

MIDLAND MAIL



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



President: Mr W.J. Calladine

Chairman:
Mike Young

Treasurer:
Trevor Clewley

Secretary:
Elizabeth Lewis

Number 77, November 1992

As far as I am aware the only damage that the hobby of postal history is likely to do is to one's bank balance. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of gardening. In preparing a new rose bed I managed to aggravate an old back injury, and had to spend some time in bed. Thus this edition appears very much later than I had intended for which I apologise. Also the index which I had hoped to include in this issue will now not appear until the final edition of the season.

It was indeed that it was my car which was stolen and then used in an armed raid on a post office. When, some months ago, I heard on the radio a muslim gentleman advocating a greater need for an Islamic influence in our culture, I thought that he was speaking with tongue in cheek when he said that it would be possible to make great savings by dispensing with the need for most policemen if we were to cut off the hands of thieves. Now I am not so sure that he did not have a point to make.

As announced in MM75, the award of the Jon Baker will in future be decided by a ballot amongst the members. The next award will be to the member who, in the opinion of the members, wrote the best article appearing in Midland Mail during 1992 i.e. numbers 73 to 77 inclusive. The closing date for nominations will be 13th March, the date of the meeting at Worcester. However do not wait until then but peruse the copies of MM produced this year, and let me have your nomination as soon as possible. All names of those who reply will be entered into a draw in which the prize will be a set of NPM postcards.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Our traditional visit to Burton-on-Trent will take place on 12th December. Members are invited to gather from 10.30 a.m. and to bring along static displays. Lunch will be at 12.45 p.m. and is expected to cost about £6. If you wish to join us for lunch please let Richard Farman (tel.0283-66515) know by 5th December. The meeting proper will begin at 2 p.m. when the speaker will be Victor Short.

The January meeting will be held at Carr's Lane, Birmingham on 9th January beginning at 1.30 p.m. when there will be a speaker. There will be a committee meeting at 12.30 p.m.

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

The meeting at Cranham on 26th September was the first of the new season, the first we have ever held in Gloucestershire and, more significantly, the first joint meeting with the Somerset and Dorset Postal History Group. It attracted a good attendance with seventeen members of each society present, together with several supporting spouses. The Gloucester area was chosen for the meeting as being at "the centre of gravity" of the two societies' membership and members duly arrived from destinations as disparate as Poole and Northampton, Taunton and Shrewsbury.

The chosen form of the meeting provided for five pairs of displays, each comprising a 15 minute, 27 sheet contribution by a member of each society. This worked well and the day was enhanced by a wide range of standing displays for which both societies were most grateful. It is invidious to single out a contribution but those who saw Eric's amusing and original interpretation of "philatelic definitions" are unlikely to forget it.

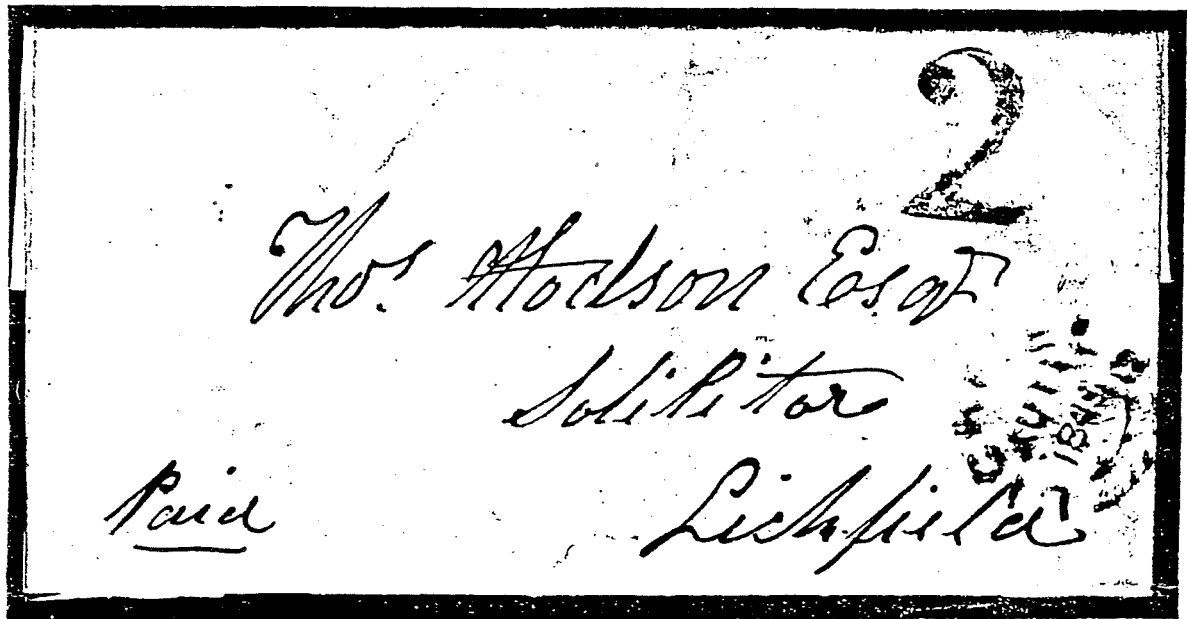
The Chairmen of the two societies, Mike Young and John Millener, were introduced to each other's members and they, in turn, introduced the displays. Mike Jones of the Somerset & Dorset PHG opened the day with an excellent display of the marks of Wellington - Somerset, this time, rather than Shropshire. He convinced us that an anonymous datestamp of the 1790s, widely believed to be a private arrival mark, actually belonged to the Wellington office. We saw the mileage marks of Wellington and, appropriately, something of its penny post. Our Society's first display came from Roger Broomfield. Knowing that the visitors had recently produced a UDC book, Roger showed undated marks of 1840/60 from the sub-offices and receiving houses of the Herefordshire post towns, extending from the Hereford town sub-offices of Bridge St, Eign St and High Town to the most distant - Nantmel, just 4 miles from Rhayder. They included the different types of undated circles, relics of the penny post, the Penybont "mileage removed" and the very rare "Eardisley".

After this and each subsequent pair of displays, the members were given time for viewing and close study. The second S&D display was by Geoffrey Tapper who showed part of his extensive collection of the Shaftesbury Penny Post. He described the routes taken and the complications of a penny post which not only had a relatively large number of receiving houses but changed their numeral marks more than once. Denis Salt responded with his impressive early material from the Great Cross Post. Two letters of 1709 and 1716 originated from Bridgenorth, an office which, at the time, had no direct London mail. The earlier letter, addressed to London, would have used the cross post as far as Worcester while the second letter, to a village near Stroud, was equally interesting as it was sent at the time that Stroud was first paid a cross road salary (the connection with Gloucester being imperfectly understood). There was a letter from Tewkesbury which, without Denis bothering to mention it, happened to bear the earliest known strike of a Tewkesbury handstamp. Tewkesbury like Bridgenorth, had no London link and the letter travelled in the cross post to either Worcester or Gloucester.

The third pair of displays brought the two chairmen head to head. John Millener's pot-pourri included UDCs of the Bristol area, a straight line "Wrington" and an Ilminster "401" with a datestamp of 1st May 1844. He concluded with a quite splendid display of penny blacks used on cover from the Somerset post towns, some in pairs. Our chairman, Mike Young, responded in kind with 1d blacks from virtually all the towns of Worcestershire, the aim of his display being to relate the value of the 19th century to modern 1st class postage. He showed a pre-1840 letter to Madeira costing 3/2d (now equivalent to at least £9 if 1d=24p) and a letter to Edinburgh at 1/2½d (perhaps £3-50). We saw the rare Worcester handstruck "4" and an unofficial local 1d rate. It was all a vivid illustration of the value of Rowland Hill's reforms and, as for who won the "Battle of the Blacks", it was declared a dead heat. It is remarkable that Mike still seeks a penny black used at Worcester itself.

