

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.midlandphs.org.uk



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Number 205, January 2020



Oundle post office and postmen, 17 May 1905. The lad in the centre looks a little off adulthood!
See page 9 for an account of the January meeting

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It was good to see **Ian May** at the November meeting at Warwick, Ian having ventured from his Scottish retreat. It gave our Chairman, **Gordon Hardy**, chance to present the **Jon Baker Trophy** to Ian, whose worthy winning article was *The use of Computed Miles by the British Post Office* in MM 199 / 10, won with 58% of the votes cast with 20% of members voting.

THE JON BAKER TROPHY – As the AGM and consequent announcement of the winner of the Trophy will not take place until 23rd May 2020, the list of possible articles, and thus members, to vote for will not appear until the next edition of Midland Mail (MM 206, end of April). This will create urgency among members to register their vote, whereas if the list appeared in this edition, as it usually does, there would be over three months to the AGM, so it would seem advisable to wait until the next

edition, when a list of possible articles, all written in 2019, will appear.

Ian Baker writes that Martin Townsend has confirmed that the copy of the Birmingham 'Chandelier' cover that he has available (see MM 204 / 19) is dated 17 December 1772.

Ian Baker has also sent the following: Further to the publication of **The Scottish Additional Halfpenny Mail Tax 1813-1839** compiled in 2017 by Ian Baker, David Graham, Michael Sanig and Bill Shand, the SPSHS has now published a **handy A5 size checklist** of the additional half hand stamps as recorded in that book. It contains extracts from the book, featuring a summary of 'How to use this book' (1 page), a description and illustrations of the four Types and sub-types of hand stamp (2 pages) and then over the following 25 pages, an illustration of the mark(s) and the data table(s) for each place. The tables consist of the catalogue number, size, type, EKD/LKD, colour and price guide. If you are interested in a copy, it is priced at £5 plus £1 for UK P & P and is available from: Mrs Lyn Robinson, 25 Myreton Avenue, KILMACOLM, Renfrewshire PA13 4LL. Please make your cheque for £6 payable to Scottish Postal History Society.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE WEBSITE - **Colin Fountain** and **John Hine** have created a new website containing illustrated lists of Gloucestershire postmarks; they have been compiling the listings over several years. The website contains a separate pdf file for each office, listing all the recorded postmarks from the earliest known to the current self-inking date stamps. Every mark is illustrated where illustrations are available and data shown for each mark consists of size, date issued with PIB (Proof Impression Book) reference where known, colour and earliest and latest date. The website currently contains over 100 office lists but many more will be added over the coming months. The completed office lists will also be updated on a regular basis with date extensions and additional marks when information becomes available, the address is www.sites.google.com/view/gloucestershire-postmarks. Colin & John welcome updates to the data shown, please send reports with scans to Colin at cfountain@talktalk.net. I have had a look at the site and it is a remarkable effort for which Colin and John are to be congratulated – Ed.

Bill Gillham states that he collects Rutland but he is having trouble finding items, especially early ones (This might be a common problem as early Shropshire material is extremely difficult to find as well!). He would be pleased to receive information of any spare items members might have available for purchase. Call him on 01572 812366.

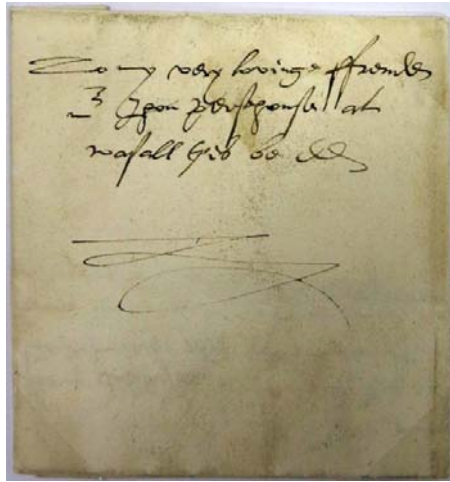
Marion Turner reports that she received positive reactions to her article about the Jack Barlow Collection (see MM 202 / 11-13); furthermore she discovered that **John Hine** had exchanged letters with Mr Barlow in the 1960s! Marion has produced another article for us, to be found on page 15 of this issue.

COMPETITION – Members noted as award winners at the Midland Philatelic Federation Autumn 16-sheet competition at Banbury 2019 were:

Clive Jones	Insured Mail	Large Gold (92 points, Best in Show, Well done Clive)
Chris Jackson	Upton on Severn	Gold (87 points)
Stuart Geddes	Mail to and from Villages Between Ross on Wye & Monmouth	Silver Gilt (75 points)
	All in the Postal History Class	Congratulations to all three

WANTS – The above note from Bill Gillham started me thinking. We could be each other's eyes and ears. Not everyone can get to every stamp show, bourse, auction, so if you have something you are particularly looking for and are willing for members to keep a look out for you and let you know where it can be found etc, then send me a note and I'll put your request into Midland Mail - Ed.

THE 9th NOVEMBER MEETING at WARWICK began promptly at 1.30pm after the morning committee meeting. Gordon Hardy was to give the Chairman's Display of Derbyshire Postal History

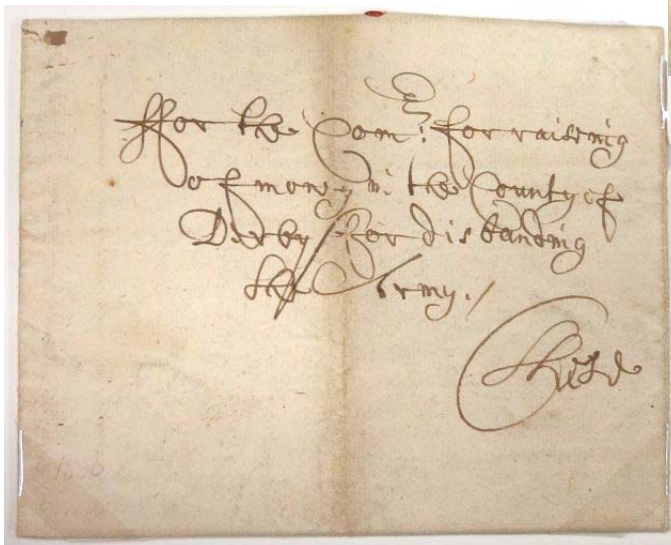
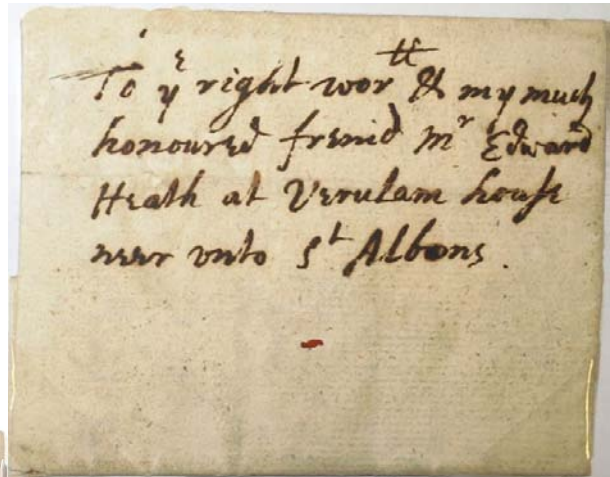


Gordon began with a description of the early Derbyshire post roads using early maps as well as maps he had drawn on his presentation sheets. He pointed out the bye-posts into Derbyshire from the Great North Road and from Lichfield on the Holyhead road. His display concentrated on some remarkable early 17th century covers, Derby covers as well as covers from Chesterfield, Buxton and Ashbourne.

His earliest cover was a King James 1 era dated 20 March 1612 sent from Chaddeston, near Derby to Walsall (see left), a distance of about 37 miles through Burton-on-Trent, and Lichfield. No manuscript charge marks on the cover, so it was probably carried privately. The letter relates to a payment of £50 and other legal matters. The day after his Coronation, James 1 appointed Lord John Stanhope and his son as joint Postmasters of England for life. In 1632 another Derbyshire man, Sir John Coke of Melbourne Hall was appointed Postmaster General. Sir John didn't trust the 1635 Proclamation for the Settling of the Letter

Office of England and Scotland Act and often advised his family to use unofficial routes. On one occasion he wrote 'I wrote to you last month by the Post and this week by Tom Ball, and received from you by Withering's man'!

This was followed by a Withering's Post period letter from Chesterfield to St Albans dated 26 October 1636 (see right). The sending location of the letter is unknown but the writer of the letter was Richard Lowe and the Lowes had houses at Denby (Denby is notable as the birthplace of John Flamsteed, England's first Astronomer Royal, and the location of the Denby Pottery Company) and Alderwasley. The letter reads in part – *For fear of ye infection the winter arrested us in Derbyshire.* 1636 saw 10,000 people killed in England due to the plague. Again there were no apparent rates and the letter was probably carried privately.

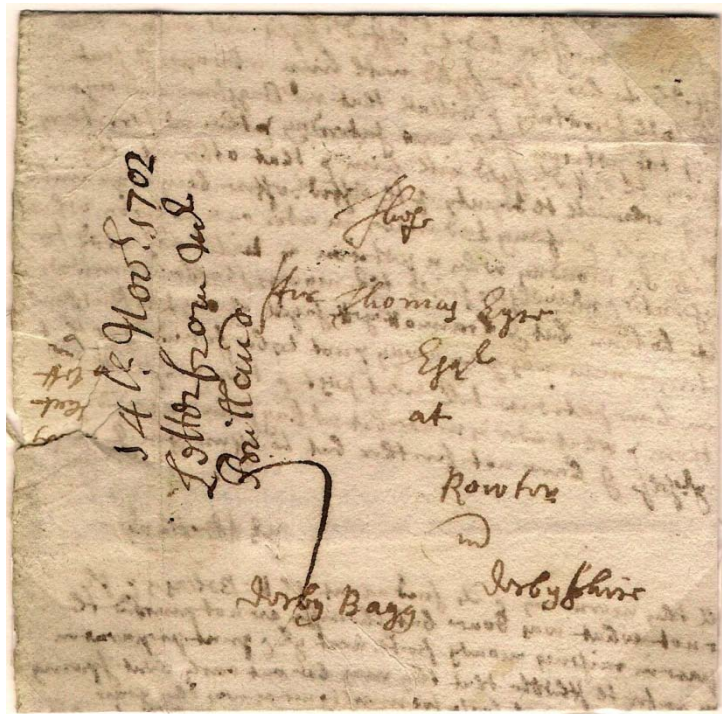


During the Civil War, in 1643 parliamentarians set up a post from Preston to London via Derby. Hostilities abated between 1645 and 1648 when Parliament hoped the King would listen to their demands; a 1647 letter from Chapel-en-le-Frith to London was sent in this period. There were three letters sent during the Commonwealth period (1649-1660). The armies were disbanded after the Restoration in 1660. The entire dated 22 September 1660 (left) is from 'Albemarle, William Prynne, John Birch, Edwd King and Rob Scawin'. It was carried free on State business. The letter is addressed 'for the commt for the raising of money in the County of Derbyshire for disbanding the Army / These' Gordon pointed out that, shortly before the date of this letter, in 1657 an Act was passed under

the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, making a charge of 2d for a single sheet within 80 miles of London and 3d for over 80 miles. He further indicated that when the Monarchy was restored in 1660, the 1657 Act had to be re-enacted to make it legal under the new monarchy. Colonel Henry Bishop was appointed Postmaster General and he quickly established new routes and this included one to Derby which left the Chester Road at Towcester. He also introduced the first postmark, our well-known Bishop mark, so that all letters originating or arriving in London had a clear date when they were received at the General Office. The September 1660 letter pre-dates the Bishop mark.

