



MIDLAND MAIL

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



President: John Soer

Chairman:
Chris Jackson

Treasurer:
Elizabeth Lewis

Secretary:
Eric Lewis

Number 108, January 1999

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to two new members Dr. D. Lucas of Whissendine, Rutland whose interests include G.B. postal history from 1650 to 1950, particularly Rutland and Leicestershire, and Terry Hetheridge of Dudley whose interests cover general G.B. postal history 1800 to 1910 with emphasis on duplex cancellations.

AWARDS

First of all I must apologise to Dave Tarry for failing to mention that his 'Mauritius - The Sterling Period 1811-77' was awarded a gold medal at Stampex in addition to the trophies it gained. Congratulations to the following members who received awards at Italia '98: Michael Jackson whose 'Early Postal History of the British Isles' gained a large gold; James Grimwood-Taylor received a gold for his 'British Postal Reforms & Origins, 1458-1864'; Roger Broomfield whose book 'The Undated Postmarks of Wales, 1840-60' gained a large silver. Chris Jackson's 'Mileage Marks of Worcestershire' was awarded a silver medal at Brighton in November. At the same venue, 'The Royal Mail in Leicestershire and Rutland' gained a silver medal in the International Literature exhibition.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Our first meeting of the year will be held on **16th January** at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham at 1.30 p.m. when Richard Farman will display 'Staffordshire'.

On **20th February** we visit Worcester where our meeting will be held in conjunction with the Worcester Society Fair. The actual meeting will consist of a display 'Free Franking Privilege' by Ralph Richardson, starting at 2 p.m.

Finally, remember to start preparing your entries for our annual competitions which will be held on **6th March**.

1999 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Carrs Lane Church Centre on 24th April, commencing at 1 p.m. It will be preceded by a committee meeting at 11 a.m. Please note the above date and times in your diary now.

In April, John Soer, our President, will have completed his three year term of office. Nominations, duly seconded, for this positions are required prior to the AGM with of course the agreement of the members nominated.

MATERIAL FOR THE ANNUAL AUCTION

In order that catalogues can be sent to our overseas members in good time for them to submit bids it is necessary to have auction lots in by 6th March at the very latest, i.e. the date of our March meeting.

It would however be appreciated if you could submit lots before that date, perhaps at the meeting on 6th February or by post to Mrs E. Lewis at 27 Rathbone Road, Smethwick, B67 5JG

Please include full descriptions together with estimated market values and your reserve price, or state no reserve. If you wish, the actual lots can be brought along to the auction but in this case please also state the condition of each item based on 'Poor', 'Good', 'Fine', or 'Superb' and also indicate clearly the number of items in each lot.

A gift of any surplus material that you may care to give to be auctioned for Society funds would, as usual, be much appreciated.

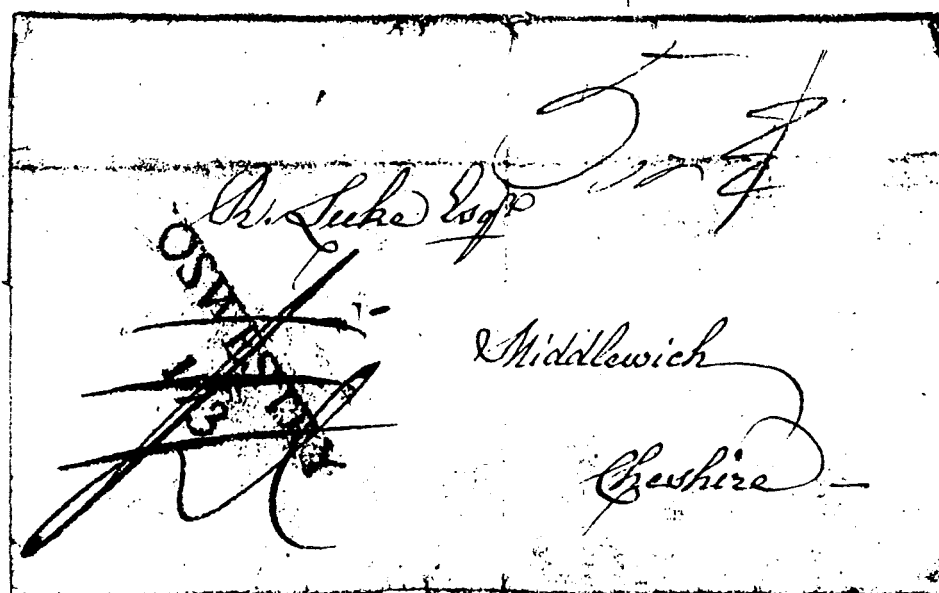
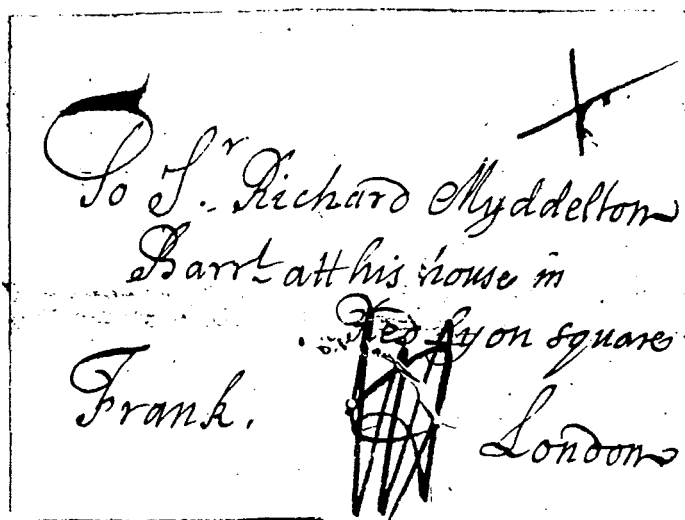
JON BAKER TROPHY

Nominations are needed for the best article to have appeared in Midland Mail during 1998. The definition of best is left to you, but all nominations should be sent to the Editor by the date of the March meeting at the latest.

THE OCTOBER MEETING

Not a few of the members who braved gales and horizontal rain to be present at Carrs Lane on 24th October suggested that the regrettable absence of the Editor (and chief scribe) was widely expected. They had the understandable premonition that the displays of 'Oswestry' and 'Welshpool' would be littered with orthographically-challenging Welsh place names and that only someone of unsound mind could be prevailed upon to attempt a written report. Having found such a simpleton and having allowed him a large-scale map of mid-Wales, an elderly copy of the Collins-Spurrell Welsh Dictionary (with foreword by D. Lloyd George) and the Society's UDC book, they awaited the inevitable shambles. Here it is ...