The completion of the third pair of displays brought us to one o'clock and a visit to the nearby "Black Horse" where the visitors praised not only the quality but, some might think significantly, the quantity of the luncheon cuisine.

After lunch, our society re-started proceedings, this time with a fine display of Birmingham material from Eric Lewis - Elizabeth being required elsewhere on teddy bear duty. Among an array of undeliverable and surcharged mail from the Birmingham postal system was the distinctive handstruck "2" of 1845. This, the first surcharge mark used at Birmingham, is on a letter (reproduced below) marked "Paid" but Eric thought it likely that the office boy sent to post the letter had pocketed the penny and taken his chance! We were shown several Birmingham Ship Letters including the only recorded naval cover, posted on HMS Capetown when in the West Indies. Mail which could not be dealt with at Plymouth was sent to Birmingham, any uncanceled adhesives being struck with a "Birmingham Ship" handstamp. The S&D contribution was from Bill Pipe who showed us railway station marks including the earliest 1842 Gloucester Station double arc and a wide range of double and single arcs, UDCs and duplexes, including such esoteric delights as "Euston Station Irish Mail".



Our society's final display was given by Chris Beaver. We saw the local posts of Newcastle under Lyme from the 1780s to the 1840s but principally items from the Newcastle 5th Clause post. Although there were a number of such posts in Somerset and Dorset, Chris stressed the peculiarities of that at Newcastle which was significantly different from any other. From November 1801 to October 1815, the charge was to the Potteries only and assessed per delivery and not on each letter. As there was no charge for putting a letter into the post, there could be no objection to open boxes at the Potteries receiving houses. When an agreement of 1815 ended some of the idiosyncracies, 5th Clause stamps were struck on outward unpaid letters (only) to explain the additional 1d charge marked, while the penny charged on incoming mail was not marked (even on local letters). Chris pointed out that this was a large and profitable post and, while the P.O. turned down all requests for a post town in the Potteries, it did not aggravate local dissent by insisting on the inhabitants pre-paying charges or being converted to a penny post. Tony Osmond completed the day for the S&D with a comprehensive review of the Taunton Penny Post and showed marks from its large array of receiving houses. With the exception of Birmingham, we have nothing comparable in the Midlands. The meeting was judged a great success and it is reliably reported that the Somerset & Dorset PHG would like another meeting, perhaps even a regular event, at the same venue. We shall certainly hope to meet again in the reasonably near future.

THE OCTOBER MEETING

Some fourteen members gathered in Birmingham on 24th October for a meeting devoted to nine sheet displays on the theme of "Something old, something new". Peter Baxter began the proceedings with a 1726 letter showing the "HENLY/INARDEN" mark, and items from the Warwick Penny Post. More recent was the "tourist mark" of Stratford. Mailbag labels formed the major part of David Hardwick's display. These included items from: House of Commons mail to Coventry; Quality Assurance Bag Checks; Embargo mailing; Derby to London T.P.O. The final item was a letter sent from the U.S. to Daventry, U.K. The American postal clerk had altered the "U.K." to "Ukraine". Fortunately the geography of the clerk in Kiev was better than that of his counterpart in the States. Notable in Elizabeth's nine sheets were a copy of the London Gazette with a piece about the bellmen, a 1/- postal order from 1898 which had not been cashed as it did not carry the datestamp of the issuing office, and a letter of 1844 in an inner envelope endorsed "They could read my note through the envelope and post office authorities are curious sometimes."

Leith, in Scotland, was the subject of Alf Fieldhouse's display which began with examples of the combined name/date stamps of 1800-07. These were followed by unpaid marks, both the double circle and the framed rectangular types, and an example of the "Mae West" "Too Late" marks. One of this year's anniversaries was celebrated by Eric Lewis who showed items that Christopher Columbus might have collected including letters from the Venetian Merchant's Post dating from 1458 and 1459. Denis Salt produced a number of letters charged 1d or 2d. The rate on a letter sent in 1673 from Shrewsbury to London had been changed from 3d to 2d. We were shown items from the unofficial local posts of Shrewsbury as well as a letter sent on the first day of UPP - 10th January 1840. Guy Bridges showed us matching pairs of old and new items from a number of towns. Of note were a letter from Birmingham to Bishop's Castle marked with a bag seal, and a fine example, in purple, of the "No 2" of Llan-saintffraid in the Oswestry Penny Post. The three line handstamps of Wooton under Edge, with a variety of spellings, was John Calladine's subject. Ches produced a number of items from the Atherstone Penny Post, including the various types of "No 3" used at Appleby.

Like the display of John Calladine, that of John Soer was new to those who had not been present at the PHS in Northampton, but to those who had it was "old". He used mailbag labels to illustrate the postal services, road and air, based on the East Midlands Airport. The first part of Harold Wilson's display was definitely new for it updated the previous display by dealing with the "Skynet" air services introduced on 28th September to replace the "hub and spoke" services based on Speke and East Midlands Airport. The last man in, Chris Beaver, produced items from an old family correspondence. These included a number of colourful greetings telegrams and a Festival of Britain adhesive cancelled by the "448" of Leek.

In his closing comments our Chairman said that the meetings devoted to these short displays by the members always provided a fascinating and varied afternoon's entertainment. This meeting was no exception.

ARTICLES FROM OTHER JOURNALS

The Autumn 1992 edition of Cross Post, the Journal of the Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum, contains an article - "A Rural Post Shelter Hut in Shropshire". It is about the hut, near Cleobury Mortimer, used by Simon Evans, writer and postman, and contains a photograph of Simon Evans looking out of the window of the hut as well as a photograph of a surviving hut at Stottesdon.

The September issue of "History Today" contains an article on the development of postal services in Renaissance Europe.

POST-CHILDREN ?

Derek Smeathers has sent a copy of the letter shown below which was sent from Towcester to the Foundling Hospital in London in March 1761. He comments on the words "order the children away the next Post", that he thought only letters were carried in the post at that time. In a more serious vein he would welcome comments on the use of the word "carravan" in line 6. Has anyone heard this word used before 1761?

Mr. 7

I received a Parcell of Cloths from the Hospital, but your Letter coming to order the Children away the next Post, I have not opened the Parcell, But in Case they are all to be removed I desire you'll inform me whether I shall send the Cloaths to Cheshbury by the Carravan or to London.

We have sad Lamentations with the Nurses at parting, & when I sent the remonstrance with the woman who took her Child into the Street, I received the enclosed, which I was most earnestly desirous to send to the Hospital. —

If the Governors have nothing in view on removing the Children, but a saving to the Charity, I believe the Nurses would be glad to keep them some Time longer at 2^s a Week.

I am Sir, Desiring your Answer
Y^r most Obed^t. Serv^t

W^m Hodges

Towcester

March 1. 1761.

THE GREAT CROSS POST

by Denis Salt

The Great Cross Post (as it came to be called) was established on 2nd December 1696, to run twice weekly from Exeter to Bristol, passing through the towns of Tiverton, Wellington, Taunton, Bridgwater and Wells, at all of which places stages were settled and letters were received, and carefully despatched and delivered. The Cross Post left Exeter on Wednesdays and Saturdays each week, and returned from Bristol on Mondays and Fridays each week. Additional information is given in the G.P.O. Notice MR.*9603 dated 26th November 1696.