In 1663 Henry Bishop introduced a new route to Derby leaving the Chester road at Towcester, via Northampton and Leicester to Derby, then on to Chesterfield and Sheffield. A 14 May 1669 letter from 'Tydswell' (Tideswell) to London has two Bishop marks for MA / 17. As no postal route went through Tideswell, the letter was probably taken privately to Chesterfield.

From 26 March 1690 the mail from London to Sheffield no longer went via Northampton and Derby but was re-routed via Kettering, Nottingham, Mansfield and Chesterfield, though Derby still had three mails per week from London. The display showed the change in route reported by the London Gazette of 29 March 1690. Between 1678 and 1681 England and Wales were gripped by the Titus Oates-led Popish Plot and a letter dated 11 October 1678 mentions this.



The letter dated 14 November 1702 from London to Birchover is a rare example of the manuscript mark 'Derby Bagg', showing it went via Derby (see left).

An 11 May 1706 letter sent from Kings Newton, near Derby to London relates to a 'Coeldelph' (coal seam) in Newbold and is an early reference to coal mining.

A superb example of DY 117 with DERBY having a short letter Y was seen on a letter dated 25 September 1727, arriving in London on 29th (see below).



A 1720 letter showed a weak strike of the DARBY hand stamp which is very scarce, examples of the large DARBY were also included.

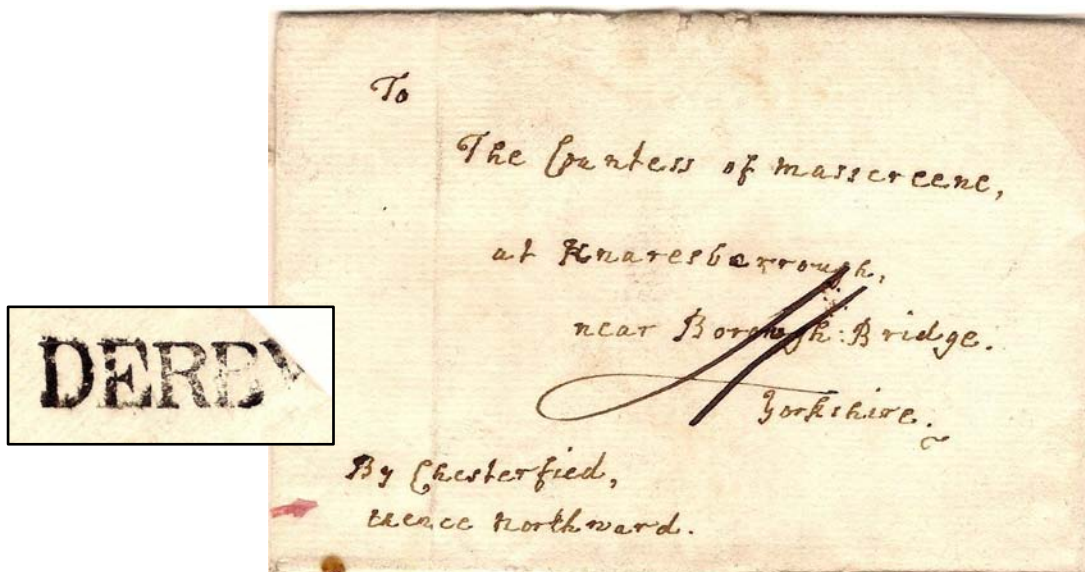
A September 1784 mileage mark was shown as were all other forms of mileage marks. There were two lovely examples from October 1793 and 3 May 1794 of a DERBY mark with a splayed letter Y (see below)



An example of the DERBY 'Ram's Horn' mark was shown but as it was indistinct, a copy taken from the County catalogue is shown left. As well as examples of a PAID / AT / DERBY mark there were also examples of the DERBY / PENNY POST marks at the number one and number two receiving houses of Duffield and Belper.

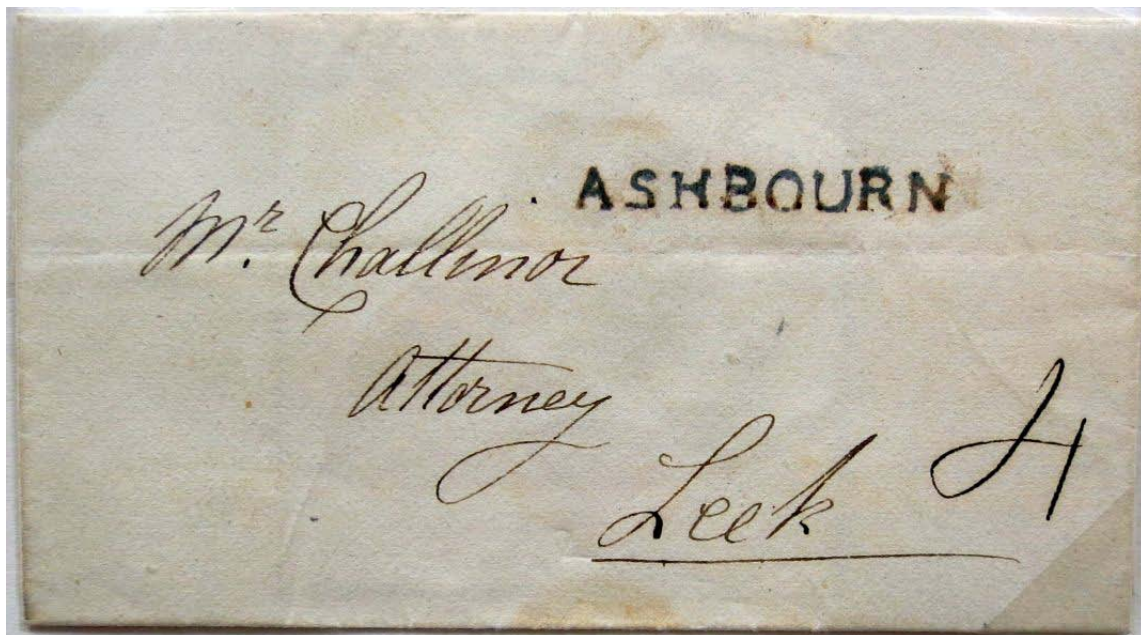
Hand stamps for Chesterfield and Derby were originally issued at the same time but the earliest known Chesterfield hand stamp is dated 1706. A letter dated 3 April 1734 shows the spelling CHESTER / FEILD. Gordon suggested the mark was probably made

locally, although Mansfield used a mark with a similar mis-spelling at a similar date.



A 1765 letter from Derby, with DY 123 (above) is endorsed 'By Chesterfield, thence Northwood'. The contents relate to the sender's funeral, stating he wants to be buried in St. Peter's Church, Derby. A 1777 letter mis-sent from Hattonbor (Attenborough, Nottingham) to Chastarfield (Chesterfield) was sent to London where it was endorsed 'Supposed Chesterfield' and charged *In all 8d*. The entire is written in dialect with phonetic spelling, hence the mis-direction. Finally in this section Chesterfield mileage marks were shown including horseshoes and circular examples.

As for Buxton a 1768 letter from London to Lyme was endorsed 'Per Buxton Bagg', showing a change of route from Tideswell via Buxton. A letter dated 30 November 1765 with a first type BUXTON was charged 1d as the distance did not exceed one post stage from the office of posting. Mileage marks included a use of the DY 71 boxed mileage BUXTON / 166 used in 1807, whereas a DY 72 Buxton mileage mark BUXTON / 178 used on 14 July 1881 to Bristol was also on display. This route was used during the summer months and went via Macclesfield. Finally also shown were a Buxton skeleton (16 August 1845) in blue and a Buxton Too Late in green dated 23 August 1846.



Matlock, Matlock village and Matlock Bath were all represented as well as Railway letters and an 1830 BUTTERLEY straight line. The 6 Nov 1792 entire with ASHBOURN to Leek (above) was prominent towards the end of a wonderful display.

Our President Chris Jackson thanked Gordon on behalf of all present for an excellent display.

THE 7 DECEMBER MEETING at the NATIONAL BREWERY CENTRE, BURTON-on-TRENT – Many thanks to John Calladine, for some general information related to the day and to Alan Godfrey for the detailed list of many of the covers of Chris Rainey's display *Around the World in 180 covers*, showing covers of many countries from A to Z, a unique collection. Some 36 members and guests sat down to the Christmas lunch and 21 remained to view Chris' post-lunch display.



Chris Rainey showing part of his wonderful collection

ANTARCTICA – 1908 Cover addressed to member of Shackleton Expedition at King Edward VII Land and marked "Returned Not Known".

ASCENSION – 1890 cover to Chicago carried aboard USS *Pensacola* for the US Eclipse Expedition

SOUTH AUSTRALIA – Mourning cover 1854 carried from Australia to Panama by paddle ship '*Golden Age*' to London charged 6d ship letter and 2/- British Packet Rate (See below)

WEST AUSTRALIA – 1859 cover charged 2/- emergency rate and with pair of 3d blue

VICTORIA (Australia) – 1854 cover charged 5/2 to Holland (2oz rate) and 1d ship fee

BARBUDA – 1743 Addressed to Lady Codrington – earliest letter known from Barbuda.

