Scotland, with the distances in English miles, from Edinburgh, and the rates of postage with which they are to be charged from 5 January 1784, Post office archives, London.
- 8 Raguin M. M., British Post Office Notices 1666 - 1899, Vol. 1 pre 1800, Published by author, 1991.
- 9 Bowen E., Britannia Depicta or Ogilby improved 1731, Reprint Britannia Publications, Tiverton, Devon, 1979
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- 11 Joyce, H. C. B., History of the Post Office from its establishment down to 1836, available at: http://www.ajhw.co.uk/books/book235/book235.html#Page_24
- 12 Robertson A. W., Great Britain post roads, post towns and postal rates 1635 -1839, Published by author, 1961
- 13 Haslam D. G. and Moreton C., Post Office Notices extracted from The London Gazette, 1666 to 1800, The Postal History Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1989.
- 14 Scroggs M., Personal communication.

THE POSTAL MARKINGS OF SHROPSHIRE – A Review

by John Calladine



This 122 page ring bound volume produced by the Shropshire Postal History Society and co-ordinated by Brian Atkins is the type of record one hopes every County Editor has tucked away in his desk. It quite simply records every scrap of information known about the postal markings of post towns, sub-offices and receiving houses in the county of Shropshire from the introduction of the earliest postal markings in 1705/1706 through to 1910. (Of course, our County Editors should not neglect later markings either.) This second edition, updated to January 2017, has the benefit of colour illustrations. It begins with a general introduction followed by an attempt to place Shropshire into the context of recorded English postal history and lists almost twenty books and journals used as references, a third of them from our society. The types of marks used in the county and the method of measuring them are also covered before the comprehensive and crystal-clear listing of postmarks from fifteen post towns and sub post towns and from five penny posts. The detailed recording is exemplary and, in the case of such as the single rings of Shrewsbury, remarkable. This publication has been offered to members of the Midland (GB) Postal History Society at a price of just £15-00 and only a small number remain (4 in fact – Ed). E-mail Brian (sniktab@gmail.com)

and he will bring a copy to a meeting. Any County Editors who ponder what they should or should not be recording will not want to miss it.

A FEW SNIPPETS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MAIL OF BINGHAM

by Alan Marshall

It is quite clear why Bingham became a well known and important post office. Close to the Great North Road, midway between Nottingham and its postal server Newark on the east-west cross country route was a major geographical benefit. Added to this, it was surrounded within the Vale of Belvoir by many seats of the nobility from where mail was being generated at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th century, eg: Belvoir Castle and halls at Langar, Shelford, Orston, Colston Bassett, Elton, Holme Pierrepont Wiverton and the Whatton estate. Over 85% of Bingham's 3,000 plus acres belonged to the Earls of Chesterfield.

A local entrepreneur, John Strong, who as a spirit and clover merchant, plumber, headmaster, church warden, actor, organiser and mason was the final link to creating the focal point for a post office.

A wrapper of 1798 displays an early example of the first 40mm x 5mm BINGHAM mark (NG12) to Holme Pierrepont, now better known as the International Water Sports Centre for rowing and white water rafting etc. The Hall was built in 1550 and, apparently, has been in the ownership of one family ever since. This item is the only yet found from Bingham that does not have a postal rate from the Bingham post office.

