



MIDLAND MAIL

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



Chairman:
Elizabeth Lewis

Treasurer:
Trevor Clewley

Secretary:
Richard Farman

NUMBER 51, AUGUST 1987

In my youth, the third Saturday of August, the start of a new football season, was awaited with keen anticipation. Now, the end of the holiday period heralds a new postal history season. Although, in truth, there does not seem to be a close season for this hobby. I hope that you have managed to find interesting material to display in the coming months. This winter there will be two new venues for our meetings, in London for the January meeting and at Worcester in February. Do try to come to these and the other meetings.

Since the dispatch of the last Midland Mail, a new philatelic publication, Stamp World, has appeared on the bookstalls. Two of our members are regular contributors. It is a well presented magazine full of interesting articles. My only quibble is that the title does not reflect the fact that postal history and postmarks take up a significant part of the magazine. Anyway, I wish the publishers and the B.P.F. well with this new venture.

It worried me considerably when I was shown two newspaper articles which recommended postal history as offering excellent potential for investors. Philately is still recovering from the activities of those people trying to make a quick financial gain. However it could prove to be far more difficult to build up an investment holding of postal history. The rate at which material comes onto the market along with the knowledge and expertise needed would deter anyone but the true enthusiasts. Let us hope so.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The first meeting of the season will be on Saturday 26th. September at 2 p.m. in Dr. Johnson House, Bull Street, Birmingham. We are privileged in that the main part of the meeting will be devoted to a talk by Mr. S. Bowen of Post Office Archives. So do come along and learn what Archives have to offer and how to use the facilities; this is a preliminary to the visit in January. For the final part, we are asked to bring one sheet - "My Most Historic Cover". This meeting will be preceded at 1 p.m. by a Committee Meeting to which the County Editors are invited.

The October meeting will be at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street, at 2 p.m. on 31st. October. This will be a joint meeting with The Forces Postal History Society and coincides with the Annual Stamp Fair and Exhibition organised by the Birmingham Philatelic Society.

Future Meetings

The programme for the rest of the season is expected to be as follows:-

12th. December - the very popular annual gathering at the Bass Museum, Burton-on-Trent. This year it will take the form of a joint meeting with the Shropshire Philatelic Society.

16th. January 1988 - a visit to Post Office Archives.

20th. February - a meeting to be held at Worcester to coincide with the stamp fair organised by the Worcester and District Philatelic Society.

19th. March - the Annual Competition at Dr. Johnson House, 2 p.m.

23rd. April - A.G.M. and Society Auction at Dr. Johnson House, 2 p.m.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A reminder from the Treasurer that if you have not already paid your subscription for the 1987/88 season, now is the time to do so. Cheques for £4.50 to be sent to Trevor Clewley, 127 Queslett Road East, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2AJ as soon as possible please.

MIDLAND PHILATELIC FEDERATION EIGHTEEN SHEET COMPETITION

The Midland Philatelic Federation was asked to organise a competition which could be used as a stepping stone between a local society competition and that at national level. The first of these eighteen sheet competitions was held in 1983.

This is not an inter-society competition but is for the individual member, and is judged using the national system of marking. All entries attaining 40% or over receive a certificate showing the standard they have achieved.

The present judges make a point of discussing with those who are interested the merits of their entry and how it might be improved. Many have found this useful; some have gone on to win awards in the national competitions.

This year the competition will be held at Streetly on 14th. November. An entry form is enclosed with this edition.

REDIRECTED PACKETS - THE FINAL WORD?

by Elizabeth and Eric Lewis

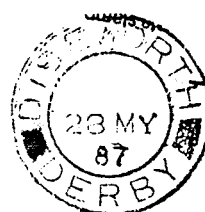
Bundles of redirected mail are now few and far between (See MM48/14 and MM49/10). However the labels now have a printed sticker and bear no postmarks or manuscript markings. Is the Post Office getting lazy?

This surely must now be the end of this particular saga.

P 688 (Rev. MAY '77)	
REDIRECTED PACKETS THIS BUNDLE MUST BE DELIVERED UNOPENED TO:—	
Name and Address	Made up by Date Stamp or Name of Office
NOT TO BE USED FOR ADDRESSES OUTSIDE GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND OR FOR ENCLOSING SURCHARGED. POST OFFICE OFFICIAL REDIRECTION PURPOSE BUILT LTD SPRING LANE SOUTH MALVERN LINK WORCESTERSHIRE WR14 1AQ Please - Pass on your Postcode! NE PAS MODIFIER LE CUI-TOUR	
OP/00049 686	

PUZZLE CORNER

What do the sub-offices shown on the postmarks below have in common? If you do not know the answer, send to the editor a S.A.E. with five double circles from Leicestershire village post offices. Alternatively, page 30 of the UDC book should provide a clue.