BERMUDA – 1849 soldier's mail Private in 1st Battalion 20th Regiment

BOER WAR – 8 covers including 1902 to South Africa from Enfield, GB

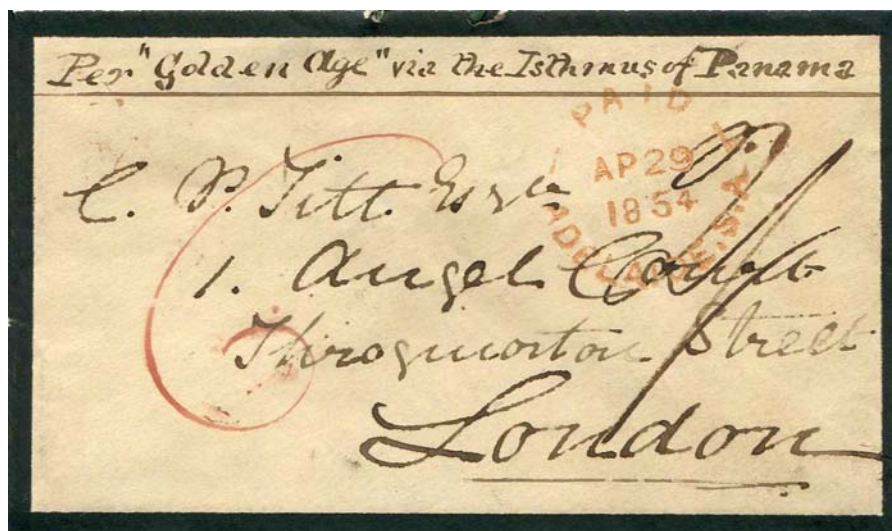


Members reviewing and discussing Chris Rainey's display

BRITISH EAST AFRICA – 1891 expedition by steamer *Kenia* to Tana river

BRITISH GUIANA – 1860 cover sent to Colonial Secretary, Colombo, Ceylon - stamps cancelled with A03 numeral

BRITISH HONDURAS – 1868 soldier's letter to Ireland



1854 Adelaide, South Australia to London via Panama – see above

BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS – cover with first stamp (1d canoe but not recognised by UPU) with additional 1d NSW stamp to Lincoln

BRUNEI – OHMS Letter from Spencer Buckingham St John (Consul General) to Singapore,

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE – wrapper with Cape triangle to Amsterdam,

CHINA – 1941 Letter from Indiana, USA, addressed to Hong Kong but with label

added by occupying Japanese to return to sender via China, CLIPPERTON ISLAND (Off the coast of Ecuador) – Cover from W Frese & Co. with 5c local stamp and additional 5 cent USA stamp, sent via San Francisco to Birmingham UK, CYPRUS – 1879 soldier's letter with 969 Nicosia cancel, FALKLAND ISLANDS – 1894 letter to Berlin carried aboard the Kosmos steamship SS *Neko*, stamps cancelled with a cork canceller.



FIJI – 1880 letter with LEVUKA / FIJI date stamp to Bromsgrove via Brindisi with sunray cancellations

GALAPAGOS – 1937 MV *Stella Polaris* letter to San Francisco (Considered to be the first custom built cruise ship)
 GAMBIA – 1901 Field Service cover sent to GB from expedition sent up Gambia river to arrest murderers of 6 constables and 2 commissioners



GIBRALTAR – November 1871 cover with S in circle from Cheltenham to Gibraltar
 (Chris stated that the S in circle denotes that the mail was sent overland via Spain, probably applied at La Linea).

GRIQUALAND WEST – letter from the diamond fields. Stamps cancelled 'De Beers', HONG KONG – Letter with "62B" (military or naval mail), JAMAICA – 1916 Censored letter to member of 'H Force' on Australian ship HMAS *Sydney*, LAGOS – 1869 cover from base of the West Africa Squadron to Wurttemberg via England, LONG ISLAND – 1916 Censored cover with Long Island local stamps to Newport, Mon. NORTH BORNEO – 1949 rail crash cover, MONGOLIA – 1938 postage due cover, MOZAMBIQUE – 1894 cover marked via Pretoria to Switzerland, NEW HEBRIDES – 1897 cover from Port Vila with AHN

& Co. 1d local labels and 2½d NSW stamp, SOUTH NIGERIA – 1901 Letter from Lt Rastrick (Canadian Officer) returning from Boer War and fighting Aro rebellion (Later killed aboard HMS *Thrush*), NORFOLK ISLAND – 1850 soldier's letter from Robert Robertson, originally stationed in Tasmania but sent to Norfolk Is. (penal colony) contained census report, NIGER COAST - 1898 letter from soldier in 2nd West Africa Frontier Force, Jebba, PAPUA – Missionary cover, RHODESIA – 2 covers from the German car and motorboat expedition crossing Africa Mozambique to Namibia; small letter from Paul Graetz to Vienna and large cover to Berlin 'Deutsche Motorboot-Expedition durch Afrika', ST LUCIA – 1922 cover cancelled with old temporary hand stamp, used after fire in PO Castries, ST HELENA – 1892 cover sent by Zulu war activist and prisoner Dinuzulu (son of Cetawayo). Also Illustrated London News engraving 'Landing of Dinizulu (sic) exiled Prince at St Helena'.



ST VINCENT – 1886 1/- Registered cover (stamps cancelled A10, for St. Vincent in the PO Lists of 1874 according to Brumell) from CALLIAQUA to London forwarded to Bury-St-Edmunds

SAMOA – 1891 Mormon missionary cover with manuscript 'to be called for by Maiava a Samoan Chief', SIBERIA – 1918 British forces in Vladivostok cover used Japanese stamps (ran out of British stamps) to Japan, but Japanese stamps disallowed,

SOUTH AFRICA – 1905 postcard camel service & 1921 postcard by ox cart service, SUDAN – 1879 letter by General Gordon with contemporary photo and 1885 Cover from Dongola 'on active service no stamps' in manuscript, SPANISH GUINEA – c1907 cover with first 3 stamps produced sent to Burnley, Lancs, TAHITI – 1846 British PO cover rated 2/2 to London.



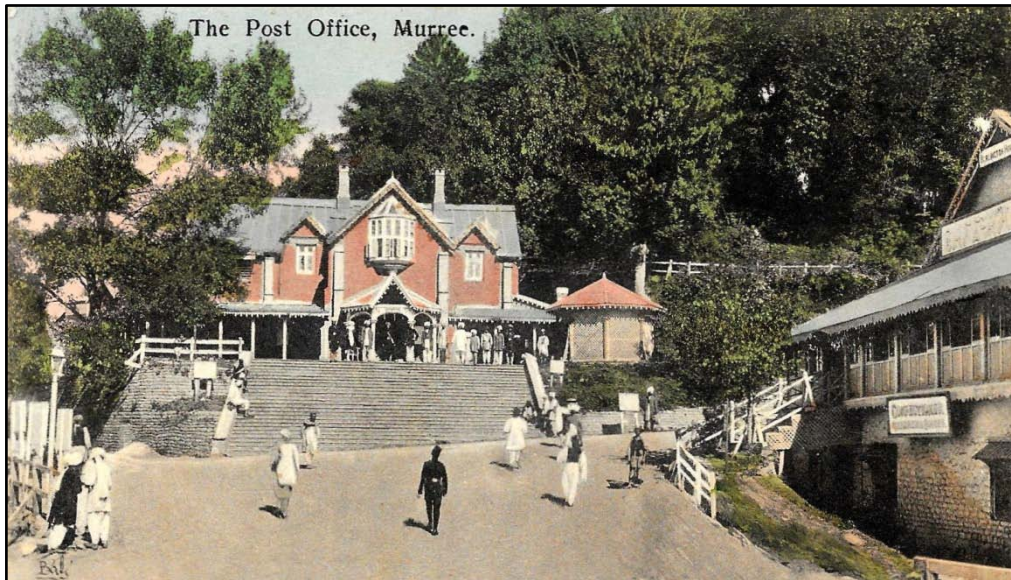
TOBAGO – 1888 'Too late for bag' cachet sent to London, A14 numeral cancel VIRGIN ISLANDS – 'East End' Tortola temporary hand stamp, ZANZIBAR – Zanzibar Railway Company cover

ZULULAND – No cover but a South African Campaign Medal 1877 – 79, Zulu War Medal 25B/1284 awarded to Private Charles Mason a Rorke's Drift defender survivor. The illustration left is of the original medal with a sloping style inscription, a duplicate issued in 1884 has a straight line inscription.

John Calladine reports that, 'Generally, it was one cover on each page and one page from each country as Chris Rainey covered the world alphabetically from A to Z'. Chris Jackson apparently said you could more easily have written a report on each page, never mind the whole display! I am also much indebted to Alan Godfrey for the listing of the covers on display and to Chris Rainey for the scans he provided.

THE 11 JANUARY 2020 MEETING at COTTERIDGE, BIRMINGHAM was opened by our Chairman, Gordon Hardy, on the stroke of 1.30pm with apologies received from Alan Marshall and Martin Scroggs. We were also informed that long-time member Jan Young had resigned, as she no longer drives. 19 members and guests were present for *Members' Displays of PPCs of Post Offices*.

The proceedings began with **Eric Winter** exhibiting coloured postcards of grand Indian post offices, including those of major cities (Calcutta, Bombay) as well as smaller places such as Talli Tal and the old Hill Stations of Coonor and Murree (see below, and now in Pakistan about 20 miles north east of Islamabad). A card of the Shillong office (a Hill Station in north east India) had a board outside clearly displaying the old dates of departure of the English Mails!



The Post Office at Murree and a MURREE square circle of June 1889 on a 4a 6p stamp (not on the card)

Pete Elms showed a postcard of the Birmingham General Post Office, designed by H. Tannor, opened 3 August 1891, in Victoria St., opposite the Council House. The offices at Rubery and Rednal and three cards of Wythall office were followed by four photographs of the Wythall office showing changes from 1905 to the present.

Gordon Hardy continued with cards of Derbyshire offices – Melbourne, Middleton-by-Wirksworth (a lead mining area), Over Haddon (near Bakewell), Edensor, the village next to Chatsworth House, which, Gordon stated, the Duke thought too near and had it moved!! Cards of Derwent (buried when making a reservoir), Ashover and Duffield followed.

Brian Atkins began with a card of Hinstock post office and combined it with the only known example of the J20 cancel used at Hinstock in April 1891. Other cards were of the black-and-white office at Marshbrook, Clun (office in Market Square), Bromfield, Bucknell, the long-gone castellated office of Tong and, of course, the office at Wem.

Colin Fountain's display consisted of cards showing the offices at Bibury, two from Adelstrop, Alderton, Aldsworth (between Burford and Bibury), Almondsbury, Andoversford and Barnsley, near Cirencester, not Yorkshire.

Alan Godfrey Post offices on postcards from south-west Warwickshire: Aston Cantlow c1910, Ardens Grafton c1905, Dunnington, Broom with postcard showing violet rubber cancel 1905. Cookhill c1910 (Worcestershire but under Alcester, Warwickshire), Coughton c1905 with postcard cancelled with COUGHTON RSO 1905. Great Alne c1905 (first post office), 1906 (second PO) and Great Alne c1965 (third PO 1954-74) in the former railway station. Haselor c1905, PO in use from 1905-1945, postcards with distorted rubber HASELOR / ALCESTER cancels

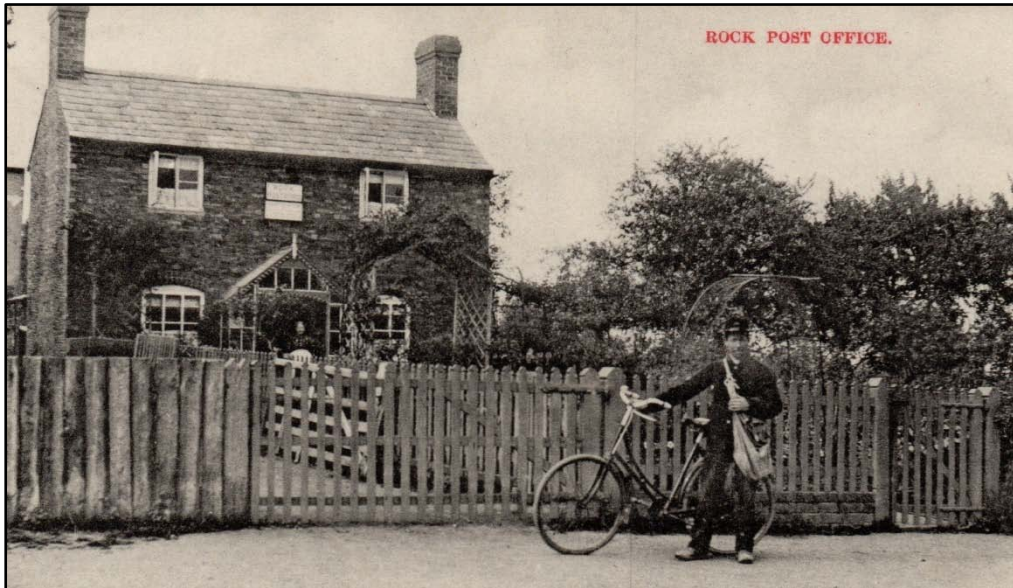
Richard Capon produced nine postcards of Oundle post office showing changes over time with the first office at the Talbot Hotel. The picture of the Oundle office postmen on the front page has an OUNDLE squared circle mark for 17 May 1905 and is addressed to Stoke Doyle, a small village about 2 miles outside Oundle, on the old Post Road.