By another G.P.O. Notice, MR-0004, this Cross Post was extended from Bristol to Chester, to begin from Michaelmas 1700, and to continue twice weekly through Tiverton, Wellington, Taunton, Bridgwater, Wells, Bristol, Wootton Under Edge, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Worcester, Kidderminster, Bridgnorth, Shrewsbury and Whitchurch to Chester. Letters sent from Exeter on Wednesdays were in Chester on Sunday mornings, and answers were returned to Exeter on Wednesday mornings; and those sent on Saturdays were in Chester on Wednesday mornings, and answers were returned to Exeter on Saturday mornings.

Another G.P.O. Notice, MR-0902, announced that another Cross Post, generally regarded as a branch of the Exeter to Chester Cross Post, would from Monday 18th July 1709 run three times a week backwards and forwards between Oxford and Bath, through the towns of Abingdon, Wantage, Marlborough and Devizes. This, like the Great Cross Post, was entrusted to the care of Joseph Quash, and the London to Bristol post passing through Bath, gave a direct connection to the Great Cross Road at Bristol.

Originally the Cross Post had been run by the Post Office, but in 1706 Joseph Quash, who was the Postmaster at Exeter, was granted the farm of the Cross Post from Exeter to Chester; and when the Cross Post from Oxford to Bath was established, this too (as we have seen) was entrusted to the care of Quash. This situation continued until 1712, but on 13th February 1713 Joseph Quash was adjudicated bankrupt, and the management of these two Cross Posts came into the hands of the Post Office. This meant that the Post Office took over from Quash the responsibility of paying the salaries of the Postmasters on these Cross Posts, for which Quash as farmer had been responsible.

It appears from the Accounts Series at P.O. Archives that in 1715 the postmaster at Bewdley received a Cross Post salary of £30, and Bewdley became an additional post town on the Cross Post. Bewdley is only three miles from Kidderminster, and at the same time the Cross Post salary at Kidderminster was reduced to £5. These changes in the postmasters' salaries suggest that the Cross Post service now ran through Bewdley instead of Kidderminster, and latter was probably served by a footpost to and from Bewdley.

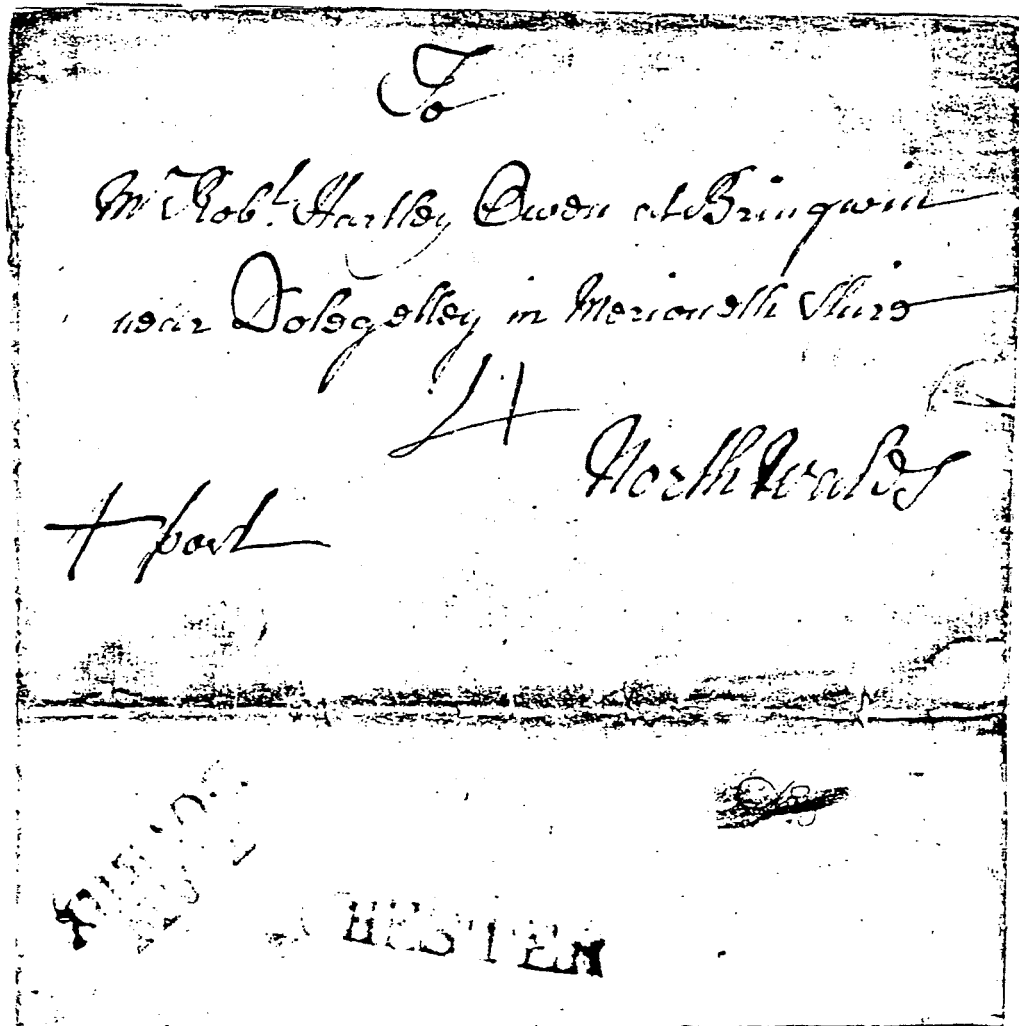
In 1717, the postmaster at Stroud received a Cross Post salary of £8, but there is nothing to suggest that the Cross Post passed through Stroud, or indeed in what way Stroud was served by the Cross post.

The Post Office's responsibility for the Cross Post continued until 1720, when Ralph Allen, who had been the postmaster at Bath since 1710, entered into a contract dated 12th April 1720 to farm all the cross-posts and bye-posts in the country, and was given a contract for seven years at £6000 per annum rent. His contract contained strict provisions as to what he could and could not do, including a clause that he should produce a profit for the Post Office from the proceeds of the Bye and Way letters, without reducing in any way the profit to the Post Office on the Country Letters (i.e. the General Post letters which passed through London).

A G.P.O. Notice dated 12th April 1720, MR-2001, gave public notice of Ralph Allen's contract, and goes on to provide that after 24th June 1720, the postage of no Bye-way or Cross Road letters is anywhere to be demanded at the places they were sent from unless they were directed on board a ship.

Finally a G.P.O. Notice dated 9th December 1720, MR-2010, gave notice "that letters from Bath, Bristol, Exeter, etc., which did normally lie two days at Gloucester in their way to South Wales, are now sent into all parts of the country without any loss of time; and the same advantage is gained three times a week at Kidderminster, for the benefit of the traders of Stourbridge and Birmingham."