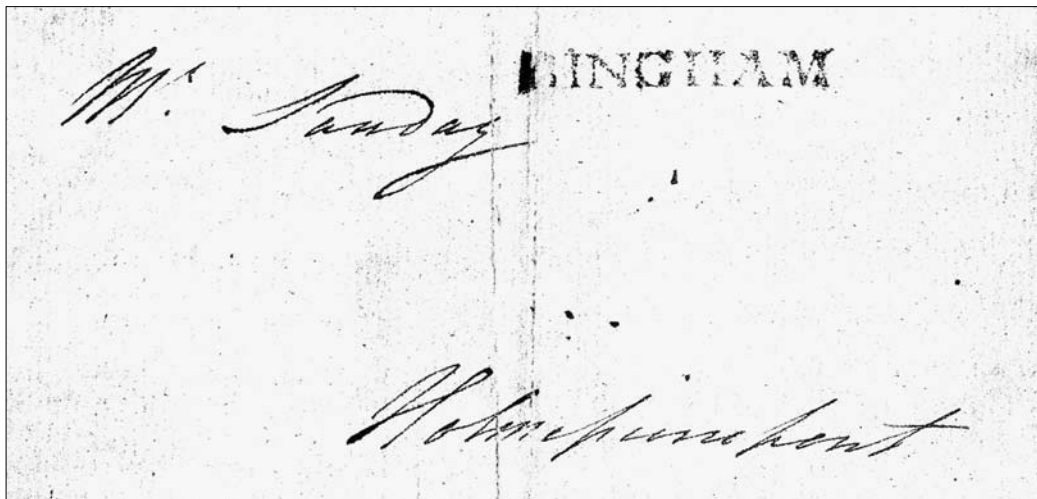


Fig 1, 1798 wrapper from Bingham to Holme Pierrepont.



Fig 2, Christmas Eve 1907 postcard of Holme Pierrepont Hall

The postal delivery rate of the letters from the Bingham post office can be seen in *The Local Posts of the Midland Counties to 1840*, produced by the Midland (GB) Postal History Society as obtained from the Post Office archives. Access to the postmasters running account would be necessary to indicate what income London received from delivery to the 32 villages listed. In fact examples of mail delivered from the office are conspicuous by their absence. As letters received for delivery were not given a Bingham mark, it is presumed they would be sought and held by collectors of the sending office marks or of famous nobility family names.

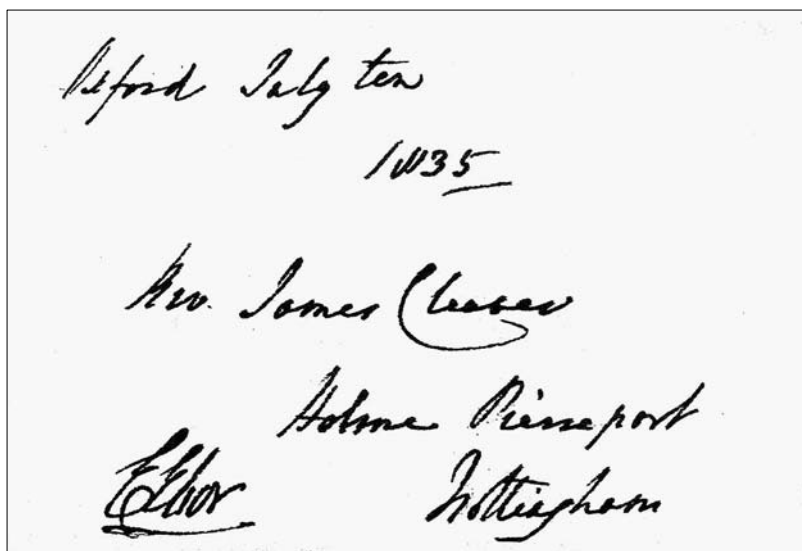


Fig 3, 1836 Free letter from Oxford to Holme Pierrepont

Although it is known that the postmaster raised on average £70 per annum for the delivery of letters, he maintained in a letter dated November 1836 (ref, Post 40/45/1827) that he never received more than one penny for each letter delivery, which suggests one or two letters per week. This is quite possible as a number are known to be dealt with directly by the Nottingham office for Orston, Shelford and Colston Bassett and also to Screveton, from where the Nottingham penny post was used. The only item believed to have been delivered from the Bingham office is one to the vicar of Holme Pierrepont from Oxford on 10th July 1835. It is a free wrapper with the appropriate signature of E Ebor, Bishop of York (see Fig 3).

An interesting entire from Orston Hall to Ripon dated 1st August 1832 highlights the ongoing occurrence of migrant workers. The real reason for the letter was the desire to find out whether the £5 notes sent eight days earlier had arrived as there had been no acknowledgement. It continues that a cholera epidemic was spreading rapidly and too

near for comfort, not helped by the numbers of Irishmen who are allowed to help with the harvest. The magistrates were being very strict ordering all beggars 'to be taken up'. A woman with cholera had been



Fig 4, 1906 postcard showing Wiverton Hall and BINGHAM / NOTTS skeleton.

seized in a village near Newark and taken away; it was hoped the epidemic had not reached Ripon. Of the Rev. Fell's Orston correspondence (1795 to 1810) 4 are dealt with at Bingham and 6 posted at Nottingham; it would be enlightening to know where the correspondence to the Rev. Fell from the trustees of the Rev^d Grand's Charity at Bristol had ended up.