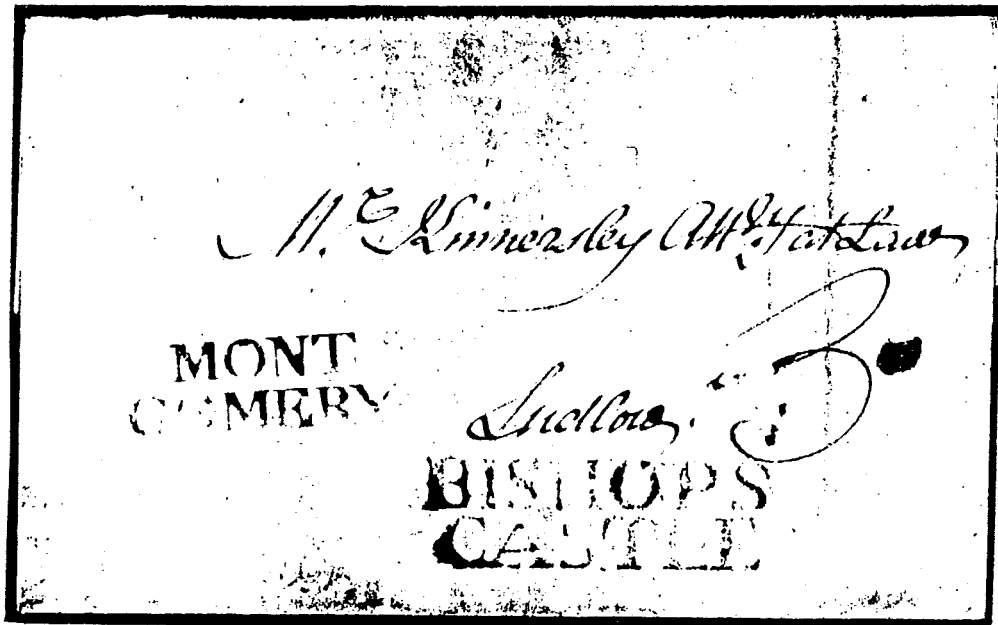
Guy Bridges' 'Oswestry' was not the nightmare that might have been expected since he was able to fill ten frames without venturing a mile from the centre of the town. He began by telling us that its first recorded postmaster was in 1698 and that the first postmark 'OS-ESTRE' (illustrated) dates from 1710. He showed us two-line marks of 1745, 1762 and 1779 as well as a single line stamp, also of 1779. The first mileage mark appeared in 1786 - we saw a 1787 example (illustrated) - and the boxed mileage in 1801, the mileage having increased from '173' to '182'. There were several circular dated mileage marks and we saw the rare blue ink usage of 1827. The Oswestry Penny Post was well represented with an 1819 example of the first mark and strikes in red and black of the later (Oxley type 2) handstamp. Not content with showing a penny black on cover from Oswestry, Guy included an Oswestry Mulready - not a plain one but an advertising Mulready. The handstruck '1' of Oswestry had remained unknown, even to Guy, for many years but now we were shown two types and in three different colours. There were several rarities among the display of later marks: items from 1844 alone included a skeleton (only two recorded), an Oswestry 'Missent to' mark and a three-line 'Missent to Oswestry' (a unique recorded example). There were spoons and duplexes and the scarce four-bar numeral. The display concluded with some GWR and Cambrian Railway letters, Oswestry ephemera, parcel post labels and early 20thC items, not forgetting use of that vertical four-bar numeral in 1969 - by which time it had worn down to a three-bar numeral.



One knew that Roger Broomfield's 'Welshpool' was going to bring joy to itinerant Welshmen when Roger explained that no one could fill nine frames with gems from the town of Welshpool itself and we would have a chance to see gems from its immediate hinterland. He began with a few memorable UDCs - Llanymynech, Llansaintffraid-yn-Mechan, (L)Llansillin (with the initial third 'L' filed out), Llandrinio, Llanrhaiadr-yn-Mochnant and Llanfyllin to name but a few (probably inaccurately). Coming towards Welshpool from the northwest, we saw material from Guilsford, Myford (Meifod) - which was in both the Welshpool and Oswestry Penny Posts - and Westbury where where Roger had a 'No. 2' of that place on a letter going into Welshpool (albeit after 1840), a known routing but previously unrecorded. He then turned his attention to the road from Craven Arms and highlighted Church Stoke, a sub-posttown of Welshpool. Roger made the valid point that obliterators from such offices are particularly scarce. Continuing in the same general direction, he reached Montgomery and we saw a 1696 letter sent 'via Montgomery bag'. Montgomery had a number of two-line marks and we were shown examples of 1764 and 1789 (illustrated). We also its mileage and mileage removed marks and a handstruck '1'. If we thought we now knew where we were, we were quickly moved southwest in the direction of Newtown and learned that Garthmill and Berriew letters can be found cancelled in either Newtown or Welshpool. Berriew was the 'No. 1' receiving house in the Welshpool Penny Post but circumstantial evidence makes it near-certain that the 'Welshpool Penny Post' handstamp was passed to the Berriew office in 1840 and thereafter struck there. Moving into Welshpool itself, we discovered that early marks, although not BCC listed as such, are single-line but in two words, Welch or Welsh Pool. Among a number of interesting items from the town were Maltese Crosses of February 1841 in red (11th) and black (24th), the latter possibly being the first day of use. Finally, we took a westerly road from Welshpool towards Dolgellau, embracing the delights of Llanfair Caereinion (struck as 'Lanfair' in 1813), Can Office (which had a handstamp in 1828 but used manuscript markings in the early 1830s), Mallwyd (including a UDC used with a penny black in 1841) and Llanymawdd which, with Dinas Mowddu - an office that appears to have replaced Mallwyd - was under Shrewsbury in the 1850s. Steph Stobbs would have appreciated that as a fitting finale.

Our Chairman, Chris Jackson, gave both speakers a glowing and sincere vote of thanks, saying that he had learned much and that it was a fortunate society that could be entertained thus by two of its members. No one would disagree with that.

The Editor would like to thank John Calladine for providing the above report. Any errors are the fault of the editor.



THE NOVEMBER MEETING

There was a very good attendance of over twenty members at our meeting on 21st November. The theme of the meeting was 'These covers are ...'. John Calladine began the proceedings with a number of apparently identical covers. They were all Mulreadies sent from Bate and Robins bank in Stourbridge to a bank in Bewdley. Although the covers were all struck with the same cds, they were different in that they had been produced from different Stereos. Roger Broomfield then produced nine sheets of Herefordshire skeletons - all superb strikes. This was followed by a series of fascinating letters, shown by Peter Elms, which related to attempts by the Midland Chartists to get the vote for working men over the age of twenty-one. The Dean of Lichfield promised £5; the miners of Dudley offered £50. Dudley was the subject of Chris Jackson's display which included a straight-line mark of 1784 as well as items from the penny post.

John Bradnock took us outside the Midlands with material from some of the early Branch Offices in London, including Lombard Street, Borough and Vere Street. Alan Godfrey brought us back to Warwickshire with modern material relating to Shakespeare, largely from Stratford-on-Avon. Even more modern was the material on the various Royal Mail services shown by David Hardwick who ended with the star of the show - two postcards recently produced by him to celebrate 175 years of Rugby Football. Sharon described Elizabeth Lewis' nine sheets as "A load of rubbish", but they proved to be another fascinating miscellany which included a letter of 1831 sent to Ludlow but inadvertently sent back to London in the mail bag.

Chris Beaver took an unusual direction with material relating to Robert Peel, consisting of letters by or to the members of the Peel family. Harold Wilson took a look at the unofficial posts of Derby, starting with a copy of a 1654 letter to Thomas Coke at Melbourne which was endorsed "One penny for post of Derby". Significant amongst the letters to the Earl of Moira, shown by Richard Farman, was one with the mark of the King's Post dating from the period when the Earl was Governor-General of India. Material relating to 'Postage Due' was shown by Eric Lewis. This began with a letter sent on 10th January 1840 on which the '4' had been replaced by a '2' to represent the fee to be paid by the recipient.

Guy Bridges showed letters taken up on the road by mailcoaches on roads near Ludlow and Church Stretton. Each letter carried an appropriate endorsement. Roy Summers' nine sheets were devoted to material from exhibitions, in particular 'The Great Art and Industrial Exhibition' held at Wolverhampton. Also of note was a skeleton from the 1937 Royal Agricultural Show. The afternoon ended with John Soer showing the fruit of fifteen years collecting - postcards showing about twenty of the sub-offices in Rutland.