POSTED IN ADVANCE FOR XMAS- SHREWSBURY -

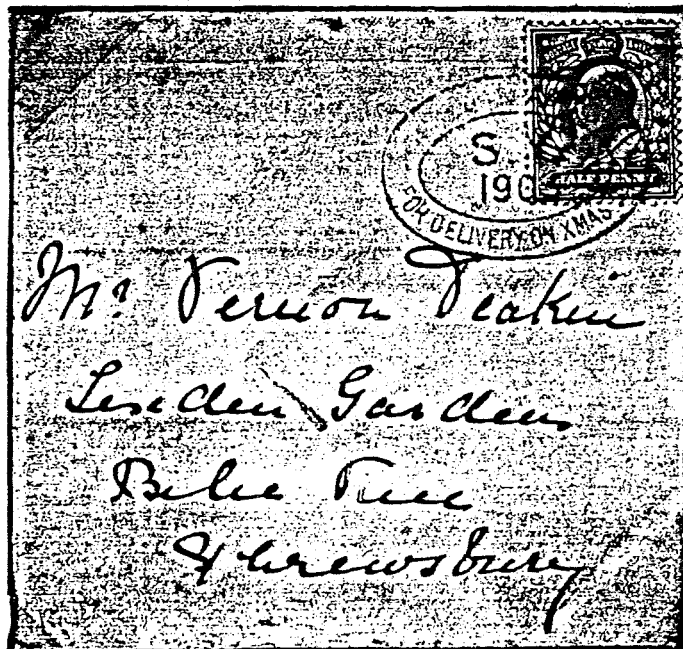
by Steph Stobbs

Ever since the article on the above appeared in MM47 I have been meaning to compile a few notes.

I have collected Shropshire items for very many years during which time I have searched everywhere for a cover bearing this cancellation. If, and to me it seems a big "IF", some 880 items were so postmarked at Shrewsbury in 1903, then a few, at least, should have come to light by now.

Messrs Meredith and Kidd, specialists in these marks, had neither seen nor heard of a copy when the book "The Christmas Story" was published. The position remained unchanged when Cyril Kidd and Alan Morley wrote articles in the June and September 1966 editions of The Philatelic Journal of Great Britain. In the latest edition of "Collect British Postmarks", published in January 1987, Dr. J.T. Whitney lists this mark with a "?".

I must confess that, some months ago, I heard a rumour that a copy was known in a collection in the County Town. However, even allowing for such a copy, where are all of the others so postmarked? Over eighty years later, no cover bearing such a mark has been found. Would the local postmaster in spite of his remarks on the idea ("It cannot be said to have been a success but when better known the arrangement may prove of considerable service") have dared to send a false return up to London? But why? Even in cities and towns where the scheme was comparatively successful only a very small proportion of the Christmas Mail was "caught".



The Shrewsbury mark is a double oval with maximum widths 35mm and 26mm, and maximum heights 25mm and 15mm. In the centre are the letter and date:

S.Y.

1903

In between the two ovals, at the top, are the words POSTED IN ADVANCE, and, at the bottom, FOR DELIVERY ON XMAS DAY. It is struck in bright red.

STONE DELIVERY

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

I have no authoritative answer to offer to our editor's conundrum, but cannot resist some observations after a little searching and rather more musing. The issue of the printed list in April 1849 coincided with the opening of offices at Sandon, Hilderstone and Milwich for which UDCs were issued within a week of each other in March - April. Not included in the list are places served from Cheadle which itself was served by a branch from Stone. The first office under Cheadle, Ipstones, had its UDC issued to Stone in 1850, though Leigh's a few months later was issued to Cheadle direct. Cheadle ceased to be a post-town on 14th. May 1849, so no doubt its demotion was already under discussion, if not determined, when the list was printed. At an earlier period, its new status would have been sub-post-town. If it was now to be called a sub-office of Stone (the postmaster demoted to a sub-postmaster), some other term may have seemed expedient to distinguish the village offices; if receiving office no longer seemed an adequate term, what about 'public post'? White's Staffordshire Directory of 1851 gives the name and other occupation of a 'postmaster' at three of the villages under Stone (overlooking Hilderstone) and of four under Cheadle; in White's terminology each had charge of a 'post office'.