A postcard posted on 23rd April 1906 displays a picture of Wiverton Hall, two and a half miles from Bingham and half a mile from Langar. The card has KEdVII ½d green cancelled with an example of the Bingham 31mm skeleton recorded from 2nd April to 20th May, quite a long period of use (see Fig 4 on previous page).

Over the years Wiverton has had a number of different spellings, eg, Warton, Werton, Wareton, Viverton and Wyverton. The original Hall was built in c1450 and was the residence of the famous Chaworth family serving as a stronghold for King Charles I during the civil war in 1643, but was destroyed in 1645, probably on the instructions of Oliver Cromwell.

The gatehouse was left standing and part of it was incorporated into the new and present Hall in 1815. It was built by Jack Musters as a hunting lodge and occupied by the Chaworth Musters family until sold to the Crown Estate in 1938. The Hall, half a mile from Langar aerodrome, was requisitioned by the Army in WW2 and was lucky not to have been destroyed by the RAF who had originally planned to use it as a practice target for a raid on Gestapo Headquarters in Antwerp. It was saved by Air Commodore Huskinson, who had lived in the area as a child and knew its historical value. Field Marshall Montgomery paid a visit on 21st August 1948. Extensive alterations were carried out after the war and the Hall was sold by the Crown Estate along with 35 acres and developed into a successful game shoot on 2000 acres of Crown land surrounding the Hall.

A later descendent of the Musters family of Wiverton Hall clearly had trouble with the local surveyor on behalf of the Board of Stamps and Taxes during 1835 to 1839. The content from entires of 1837 and one of 1839 make interesting reading, the latter one dated 14th June being postally important in that it carries the earliest of four recorded examples of the 28mm x 4mm NG20 mark of Bingham. The third of the four examples is held in Post Office Archives and is the only one recorded in red alongside the only handstruck 1 of Bingham, likewise in red (see a reduced copy below).

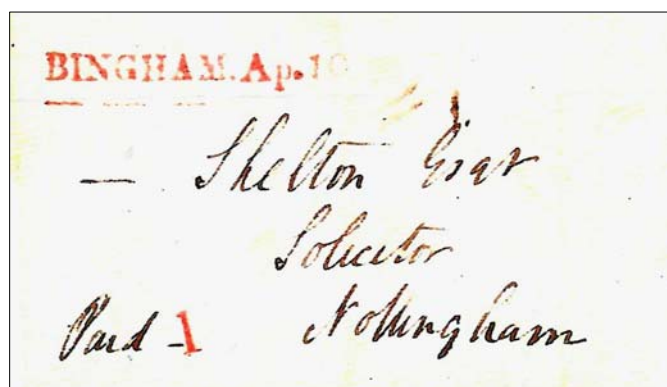


Fig 5, Reduced address panel of entire showing the NG20 and 1 of Bingham in red

Although many entires appear to be written from the Hall, a married J. G. Musters claims he was not residing there and was abroad from 1835 to late 1836 having hired a servant by the week and alleged to have a carriage he maintained that the only vehicle he had was a Cabriolet which was in a Pantechnicon, no horses, dogs or anything else. The 1839 entire, though dated 14th June, was written on 30th May as he was obliged to take his children to the seaside and he had forgotten to post it! He claims that a pony carriage and two ponies were exempt and the number of male servants listed was incorrect. Attendance at an appeal with the inspector at Bingham did not occur as he had been on Her Majesty's Service with the Yeomanry at Mansfield and he had taken his children to the seaside.

A clerk's notes record:-

Musters had returned 4 servants with a gardener charged in addition.

Ponies must not exceed 12 hands and the cart wheels must be under 30ins in diameter.