Yet again, the members had produced a most entertaining afternoon with a very wide range of material on display.

THE DECEMBER MEETING

On 12th December, we paid our annual visit to the Bass Museum, Burton-on-Trent. After the standing displays in the morning and a superb lunch (Each year it seems to be even better than before.), we settled down for a feast of postal history. But, before that Denis Humphreys presented a copy of his book on the postal history of Nottingham and its Sub-offices. I only had time for a brief glimpse at this work but it was immediately obvious that Denis had carried out a tremendous amount of detailed research for this publication, and he is to be congratulated on producing what must be the definitive work on Nottingham postal history. For reasons concerned with copyright material, there are only four copies of this work. However, it will be well worth borrowing from our library. I certainly intend to do so.

We were then treated to the most superb display of postal history by Denis Vandeveld. The fact that these notes are rather brief is no reflection on the material that we were shown, but is due to the fact that your Editor soon decided that he was not capable of producing a report worthy of the material so decided to concentrate on enjoying the material on show which was on the subject of 'Disinfected Mail with particular emphasis on Great Britain'.

Denis began by saying that there were three distinct periods in the disinfection of mail which began in about the fourteenth century. Up to about 1830, the main concerns were plague and yellow fever. Then for about fifty years cholera was the chief worry, that is until it was found that the disease is water-borne. Thereafter, the prevention of the spread of a variety of diseases was the rationale for disinfection. Amongst the covers to catch my eye was a letter of 1666 sent from Frankfurt to Genoa which had been scorched, and one sent in 1682 from Aire to Livorno which had been steeped in vinegar at Marseilles. It was noted on a 1805 letter from Barcelona to Schwyz, "All mail arriving from Spain and Italy ... must be thoroughly cleaned with ... the steam of dephlogisticated hydrochloric acid." If, like me, you wonder about the effect of chlorine on the inks used, the answer was provided in a later instruction, "Since chlorine vapours bleach the writing, ... officials should employ vapours of nitric acid." [It is a miracle that any covers ever survived such treatments, and it must be said that a few of Denis' covers would probably not gain full marks for condition in an exhibition.]

Denis then turned his attention to disinfection in England where the attitude was "it may be nonsense, but we had better be on the safe side". He dealt in detail with letters arriving by ship at Stangate Creek in the Medway and the Motherbank, in the Solent. Although mail arriving at Sandgate Creek was splashed with vinegar, no endorsement was applied. However we did see a variety of Ship Letter marks applied when the letters were put ashore at places such as Rochester. A letter sent from Cairo to Bradford had been immersed in vinegar in Egypt, and the letter noted, "... smoked or faded appearance is caused by the acid the letters are plunged into. In England they merely heat them over a fire of charcoal."

The "cordon-sanitaire" set up by the Austrians to guard against the diseases of the Ottoman Empire was explored in some detail.

In 1831, cholera spread from India into Russia. The reaction in Germany, where mail had not been disinfected, was that now everything had to be treated. The inevitable result was chaos. The material that Denis showed on this was superb, to say the least. Individual officers were issued with their own handstamps, but the one cover that should be mentioned showed a charge for disinfection and the 'Ox-head' with 'San.St' mark applied at Hamburg. A letter sent from Riga to London had been disinfected three times - in Russia, Holland and at Stangate Creek. We were shown the only letters of the period known to have been disinfected at Hull. Amongst the items in the final part of the display was a letter from Reunion which is the only known disinfected letter to Mauritius. This was the cause of not a little envy in one part of the room.

As a society, we have been fortunate to see many outstanding displays of postal history. The material shown by Denis Vandeveldt as well as his fascinating and entertaining discourse ranks amongst those.

Our thanks are also due to Richard Farman for arranging yet another most enjoyable day.

JAMES SPENCER OF HAY, 1766-1851

by Frank Bennett

I found the reference in MM106/14 to a complaint by a Mr Spencer quite amusing in view of the personal history of this particular gentleman. The correspondence that has survived indicates that Spencer was a prolific letter writer and a recipient of much correspondence.

Spencer was born in 1766 and by 1797 was in partnership with Thomas James, a solicitor in Hay. My first evidence of his dishonest nature is the letter of June 1797 (Fig. 1) to James Pewtress, a barrister, where he abused the Franking Privilege by persuading the local vicar, Walter Wilkins, to annex his signature. No doubt, he charged his client for the postage. He was still communicating with the same barrister in 1820 (Fig. 2). He was obviously making use of this gentleman, writing after the business part of the letter, "Will you have the goodness on Friday next to send by the Coach to Monmouth a very nice cod sufficient for you and I and a proper supply of oysters addressed to James Jones Esq Monmouth 'I'll pay for it'."

By June 1843, was experiencing financial difficulties because of his dealings with the Gwynn Almshouses of Hay and wrote to his own solicitor in Hereford, a Mr Bodenham, who subsequently became his trustee in bankruptcy, "I did not expect to be so callously treated about the attention of my affairs. I can add that I am much hurt but remain yours truly." When he wrote to Bodenham four days later the handwriting was extremely shaky which can possibly be explained that the letter was written at "The Rose and Crown Sunday morning."

By 1848, his creditors had caught up with him and in September of that year he wrote from his new abode, Hereford Jail.

Spencer remained in prison for debt until his death in 1851. In the census of that year his occupation was given as "debtor". His death certificate states that he died "by the visitation of God".

May, Twelfth June 1797

James Pentrice Esq. MAY

Grays Inn

Walter Wilkins LONDON

fig 1

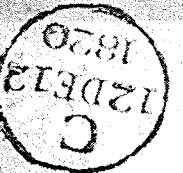


fig 2

James Pentrice Esq.
Grays Inn
London

3/4

A SHREWSBURY CANAL LETTER OF 1844

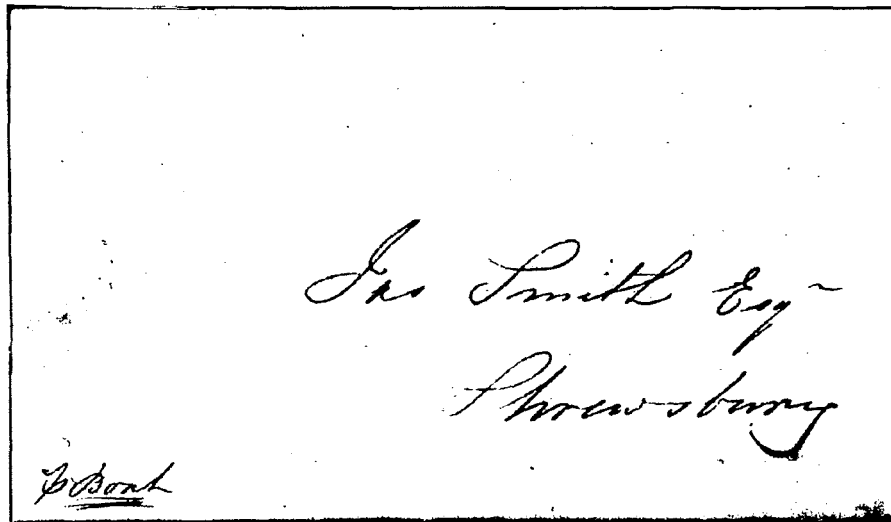
by Brian Atkins

In his excellent book 'The Middlewich Letters, Carriers Mail on the Trent and Mersey Canal', Graham Moss describes and illustrates a number of letters, which either accompanied the goods to which they referred, or related to business about goods carried. Of the seventy or so letters researched for the book, all but two were dated 1846 and only one had gone through the postal system. Many of the address panels of the letters show endorsements such as 'per boat', 'pr boat', 'pr bt', 'by boat' or simply 'boat'.