Richard Farman showed cards of post offices in Staffordshire beginning with a WALL / LICHFIELD mark with Richard stating that Ken Smith's Staffordshire website suggests the office wasn't open then. Other offices included Shenston, Little Hay, Camwell, Whittington, Burntwood, Wilnecote and Meir Green. For his second display Richard put up offices of Ashbourne and villages, including a card of the office staff as well as 3 cards of Ilam with different rubber cancels, Dissington, Brailsford, Hollington and Kirk Ireton.

Malcolm Allinson showed a few of his Cumberland Post Offices. A number of them are not specifically Post Office 'views', but certain village post offices just happen to be in shot which does reduce the purchase price somewhat!

Mick Gill's first two displays showed postcards of post offices and locations of former offices in Bassetlaw, north Nottinghamshire comprising Beckingham (two locations 1898 – 1983), Ranskill (c1916 – 1929), South Leverton (two locations, 1905 – 1993), Ranby (1896 – 1936) and Worksop head Office (three locations, 1864 – 1872). Moving to central Nottinghamshire, Mick continued with Clipstone Village (1925 – 1931), Edwinstone (two locations 1895 – 1948), Ollerton (three locations 1780 – 2008), Kneesall (c1965 – 2000), East Marham (1946 – 1997), an office Mick ran in 1969 when the sub-postmaster died suddenly and Weston (1867 – 2000).

Chris Jackson included Ashton under Hill, Birlingham, the brilliantly named Clows Top, Cookley, Inkberrow, Madresfield, Rock (see below), Offenham, South Littleton, Stourbridge, Welland and Beoley.



ROCK, c1910
Worcestershire
post office

Brian Purcell produced Cannock Festival of Flowers 1977, special event covers.

Colin Fountain finished with cards which included Chalford, Cutsdean, Haresfield, Hartpury, Kemble & Kingswood

Alan Godfrey displayed 3 cards of Alcester PO in Church Street c1860-1963, a card from c1900, postcard from c1925 with uprated Registered envelope cancelled with 1924 'thimble' and the delightful example of a country post office with a c1915 postcard of the Lawsonford office, 4 miles north east of Henly-in-Arden (below).

Last two displays continued on page 22.



SHROPSHIRE MAIL COACH GUARD LETTERS or ARE THEY?

For the meeting on 26 October last Guy Bridges had asked for 9 sheets to be displayed on his behalf. The floods and consequent lack of trains put paid to that but the subject is not only interesting but, possibly, an important piece of postal history. On mentioning the letters at the Warwick committee meeting no one had seen anything like the endorsements, which date from 1823 to 1837. The letters appear to have been picked up on the roads between Shrewsbury and Ludlow and Bishops Castle and Ludlow, though whether by coach or loan rider is not entirely clear. A number of members present stated they deserved a wider audience and on Guy's behalf and with his agreement an article has been produced which provides an account of the display, though not all the items are fully illustrated.

In Midland Mail 67 / 12-14 (December 1990) there appeared a copy of the 1815 GPO INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAIL GUARDS, which lists the do's and don'ts of his duties – if you don't have a hard copy one can be found on the website at <http://www.midlandphs.org.uk/archive/>. The instructions include 'If in post towns he collects or delivers letters, or packets, or does so upon the road except in some particular cases where the Postmaster of the district or superior officers authorize it, he will be liable for an information before a Justice of the Peace, and to the payment of ten shillings for every letter,.....and will be dismissed the service'. Ten bob per letter in 1820s, some deterrent!

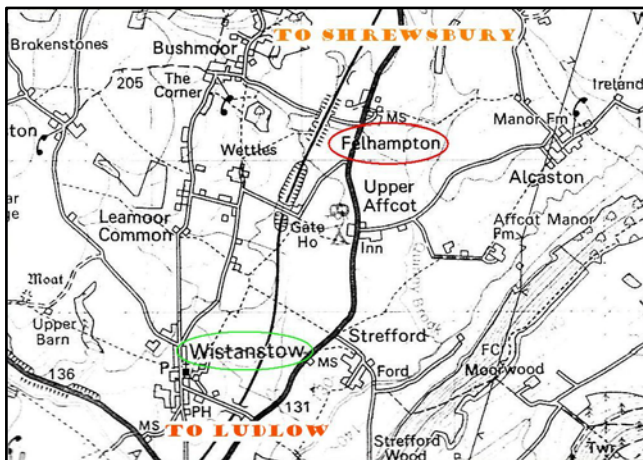


Fig 1, Map showing Felhampton & Wistanstow

In the cases below the guards / riders must have received a Postmaster or Surveyor's authorisation so they could pick up at points on the road. The first three letters in the display were addressed to C. B. Alnatt, Crescent, Shrewsbury, described as a Barrister in Pigot's 1828 Directory. One, dated 17 Nov 1837, is written from Affcot (sic) Hall, the nearest group of houses for which is the hamlet of Felhampton 17 miles south of Shrewsbury on the road to Ludlow. It has never had a post office (see Ken Smith's listing) but has a milestone. The other two letters, dated 6 Nov and 27 Dec 1837, were probably from Affcot Hall as well. All are charged 4d, two are endorsed Felhampton on the reverse and the third is endorsed C Stn P Guard (Fig 3), which Guy suggests is short for Church Stretton per Guard. Fig 2 shows one of the address panels (all three are similar) and one of the endorsements, all of which are on the reverse. There are no Church Stretton or Shrewsbury marks.

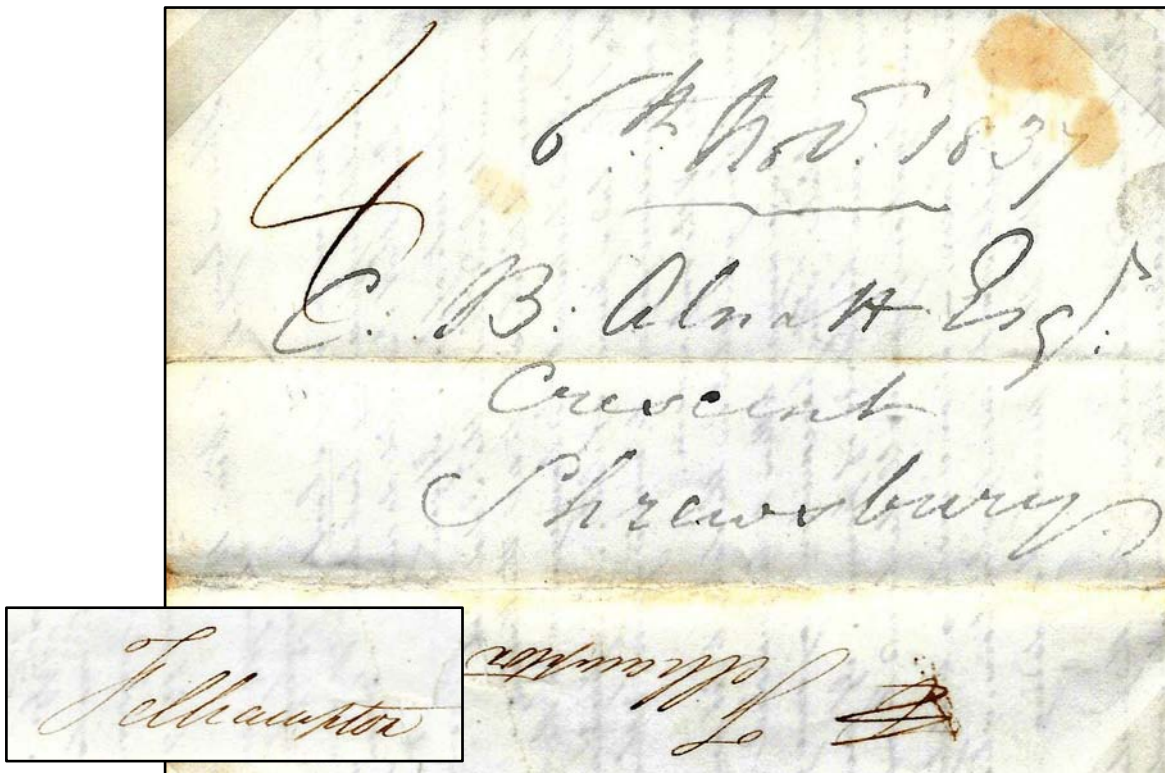


Fig 2, 6 November 1837 cover to Shrewsbury endorsed Felhampton on the reverse

The suggestion is they were picked up on the road and charged from the Church Stretton office as the coach went toward Shrewsbury 12 miles to the north and that the 4d charge was for under 15 miles (1812 Act). The November letter includes 'My sister received both your letters today as the coach now comes only three times a week'.



Fig 3, *C Stn p Guard* on the reverse of the 27 December 1837 entire to Shrewsbury.

Guy surmises that the December letter may have been handed to the guard at the Talbot Inn at Church Stretton, which acted as the post office and coaching inn, as a late mail with the Church Stretton bag having been made up.

The next group are all addressed to Lloyds, Ludlow; one is dated 25 January 1823, from *Little Stretton*, and endorsed as such. It is charged 3d and has a LUDLOW mileage date stamp (see Fig 4). A cover with a date endorsement of 28 January 1825 (see Fig 5) but no place mentioned is endorsed *Salop Road* and charged 2d. The third, dated 4 November 1826, is from Wistanstow (see Fig 1), is also charged 3d and endorsed *Salop Road* (see Fig 6). But what about those charges? There was no 2d or 3d charge under the 1812 Act, the lowest charge being 4d; the later 2d charge for towns 8 miles apart was not in force until 6 January 1838. Were there special rates for 'road pick-ups'?