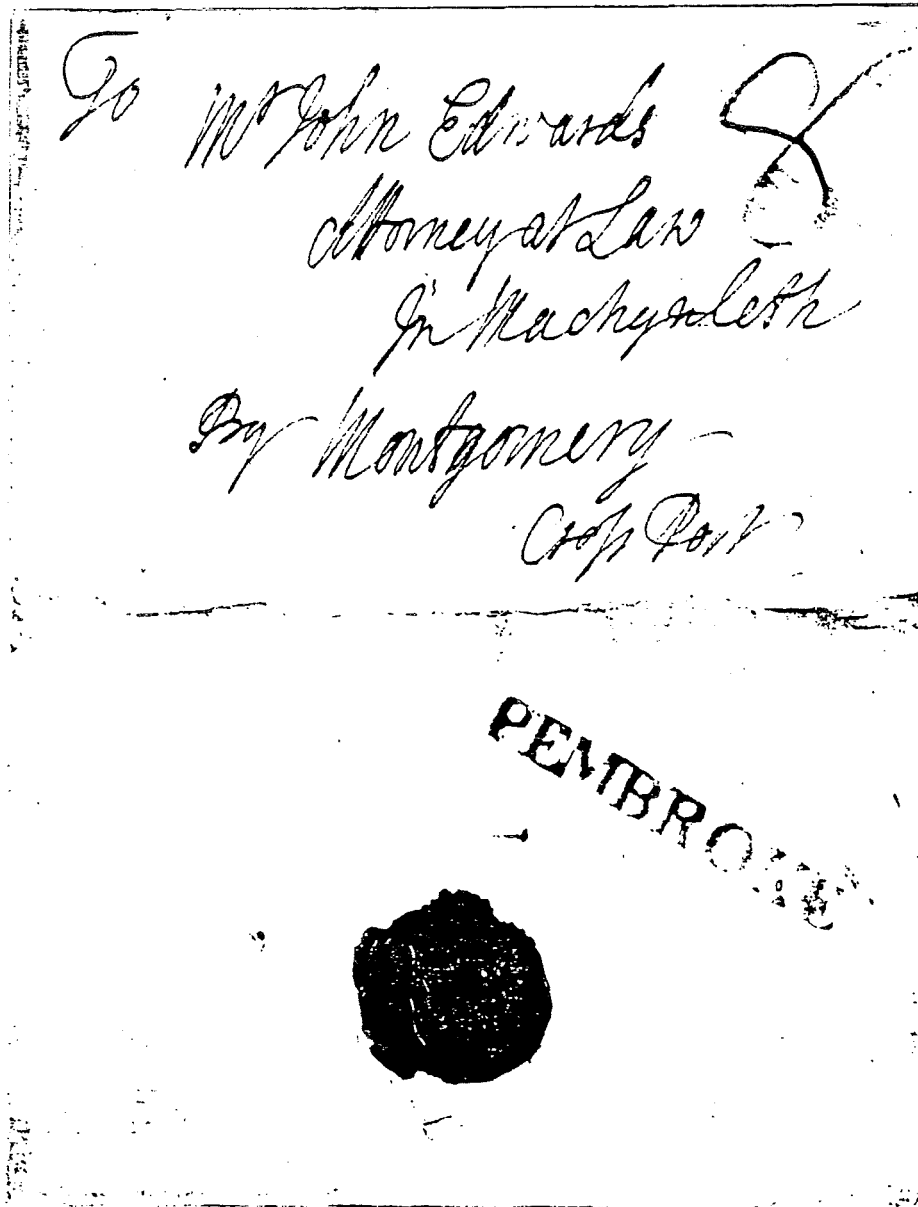
The G.P.O. notice just mentioned, MR-2010, refers to Wales. This Cross Post was of great value to the Welsh community, as there were no roads of importance in Wales providing communication between the North and South of the country, since all the main valleys run east and west. Roads to and from Wales reached the Cross Road at Gloucester, Worcester, Shrewsbury and Chester, making communication by post much quicker, and at the same time cheaper, than following the general rule of passing through London. A letter shown here dated 24th April 1766 from Llandovery to Dolgelly shows how the Cross Post provided both a saving in time taken for the carriage to its destination, and a saving in postal charges.



The charge of 4d. covers any distance above 80 miles. The letter went from Llandovery via Brecon to Gloucester or Worcester, where it joined the Cross Post. At Shrewsbury it should have left the Cross Post, but in fact it appears to have gone on to Chester. It then returned to Shrewsbury, and proceeded via Mallwyd to Dolgelly.

Another letter dated 14th January 1777 from Pembroke to Machynlleth shows a similar saving in both time and postage.

The main road from Pembroke ran along the south coast of Wales, via Cardiff to Bristol; but there was an alternative route via Brecon.



This was a double letter, the charge of 8d. covering over 80 miles.

This letter probably went to Bristol, where it joined the Cross Post as far as Shrewsbury; from there it went via Welshpool and Mallwyd to Machynlleth. It is marked "By Montgomery", and to do this, it would have left the Cross Post at Worcester, to go via Ludlow and Montgomery to Welshpool, Mallwyd and Machynlleth.

Ralph Allen's first two contracts each lasted seven years, so that the second expired in 1734. During this period of fourteen years Ralph Allen spent most of his time improving the bye-posts and remedying the abuses carried on by the postmasters, letter carriers, and others, resulting in the loss of considerable income belonging to the Post Office. From 1734 onwards he devoted more attention to improving the services from London to the more distant parts of the country by deliveries six days each week instead of the normal three. This was achieved by additional services on the Bye-nights (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays), using different routes from the existing services on the Post Nights, and thus giving direct services from and to London to many towns which previously had no direct services to and from London.

Each of Ralph Allen's contracts was for seven years, with a provision that it should terminate on the death of either the Monarch or Ralph Allen himself. His sixth contract was therefore terminated on the death of George II in 1760. However Ralph Allen in his seventh and last contract (which terminated on his death on 29th June 1764) agreed to extend the bye and cross-road posts in numerous places, connecting one part of the established service with another, especially in the north and central parts of England; and at the same time increase the frequency of the posts on certain routes from three to six times each week. All this he agreed to do, while at the same time undertaking to make good any lessening of the profits to the Post Office from country letters below £20,000 each year.

It was still another twenty years before the first mailcoach was introduced. The first mailcoach to Shrewsbury, via Oxford, Henley-in-Arden, Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Shifnal commenced on 5th September 1785. But on 5th July 1785 a mailcoach from Bristol started to run to Birmingham, replacing the original Cross Post as far as Worcester; and Bridgnorth was served by a new horse post from Shifnal. The horse post between Shrewsbury and Whitchurch was also retained, but finally ceased on 10th October 1795.

The writer acknowledges the considerable help he has received from John Calladine in writing this article. It is believed that all the statements made in the article are an accurate interpretation of the G.P.O. Notices to which they refer; but some Notices may be missing, and the effect of others may not have been fully appreciated, so that further research is required. The writer will be grateful for any additional information or amendments which are known to the reader, quoting the source of such information.

G.B. COVERS

Do you see my lists of GB cover material? If you don't and are a member of The Midland (GB) Postal History Society, you should! They contain a wide selection of interesting and unusual items - county material, difficult values and rates- from 1840 to date. Send for a copy of my latest list today. All 'Wants Lists' for specific items or county material will receive my personal attention.

ROGER HUDSON



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"THREE MAIL COACHES ARRIVE AT NIGHT"

by Rev Christopher Beaver

On one of my early visits to P.O. Archives when my explorations were concentrated on Staffordshire, I noted the gist of a Freeling report dated 25th July 1831 recommending improved accommodation for the Potteries (Post 42/54/259). At the time their letters for London were collected from the receiving offices around 8 p.m., spent that night at Newcastle their post town, reached London at 10 p.m. the next evening, and spent that night at the G.P.O., before delivery more than thirty-six hours after dispatch. This was the first allusion I had come across to any mailcoach arriving in London in the evening. It was clearly that from Liverpool. Freeling told the P.M.G. the reason, that is "three mailcoaches arrive at night so that the correspondence of some of the largest towns in the Kingdom may be forwarded by the Foreign mails the same evening they reach the Metropolis, an object of very great importance." Further, "to remedy the inconvenience at some of the towns through which they pass" rides had been established elsewhere to connect such towns "with other mails which arrive here in the morning." The answer to the complaints from north Staffordshire would be a new ride from Newcastle through Stone to Stafford, connecting there with the up Chester mailcoach (MM38/10). Ever since I read that report the search has continued for evidence of those three mailcoaches and several allusions in Midland Mail indicate that progress has been slow.