PARCEL POST TO & FROM CHATHAM

by John Paulson

I can add some information in response to Pete Elms' wonderful photograph of the c1905 London to Chatham parcel mail coach (MM 198 / 21), confirming the statement that the horse-drawn service was taken off the road in 1908. As early as 1897 motor vans were being tested but it was June 1905 before they began to be used on a service to Brighton. Proof strikes of the circular date stamps of the LONDON-CHATHAM PARCEL COACH and the CHATHAM-LONDON PARCEL COACH to be used on part of the new service are shown at Fig 1 below.



Fig 1, the date stamps of the new PARCEL COACH service between London & Chatham.

Fig 2 below shows the final journey of the Chatham-London horse coach on 30 June 1908 (is this the same coach as seen in Pete Elms' article?) with driver Miller and guard Luckett. Also present are G. T. Owen, who retired in 1913 as Assistant Inspector and S. C. Cain, who retired as Assistant Superintendent and R. C. Aldridge, who retired in 1929. Mr Owen is thought to be the person standing next to the coach on the right of the picture.



Fig 2, Chatham-London parcels coach 30 June 1908

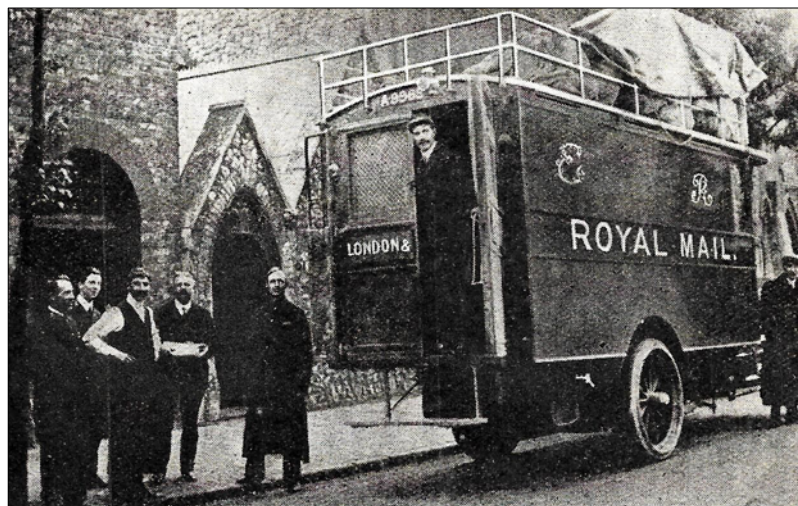


Fig 3, the first journey of the LONDON-RAMSGATE parcels van arriving in Margate on 1 July 1908

TWO MISSENT TO LOUGHBOROUGH ITEMS

by Marion Turner

Marion is one of our two members residing in the Netherlands. She writes 'Having received Midland Mail 198 and had a read through the Missent items displayed at the February meeting I was a little disappointed that no Leicestershire items were shown!! So here are a couple to make up for that'.