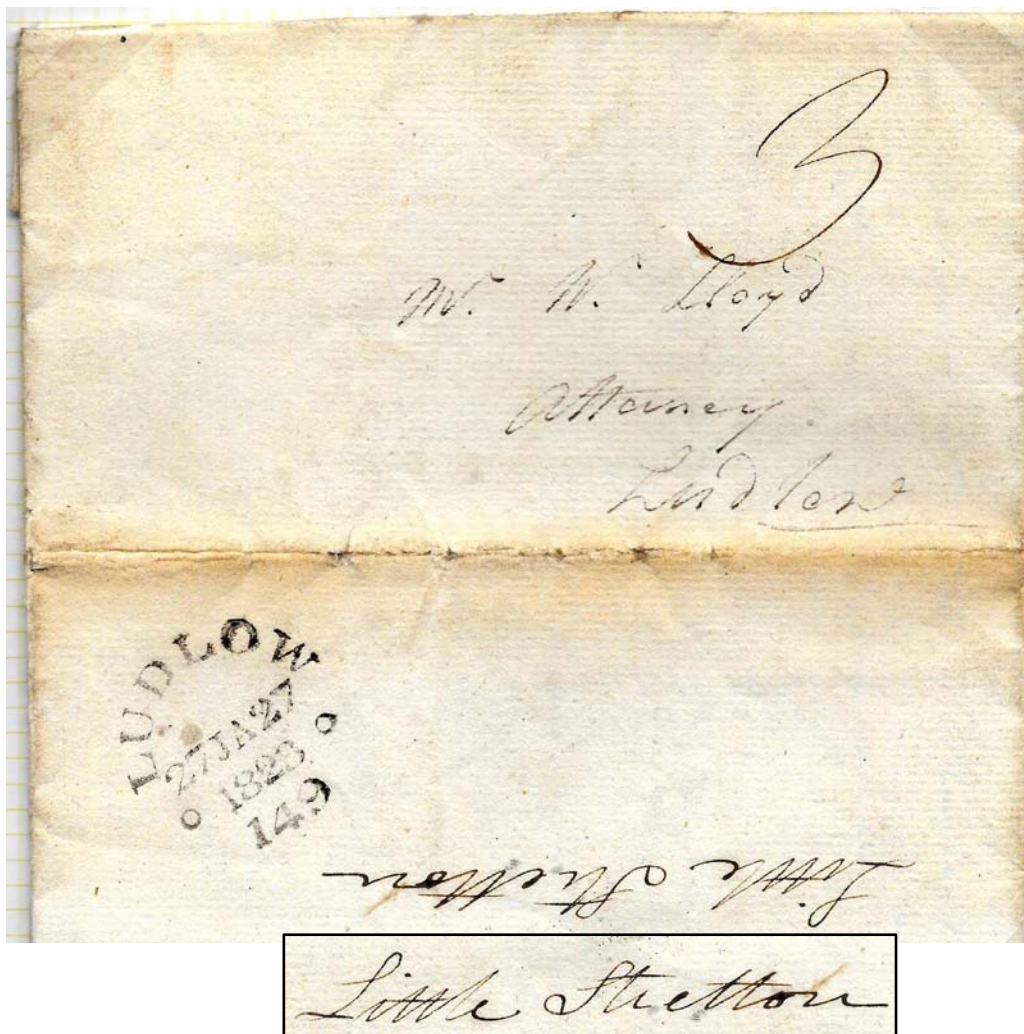


Fig 4, Entire from Little Stretton to Ludlow with mileage date stamp for 27 January 1823

Little Stretton, where there is also a milestone, is 12 miles NNW of Ludlow and 1½ miles south of Church Stretton.

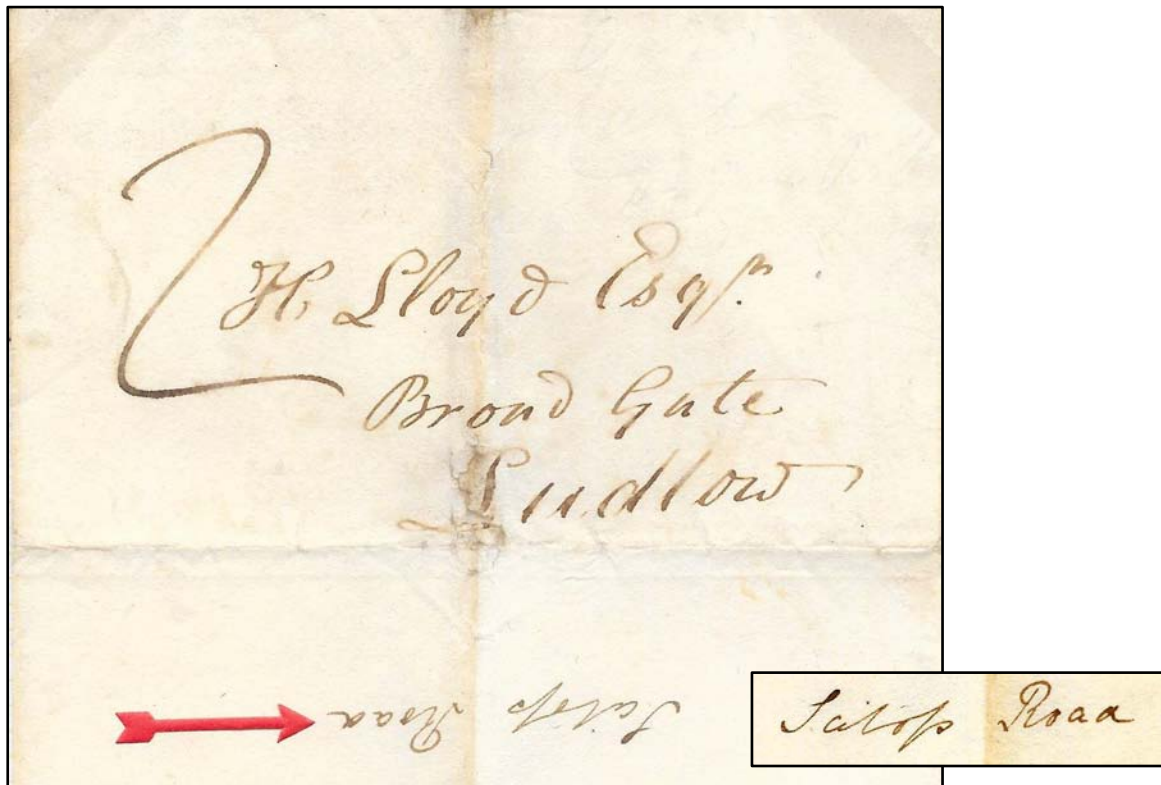


Fig 5, 28 January 1825 wrapper from unknown location to Ludlow, charged 2d & endorsed *Salop Road*

There is little to be gained from showing the whole of the Nov 1826 item described above as it is similar to Fig 5, but the two *Salop Road* endorsements are distinctive and the Nov 1826 one is shown below.

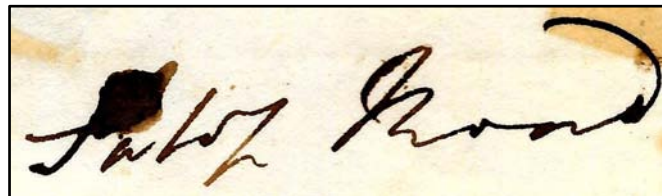


Fig 6, *Salop Road* endorsement on reverse of 4 Nov 1826 entire from Wistanstow to Ludlow

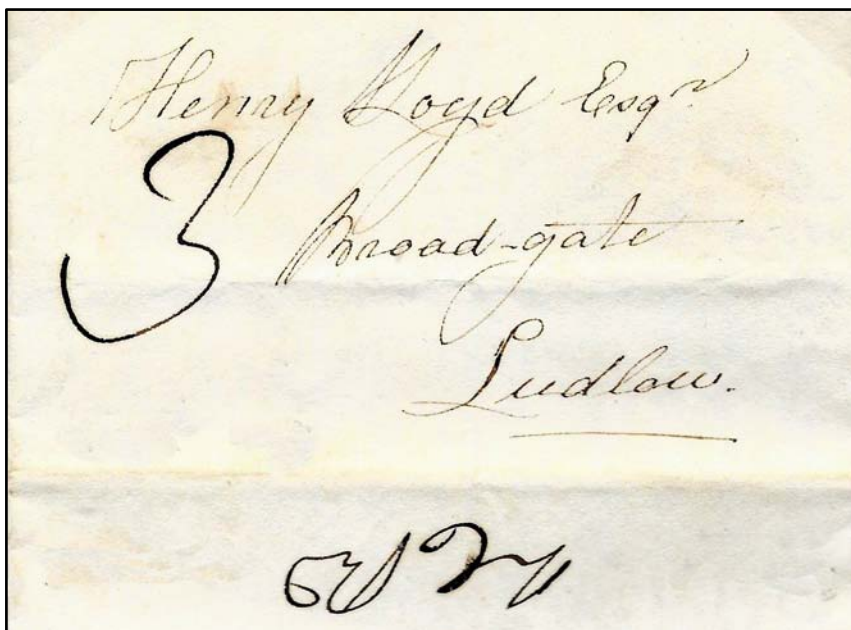


Fig 7, Cover dated 24 September but no year, possibly c1826.

It was written at Clunbury, 6 miles SSE of Bishops Castle, to Ludlow, charged 3d and appears to be endorsed *BC Rd* (for Bishops Castle Road?).



The suggestion here is that the cover was picked up by the Bishops Castle to Ludlow coach or rider, but why the 3d charge again?

The second cover thought to have been picked up on the Bishops Castle to Ludlow road is a wrapper of unknown origin, endorsed 16 December 1828 and dated 17 Dec in Ludlow using the later dated mileage, charged 2d and further endorsed *B Castle Road*. The letter is also endorsed 'Mr Greenstall(?), at Mr Ford's, painter, malster(?), Baker Street, Shrewsbury'. Under PAINTERS Pigot's 1828 Directory shows John Ford, (& Glazier), Barker Street, presumably the letter was written from Shrewsbury, so why was it collected on the *B Castle Road*? There could be a number of explanations, including forgetfulness!