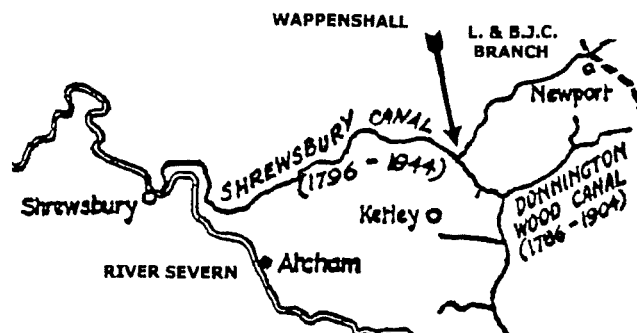
The Shrewsbury Canal was authorised in 1793 and finally opened in February 1797, though it was not the first canal to be built in Shropshire, that privilege belongs to the Donnington Wood Canal, built by Lord Gower in 1786 to carry coal from his estate to Pave Lane near Newport. Thomas Telford took over the construction of the Shrewsbury canal in February 1795 and was responsible for the iron aqueduct at Longdon and the Berwick Tunnel. There were eleven locks on the Shrewsbury canal, two between Shrewsbury and Wappenshall and nine between Wappenshall and Trench, the latter being too narrow for standard canal boats and so only specially constructed 'Shroppies' or 'narrer-narrer boats' could use this section of the canal.

Telford was also the engineer for the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal (B&L. J. C.) which joined the Shrewsbury Canal at Wappenshall (2 miles N.E. of Wellington) in 1835. From the beginning heavy traffic was handled at Wappenshall wharves with unloaded cargoes including sugar, salt, slates, tobacco, coffee, rice, glass, molasses, soap, malt, raisins, oranges, rum, wine, herrings, gunpowder, shovels, hops, carpets, seeds and sacking and this list is abridged from the original! Letters are not mentioned, but it is probable that few have survived, just as few carriers letters have survived.

Some years ago, I was able to obtain a letter written from Wappenshall, dated 11th March 1844, the address panel of which is illustrated below.



The letter does not accompany goods carried, but it does relate to goods which should have been carried, as the writer, John Morris, goes to some length to explain why he had no boat on 7th March to carry iron for Messrs Botfields. His letter was in reply to a letter from James Smith, who was a Canal Company agent, presumably enquiring why the iron had not been sent. Graham Moss states that all the letters he examined have a common thread - the wharfingers are covering themselves, for each letter explains a circumstance they felt they might be asked to explain in the future. Morris, who was probably a wharfinger, is doing exactly this, as he is at great pains to explain the circumstances surrounding the event in question. His explanation is so long that it is impracticable to illustrate the contents of the letter.



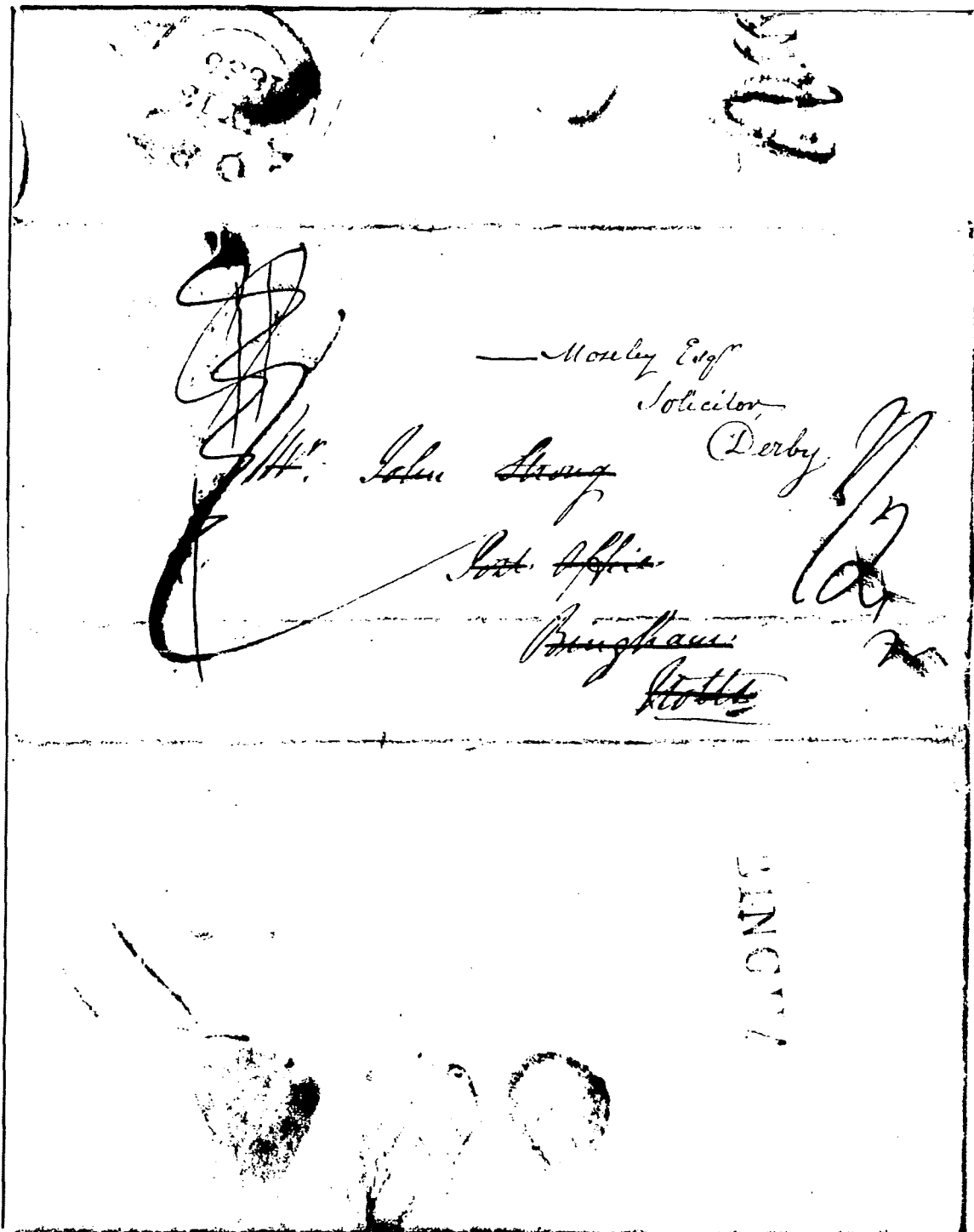
BINGHAM PRIVATE POST - POSTMASTER JOHN STRONG

by Alan Marshall

The Society's Local Posts book covers the unusual private post situation at Bingham in some detail. The following compliments this and shows what an important role this entrepreneur postmaster played in the village at that time. First and foremost, as well as being the postmaster he was also the village schoolmaster. Secondly, he was involved with, and had responsibilities within the the Church, as a letter which has just come to light clearly shows.

Although the Bingham postmark is the common NG14, it is not usual to find letters actually addressed to the postmaster as is the case here. Obviously, he is responsible for providing in the absence of the vicar, Rev R. Lowe, the requisite petition/licence to enable the consecration of additional burial ground at Bingham, conveyed from the Earl of Chesterfield. It is considered that the Dr Wilkins referred to by John Strong is the Ven Archdeacon of Southwell, George Wilkins, D.D.