The latest find, reproduced on the next page, dated 8th May 1825 is a Bull and Mouth advertisement announcing "Important Alterations in the Northern Royal Mail Coaches." This notice mentions that two of the up coaches specified, which do not include a Liverpool, are to arrive in London in the evening. This is the first I have come across of an Edinburgh mailcoach doing so, nor have I previously found evidence for contemporaneous routes between London and Edinburgh. The arrangements are set out in considerable detail, but just what is new, and what did these arrangements replace? To these questions we shall return. It is time to try to put in sequence what evidence we have and clarify thereby what yet eludes us.

The Leeds mailcoach was altered to reach London in the evening during the latter half of 1820 "to expedite all the Foreign correspondence of the Mercantile Districts of Yorkshire." (MM42/8-9 and 65/5). A similar alteration was under discussion for the Liverpool route in August 1821 and implemented by January 1822 when this mailcoach was reported as expected to arrive about 11 p.m. - which may have been later than the time-bill scheduled (The Times 23.8.1821 and MM65/5). It is peculiar that nothing under the heading of Mail Coaches in Post 42 nor the reports in Post 10 bears upon these changes, as far as I can discover, for when it came to the introduction of morning mails from London this was fully discussed and recorded in the reports. The implication is that the alterations in the 1820s were ordered by government or P.O. Board without prior consideration of the effects along the routes. It is the repercussions which alert us to changes already implemented.

The July 1823 circulation map depicts prominently the routes of all the London mailcoaches. They are shown in red. A key in the margin numbers them anti-clockwise from I to XXIII and those numbers are on the map itself wherever there might be doubt which used which roads - the Leeds and the Liverpool numbered VIII and X. Others relevant to our subject are VI York and VII Carlisle, and so is a note attached to the map. The York, with a "red" connection to Edinburgh via Thirsk, Doncaster and Berwick, is through Waltham Cross, Royston, Stilton, Newark, Bawtry and Thorne; Bawtry to Doncaster and Ferrybridge to York however are also in red and it looks as though this was its route in July 1823 and the line through Thorne and Selby with the VI of the York route upon it has been added later. The Carlisle, with "red" connections to Glasgow and Portpatrick, is through (Barnet?), Baldock, Stilton, Newark, Worksop, Doncaster and Wetherby. The incomplete m/s note attached to the margin indicates an alteration not depicted on the map: "There is now a London & Wetherby .. through Stilton, Grantham, Doncaster - to join the Edinburgh Mail." Nothing in

BULL AND MOUTH INN. IMPORTANT ALTERATIONS IN THE NORTHERN ROYAL MAIL COACHES.

Under New Contracts with his Majesty's Postmaster General.

THE Public are respectfully informed, that the **DIRECT EDINBURGH MAIL COACH** will leave the above Inn every Evening, at Half-past Seven (Sundays at Seven,) and, passing through Huntingdon, Stamford, Doncaster, Ferrybridge, Wetherby, Boroughbridge, Northallerton, Durham, Newcastle, Alnwick, Belford, Berwick, Dunbar, and Haddington, will arrive at Edinburgh the second afternoon to dinner. It will leave Piper's Mail Coach Office, Edinburgh, every morning at Eight, and arrive at the Bull and Mouth Inn, London, the second morning at Six. The whole distance will be performed within 16 hours, including all stoppages, which, for breakfasts and dinner, will be sufficient to enable travellers to refresh themselves thoroughly, and go the entire journey with facility. Care will also be taken that such refreshments shall be provided as are fit for a superior class of passengers.

No attempt having yet been made with any public Carriage to travel regularly so great a distance in so short a time, the proprietors think it necessary to give the public every reasonable assurance not only of the comfort, but of the safety of this conveyance. A mail coach carries few outsiders, and can go a fast pace with more security; and this will be driven by coachmen selected for their ability and good character. An ample number of horses have been allotted to this establishment, and the stages will be very short, to prevent distress and difficulty. The proprietors having entered into this contract solely in compliance with the desire of the Postmaster General, to improve the northern posts; and as they can only fulfil it by incurring great additional expence, without any certainty of its succeeding as a commercial speculation, they trust to their northern friends (particularly in Edinburgh, and on the great line of road to Inverness, who will gain a day in their course of post with London) to bestow on them that liberal patronage which will be so essential to the permanency of this undertaking.

THE YORK, SUNDERLAND, and EDINBURGH MAIL COACH will also leave the above Inn every Evening at half-past Seven (Sundays at Seven,) and, passing through Baldock, St. Neot's, Stamford, Newark, Bawtry, Thorn, Snaith, and Selby, will arrive at York the following Evening about Eight o'clock; whence it will proceed through Easingwold, Thirsk, Tontine Inn, Yarm, Stockton, and Sunderland, to Newcastle, where it will arrive about Seven in the Morning; and proceed thence through Morpeth, Wooler, Coldstream, Kelso, Lander, and Dalkeith, to Edinburgh, where it will arrive the same Evening about half-past Nine. This Mail Coach will leave Edinburgh for London every Evening, at Nine o'clock, and arrive at York the following Evening before Ten, and at the Bull and Mouth Inn, London, on the second Evening, at half-past Ten. Passengers by this Mail will be only two nights out between London and Edinburgh, and only one between London and York, or York and Edinburgh. Passengers who leave Newcastle, Shields, Sunderland, &c. in the Morning, will be in London in the Evening of the following day, being one night only on the road.

THE LEEDS, CARLISLE, and GLASGOW MAIL COACH will likewise leave the above Inn every Evening at half-past Seven, passing through Bedford, Kettering, Melton Mowbray, Nottingham, Chesterfield, Sheffield, and Wakefield, to Leeds, where it will arrive the following Evening, at half-past Seven; whence it will proceed through Harewood, Harrogate, Ripley, Ripon, Leeming Lane, Catterick Bridge, Greta Bridge, Brough, Appleby, and Penrith to Carlisle, where it will arrive the second Morning about Ten o'clock; and proceed thence through Longtown, Ecclefechan, Moffat, and Hamilton, to Glasgow, where it will arrive the second Evening. It will leave Bains' Royal Mail Coach Office, Glasgow, for London, every Afternoon, at a Quarter-past Six; Carlisle every Morning, at Seven; and Greenes' Hotel, Leeds, every Evening, at Ten; and will arrive at the Bull and Mouth Inn, London, the following Evening, at Ten. Thus Passengers will leave Glasgow in the Evening, be in Leeds the following Evening, and in London the second Evening; or, if Passengers wish to divide the journey, Leeds affords every requisite for that purpose, and Coaches leave there for London every Morning. Passengers who leave Carlisle, Penrith, &c. in the Morning will be in London in the Evening of the following day, being One Night only on the road.

All these Arrangements will be executed under the personal direction of the Superintendent of Mail Coaches at the General Post Office, and his Assistants.

CONTRACTORS IN THE PRINCIPAL PLACES.

SHERMAN.....	London.
PIPER.....	} Edinburgh.
SCOTT.....	
RAIN and SON.....	Glasgow.
FOSTER and DODSWORTH.....	} Newcastle.
LOFTUS.....	
FAIRBAIRN.....	} Carlisle.
WILSON.....	
BARBER.....	} York.
CATTLE and MADDOCKS.....	
CROSSLAND.....	Leeds.