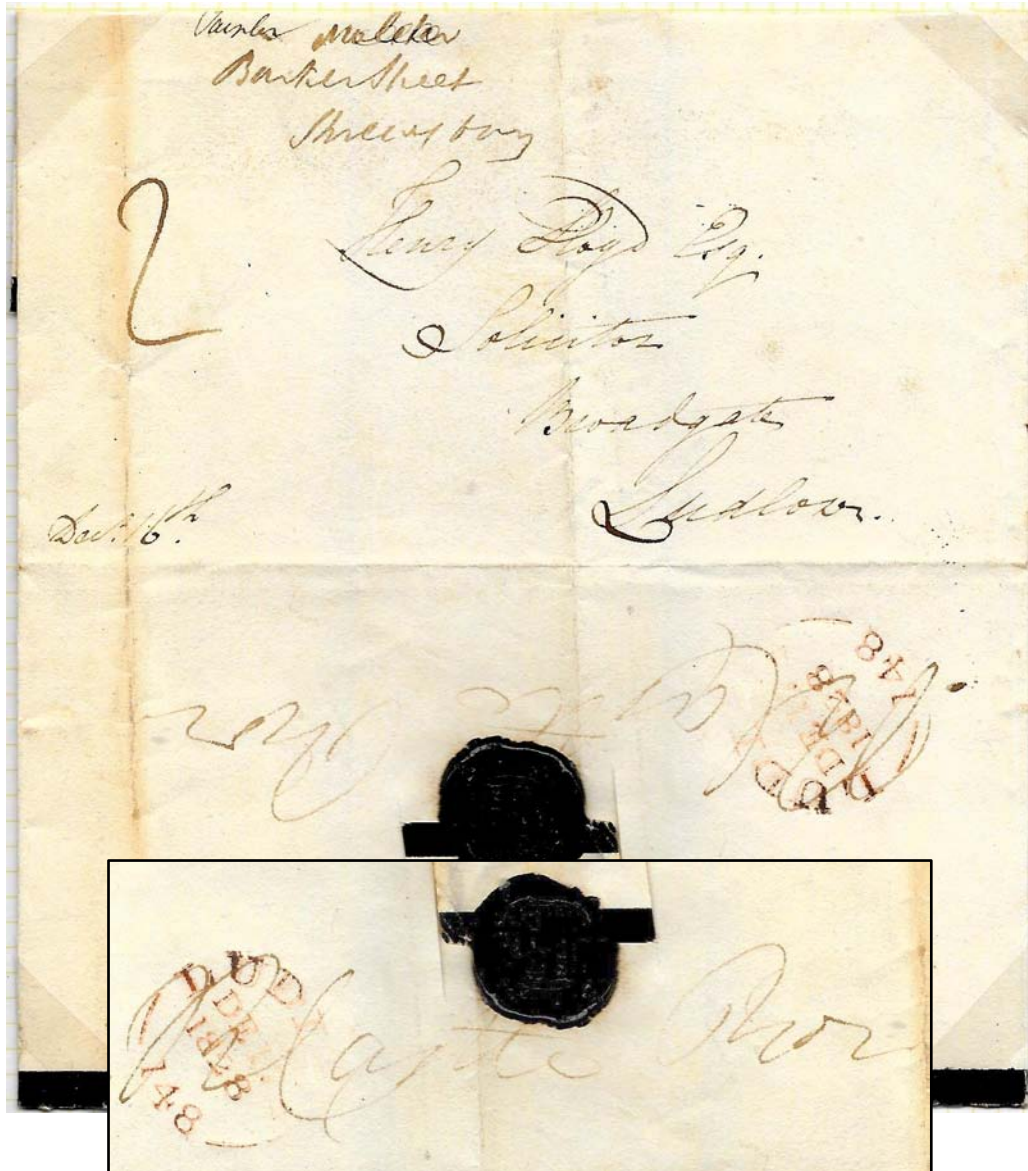


Fig 8, December 1828 wrapper to Ludlow apparently endorsed *B Castle Road*

After the Surveyors report of March 1803 (MM 86 / 19) a direct post road between Shrewsbury and Ludlow opened early in Sept 1803; at the same time the Church Stretton sub-office officially opened under Shrewsbury. In MM 101 / 9 Chris Beaver shows dates of a Shrewsbury to Hereford mail coach from 6 Oct 1822 to 11 September 1831, it was superseded by a coach from Liverpool to Bristol on 12 Sept 1831 but he shows this ending 36/7 (MM 101 / 9), does that mean 1836/37? It seems as though a coach may have been running on the Shrewsbury to Ludlow road at the date of the covers. However no such luck with mail on the Ludlow to Bishops Castle road. Chris Beaver shows a Ludlow to Bishops Castle coach running from 14 July 1827 to 21 Jan 1828. In February 1828 the Surveyor, Mr Rideout was in Ludlow and Bishops Castle arranging a horse-post between the two towns and the letter at Fig 8 is dated December 1828. Under Bishops Castle Pigot's 1828 Directory shows 'To LUDLOW, the **Mail** from the Castle Inn, every morning at eight'. Were letters picked up on the road by a coach or by a horse-post during his daily journey?

Finally, in his notes Guy asks if there are society members who have covers or wrappers with similar manuscript markings, suggesting letters were picked up on the road and, perhaps more importantly, why the 2d and 3d charges?

1902 NEW ZEALAND TO SWITHLAND (UNDER LOUGHBOROUGH), LEICESTERSHIRE

by Marion Turner

Although at the beginning of the 20th century the head post office in Loughborough was handling more than 50,000 letters a week, mail from as far away as Australia and New Zealand was still an unusual occurrence. Earlier this year the envelope shown (Fig 1) came up for sale on an eBay internet auction and I was lucky enough to secure it. It is franked with a New Zealand Queen Victoria Penny Postal stationary envelope uprated, due to weight, with a Zealandia 1d stamp; the stamp being issued on the occasion of the introduction in New Zealand of Universal Penny Post in 1901. Above the address the writer has written 'Frisco'. Via San Francisco, overland to New York and then by ship to Liverpool was known at the time to be the quickest route to the UK. On the envelope there is no departure place shown but a date of 10 Jan 1902 is readable. On the reverse time and date of arrival is clearly shown with a single ring LOUGHBOROUGH hand stamp dated Feb 10 1902 (Fig 1).



Fig 1, 1902 cover New Zealand to Leicestershire and LOUGHBOROUGH arrival date stamp

The *Taranaki Daily News* of 9 January 1902 informs us that on Friday 10 January the *S.S. Ngapuhi* will sail from New Plymouth harbour to Auckland at 7pm, carrying mail for the UK, which would then continue on to San Francisco and was due in London on 8 February. The Postal Archives in London have confirmed that mail was due on that date, but as the Loughborough hand stamp is dated two days later I immediately began to wonder if the ship had in fact arrived at the expected time. With a journey that entailed so many changes there is no single archive where one can trace the times from A to B. It was therefore a matter of piecing together the information as one found it and, not surprisingly, there were loose ends. Not feeling satisfied with the gaps in the results, I sent an SOS to our ever helpful editor Brian Atkins, who to my relief and joy entered wholeheartedly into the search, whereby we have managed to reconstruct the journey from the moment that the writer handed in his letter at the post office in New Plymouth through to its arrival in England. Here follows an itinerary of that staggering journey which we believe carried the illustrated envelope:

10 January coastal steamship *SS. Ngapuhi* departs from New Plymouth to Auckland.

11 January *SS. Sierra* departs from Auckland to San Francisco.

27 January *SS. Sierra* arrives at San Francisco, mail transferred to overland train to New York.

1 February *RMS Umbria* departs from New York to Liverpool.

10 February *RMS Umbria* arrives at Liverpool, 2 days later than expected!

In our digital age one cannot help but wonder that the above was, at the beginning of the 20th Century, the normal journey for mail travelling back and forth from these countries every two weeks.

Before moving on to the social history that this envelope has revealed, there is just one other question that came to mind. Queen Victoria passed away on January 22 1901, my envelope is dated a year later, so was the writer just using up old stock or was the new postal stationary for the now reigning monarch Edward VII not yet in use?

Postcards had been introduced in 1876, followed by Newspaper Wrappers two years later and Letter Cards in 1895. It wasn't until 1898 that Registered envelopes came into use and finally my Penny Postal Stationary envelope one year later in June 1899. David Holmes of Auckland city stamps was more than ready to answer my question on this

subject. Apparently postal stationery for the new King was not introduced until 1903; first came the 1d postcard on 25 February, ½d stationary envelope on 11 April, followed by the 1d envelope on the 30th. All this explains the late use of the Queen Victoria envelope.



Fig 2, Swithland Hall in 2006

For many people the name of Swithland will immediately conjure up those grey slate roof tiles on rows of terraced houses so fondly represented in the TV serial *Coronation Street*. In fact slate had been quarried at Swithland since Roman times and was in the Victorian period widely used throughout the Midlands, not only for roofing but also as grave stones. Production ceased at the end of the 19th century but supplies can still be purchased from building firms specialising in older materials.

Swithland village is a small, linear village in the old Charnwood Forest, Leicestershire and was designated a conservation area in 1993; the census of 2011 recorded the population as 217. It is situated not quite half way between Loughborough (6½ miles) and Leicester to the west of the A6. The village has 31 listed buildings, the most significant being the 13th century St. Leonards

Parish Church, the Griffin Inn, and Swithland Hall (Fig.2).

The original Hall stood at the eastern end of the village near to St. Leonards Church, hemmed in by outbuildings and close to the main road. It was completely destroyed by fire in 1822, although part of the boundary wall including two towers is still in existence. The architect Sir James Pennethorne (1801-1871) designed the new Hall for George John Danvers-Butler the 6th Earl of Lanesborough (see below) who wisely chose to have it built further away from the main road. It was completed enough to occupy in 1834 but not finished for another twenty years.

Since the 15th century the most prominent family in Swithland had been the Danvers, originally D'Anvers, who had for many years owned most or all of the village. The Swithland Hall estate was held by the family until 1796, but after the death of Sir John Danvers, the last male heir of his line, the estate passed to his son-in-law Augustus Richard Butler. He was the second son of the second Earl of Lanesborough, and adopted the surname of Butler-Danvers. The Earl of Lanesborough was a title in the peerage of Ireland, created in 1756 for Humphrey Butler 2nd Viscount Lanesborough. The Butler family descended from Theophilus Butler, who represented County Cavan and Belturbet in the Irish House of Commons. So here at last we encounter the name written on the envelope. There were in total 9 Earls and on the death of the last Earl, Denis Anthony Brian Butler, in 1998, who died without a male heir, the title became extinct.

The envelope is addressed to the Countess of Lanesborough, so who was she and to which Earl was she married? John Vansittart Danvers Butler, born in 1830, was the 6th Earl of Lanesborough. In 1864 he married Anne Elizabeth Clark, a lady 15 years younger, a vicar's daughter from the North of England, who became the Countess of



Lanesborough and in 1902 was the recipient of the letter from New Zealand. The couple had two sons, the first Charles John Brinsley Butler (1865-1929) automatically inherited the title on his father's death in 1905. However it was the second son, Henry Cavendish Butler, born in Belturbet Ireland in 1868, who supplied the link to New Zealand that I had been looking for. He was educated at Winchester and when only 17 or 18 years of age went to farm in New Zealand. The Land Transfer act Nr. 3474 of 1885 informs us that 132 acres on the right bank of the Wanganui river (south island of New Zealand) had been bought by Henry Cavendish Butler and John Henry Nixon. At this time farming in New Zealand offered boundless opportunities and many British people were taking advantage of the situation. From further Land Transfer notices one can learn that the two men expanded on their original purchase, and it would seem that young Henry was happy with his way of life.