Having added his postscript to the letter from York, Mr Strong crossed out the 9d rate and re-rated with an additional 5d to 1s 2d before sending it to a solicitor in Derby.



Sir,

The first requisite for the consecration of the Additional Burial Ground at Bingham is the conveyance from the Earl of Chesterfield, as this has no doubt been done. I will thank you to forward the Deed of Conveyance to me without delay. I am

Sir,

Yr.
13th July 1835.

Your most obed^t Serv^t

H. Nichol

M^r Dr. Wilkins not having a form of the petition necessary to be presented to the Arch. Bishop, advises me to write to Mr. Nichol to prepare one, in answer to which I rec^d the above, you will therefore have the goodness to prepare as you think proper and it will be esteemed a favour to furnish us with your sentiments. Mr. Lowe is gone into Shropshire and has requested me to write to inform him of our proceedings -

Yours obed^t Serv^t

J. H. Strong

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THE MIDLAND COUNTIES
IN THE INLAND OFFICE ORDER BOOKS, 1837-40

This continues the article which appeared in MM107/4 ff. Incidentally, in the introduction to that article the last word in the sentence which ends on the fourth line of the second paragraph should be "sent".

The first nine entries are those that cover more than one county so, rather than repeat the information several times, I am putting these apart from those that appear under the county headings. The numbers in square brackets refer to mailcoach routes listed in MM101/5 ff.

- 5JUL1837 On the adoption of the Grand Junction Railway for the conveyance of mailbags, the following changes are to take place:
 Liverpool Division - bags for Newcastle (Leek and Lawton) and Stone to be sent to the Railway Division. Barnet & Lichfield and Coventry & Towcester sacks to go by the new Liverpool Mail
 Chester Division - bags for Stafford, Eccleshall, Market Drayton (Whitchurch) to be sent to the Railway Division.
 Manchester Division - the Derby sack to be forwarded by the new Derby Mail. (Note: The Inland Office continued to refer to this as the "Manchester Mail", though after 5JUL1837 it only ran as a mailcoach as far as Derby. [133])
 Holyhead Division - bags for Walsall, Wolverhampton and Penkridge (Rugeley) to go to the Railway Division.
 (Note: The bags were carried to Birmingham by mailcoach [99].)
- 22AUG1837 The distances of the undermentioned places (forwarded by the Railway) are altered:
 Walsall - 120 miles; Wolverhampton - 123; Penkridge - 133; Rugeley - 142; Uttoxeter - 154; Stafford - 138; Stone - 147; Eccleshall - 147; Market Drayton - 161; Whitchurch - 174; Newcastle - 158; Lawton - 164.
 For each place the postage from London was given; in each case this was 10d apart from Whitchurch which was 11d. However see 11DEC1837 in Staffordshire.
- 22MAY1838 Among the alterations consequent upon the opening of the railway from Euston to Denbigh Hall were:
 A sack to be made up and ticketed "Stoney Stratford & Lichfield" to contain bags for Lichfield, Tamworth, Atherstone, Hinckley, Lutterworth, Welford and Stoney Stratford. This sack is to go to the railroad.
 The "Edgware and Banbury" sack is to continue to go by the Birmingham Mail [67] but containing only five bags - Banbury, Bicester, Brackley, Stanmore and Edgware.
 A "Towcester and Coleshill" sack is to contain bags for Coleshill, Coventry, Dunchurch (Rugby), Daventry and Towcester.
 (Note: The bags were carried by mailcoaches north of Denbigh Hall. [101, 103, 123])
- 20JUN1838 Dublin Express Mail at 9 a.m. is to include bags for Stafford, Penkridge, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Coventry, Rugby, Dunchurch, Daventry and Towcester.
- 1OCT1838 Among the changes caused by the withdrawal of the Birmingham mailcoach [67]:
 Weedon to be made a posttown.
 Bicester bag to be enclosed in that for Oxford and the Banbury bag to go in the Woodstock.
 The following sacks were to be sent by rail:
 "Blisworth and Rugby" containing the bags for Towcester (Buckingham and Brackley), Weedon (Daventry), Rugby (Dunchurch, Lutterworth and Welford);
 "Coventry" containing bags for Hinckley, Atherstone, Warwick, Leamington (Southam), Coleshill and Coventry;
 "Stourport and Birmingham" containing Dudley, Stourbridge, Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport;
 "Shrewsbury and Birmingham" containing West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Bilston, Shifnal (Newport and Ironbridge, Wellington and Shrewsbury (Welshpool and Newtown));
 "Worcester and Birmingham" containing Bromsgrove, Droitwich and Worcester.
 "Sheffield and Birmingham" containing Lichfield, Burton-on-Trent, Derby (Ashbourne), Alferton, Chesterfield and Sheffield. The Sheffield and Chesterfield bags will arrive by the Halifax mail.

- 5APR1839 The Halifax mailcoach [165] discontinued.
Bags for Northampton (Wellingborough), Market Harborough, Leicester (Ashby-de-la-Zouch) and Loughborough to be sent by the Manchester mailcoach. Bags for Nottingham and Mansfield to be sent by the Leeds mailcoach. Nottingham bag inwards will arrive by the Manchester mail. Mansfield bag inwards will be enclosed in the Alfreton by the Birmingham railroad.
- 6APR1840 Coleshill and Tamworth bags now to enclosed in the "Sheffield and Birmingham" sack.
- 16JUN1840 "Sheffield and Birmingham" sack to now contain bags for Coleshill, Tamworth (Lichfield), Burton-on-Trent, Belper, Alfreton, Chesterfield, Rotherham and Sheffield. Derby (Ashbourne) sent singly.
- 24AUG1840 Alterations in consequence of the opening of the railroad from Rugby [to Leicester and Derby]:
"Sheffield and Birmingham" sack to be labelled "Coleshill and Chesterfield" and to contain bags for Coleshill, Tamworth (Lichfield), Burton-on-Trent (Ashby-de-la-Zouch), Belper, Alfreton (Mansfield) and Chesterfield (Worksop).
A new sack "Leicester and Derby" containing bags for Leicester, Loughborough and Derby (Ashbourne, Wirksworth, Matlock and Bakewell).
The Market Harborough bag to be sent in that for Welford.
Northampton (Wellingborough) bag to go by the Manchester mailcoach.
- 29AUG1840 The so called "Manchester" mailcoach withdrawn - by this time it only ran as far as Derby.
Northampton (Wellingborough) to go by "Northern Railroad".

DERBYSHIRE

- 6MAR1837 Letters for Sudbury to be sent to Derby instead of Uttoxeter.
- 7MAR1837 Letters for Hathersage to be sent to Bakewell. Charge 10d.
- 5JUL1837 See introduction.
- 8AUG1839 Buxton bag to be enclosed in that for Leek.
- 16JUN1840 See introduction.
- 18JUN1840 Butterley, Codnor and Ripley to be charged on Alfreton instead of Derby.
- 27AUG1840 All letters for Dronfield are to be sent to Sheffield.
- 27AUG1840 See Leicestershire.
- 14DEC1840 Bakewell bag to be enclosed in that for Sheffield instead of the Derby.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

- 1OCT1838 Tetbury bag inwards will arrive enclosed in the Chippenham.
- 17DEC1839 See introduction.
- 24DEC1839 A day mail bag to be made up for Gloucester to go by the Cheltenham mail.
- 4FEB1840 Bath, Bristol, Gloucester and Stroud mails will be conveyed by the Gt. Western Railroad as far as Twyford.
- 6APR1840 Letters for Kingscote, Uley and Nailsworth and their deliveries are to be sent to Stroud instead of Chalford. [Details of the deliveries of Kingscote, Uley and Nailsworth.]
"Chalford and Wotton-under-Edge" sack discontinued. Chalford bag to be sent in the Abingdon and Stroud sack, Dursley and Wotton bags in the Stroud bag.