Manuscript amendments and endorsements were made to the list probably in 1852 and 1853, by several hands. Barlaston and Draycot received their UDCs in September 1852; Standon's was issued to Eccleshall in April 1851 and within a year or two Eccleshall was demoted and Standon (with Meece and Millmeece) transferred to the Stone delivery. The three additional village offices were designated as "P.P.", they being of the same status as the earlier five. Gayton was transferred to the Stafford delivery around the same time. Someone seems then to have decided that sub-office was the proper term for a village agency but only got as far as erasing three of the "P.P." entries.

The other alterations are corrections of mistakes - Stallington not Hallington and Kenner not Kermer. I am unable to identify Wetley Brooks; it cannot be Wetley Rocks a village office under Leek. (Some errors of spelling remain which suggests that the amendments were made in London - Forsbrook, Hilderstone and Swynnerton are meant.) Every other place is known to me or is on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map; indeed very little has altered in the whole of this still thoroughly rural area.

Kelly's Directory of 1854, "corrected to January" of that year, did not include the major changes in the Potteries which became effective on the 24th. of that month. It shows both Cheadle and Stone as Money Order Offices. There are enough variations in the Stone delivery to show that the list was not brought up to date beyond the early months of 1853. The directory has Draycot-in-the-Moors and Caverswall as served from Cheadle, and Cotes served "through Eccleshall". Apart from the mailcart to Forsbrook and Cheadle, there were apparently six "messengers" sent out from Stone with their destinations at Hilderstone, Milwich, Moddershall, Oulton, Sandon and Swynnerton, but it is difficult to suppose Standon was served by any of these. There is mention of only one local charge - Aston, which is within two miles of Stone and practically on the way to Sandon, had to pay 2d. a letter. Naturally, one wonders why.

The endorsements whether legible or not have no particular significance for me. The signatures and initials do not seem to belong to local postmasters, so are probably those of Inland Office clerks etc. I surmise that the last addition to the sheet was Lord Canning's signature not long after he became P.M.G., but why should he have needed to see this particular sheet and apparently without the Secretary of the Post Office or Rowland Hill his own Secretary passing it on ? By now it's all musing, which is best done without an audience.

DELIFE
OR
WHO WOULD BE A COUNTY-EDITOR ?

by Steph Stobbs

Some months ago the Editor kindly sent me a copy of instructions concerning the transfer of mail, for a number of places in the delivery of Shrewsbury, to the Shrewsbury and Tamworth T.P.O. on 31st. December 1863. Amongst the places affected by this measure were Machynlleth, Montgomery, Llanidloes and Bow Street. However there was one village on the list, Delife, with which I was unfamiliar. An office there had been authorised in July 1859, so I wondered if a UDC had been issued and, in any case, where in Central Wales was it situated.

The first point was soon cleared up for it was found that a UDC had been issued on 3rd. August 1859, and had been sent to Newport, Mon. — Heaven knows why —. I duly searched through a number of gazettiers for Delife without success. So once more I sought the help of a friend who is a member of the Welsh P.H.S., and who has an excellent knowledge of the villages of Central Wales and Shropshire. (Although I was certain that it was not in the latter). I do not think that I can do better than quote a few extracts from my friend's letter to me:—

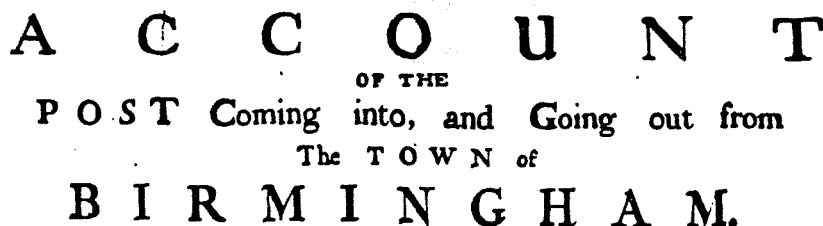
"When I lived in Machynlleth, I knew Delife (or Delive) very well. It is a remote, derelict area on a single-track road across the mountains between Machynlleth and the Llanbrynmair to Llanidloes main road, used only by idiots looking for a short cut and madmen like myself going nowhere in particular. Delife owed its existence to a huge lead mine, now derelict. There are a few very isolated farms, an abandoned church with a hole in the roof and, to save the four or five remaining inhabitants going absolutely "bats", a pub, still open, called "The Star". The post-office closed about ten years ago. The landlord of the pub, an ex-naval officer and from the Yorkshire Moors, told me that sometimes he and his wife saw no one for days.