Places may be taken and Parcels Booked for the above Royal Mail Coaches, at the Bull and Mouth Western Coach Office, No. 40, Regent Circus, Piccadilly.

TAKE NOTICE.—That the Proprietors of the Public Carriages who transact their Business at these Offices will not be answerable for any Packages, which, with its Contents, shall exceed Five Pounds in Value, if lost or damaged, unless the value be specified, and an Insurance paid over and above the common Carriage, when delivered here, or to any of their Offices or Agents in the different parts of the Kingdom.

the index headings leads to elucidation of this note, but mention of excessive weight on the Edinburgh mail has been seen. It would not be surprising if the "York" or the "Wetherby" was timed to arrive in London in the evening.

There is in the Post 42 "Mail Coaches" Index a "Northern Mail Coaches" entry in 1824, followed in 1825 by "North Mail Coaches - projected acceleration, great difficulties attending it", "York", "High Harrogate", "Leeds Rd" (all 40/153) and then a conclusive "Edinburgh & Glasgow Mail Coaches accelerated" (40/322). It is to this last presumably that the John Bull notice of 8th May 1825 relates.

The advertisement states that all three routes detailed result from new contracts. Four facts are emphasised concerning the first of them in the first two paragraphs - i) that the Edinburgh mailcoach will be DIRECT; ii) that the contractors have undertaken to perform the whole distance "within 46 hours"; iii) the improvements are in response to pressure from the Postmaster General; iv) the "permanency" of the arrangement is dependent on "liberal patronage", for it is an expensive venture fraught with risk for the contractors. It will be noticed at once that the route of this first coach is through Ferrybridge and not through York.

The third paragraph concerns an alternative mailcoach to Edinburgh and this one will arrive in London in the evening "at half past Ten." It is on the same route as the other from Alconbury Hill in Huntingdonshire as far as Bawtry and again from Newcastle to Morpeth. The road through Baldock had been that of the Carlisle on the 1823 map; that from Bawtry through Thorn to York we have seen to have been a later amendment on the York route; York to Sunderland (and South Shields) was a distinct crosspost mailcoach in 1823. Sunderland to Newcastle and Morpeth through Wooler etc to Edinburgh I believe had not previously been mailcoach roads.

Here I must digress a little to mention a fascinating article by J.G.S. Scott entitled "The Wooler Curricule" (Mail Coach No. 4, c.f. also No. 5 p. 12 by J.W. Lovegrove). This gives much detail concerning the introduction in mid-1830 of a two-wheeled express vehicle without passengers designed to speed the mail between Morpeth and Edinburgh. It is there stated that "the Wooler route had been tried previously for nearly two years but had been found unsuitable" - for a mailcoach that is, and from 1825-7 we must suppose.

The "Leeds, Carlisle and Glasgow Mail Coach" detailed in the next paragraph of the John Bull notice also, as we should expect, is to arrive in London in the evening, "at Ten." This is on the same route as on the 1823 map all the way from London to Leeds where it then ended. From Leeds to Leeming Lane is a new mailcoach road I surmise, and from there on only it follows the route of the 1823 Carlisle route.

So it is clear that the changes to "the Northern Royal Mail Coaches" in the summer of 1825 were considerable indeed, and we are already aware that some of these arrangements were short-lived.

Next we can turn to the recently available complete collection of mailcoach timebills which give full details concerning every route as at September 1827 (MM63/9-11, and Cross Post vol. 3, no. 2 pp. 47-53). Here there are only two among twenty-five with a terminus in the capital which arrive there in the evening. The Liverpool arrives at 10.05 p.m.; the Leeds is filled in as due at 8.17 p.m., but this is a miscalculation for the total time allowed is 24hrs 2 mins and it is clear it should be 9.17 p.m. This is by the Nottingham road just as on the 1823 map and detailed in the 1825 advertisement. Among the remainder timed to arrive in the morning the Carlisle route is as in 1825 north of Leeds, but now is again on a distinct route south of Leeds, through Doncaster, Stilton, St Neots, Barnet. (it ceased to go through St Neots in 1832.) The one London to Edinburgh route is through Doncaster, Ferrybridge, York and Berwick. (It went through Selby instead of Ferrybridge from 1835, on a newly made road.) Other mailcoach routes in the 1827 collection include: Doncaster to York through Thorne, and York to South Shields. (The

latter was discontinued in 1831, revived in 1833, and, soon after, it started from Leeds instead of York, but ceased altogether in 1835.)

The timing of the Liverpool up-mail was altered in 1835 to reach London earlier, and according to Frederick Baines both the Liverpool and the Leeds arrived at 6.30 p.m. at the time of Queen Victoria's accession, which may just be true, ("Forty Years at the Post Office", 1895, which contains examples of mailcoach timings without precise references). He did not mention the former ceased in July 1837.

I've no reason to suppose Francis Freeling may have been wrong to tell the P.M.G. in 1831 that three mailcoaches reached the Metropolis at night. If a third began to do so in 1825 it did not survive until September 1827 and I simply do not know which was the third one he had in mind or how soon it too ceased.

(Unattributed details in this article may be readily found in the Post 42 index under the heading "Mail Coaches".)

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THE SURVEYORS' JOURNALS

The first journal, for 1794, of Mr Woodcock that I can find is that for the first two weeks in February. At the beginning of the month he was in London to consult Freeling on several, unspecified matters. He spent a week inspecting a number of offices in Oxfordshire on his way home to Gloucester where he arrived on the 14th. In the following two weeks he dealt with a number of matters. He wrote to Hasker about the Hereford & Worcester diligence which was badly worked; he sent to Freeling a proposal from Mr Fieldhouse of the Star and Garter Inn, Worcester for carrying the mail between Leominster and Worcester; a sum of £17.15.4½ was sent to the Solicitor as settlement of the account of Mr Barrett at Stroud [See previous issue]; he told the postmaster of Evesham to tax letters for Stow 3d. and charge them on Moreton-in-Marsh.

On 1st March he set out for Hereford to take charge of that Office, "the Deputy being Suspended on a strong suspicion of making false and deficient returns of the amount of Unpaid Ltrs received by him from London." He remained in Hereford until the middle of April. The postmaster there could not account, in a satisfactory manner, for the deficiency in his accounts so the P.M.Gs decided to dismiss him. However, Mr Woodcock reported that the postmaster, Mr Griffiths, had entrusted the running of the office entirely to another person, and was not himself guilty of any intentional fraud. So he was allowed to resign rather than be dismissed. The office was then placed in the hands of a Mr Mason whose house was "in a central situation and an Office very well fitted up for business and convenient to the Town."

Whilst in Hereford Mr Woodcock arranged the re-establishment of a post between Hereford and Leominster, three days a week, starting on 6th April.

He also reported an application from Sir George Cornwall to have the Hay post detained while the letters for himself and other gentlemen on that road were sorted out of the Hereford bags so that they could be immediately forwarded by the postman. Mr Woodcock said that there were five gentlemen, on that road, who had private bags for which they had sent their own messenger to Hereford every post-night. He was in favour of this measure which would save them three nights provided that "they fix on convenient places on the road to drop their bags at, and never detain the rider on any pretence whatever."

Mr Hasker was informed that the contractors of the Hereford & Worcester diligence had performed the duty very badly, and had brought in the post so late that no delivery could be made. From 15th April Mr Mason was to carry the mail, three days a week, in a light coach between Hereford and Worcester. It had been intended to introduce a similar service between Worcester and Leominster but it had not been possible to agree suitable terms. [See the first paragraph.]

Routine administration took up much of the five weeks or so that Mr Woodcock spent at home. He did visit the office in Gloucester to check that the postmaster of Hereford was following his instructions about making up the bags. He found that, apart from one or two trifling instances, all was correct.