HEREFORDSHIRE

- 14DEC1840 Bags for Bromyard and Leominster (Presteigne) are to be enclosed in the Worcester bag which is to be sent by the Birmingham railroad.

LEICESTERSHIRE

22MAY1838	See introduction.
1OCT1838	See introduction.
5APR1839	See introduction.
26DEC1839	Letters addressed to Kibworth, Leicester are to be sent to Leicester; those addressed Kibworth, Leicestershire must be sent as before to Market Harborough.
11MAR1840	Letters for Quorndon are to be sent to Loughborough instead of Leicester.
6JUL1840	Bag for Ashby-de-la-Zouch to be enclosed in that for Burton-on-Trent instead of the Leicester.
24AUG1840	See introduction.
24AUG1840	Letters for Mountsorrell, Cossington, Sileby, Rothley, Swithland, Seagrave, Ratcliffe, Thurcaston and Cropston to be sent to Loughborough instead of Leicester.
27AUG1840	Letters for Shardlow, Cavendish Bridge, Kegworth and Castle Donington are to be sent to Derby instead of Leicester.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

1OCT1838	See introduction.
15OCT1838	Postage to Thrapstone to be 8d.
19MAR1839	A day mail bag to be made up for Towcester. There will be no day bag from Towcester.
5APR1839	See introduction.
12JUN1839	Letters from Kettering to be charged 8d. - distance 76 miles.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

5APR1839	See introduction.
5APR1839	Letters for Sutton-in-Ashfield are to be sent to Alfreton instead of Mansfield. Rate 10d.
6APR1840	Nottingham bag to be enclosed in a sack "Nottingham and Birmingham" and sent to the Birmingham Division Rail Road Room.

OXFORDSHIRE

15JUL1837	A bag to be made up for Benson instead of Wallingford which is reduced to a S.O. under Benson.
22MAY1838	See introduction.
1OCT1838	See introduction.
8NOV1838	Bag from Banbury will arrive in that from Brackley.
2MAY1840	Printed delivery list of Woodstock.
22JUN1840	Benson no longer a posttown. Letters for Benson and delivery are to be sent to Wallingford which is to be a posttown; the bag to be given to the Gloucester guard.
23JUN1840	Nettlebed is no longer a posttown. The letters are to be sent to Henley whose bag will in future be enclosed in the Reading bag.

SHROPSHIRE

5JUL1837	See introduction.
5JUL1837	Letters for Woore to be sent to Market Drayton instead of Stafford.
22AUG1837	See introduction.
16MAY1839	Bishop's Castle bag to be enclosed in the Welshpool instead of the Ludlow bag.
19AUG1839	Ludlow bag to be enclosed in that for Bewdley instead of the Woodstock sack.
13NOV1839	Ellesmere bag to be enclosed in the Whitchurch instead of the Oswestry bag.

STAFFORDSHIRE

- 5JUL1837 See introduction.
- 5JUL1837 Penkridge to be a posttown. Letters for Shugborough, Wolseley Bridge, Great Heywood and Shirleywich to be sent to Rugeley.
- 17JUL1836 Letters for Penkridge to be taxed 10d, the distance being 133 miles.
- 22AUG1837 See introduction.
- 24AUG1837 West Bromwich to be a posttown. 114 miles. Bag to be enclosed in the Birmingham.
- 25AUG1837 Rugeley bag to be enclosed in the Penkridge bag which is to be sent to the Railway Division.
- 6SEP1837 Wednesbury to be a posttown. 117 miles. Bag to be enclosed in the Birmingham.
- 30SEP1837 Details of the deliveries of Wednesbury and West Bromwich.
- 11DEC1837 It has been authorised that where Rates of Postage have been increased by letters being sent circuitously in consequence of the use of the railway, the rate that was charged previously shall be continued - thus Walsall to be 9d instead of 10d.
- 18JAN1838 Rugeley bag to be enclosed in that for Stafford and not that for Penkridge. The Uttoxeter bag is to be enclosed in that for Rugeley.
- 22MAY1838 See introduction.
- 20JUN1838 See introduction.
- 1OCT1838 See introduction.
- 6JUL1839 A bag to be made up for Tipton. Rate 9d. To be enclosed in the Birmingham bag.
- 6APR1840 See introduction.
- 6APR1840 Letters for Fazeley are to be sent to Tamworth instead of Birmingham.

WARWICKSHIRE

- 6MAY1837 A bag to be made up for Solihull and to be sent in the Southam and Warwick sack. Postage 9d. The bag to include letters for Hampton-in-Arden, Knowle and Acock's Green.
- 22MAY1838 See introduction.
- 20JUN1838 See introduction.
- 1OCT1838 See introduction.
- 1OCT1838 Letters for Knowle are to sent to Birmingham.
- 21DEC1838 Day mail bags made up for Leamington, Warwick and Stratford and sent in that for Coventry.
- 6APR1840 See introduction.

WORCESTERSHIRE

- 27JAN1837 The Birmingham and Stourport sack to be sent by the Shrewsbury and Holyhead mailcoach instead of the Birmingham Mail.
- 1OCT1838 See introduction.
- 1OCT1838 Letters for Redditch are to be sent to Bromsgrove instead of Stratford.
- 5APR1839 Letters for Studley and Feckenham are to be sent to Bromsgrove instead of Stratford.
- 7SEP1839 Letters for Studley and Redditch are to be sent by the night mail to Bromsgrove but by the morning mail to Stratford.
- 1DEC1840 Great Malvern bag to be enclosed in that for Worcester.

THE SURVEYORS' JOURNALS (Part 34)

"Not the Surveyors' Journals" would be a more appropriate title for this part as the journals for the first quarter are missing. The implication of a report in Post 40 is that were needed when a query arose over the allowances paid to the surveyors.

However, on 1st April 1825, we find Mr Churchill installing a new postmaster at Daventry - a task which occupied him for a week. A week was then spent in opening a penny post at Bedworth, withdrawing the horsepost between Hinckley and Coventry on the commencement of the Stamford and Birmingham mailcoach, changing the route of the Nuneaton messenger from Hinckley to Coventry, putting on a new ride between Coventry and Warwick, and attending to "various alterations connected therewith at the offices of Hinckley, Nuneaton, Coventry, Kenilworth, Warwick, Leamington and Birmingham." Next, two days were taken up in making arrangements for serving Sutton Coldfield from Birmingham instead of Lichfield, and altering the hours of the messenger so as to give an earlier delivery thus allowing London letters to be answered the same day. [Unfortunately, I cannot find the details of this.]

Apart from three days in which he was drawing up a new contract for the Atherstone to Measham horsepost and inspecting the penny post receiving offices, Mr Churchill spent the first half of May investigating the loss of several letters sent from Wirksworth. Apart from six days in Wirksworth itself, he also visited Derby, Lichfield and Stafford. Then there was trouble in the Potteries. Complaints had been made of "great irregularities" at the Newcastle and Hanley offices as well as delays in letters sent from Chester to Burslem.