Fig 3, Right Hon. Henry Cavendish Butler, later 8th Earl of Lanesborough

In the following years Henry met his future wife Isobel Daniell, the daughter of a notable farming family with extensive land and property in the same area. She, too, was a descendant of a prominent political line; her great

grandfather Ralph Allen Daniell (1762-1823) having been sheriff of Cornwall and later a Member of Parliament for East Looe. Having sold his commission in the 75th Old Stirlingshire regiment, her grandfather Capt. Edward Daniell bought, by ballot, 1000 acres of land in New Zealand from the New Zealand Company in 1839. He and his family travelled to Wellington on the *Adelaide*, a journey of a least three weeks and depending on the weather possibly double that length. He soon played an active part in the affairs of the settlement, becoming a member of the Provincial Council and later a Justice of the Peace. The father of Isobel bearing the same name as his famous ancestor Ralph Allen Daniell was born in Wellington in 1845. At the age of ten he travelled with his mother and sister to Cornwall and was educated at Helston. After further travels he returned to New Zealand and farmed with his brother Lawrence before marrying Isobel's mother Mary Imlay in 1870. Isobel and Henry married in Wanganui on the 27 November 1894. The wedding was reported in the *New Zealand Times* a few days later on the 29 Nov with the following words: *'One of the most fashionable weddings to have taken place in Wanganui was celebrated at Christ Church on Tuesday, when the Hon. Henry Butler, second son of the Earl of Lanesborough was united in marriage to Miss Isobel Daniell, eldest daughter of the late Ralph Allen Daniell Esq of Truro Cornwall'*. No doubt it was a grand affair, springtime, fine wines and champagne imported from France, the latest fashions, one can easily imagine it.

It was while glancing through other newspaper records of New Zealand that an unexpected announcement caught my



Fig 4, Lord Ranfurly in office, Auckland, c1903.

eye. On the 28 June 1900 the *Colonist* reported that the Hon. Cavendish Butler had been appointed Hon. A.D.C. to the Governor, the (5th) Earl of Ranfurly, who had held the post of Governor since 1897. The arrival of Lord Ranfurly with his political experience, as opposed to earlier Governors from a more military background, reflects on how New Zealand at this time was developing its own identity as a country moving from being a colony towards dominion status in 1907. Uchter John Mark Knox, Lord Ranfurly (Fig 4) was born into an Ulster-Scots aristocratic family in 1856 and is descended from a long established political family, whose large estate was, since 1692, centred on Dungannon in the South - East of County Tyrone in Ulster. He himself began as a naval cadet on board HMS *Britannia* and passed for the Royal Navy but decided against a naval career and at the age of eighteen entered Trinity College Cambridge. Before his appointment as Governor he had served

as a Lord-in-waiting to Queen Victoria under Lord Salisbury and was knighted in the 'Order of St. Michael & St. George' (KCMG) in 1897 for his public services. After a visit to New Zealand from the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1901 Lord Ranfurly was created a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (GCMG). On 19 June 1904 he personally handed over office to Lord Plunkett the 14th Governor.

In the years between his marriage and new appointment Henry and Isobel had been blessed with the birth of two daughters, Frieda born in 1895 and Hilda a few years later in 1900. We are now entering the 20th century and will soon arrive at the date that Henry wrote his letter to his Mother in January 1902. One cannot help wondering if that extra weight was due to a long letter or maybe a photograph, we shall never know. Sometime after this date the Butler family decided to travel to England. Henry's parents were now elderly and would have been anxious to meet



Fig 5, One of a number of postcards issued after the disaster.

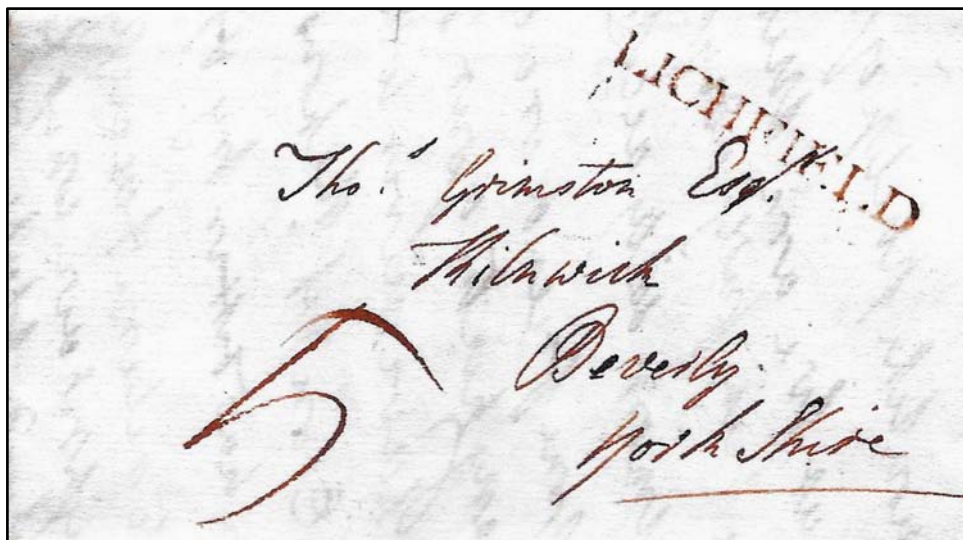
not only their Daughter-in-Law but also their grandchildren. His father the 6th Earl of Lanesborough; John Vansittart Danvers (Butler-Danvers) later Butler died in September 1905 and it is reasonable to assume that Henry and his family would have attended the funeral. His older brother Charles John Brinsley Butler inherited the title and became the 7th Earl of Lanesborough. For Isobel this would finally be the moment that she would breathe the air of the country of her fore fathers. An exciting journey lay ahead for her and the children, travelling towards a new life but to a country steeped in old traditions. Isobel's father had died a year before her marriage, so for her mother and younger brother it would be a tearful farewell. Tragedy always strikes at unexpected moments. At 22:00 on 17 November 1905 the SS *Hilda* (Fig 5), a steamship owned by

the London and South Western Railway left Southampton on her regular service to Saint-Malo in Brittany. Thick fog

forced her to anchor off Yarmouth, Isle of Wight but early the following morning she resumed her journey. After passing Jersey in the afternoon weather conditions worsened although by 18:00 *Hilda* was approaching St. Malo. The lights of the town were visible, as was the Jardin lighthouse, but snow squalls reduced visibility to the extent that Captain Gregory was forced to abandon the attempt to reach port. Several unsuccessful attempts were made and at around 23:00 *Hilda* struck the Pierre de Portes rocks. The ship carried six lifeboats but five were lost while attempting to launch them and the sixth washed up at Saint -Cast-le Guildo some 15miles (24km) west of St. Malo. The tide was ebbing and *Hilda* broke in two 15 minutes after running aground. Mrs. Isobel Butler was one of the estimated 125 lives lost, there were six survivors. At an enquiry in London the very experienced Captain Gregory was cleared of any negligence.

Life goes on relentlessly. In 1909 Countess Lanesborough, Henry's mother died. We have now long passed the date of the envelope but hope readers will bear with me if I continue this short biography. During WW1 Henry worked for the war office in London while his older brother Charles John Brinsley (7th Earl) was an officer in the Coldstream guards where he commanded the 2nd Battalion. He miraculously survived the war and later held high government posts in Canada and Malta. Meanwhile in 1917 Henry married Grace Lilian Abdy, daughter of Capt. Sir Anthony Sykes Abdy 3rd. Btl. and Hon. Alexandra Victoria Bosville Macdonald at St. Georges Hanover Square London. They too had two children but this time two boys. Henry's older brother Charles Brinsley died in 1929. The Western Morning News of 19 Aug states that he died at his country seat, Swithland Hall near Loughborough. Henry now inherited the title and became the 8th Earl of Lanesborough. The two daughters from his first marriage remained in England, married well and in turn had children. History does not reveal if they ever returned to New Zealand. Both died before the end of the last century. In 1944 tragedy struck again when in February their second son Captain Patrick Henry-Stanley Danvers-Butler was killed in action at Anzio Italy. He was 23 years of age.

From the moment I started research for this article it surprised me that compared to other members of the family there is very little information available about Henry. The same also applied to Swithland Hall, of which I was seeking knowledge as to its present state and use. A lucky find was a local history society covering neighbouring villages who very kindly passed on my request to a local historian Canon Rev Anne Horton. She had been the Rector at Swithland for several years, written a book about the village and has a deep knowledge of the Butler Danvers family. From her I learnt that Henry took a genuine interest in the village and participated in numerous ways. He was for many years Chairman of the Swithland Parish meeting, a keen sportsman, horticulturist, Chairman of the Leics. Scouts council and much more. A special thanks to Rev Anne for sharing this information. In August 1950 Henry collapsed when going into lunch and died on the 22nd aged 82. He is buried at Swithland along with many other members of his family. And the Hall? After WW1 Swithland, like so many estates throughout the land, began to buckle under the ever increasing financial burden. Heavy death duties resulted in many properties falling into disrepair, being sold or even worse demolished. Swithland Hall was no exception but through economising on his lifestyle Henry managed to keep the estate together. He is fondly remembered for travelling regularly on the bus to Leicester, complete with carrier bag, to do his shopping! The 9th Earl Denis Anthony Brian Butler inherited not only the title but also the financial headache. Crippling death duties led to an impossible situation and sadly in 1954 the majority of the estate was sold. He struggled on for a number of years until finally in 1983 the Hall was also sold. The 9th and last Earl died in December 1998. The Hall is now in private hands and has been magnificently restored.



Brian Purcell showed this entire dated 13 Jan 1796 at the October meeting. He suggested it is rated incorrectly at 5d and that it should be 7d.

However, I believe the 1796 Act was not in force until 5 Jan 1797, making the entire charged 5d for 80 to 150 miles under the 1784 Act. I think it may be charged correctly. Am I right?



Bill Pipe

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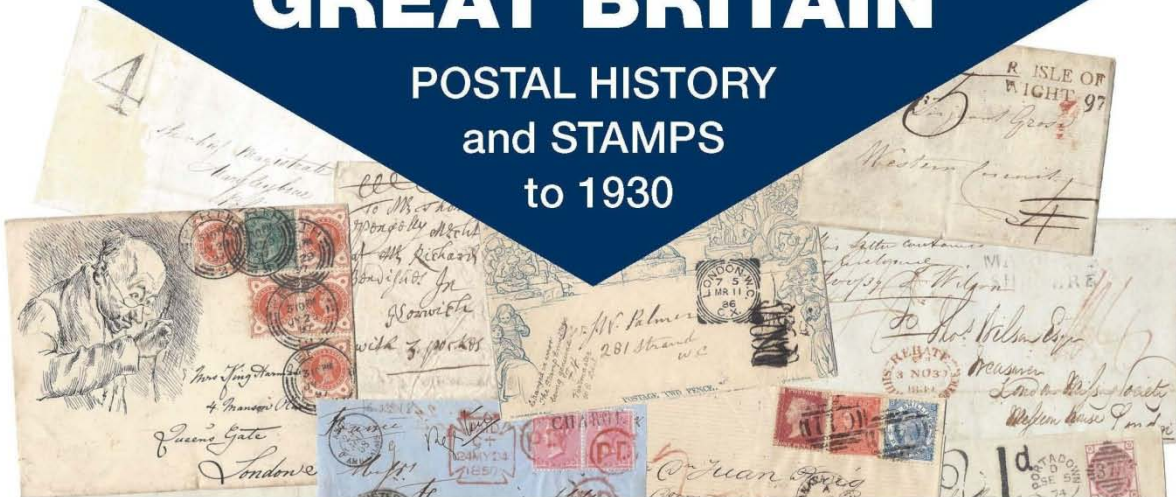
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**TWO SIMILAR COVERS FROM OSWESTRY TO GODERICH, CANADA, 1859 & 1860
or AN ENDORSEMENT CAN BE CRUCIAL**

by Brian Atkins

Both covers are franked by a 6d violet, plate 1, are cancelled by an OSWESTRY spoon, with the usual code B, and mailed to the same address in Goderich, Canada West (now Ontario). Located on the shores of Lake Huron, Goderich was first laid out in 1828 and is named after Frederick John Robinson, 1st Viscount Goderich, who was British prime minister at the time. Dealing firstly with the later cover which is dated 3 July 1860, it was carried by the Allan Line *Nova Scotian* which left Liverpool on the 4 July, called at Moville, Londonderry, to pick up mails the next day and arrived at Quebec on 16th July, the cover reaching Goderich on 18th. The cover is endorsed by *Canada Line Steamer*, which was accepted for it to be sent by the Canadian contracted Allan Line.