On 28th May, Mr Woodcock arrived in Stratford to instruct a new postmaster. This included supervising the fitting up of an office, making out a table of rates and compiling lists of deliveries. Whilst at Stratford he "regulated the short letter account which was kept rather loose and uncertain." There were several towns near Stratford, the letters to and from which came under the heading of short letters not being included in the monthly voucher but entered in the quarterly, short letter account. The towns were Droitwich, Alcester, Henley-in-Arden, Shipston-on-Stour and Kington. Mr Woodcock added that the Kington short letters had usually been allowed to that deputy as a perquisite but, since it was the wish of the P.M.Gs that everything should be brought to account, he had directed that in future those letters were to be entered in the Stratford short letter voucher.

On 6th June Messrs Woodcock and Western met in Warwick to discuss the circulation of letters from Lincolnshire, through the cross-post, to various towns in Mr Woodcock's district. [The cross-post in this instance was that between Newark, Nottingham, Derby, Birmingham, Worcester and Bristol.] On the following day Mr Woodcock inspected the Birmingham office. He found nothing wrong that was worthy of note. The only other matter from the Midlands to concern Mr Woodcock during June was a petition from Upton-on-Severn asking for a daily post from Worcester. This began on 26th July. [See MM61/14.]

The journals for July and August do not appear to have survived. During the first part of September, Mr Woodcock was dealing with matters in Wales as well as Oxfordshire and Berkshire. On the 11th he set out on a survey of the branch between Bewdley and Birmingham. On his way he called at Malvern where he found the inhabitants well satisfied with their receiving office. [See MM76/13.]

He reported that the inhabitants of Stourport sent a messenger daily to Kidderminster for their letters, though the horse post from Birmingham to Worcester passed through there. They wished to have a bag sent by "the regular Post through Bewdley, to be made up in London." Mr Woodcock felt that a bag might be made up for Stourport at Kidderminster and sent "this way" [through Bewdley?], but felt that it would detain the post too long at Kidderminster.

The reason that he gave for making a survey of that branch was that he wanted to inspect the riding work which, for sometime, had been done badly. However he found that Mr Saverland had submitted some proposals on this to the P.M.G. so he returned to Gloucester on the 16th. He then circulated through his district two hundred handbills about the conviction of the Warwick carrier for illegally collecting and carrying letters.

Most of October was spent in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, London and at home. Near the end of the month, he reported that Mr Ballard, whom he described as the sub-deputy of Malvern and not as the receiver, intended to resign. A Mr Wilks was to be appointed in his place. At the very end of the month, he set out on a survey of the road from Gloucester to Bath where, with Mr Lott, he inspected the office.

Mr Woodcock spent the whole of November and much of December in South Wales. On his return home, as a result of a letter from Messrs Saverland and Western, he ordered the postmasters in his district to correspond with certain towns in Warwickshire and Leicestershire through the cross-post and not through London.

G.B. POSTAL HISTORY

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Towards the end of the year he heard from Freeling that on 6th January vouchers were to be opened between towns from Maidenhead to Northleach with Cheltenham and Gloucester. Consequently he went to Cheltenham to instruct the postmaster. There he found the number of missent letters etc for the previous quarter to be very great. He attributed this to the number of visitors who had left the place. He commented that during the watering season the deputy had a great deal to do and the amount of letters was considerable.

The only journey that Mr Western appears to have made in January 1794 was to London at the end of the month. Most of the time was taken up writing to various postmasters and sending reports to London. The postmaster of Sheffield was told not to retax letters for soldiers on duty when redirected to them after they had left Sheffield. [See Mr Woodcock's query on MM76/12.]

Mr Western spent the first fortnight of February in London. "on the business of the new Penny Post Bill. Procured a Clause to be inserted extending the powers of the Act to those Penny Posts already established or in future to be established in the country under the Authority of the Postmaster General." From London he went to Bath on leave of absence.

After his holiday Mr Western turned his attention to the first of two major changes in circulation that were to be introduced in March. This was in Bedfordshire so the details do not concern us. However it is possibly worth noting that since Mr Saverland was in Guernsey, Mr Western returned from Bath via London from where he issued the necessary instructions to the offices in Mr Saverland's district.

He also ordered that the London letters for Chapel-en-le-Frith and Tideswell were to be sent to Buxton and not Derby as they were often detained for a day since the postmaster of Derby did not always have time to re-sort them to Macclesfield during the stop of the coach.

After he had supervised the change in the posts in Bedfordshire, Mr Western returned home on 3rd March to collect some papers relating to a post to be introduced between Stamford and Uppingham, the purpose of which was to facilitate communication between Huntingdonshire & Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Rutland.

His first task was to draw up tables of rates of postage for the offices at Stamford, Uppingham, Kettering, Wellingborough and Northampton. He then directed that the Oakham and Uppingham bags to and from London were to be sent via Stamford and not Northampton. Finally he gave detailed instructions to a number of offices, amongst which were the following.

Northampton was told to keep a voucher with Stamford and to send there letters for Lincolnshire (except Lincoln and Gainsborough), Oundle, Peterborough and Thrapstone, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk (except Diss and Harleston), Bury and Brandon in Suffolk, Hertford and Ware. The postmaster was also to keep a short letter account for the Wellingborough and Higham Ferrers letters. [That I cannot explain.]

Loughborough, Leicester and Market Harborough were instructed to send to Northampton letters for those places which Northampton had to send to Stamford.

Uppingham was directed to do the ride to Rockingham, and to go there on the arrival of the post from Stamford. He was to return from Rockingham on the arrival there of the post from Kettering.

Both Uppingham and Kettering were ordered to keep vouchers with Stamford, and to send there the letters for the same places as Northampton was directed plus those for Lincoln, Gainsborough, Durham, Northumberland, Appleby in Westmoreland, Cumberland, Isle of Man, Scotland and Yorkshire apart from some towns in the West Riding.

Wellingborough was told to send to Kettering, and Rockingham was told to send to Uppingham the above letters.

Oakham was instructed to send off the mail to Uppingham at 9 a.m. and to return from there at about 10.30 on the arrival of the post from Stamford. The ride to Rockingham was to be discontinued.

Stamford was to keep vouchers with Uppingham, Kettering and Northampton. Letters for Leicestershire (except Hinckley and Lutterworth) were to be sent to Northampton. He was to perform the ride to Uppingham which was to leave on the arrival of the mail from London at 8 a.m., and to return from Uppingham at about 12.30 p.m. on the arrival there from Kettering.

The latter part of March and the whole of April were spent in Yorkshire and the Northwest. There is little of interest to us in the journal for May.

At the beginning of June, Mr Western left London to consult with Messrs Saverland and Woodcock on the subject of the cross-post boundaries. He went to Birmingham, Warwick and Claybrook [the home of Mr Saverland].

From Claybrooke, he went on to Stamford to make arrangements for the change in the cross-post boundaries which was to come into effect on 20th June. This allowed the cross-post to be used for letters between Stamford, Sleaford, Grantham, Lincoln, Market Raisin and Grimsby on the one hand and on the other Daventry, Hinckley, Lutterworth, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire (except Ludlow and Bishop's Castle) and Worcestershire (except Tenbury, Evesham and Pershore).

A few days were spent in the area of Brigg and Barton before Mr Western went on 28th June to Worksop, Ollerton and Mansfield to abolish the ride from Mansfield to those places, and then went to Newark to establish a daily post from there to Ollerton and Worksop. This was in response to a request from Worksop that their post from Mansfield be replaced by one from Retford. Even for this small change, Mr Western's record of the instructions he issued takes up three sheets of paper since he wrote to towns as far apart as Birmingham, Royston (Herts.) and Boroughbridge. We shall mention only four towns.