At the start of June, Mr Churchill was in Bridgnorth to instruct the new postmaster. A few days later, he was at Market Drayton as the foot messenger between there and Loggerheads had complained that his official allowance had not been paid regularly. He arranged for its immediate payment as well as bringing about an earlier delivery of the letters. Mr Churchill then went on to Ironbridge and Madeley as he had received complaints about delays in the delivery of the letters which had led to a request for the opening of an office at Madeley. Although the number of letters did not justify opening an office, he was able to arrange an early delivery of the letters. Next came five days in Birmingham where the letter carriers had asked for an increase in wages as a consequence of "the arduous duties" they had to perform. He inspected the different walks to ascertain the extent of the duty and the time required with "a view of recommending their case to the Postmaster General. [Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any report on this.]

The only business that he carried out in the Midlands during July was at Newport and Whitchurch, "inspecting the duties at those offices and making various regulations concerned therewith."

Mr Churchill spent the latter part of August making the alterations caused by changes to the times of the Birmingham and Manchester mailcoach. The times of the rides in the Potteries were altered so they could be at Newcastle in time for the coach. Arrangements were made for Penkridge to receive its London letters by the Manchester mailcoach instead of that to Liverpool. At Wolverhampton the times of the rides to Bridgnorth and Dudley were altered.

There is only one surviving journal from Mr Churchill during the remainder of the year - that for November. At the start of that month he was in Ellesmere and Overton, regulating the evening deliveries so as to give more time to reply the same night. In the middle of the month, Mr Churchill was making preparations for the introduction of a mailcoach between Welshpool and Ludlow. In conjunction with this he mentions serving Montgomery with a daily post from Bishop's Castle instead of the fourday post from Welshpool so as to save one day in answering London letters.

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At the start of April 1825, we find Mr Rideout in Chipping Campden arranging a free delivery within the town. From there he went on to Oxford to investigate a number of complaints made against the postmaster. At the end of April, he was back in Chipping Campden as an attempt had been made to break into the office. Instructing a new postmaster at Stokenchurch, reletting the Oxford to Towcester ride, and looking into requests from Frampton and Whitminster for a post to Stroud occupied Mr Rideout in May.

The only business carried out in the Midland counties during June was an alteration to the ride from Gloucester to Chepstow. And in July he was away from home very little - to Bewdley to consider an application for a better post to that town.

At the start of August, he went on from Bewdley to Wolverhampton and Stourbridge to accelerate the ride from Kidderminster to Wolverhampton on the alterations to the Birmingham and Manchester mailcoach. At Droitwich, he instructed the deputy in making up bags for towns between Worcester and Bristol on the acceleration of the Bristol and Birmingham mailcoach. The appointment of a new deputy then took him to Leominster.

Again, the only surviving journal for the rest of the year is that for November. In that month, Mr Rideout installed new deputies at Kidderminster and Bewdley and suspended the postmaster at Oxford because of the numerous complaints that had been made.

In early April 1825, Mr Karstadt was making arrangements to serve Ollerton and Worksop when the mailcoach was withdrawn from that road. After spending time at Bawtry and Retford preparing the deputies for changes that were to take place on the Great North Road, he went to Nottingham to arrange a new ride to Derby on the withdrawal of the mailcoach, to accelerate the correspondence from Birmingham and Manchester, and to make various preparations on the Leeds road on the extension of that mail to Glasgow.

He returned to Nottingham in mid-May to establish the ride to Derby and then went on to Melton Mowbray to inspect the office and to change the sorting duty on the change of the mails. For most of June he was in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire but one day was spent in revising the ride between Worksop and Newark. In July there were only two pieces of business in the Midlands. On 3rd he went to Buxton to establish the summer ride to Leek. On the 15th he went to Retford and Gainsborough to prepare for the withdrawal of the mailcoach between those two places. In August Mr Karstadt was not in the Midlands.

On 1st September, he arrived in Mansfield, "respecting the situation of the Office & to make arrangements on the probability of a Vacancy." Then he went to Nottingham to alter the Derby ride in consequence of the earlier arrival of the Manchester mail [at Derby]. The only other business in the Midlands recorded in the existing journals is a visit to Nottingham on 1st November to make a new contract for the evening ride to Derby.

In addition to our three usual surveyors, we find that Mr Hart was in the Midlands during 1825. On 16th May, he went to Rockingham "according to order" to change it from a sub-office to a posttown. In November, he went, again "by order", to Market Harborough to instruct the new deputy.

ADDENDA

ALTERATIONS TO RIDING WORK

This updates the information given in MM106/11 ff. on the riding work in the districts of Messrs Churchill and Rideout.

MR RIDEOUT'S DISTRICT

	TIMEBILLS	Departs from	Arrives at	Miles	Armed
November 1824					
Add	Moreton-in-Marsh and Winchcombe	7.00 am 3.45 pm	6.45 pm 6.45 am	14	not
By January 1825					
Delete	Hereford and Hay				
May 1825					
Delete	Bewdley and Stourbridge				
Add	Stourbridge and Wolverhampton	6.30 am 10.00 am	11.40 am 8.10 am	11	
	Kidderminster and Stourbridge	5.30 am 11.45 am	12.45 pm 6.30 am	7	

Bewdley and Kidderminster	5.00 am 5.30 am	6.00 am 5.30 am	3	
Bewdley and Stourport	1.00 pm 1.30 pm	2.00 pm 1.30 pm	3	
Coleford and Lea	9.10 am 11.30 am	1.30 pm 11.10 am	11	
Chepstow and New Passage	11.00 am 12.15 pm	12.55 pm 11.40 am	5	

By November 1825

Delete Ludlow and Bishop's Castle

MR CHURCHILL'S DISTRICT**April 1825**

Add	Ashby-de-la-Zouch Burton-on-Trent	11 am 2.30 pm	3.45 pm 12.15 pm	10	not
Amend	Coventry and Warwick	7.45 am 1.15 pm	2.45 pm 9.15 am	10	not
Delete	Coventry and Hinckley				

June 1825

Amend	Warwick and Leamington	9.45 am 12.45 pm	1.05 pm 10.05 am	2½	not
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August 1825

Amend	Newport and Shifnal	3.30 am 1.30 pm	2.45 pm 5.00 am	9	not
	Newcastle and Pottery	6.00 am 9.00 am	11.00 am 7.55 am	10	not
	Shrewsbury and Whitchurch	3.30 pm 6.45 am	9.45 am 6.30 pm	21	not
	Shifnal and Much Wenlock	1.30 pm 2.30 am	5.00 am 3.50 pm	12	not
	Wolverhampton and Bridgnorth	11.30 am 5.00 am	7.30 am 1.45 pm	15	not

November 1825

Amend	Stone and Cheadle	1.20 pm 12 mnight	1.30 am 2.50 pm	10	not
	Uttoxeter Rugeley	8.00 am 1.15 pm	3.15 pm 9.45 am	12	not
Delete	Welshpool and Bishop's Castle				

SOME CHANGES ON THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

In 1825, the acceleration of mails on the Great North Road, particularly the introduction of a London to Edinburgh mailcoach [182], led to a large number of changes which are detailed in lengthy reports by Mr Karstadt. Those involving places in the Midland Counties are outlined below.

STRETTON (Rutland). This place received a private bag at the instance of Lord Lonsdale. It was still be able to receive its London letters from Stamford by the York mailcoach [179] which passed through Stamford forty-five minutes after that to Edinburgh. However, the York mail returned before 10 a.m. [an evening arrival in London?] which was too early to allow reply by return of post so Mr Johnson arranged for the Edinburgh mail to stop at Stamford for ten minutes in the evening to allow the Colsterworth and Stretton letters to be sorted. These places received their letters from the north from Grantham where both mailcoaches stopped.