They could not stand the snowdrifts and went back to Yorkshire. Some Industrial Archaeology people get that way in the summer. I imagine that usage of the UDC must be very rare. It could turn up on the back of a cover to Spain since, I believe, Spanish miners were employed there once."

From the information my friend had given me I was able to locate the village quite easily on my detailed map of Central Wales, where it is shown as Dylife. With such help forthcoming, as I have received in this case, from five separate people, who can challenge the wonderful spirit that exists between postal historians. All I want now is for someone to find me a UDC of DELIFE.

BIRMINGHAM POSTS OF 1751

The chart on the opposite page is reproduced by kind permission of Steph Stobbs. The original is somewhat larger than A3 in size, so I hope that it is still reasonably legible. One point of note is the entry at the bottom of the "Cross - Post West" section. "All letters going Cross-Post West, turn at Kidderminster (Worcester excepted) are not to be put in the Letter-Box, but delivered into the Office; each Letter paying One Penny at putting into the Office".



Cross - Post North.

Cross - Post West.

The RATES to be paid with LETTERS to Foreign Parts, at the Time of their being put into the OFFICE as under-mention'd :

To London & all Portugal, Spain, and Gibraltar	(Single 0 1 2 Double 0 3 8 Triple 0 5 6 Quare 0 7 4)	And so in Paper- tion for every Once the Post- at half weight
To all Italy, Fri. Narbon, or Minorca	(Single 0 1 2 Double 0 3 2 Triple 0 4 9 Quare 0 6 1)	And so in Paper- tion, &c.
To Hamburgh	(Single 0 1 2 Double 0 2 4 Triple 0 3 6 Quare 0 4 8)	And so in Paper- tion, &c.
To all Germany, Switzerland, Den- mark, and all Parts of the North Sea	(Single 0 1 4 Double 0 2 8 Triple 0 4 0 Quare 0 5 4)	And so in Paper- tion, &c.
To all Russia, Prus- sia, Poland, Saxony, Silesia, &c.	(Single 0 1 4 Double 0 2 8 Triple 0 4 0 Quare 0 5 4)	And so in Paper- tion, &c.
To all France, Ital- y, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Persia, India, China, Japan, &c.	(Single 0 1 4 Double 0 2 8 Triple 0 4 0 Quare 0 5 4)	And so in Paper- tion, &c.
To all America, West India, Brazil, &c.	(Single 0 1 4 Double 0 2 8 Triple 0 4 0 Quare 0 5 4)	And so in Paper- tion, &c.
To all Africa, East India, &c.	(Single 0 1 4 Double 0 2 8 Triple 0 4 0 Quare 0 5 4)	And so in Paper- tion, &c.

bring his letter, or packet, or to the Stationers, must go one way above the London Postage, at putting in the Office, as above.

LEST IT SHOULD HAVE MISCARRIEDI HAVE WRITTEN AGAIN

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

There are two editions of Samuel Johnson's letters. For the article in MM50, the collection edited by G.B. Hill and published in 1892 was scanned for the ones sent to Hester Thrale during his visits to Lichfield. It was not Johnson's habit to head a letter with the day of the week, but an analysis of the dates given indicated that he generally wrote two or three times a week when there, and rarely on days other than Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. His request "Write to me something every post", evidently prompted Hill to investigate for he added this note: "Lichfield is not on the list of towns to which mails were sent every night but Sunday. On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mails were sent to all parts of England", giving his source as "Dodsley's Environs of London v. 221", but no date. A similar list, dated 25th. October 1755, was reproduced in the Philatelic Journal of Great Britain for September 1972, page 70, from Dodsley's "A New and Accurate Description of the Present Roads of England and Wales". It is this list which is Appendix 2 of Denis Salt's article "Mail Routes in England in 1756" (Postal History No. 228, page 12). In fact Hill was wrong inasmuch as by the time of that letter, indeed from 1770, Lichfield did have a six-day postal connection with London and appeared on the list dated 5th. April 1775, a couple of months earlier (MM48/8, MM49/3).