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Mansfield was told to discontinue on 6th July the post to Ollerton and Worksop. The short letter account was to cease, and letters for those towns were to be sent to Nottingham, charged 4d.

Worksop was told to perform the ride to Ollerton, through Cuckney. This was to leave at 4 a.m. so as to be at Ollerton by 6; it was to return from there at about 3.30 p.m. on the arrival of the post from Newark.

Ollerton was ordered to do the ride to Newark, which was to leave at 6 a.m. and to be at Newark by 8. It was to return from there at about 2 p.m., as soon as the bags could be made up after the arrival of the south-bound coach.

The postmaster of Newark was informed of all this. In addition he was told to tax letters for Ollerton 2d. and Worksop 3d.

After he had been to Boroughbridge to consult with Mr Hodgson, Mr Western spent the last eight days of July instructing the new postmaster at Leek.

The journal for August is missing, but at the start of September Mr Western was in Northampton, settling the accounts of the late postmaster and installing the new one. The rest of the month was spent in Lancashire, though on the way home he called at Buxton, Stoney Middleton and Bakewell to investigate the possibility of a post from Bakewell to the Liverpool to Sheffield route.

Much of the first three weeks in October were spent in Lancashire. He had no sooner returned home than he found it necessary to go to Burton on the 24th as the rider from there had, the night before, lost the bags for Derby, Nottingham and Newark. He found that the rider had lost his horse and the bags by going out of the road and getting off to deliver letters. The horse and bags were found safe about three the next morning and were taken to Derby but too late to be sent on. The rider had been in the habit of leaving the road to deliver letters. Indeed, in the previous January, the rider from Derby to Burton had stated that his horse had "got away from him" and not being able to obtain another he had proceeded to Burton on foot. Mr Western told the postmaster of Burton that his riders were on no account to leave the main road with the mail under their care.

From Burton, Mr Western went to Wirksworth and Bakewell to stop "the illegal practice of the Sheffield newsman" who had distributed handbills that he would carry letters between those places. He then went on to Tideswell to take over the office as he had been told that the postmaster had died.

Apart from the first three days, which were spent at Tideswell, all of the time that Mr Western was away from home in November was taken up by the Ashby-de-la-Zouch post. A survey of the country from Loughborough, through Ashby, to Atherstone occupied four days. He went again to Ashby on the 22nd to prepare for the post from Atherstone to Ashby which started on the 30th. He remained there until 3rd December.

Three days were spent at Tideswell settling the accounts of the late postmaster and instructing the new appointee, Mrs Anne Shore.

On the 17th December, he was ordered to go to Atherstone to take charge of the office as the postmaster was so ill as to be unable to do his business, and Mr Saverland was in London. As the postmaster had done all the business himself, including delivering the letters, there was no person in the town who could make up the bags or dispatch the post. Mr Western remained in Atherstone until the 24th.

The start of 1794 found Mr Saverland in Lancashire, Cheshire and Flintshire. However on 18th January, he was asked by Freeling to go to London and then to Jersey and Guernsey to open post offices there. Whilst his activities in the next three months have no relevance to Midlands postal history, I think there is enough of interest to make it worthwhile giving some account of them.

The rest of the month was spent in London consulting with Freeling and the Solicitor about the posts in Guernsey and Jersey and "the new Act of Parliament for establishing Packets & Posts to & from those Islands."

On 1st February, he left for Southampton where he told the postmaster about the packets about to be established from Weymouth, and said that in future letters for the Channel Islands were not to be given to the agents for those islands, to be sent by private vessels. He also asked to which of the two islands letters for Sark and Alderney should be sent.

From Southampton he went on to Weymouth. Everything was ready for the sailing of the first packet on the 6th, the Queen Charlotte with Captain Wood in charge having arrived from Dover on the previous day, when he received a letter from Freeling to say that the mail for the islands would not be dispatched from London until the 13th.

He sailed from Weymouth in the Queen Charlotte on the 13th, and anchored that evening in Portland Bay. They left Portland at 7 a.m. on the 14th, but were forced to return the next day due to "thick weather blowing strong & not being able to see the Land." Later that day, they sailed again and made Alderney the next morning. About noon they saw Guernsey, "but having little wind & the tide against us we were obliged to put to Sea again for the Night." Eventually the Queen Charlotte was able to anchor off Guernsey about noon the next day. Mr Saverland was then able to deliver the letters to the person acting as postmaster.

The packet then sailed for Jersey early the next morning, the 18th, and arrived that afternoon. The mail was handed over to the postmaster Mr Charles Legeyt. However Mr Saverland's troubles were not over - "not being able to get a Bed in the Town of St Hellier, every House being crammed as full of Emigrants and Military as they could hold, [was] therefore obliged to sleep on board the Packet in the Pier and in the Road at a distance from the Town & very difficult getting on board and on shore in the dark."

In the next month he sailed between the two islands several times. One week was spent in charge of the Guernsey office, until Mrs Ann Watson was appointed, and not, as had been recommended by the "Secretary of State", a Mr Dougal McDougal.

On the 22nd March Mr Saverland attempted to return to Weymouth in the Queen Charlotte, but "having got only the length of the Gasketts it blew so violently and directly in our teeth that we were obliged to bear away & come to an anchor in Guernsey Road." The ship was able to sail for Weymouth the next morning.

Three days were spent at Weymouth giving further instructions to the postmaster. On the 27th the packet arrived with news of an expected attack on Jersey by the French. As there was no advice of this in the mail for Lord Howe at Portsmouth, and the wind was then from the northeast, Mr Saverland thought that he should pass on to his Lordship all the information he could obtain from the captain of the packet. So he set off for Portsmouth where he arrived at 10 p.m. and immediately called on Lord Howe, who was "pleased to approve of my conduct."

From Portsmouth he went on to London where he consulted with Freeling on a number of matters, including "the Packet Postage of 2d. on all letters from Weymouth and the Islands."

On 3rd April Mr Saverland arrived at home where he spent three weeks before leaving to deal with the unfinished business in North Wales which took up most of the month of May.

It was his intention when he left home on 10th June for Coventry to carry out an inspection of the offices on that road towards London. But that evening he received a letter from the postmaster of Birmingham informing him that Vaughan, one of

the letter carriers, had stolen out of the office a letter containing half-a-guinea. So he went straight to Birmingham. There he had Vaughan arrested and examined before Mr Justice Carles who committed him to prison. The rest of the month was spent on the intended inspection in the counties of Buckingham, Bedford and Northampton.

The journals covering the period July to October have not survived.

Mr Saverland left Claybrooke on 6th November to meet Mr Western at Loughborough to accompany him on an inspection from there to Ashby and Atherstone. He recommended that Ashby should be served from Atherstone. He was able to spend nearly a fortnight at home before again meeting Mr Western at Atherstone on the 23rd to arrange the introduction of the post on the 30th.

After leaving Atherstone, he called briefly at home, before going on to London to discuss with Freeling a number of matters. The two most important were the abolition of the penny post receiving houses in the town of Birmingham, and the detention at Lichfield of the down coaches for Liverpool and Chester to await the arrival of the rider from Birmingham with the cross-road mail. His departure from Birmingham depended on the time of arrival of the coach from Bristol.

(to be continued)

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

I hate to tempt providence, but MM78 should appear in late January. There will probably be two articles on modern aspects of postal history. As for the rest all contributions should be sent to:

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