NEWARK. The down Edinburgh coach arrived here at 10.17 a.m. Thus the mail from Nottingham and Derby, and Lincolnshire had to arrive sufficiently early for sorting. These branches could, however, be sent out earlier and at Derby the earlier arrival from Newark allowed an earlier delivery of the Manchester letters which had waited for those from Newark. Mr Karstadt proposed not to detain the branch mails until the arrival of the York mailcoach at 11.04 a.m. as the number of letters involved was very small.

OLLERTON and WORKSOP. The mailcoach was withdrawn from this route. There were immediate protests when this was first proposed but Mr Johnson pointed out that sending the Glasgow mailcoach that way had been a concession on the part of the P.M.G. when it did not interfere with "greater objects". If the York coach were sent that way, it would involve a detour of four or five miles which would not only involve the letters being delivered half-an-hour later but would ruin the plan of it and would be felt from Bawtry to Aberdeen. Mr Karstadt considered a number of different ways of serving these two towns and eventually decided that the best solution was a ride from Newark through Ollerton to Worksop, to start as soon as possible after the arrival of the mail from London, the mails from Lincoln and Derby as well as the mailcoach from York having arrived earlier. The ride was to return from Worksop the next morning, arriving in Newark in time for the down mails and the various branch posts from Newark. The only drawback was that the direct communication with Doncaster would be cut off and the postage increased from 5d to 8d. However, the number of letters was too small to justify a direct ride.

TUXFORD AND RETFORD. These places gained from the earlier arrival of the down mail and a later departure in the up direction. Also, as the York mailcoach went up during the night and reached Newark before the departure of the branch mails, they would save a day on letters to Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby and beyond. The deputies had to deal with two mails a day instead of one, with that from York being in the night. As the deputy at Retford also was to have charge of a double post to and from Gainsborough, Mr Karstadt proposed that there should be an increase in the salary of £34 p.a.

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THE WORCESTER TO WOLVERHAMPTON POST

In July 1825, Mr Rideout wrote to Freeling asking for advice as he had been informed by Mr Mr Johnson that from 9th August the Birmingham and Manchester mailcoach would reach Wolverhampton "rather before" 8 a.m. Mr Rideout said that this made it utterly impossible for the ride from Worcester to reach Wolverhampton in time for the mail to Manchester as the earliest possible time of departure from Worcester was 3 a.m. (It took mail from the Bristol to Birmingham mailcoach) and the ride took five hours. Consequently, the towns between Worcester and Wolverhampton would have to sacrifice either their mail from the southwest or those to the north.

In response, Freeling suggested that if the towns below Worcester opened vouchers with those beyond it, the sorting would be removed from that office and the ride to Wolverhampton could be dispatched immediately on the arrival of the coach from Bristol. He also suggested an increase in the speed of the ride.

In August, Mr Rideout reported that he was arranging for Bath, Bristol, Gloucester, Tewkesbury and Cheltenham to exchange vouchers with Stourport, Bewdley, Kidderminster, Stourbridge and Dudley. By this means, the ride would be able to leave Worcester ten minutes after the arrival at 2.20 a.m. of the coach from Bristol. The ride would operate at a speed of 8 m.p.h., reaching Kidderminster at 4.30 a.m., Stourbridge at 5.20 a.m. and Wolverhampton at 6.55 p.m. This involved an increase in expenditure of a little over £57 p.a.

Mr Rideout said that he was able to improve the situation at Bewdley where complaints had been made about being left out of the direct road which meant that it received letters from Wolverhampton 1½ hours later than it had before the introduction of this change on 5th April [See MM107/19]. Mr Rideout proposed that the ride for Dudley should leave Wolverhampton at 9.50 a.m. and reach Dudley at 10.30 a.m. which was before the arrival of the mailcoach from Birmingham [83] by which means the Wolverhampton bag could be sent on to Bewdley, arriving at 12.30 p.m. As the ride from Bewdley to Stourport had no bags to bring back, it did need to leave until 4 p.m. with the bag to Worcester, giving another two hours to answer letters. As a footnote he added that the ride from Bewdley to Kidderminster would need to leave at 4 a.m. to meet the ride on its way to Wolverhampton.

[Ref: Post 40/499/1825]

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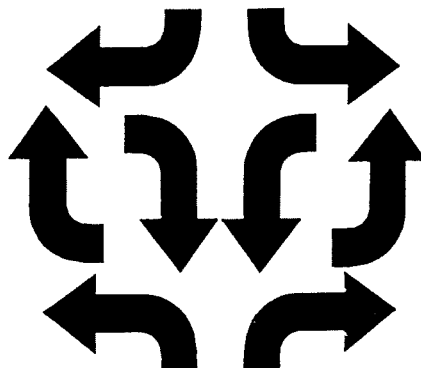
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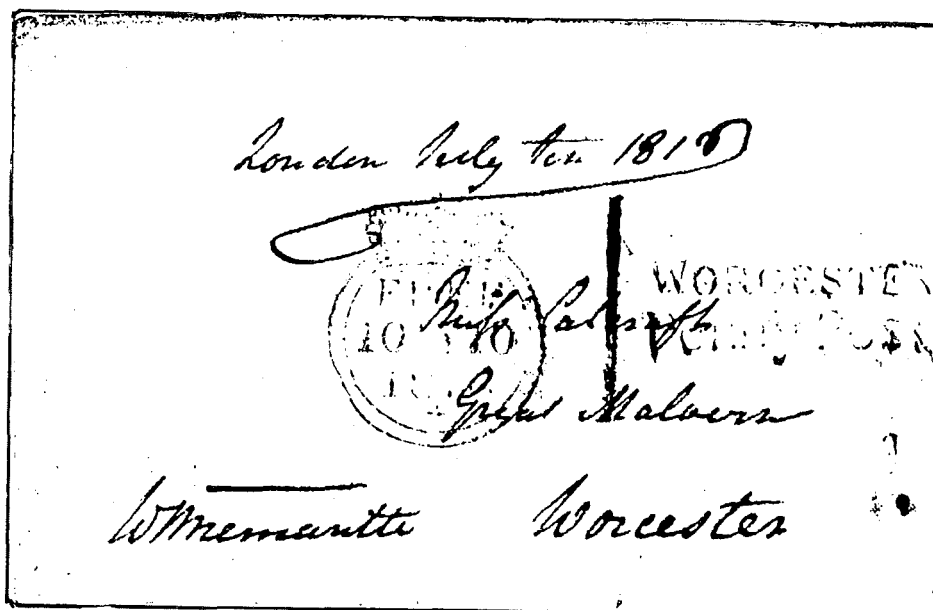


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A HANDSTRUCK 'I' FROM WORCESTERSHIRE

Chris Jackson has kindly sent a copy of a find at Stampex. It shows the first type 'WORCESTER/Penny Post mark and a handstruck 'I' which in the view of certain experts is not a mark from the frame of the handstamp. Has anyone else seen a similar mark from other counties.



ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

In addition to the volumes kindly donated by Denis Humphreys as mentioned on page 4, the Society has now acquired a copy of 'The Post Office in Nottingham' by Hall. Published in 1947, this gives a good general history as well as describing postmarks from 1810.

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

It is hoped that this will appear in early April. It should contain the usual features but all articles will be welcomed by:
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