The more recent edition of Johnson's letters by R.W. Chapman published in 1952 has been consulted in order to list other correspondence between Lichfield and London. Chapman supplies the day of the week in his headings for each letter, notes the Bishopmark if that has survived and is legible, also the form of address on the front including who franked it if these details are known. (Only a proportion of the originals are extant, mostly now in the United States where yet another edition of the letters is in preparation.) Chapman in an appendix, F, concerning Johnson's use of franks and the sending of enclosures to be forwarded by M.P.s, observes that nearly all letters to Lucy Porter at Lichfield, and John Taylor at Ashbourne were written on Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday "to 1781", and that he almost never wrote on a Sunday; also "It is characteristic that he hardly ever brought himself to write except to Hester Thrale before post-day."

Chapman's edition has five letters, not in Hill's, sent from Lichfield to Mrs. Thrale in Streatham, one written on a Monday, one on Wednesday, three on Saturdays; that is all of them on post-days.

Of letters to other people written at Lichfield, there are only four prior to 1784 which can be certainly identified as sent to the London area, all of them of 1775. One of these was written on a Friday, June 16th., and is known only from the content of another addressed to Edmund Allen, his friend and neighbour in Bolt Court off Fleet Street, who printed his books: "I wrote to you and to Sir Joshua (Reynolds) yesterday, but wrote by the bypost, and lest it should have miscarried have written again." The unreliable estimation of the indirect route through Birmingham and Oxford is again manifest. The Saturday repeat letter was stamped at the G.P.O. on the following Monday morning and presumably both were delivered together. Yet a third was written to Allen on the same Monday. The fourth and last was to another friend, written on a Saturday.

In the autumn of 1784 Johnson came to Lichfield for the last time conscious that age and infirmity were taking their toll; he'd recovered sufficiently to make the journey after weeks indoors the previous winter incapacitated by asthma and dropsy. At his stepdaughter's he was practically chairbound, anxious to settle his affairs and keep in touch with friends still alive; he wrote many letters in a now shaky hand. No doubt the inclination not to destroy last

messages accounts for the number that survived. Be that as may, there are at least twenty-two such letters sent to London in five weeks. The pattern of days on which they were written retains a consistency — five on Mondays, nine on Wednesdays, five on Saturdays, three on other days. Twelve of these have a clear Bishopmark, every one arriving at the G.P.O. on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, and that includes two of those written on the "other days" — a brief Sunday note on a Wednesday, and a Thursday letter not reaching London until Monday (so perhaps misdated or not posted until Saturday; this was an emotional letter about the belated inscription for his wife's grave.) The last letter before leaving Lichfield was to Sir John Hawkins his executor, who chose not to divulge the bulk of its content; it was apparently penned on a Sunday — unless perchance November 1st. has been misread as the 7th.

The total number of letters known to have been sent to London by Samuel Johnson, when staying at Lichfield, in nine of the years from 1770 to 1784 appears to be seventy-two, written on these days:—

Monday 13, Wednesday 24, Saturday 25;
Sunday 2, Tuesday 3, Thursday 4, Friday 1.

To complete our analysis, we turn our attention to the "down" letters. As Chapman's Appendix F indicated there is less consistency about the days when Johnson wrote to Lichfield in the last four years of his life; true, but still only six out of eighteen in those years were not written on the London post-days. There are thirty-eight letters altogether from 1770 to '84, twenty-six of them to Lucy Porter his step-daughter, and five of the others probably sent under cover for her to pass on. Of the thirty-three dates of writing, four are Tuesdays, nine Thursdays and twelve Saturdays. The only two exceptions before 1781 are Monday and Friday ones in 1779; later there are four written on a Monday, two on a Wednesday. (A likely reason for at least some of these exceptions was that he wanted to express immediate thanks for letters received.) Only six have a Bishopmark, all but one the same as the date of writing — a Tuesday letter of 1779 which has a stamp of the day following. A Monday letter of 1781 has a stamp of the same day, 15 OC, which confirms that Johnson could deliberately use the bypost; he might actually have taken this letter part way with him but didn't: "I am this day going to Oxford I hope to be with you in less than a week."