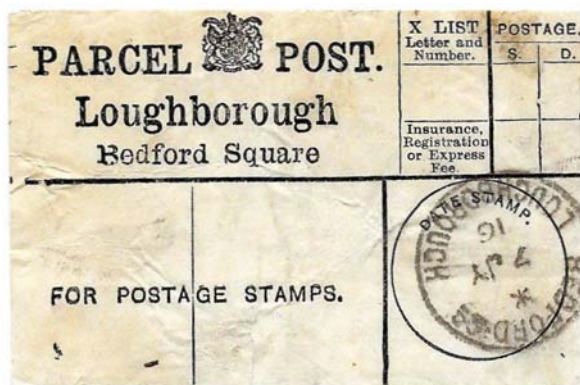
The Treasury Warrant of 23 March 1854 stated 'By British....packets (except US packets) a uniform rate of 6d per ½oz between the UK, Canada..'. That's the above cover but what about the 27 May 1859 cover below?



There are three differences, firstly there is no endorsement, secondly there is a figure 10 and thirdly a ⁵d. The March 1854 Instructions to Postmasters went on to state 'Letters to Canada not endorsed 'via Halifax' go via the US and the US transit of 2d must be added, making 8d in all'. The by Canada Line Steamer endorsement appears to have been acceptable on the 1860 cover. As there is no endorsement on the 1859 cover and with mail tending to be put on the first available ship, the only way it could get to Goderich by 11 June was via the US on the Cunard *Africa*, which left Liverpool on 28 May and arrived at New York on 9 June 1859 not calling at Halifax, Nova Scotia, as did the Cunard Boston service; thus the cover was 2d underpaid. A Treasury Warrant of 1 April 1859 stated that 'Between UK and Canada to be prepaid. Unpaid / underpaid to be forwarded charged with the deficiency (2d) **plus 6d fine**' making 8d UK owing or, at the exchange rate of the time, 10d Canadian currency to be collected, hence the figure 10. Canada converted to dollars in July 1859. The ⁵d Liverpool accountancy mark is for 5d credit to the UK.

PARCEL POST LABELS – DATE EXTENSIONS

Brian Purcell



Leicestershire - Type E2 7 July 1916, NLD



Northamptonshire – Type D1 24 January 1913, NED



Northamptonshire - Type E2, 20 August 1917, NLD



Northamptonshire - Type E2, 30 August 1917, NLD



Northamptonshire - Type E2 27 February 1912, NED



Staffordshire – Type E2, 7 October 1917, NED

Legend NED – New Early Date
NLD – New Late Date

See Brian's 'New Finds' in MM 204 /19

SAVED FROM A GOAT – An offering from Brian Purcell has saved our Saved from a Goat from obscurity. Don't forget, if you have a cover which you would rush to save from a gastronomic goat, please share it with us!



This is an eye catching 1843 wrapper addressed to the Post Office Banbury showing two imperforate penny reds each cancelled by a clear, upright maltese cross with number 7 in the centre. There is a light TP / STRAND receiving house and a bold BANBURY date stamp in black as well as *Not called for* in red. A remarkable cover.



HELP? – Is 1d the single rate of this newspaper wrapper (reduced) with the 1d red plate 124 cancelled OSWESTRY / 6 OC / 1880? What regulation from what date has it been charged a 1d to Paris? Robinson states in Oct 1834 the newspaper rate to foreign countries was 1d (Table 46.3) if there was a reciprocal agreement (otherwise 2d). Furfie & GPBS website show foreign surface printed papers (newspapers not mentioned) charged ½d for 2oz and 1d for 4oz from July 1892. I have no reference between the 1834 and 1892 dates. *All advises gratefully received - Ed.*

THE JANUARY MEETING REPORT CONTINUED FROM PAGE10:

Mick Gill finished the day's proceedings with a further two displays of Nottinghamshire post offices. For his third display Mick presented postcards of Balderton (from 1899), East Stoke (1848 – c1869), Epperstone (1876 – 1941), Lowdham (1879 – 1908), Wollaton (three locations 1851 – 1885, 1921 – 1936 and 1944 – 2004), Woodside Road TSO, Beeston (two locations 1930 – 2004) and Bunny (1942 – 1954)

And for his final display Mick produced postcards of post offices 'out of county', those which had been or still were under the control of Notts post towns. In Lincolnshire, Beckingham (often confused by dealers with Beckingham, Notts), Bassingham, Brant Broughton, Carlton-le-Moorland, North Scarle and Swinderby (all transferred from Newark to Lincoln in the 1920s). In Yorkshire, Firbeck and Letwell (both now under Worksop). In Derbyshire, Upper Langwith (under Mansfield), Creswell and Whitwell (both now under Worksop) and Long Eaton and new Sawley (both under Nottingham).

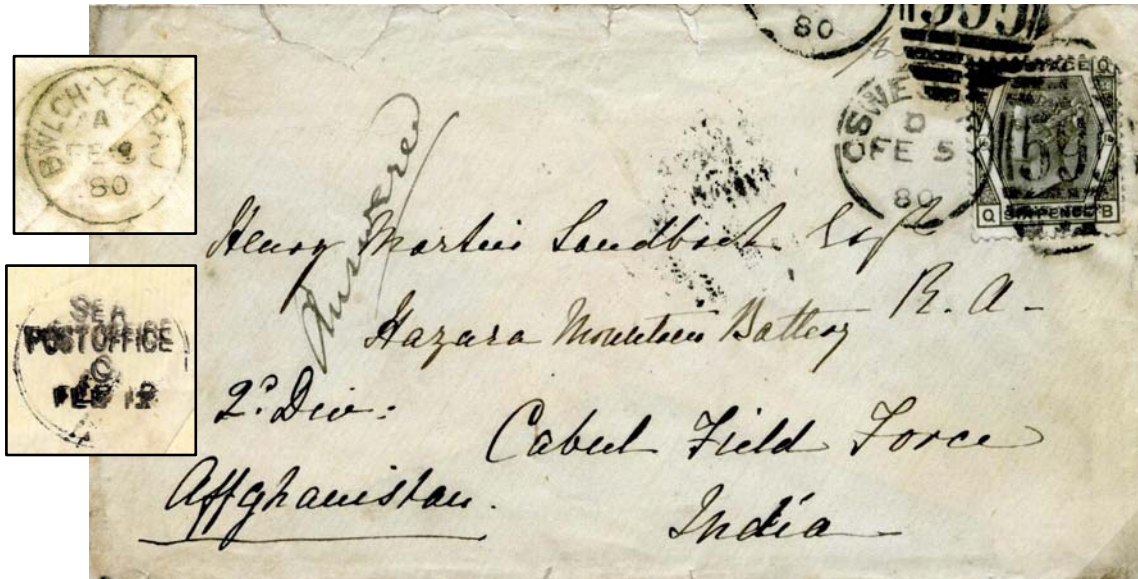
At approximately 3.40pm, Gordon Hardy, the Chairman, thanked all those who had brought displays and contributed to a very successful afternoon.

The next meeting is on 8 February 2020 at the same venue – Friends meeting House, Cotteridge, B30 1JB, (Kings Norton station) when the topic will be *Members Displays of 'Skeletons'*! Should be one to savour!!

WHEN DID THE UPU RATE TO INDIA CHANGE to 5d?

by Brian Atkins

According to Tabeart¹ the GPO Notice 21 / 76 dated 1 July 1876 stated that British India had entered the General Postal Union (GPU) and letters to India via Brindisi were to be sent at 8d prepaid and 11d unpaid. This rate lasted until the Universal Postal Union (UPU) of 1 April 1879 when the rate to India via Brindisi was reduced to 6d. Covers at both these rates are well documented. On 31 January 1880 a GPO Notice indicated a significant change for the mails to India, when it announced that 'At the end of January' mail would no longer be sent via Southampton, instead it was to now go 'solely via Brindisi' at 5d per ½oz prepaid, 10d unpaid, but when did this rate change actually occur?



5 February 1880 cover from Bwlch-y-Cibau through Oswestry to Afghanistan (Second Afghan War)

The second Afghan War (1878 – 1880) is well documented at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Anglo-Afghan_War, which describes how it was split into two campaigns. No doubt the 22-year old Martin Sandbach, involved with the second campaign, welcomed a letter from his mother, but, since the GPO Notice stated mails to India were to be reduced to 5d from the 'end of January', did she overpay when using the 6d grey, plate 16 to pay the postage on the 5 February letter? An earlier letter from her to Martin dated 8 January 1880 addressed similarly and mailed while visiting relatives at Terrick Hall, Whitchurch, Shropshire was also franked with a 6d grey, plate 16, so maybe she had bought a few of the 6d stamps and wanted to use them up.

The mails for Brindisi were made up on the Friday evening, which in the case of the cover would have been the 6th February, for forwarding to Dover and Calais and the train to Brindisi, southern Italy. Once in Brindisi the mails were transferred to a Peninsular and Oriental vessel bound for Alexandria, the name of which is often, but not always, to be found via the *The Times Digital Archive*. Unfortunately this is one occasion when the vessel is not recorded. As per THE SEA POST OFFICE cancel, the cover was eventually put on the P & O *Nepaul* at Suez on 13 February to reach Bombay on 24 February. There is no indication as to when or how it reached Martin Sandbach.

When looking for information about the above sailing, I found the following statement in The Mails section of *The Times Archive* dated Saturday 14 Feb 1880 which reported 'The arrangements recently made by the Post Office to transmit the mails to Brindisi via Dover and Calais in lieu of Southampton were **inaugurated** (my bold) yesterday (ie, Feb 13 and one week after the 'making up' of the above cover), when the Indian mails were conveyed to Calais by the French mail packet *France*'. This means the 5 February cover was included in the last despatch of mails conveyed to India from Brindisi at the 6d rate, so Elizabeth Sandbach was correct to stick with the 6d stamp for her letter to Martin! The inaugural sailings at the 5d rate would have been by P&O *Ceylon* from Brindisi on 16 Feb, Alexandria on 19th, then the P&O *Sumatra* from Suez on 21 February 1880, arriving at Bombay on 3 March 1880.

Reference:

- 1) United Kingdom letter rates Inland and Overseas, Tabeart, HH Sales Ltd, Bradford, 2003