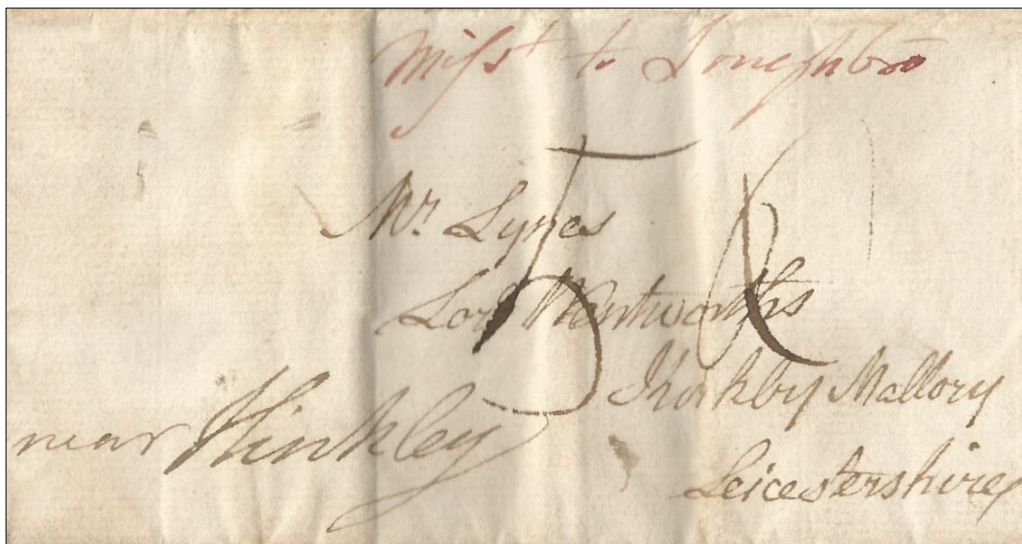


Fig 1, Manuscript *Mifst to Loughbro* on entire from London to Lord Wentworth's estate at Kirkby Mallory near Hinckley, Leics. It carries a London receiving house stamp dated Aug. 12th 1794 and Manuscript 5d (correct for 80 - 150 miles, 1784 Act) replacing the incorrect 6d, probably after its return to Leicester.

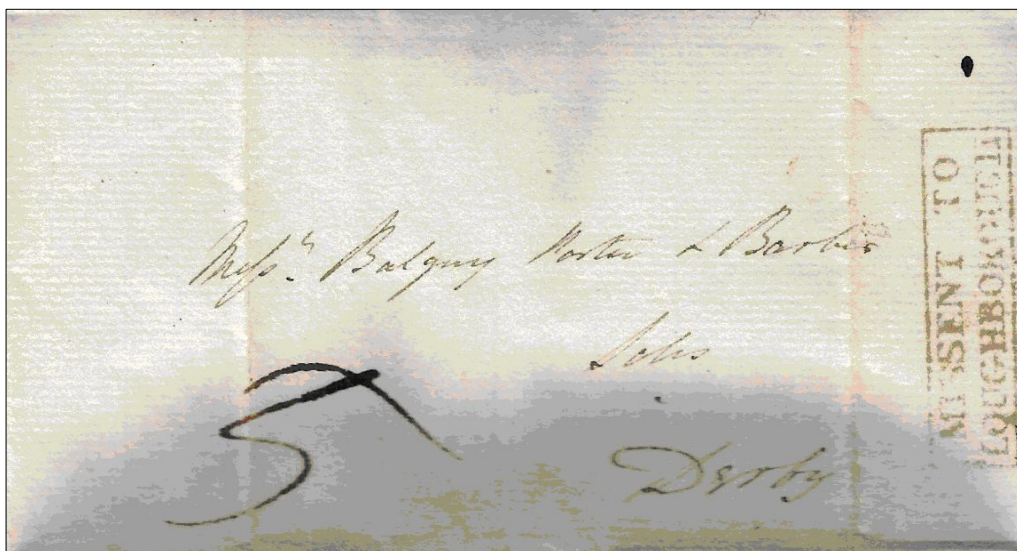


Fig 2, Entire from Nottingham to Derby dated 12th March 1823 carries a manuscript 5d (15 - 20 miles, 1812 Act) and a very fine strike of the boxed pale red MISSENT TO LOUGHBOROUGH (BCC LC103) in use from 1819 - 1846. On the reverse there is a faint strike of the NOTTINGHAM / 124 24mm circular dated mileage mark (NG182).

Marion also states with reference to the boxed MISSENT TO hand stamp that: 'Somewhere I have read that this first standard type was initially issued only for 8 towns, but haven't a clue where I got that from. Any chance that someone can confirm that?' The editor has no knowledge of the veracity of such a statement, can anyone else confirm whether it is correct or not?

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Derby
DE1 2SY

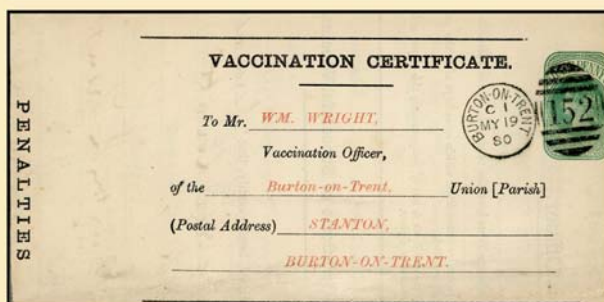
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