To summarise again, London to Lichfield letters of 1770 to 1784, including examples from almost each year, were written by Johnson on these days, the paucity of Tuesday ones being mildly surprising:—

Tuesday 4, Thursday 12, Saturday 14;
Sunday 0, Monday 5, Wednesday 2, Friday 1.

The case for the post on the direct London to Chester Road remaining thrice weekly until 1785 has been presented in this series of articles with growing confidence. Whether any other main post-roads did not have a six-day service until mailcoaches were introduced merits investigation in similar ways, beginning in each case with a study of the several dated lists of places having six-day postal communication with London.

SHORT LETTERS

In the article "Between the Lines" in MM50, Chris Beaver asked for information about Short Letters. With help from Denis Salt, who provided me with the appropriate references, I have put together a few notes which may be of interest to members.

The earliest mention that I have come across is in a document (reproduced on the opposite page) of c1780 "Instructions Relating to the Bye-Letters", issued apparently to offices in Ireland. There we read "The Short Letters (that is such as come from, or are directed to places short of the next Office to yours)...". Thus it seems clear that the Post Office regarded Short Letters as those which were carried between a post-town and places, nearer than the next post-town, which may, or may not, have been sub-post-towns. Denis quotes the example of the London - Holyhead road which from 5th. September 1808 onwards passed through Shrewsbury. On this road at that time there was no post-town between Oswestry and Bangor, a distance of about 67 miles. But letters were regularly put into the Post at stages such as Llangollen, Corwen, Cernioge and Capel Curig.

Where confusion has arisen, I submit that is largely due to deficiencies in the accounting system of the Post Office. There was a failure, before 1809, to adopt a common method of accounting for these letters. As will be seen, it was not uncommon for them to be added on to the bye-letter account. Then in some instances, when very few letters were sent between post-towns, it was not economic to account for them in the normal way on a bye-letter voucher. So again, they comprised an additional entry.

Reports of 1792 (40/74B/1792 and 40/92B/1792) indicate that, before that time, the postmasters were not always required to complete Short Letter Vouchers since the revenue would have been less than the postmasters would have required for their trouble. It was then decided that all the Short Letters, however small in number, were to be brought into the Revenue. But as Freeling wrote "I should apprise your Lordships that this will be a work of time, for nothing but direction on the Spot will enable the parties to understand the keeping of these Accompts." As will be seen the method of accounting for these letters was hardly rigorous. So in 1809 a more formal means was introduced. I think that it is worth reproducing the relevant reports in full for the information they give.

No. 63N

G.P.O. 30 June 1809.

My Lords,

I have the honour to inform Your Lordships that at certain Post Towns, Letters put into the Offices for small places in the vicinity, and the number of which letters was originally small, are not brought under any regular Cheque, but the Postmaster sets down in an Account the amount of such Postage daily, thereby making himself debtor for it to the London Office, and transmits the account quarterly, to the truth of which he swears. He thus becomes charged for whatever Sum he places to his own debit, on the faith of that oath, but as it appears by a list, enclosed, that the amount of this branch of the Revenue was in the 5th. April Quarter as much as £600, and is probably from £2400 to £2500 p. an. I am of the opinion that it ought to be placed under a regular Cheque and the oath abolished. Such a Cheque may be attained by making the Sub Deputies keep accounts against the Postmasters, in the same manner that Postmasters keep accounts against each other, and I propose with Your Lordships approbation, to send the enclosed Circular Letter to the Surveyors, with a supply of the Forms it refers to, which the accountant by my direction, has prepared for the purpose. As in general each Sub Deputy will have only one such account to keep, the trouble will be very little, and can hardly give rise to any applications for

INSTRUCTIONS

Relating to the Bye-Letters.

WHEN the Mails are to be dispatched from your Offices, you are always to stamp, carefully tax, and tell over the Letters; then enter, in your Post-bills to the several Offices you correspond with, the exact Number and Value both of the paid and unpaid Letters sent, tie them up together with the Bill, put them closely in the Bag, and seal it with a fair Impression of your Office-seal.

Dispatch of the Mails.
Letters to be stamped, taxed, numbered and entered in the Post-bills.

You are constantly to send Post-bills to the several Offices, if even you have no Letters to accompany them.

For the Bye-letters you are to keep Accounts, called *Vouchers*, according to the Form herewith given you—Enter from your Post-bills, in the proper Columns on the sent Side of the Voucher, the Number and Value of the unpaid Letters which you send to the respective Offices, and the Number only of the paid Letters, reckoning both the unpaid and the paid Letters, at 1d. 2d. or 4d. according to the Distance of the Stage to which you send them.

Sent Side of the Voucher.

On the Arrival of the Mails, you are carefully to tell over the Letters received, to see whether they agree in Number and Value with the Entries in the Post bills sent with them; which Bills you are to preserve, that recourse may be had to them in case of a Difference between your Accounts and those of the Deputies you correspond with.

Arrival of the Mails.

If any Deputy should neglect to send you a Post-bill, whether there be Letters from his Stage or not write to him by the next Post to send you the Bill wanting.

Post-bills to get.

You are to enter in the proper Columns, on the Received Side of the Voucher, the Number and Value of the unpaid Letters which you receive from the several Offices, according as the Deputies have entered them in their Post-bills, though the Deputies should have omitted to enter them in their Bills. The short Letters (that is, such as come from, or are directed to Places short of the next Office to yours) you are to Account for entering the Value of them in the Column for that Purpose on the Received Side of the Voucher.

Received Side of the Voucher.

If any of the Deputies should neglect to charge you with Letters which ought to have been charged upon your Office, you are to account for the Postage of such Letters, entering the Sum of them every Post, as an undercharge on yourself, in the Column for that Purpose, on the Received Side of the Voucher.—If the Deputies should charge you with more Letters than ought to have been charged upon your Office, claim Credit for them of *William Fortescue, Esq; Surveyor and Comptroller of the Bye and Cross Road Letter-offices at Dublin*, in the Account of mislent and overcharged Letters hereunto annexed.

Undercharged.

A Voucher is to contain the Account of Bye-letters for a full Calendar Month, excepting that at *Lady-day, Midsummer, Michaelmas, and Christmas*, it must end with the old Quarter-days, viz. 5th April, 5th July, 10th October, and 5th January, all inclusive; and the remaining Post-days of the Month are to be carried to the next Voucher.

Quarter-days.

At the End of the Month, sum up all the Articles for unpaid, undercharged, and short Letters on the Received Side of the Voucher; transfer the Totals to a Column for that Purpose on the same Side; then add, in one Article, all the paid Letters entered on the sent Side; and lastly, sum up the whole.—The Voucher thus finished must be sent to *Mr. Fortescue*, at the General Post-Office, *Dublin*, by the very first Post after the Expiration of every month.

Voucher finished.

The Bye-dead-letters together with this Abstract must be inclosed to *Mr. Fortescue*, and no one else, at the End of every 10 October, 5 January, 5 April, and 5 July, and you will have Allowance for the whole, otherwise not. On each Letter you are to write the Reason why it was not delivered, and none of them must be opened.

Dead-letters.

With the Dead-letters, you are likewise to send the Covers of the Bye-letters which have been charged to Members of Parliament, and of those which have been overcharged to other Persons, always marking upon each of them how much the Overcharge was.—If the Covers cannot be had, a Receipt under the Hand of the Person overcharged will be allowed; but in these Receipts, besides the Date and the Sum overcharged, the Place from whence the Letters came must be mentioned; otherwise it cannot be known whether the Overcharge belongs to the *Dublin*, or the Bye-letters.

Overcharges and other Allowances.

The mislent Bye-letters that have been charged to you, you are constantly to forward as directed, by the very first Post after you receive them, always charging them upon the Deputies to whom you send them, among the Letters from your own Stage.

Mislent Bye-letters.

increase of Salary on that ground, while the advantages to the Revenue will not only be the better securing the full amount of Postage where the practice of accounting for short letters now exists, but the introduction of the new mode, in the revision we shall have to make, will probably lead the Surveyors to point out many places where the Letters, now left as Perquisites, or to a sort of chance may be more regularly conveyed and delivered, and be productive of Postage without any additional expence to obtain it.

*All of which is humbly submitted by
Francis Freeling.*

Accompanying this report is a list of the amounts yielded by the Short Letters at various post-towns in the quarter ending 5th. April 1809. Amongst these are:

Birmingham £70.17.1. Gloucester £35.2.8. Leominster £15.8.4.
Litchfield £1.18.4. Newark £15.15.2. Stafford £2.5.10
Stone £3.7.9. Welchpool £32.12.8. Worcester £23.7.5.

Also attached is a sample of the Account Form which the sub-deputies were to use. Part of this is reproduced below.

[illegible]

However matters were rather more complicated than the above report states, as will be seen from that following.

No. 50

G.P.O. 10th. July 1809

My Lords,

Referring to my Report No. 63N upon "Short Letter Accounts" transmitted quarterly & attested by Affidavits, I am now to submit to Your Lordships, the enclosed statement of Towns at which Short Letters are accounted for in a different mode, i.e. by inserting them as additions to the monthly accounts of Bye Letters and the Deputies being charged with the amounts on mere confidence in their Integrity - there being no Oath applicable to the Postage of these Letters.

Your Lordships will see that the Total for a Month was £223, which gives £2676 for a year. In many of the Cases, the Letters so accounted for, are to and from Towns which are regular Post Towns, and some indeed even keeping Bye Letter Accounts with other places. All this requires regulation, and I propose to Your Lordships to do it, by ordering Bye Letter Monthly Accounts to be opened between the several Post Towns connected in the Statement enclosed, and to apply to the other cases, the new Form submitted in my Report No. 63N.

The Revenue will then be secured by proper Cheques, & will probably receive some augmentation.

Formerly, where Letters were very few between some Post Towns it was not thought worthwhile to have Bags and separate Accounts for them, but as in most instances the number is increased, & as the whole system of the Post Office has been assuming a shape of stricter regularity, I am of opinion, and presume Your Lordships will readily concur in it, that every Letter which is charged with a Postage of 4d. should be brought into some regular Account & Cheque. The lowest rate is 4d. and if there be any places where that rate cannot with propriety be charged, it is better to take no Cognizance of such loose letters, but to leave them to the Postmaster for a Perquisite at a penny each. The intention Your Lordships have to extend Penny Posts wherever practicable, will leave very few Letters not subject to some regular charge or other.

*All of which is humbly submitted by
Francis Freeling.*

The enclosure mentioned was titled "Amount of Short Letters accounted for in the Vouchers of the undermentioned Towns for one month from the 6 of May to 5th June 1809—". Amongst the towns which may be of interest are:

<u>Town</u>	<u>To & from</u>	<u>£</u>
Broadway	Campden	0. 1. 4.
Ludlow	B Castle *	2.17. 6.
	Tenbury *	0.17. 3.
	C Stretton	0. 3. 9.
	Aberithwith	0. 3. 8.
* - See MM49/18 first para.		
Stroud	Painswick	0.14. 0.
Bakewell	Short letters	4. 6.10.
Bewdley	Stourport	0.18. 8.
Burton	Ashby	2. 5. 0.
	Atherstone	3. 6.10.

Chesterfield	Alfreton	1.14. 0.
Hinkley	Atherstone	0.12. 8.
	Tamworth	0.12. 1.
	Ashby	0.16. 5.
Kettering	Rockingham	0. 5. 6.
	Higham	0. 6. 1.
	Wellingboro	1.--. 3.
Leicester	Short Letters	0.13. 4.
Lichfield	Atherstone	5.15. 0.
	Uttoxeter	3. 8. 1.
Newcastle	Lawton	1. 5. 8.
Northampton	Wellingboro	2.14. 4.
Nottingham	Bingham	1.10. 0.
Oswestry	Chirk	0. 7. 3.
	Llangollen	0.14. 8.
	Corwen	0.14. 4.
	Bala	0.17. 4.
Shiffnal	Short letters	0. 9. 4.
Shrewsbury	Ch. Stretton	1. 7. 0.
	Chirk	0.11. 8.
	Llangollen	0. 7. 1.
	Corwen	0.18. 2.
	Bala	1. 5. 8.
Stratford	Aulcester	2.15. 5.
	Henley Arden	1. 8. 1.
	Wellesbourne	0. 5. 9.
	Kineton	0.16. 8.
Daventry	Southam	0. 7. 5.
Derby	Alfreton	0. 5. 4.

In many instances it is not clear if the amounts shown refer to actual Short Letters or letters sent between the two places, or even the sum of both. What is evident from the report is that a number of letters, which were not Short Letters, were accounted for as though they were. In Postal History No. 231 page 23, Martin Willcocks mentions the Short Letters sent between Aberystwyth and Ludlow, a distance of some 80 miles. As can be seen the number of letters sent in the one month cannot have been greater than seven. It was hardly worth filling in a column in a bye-voucher for that number. I am not sure which route was used at the time, but it is possible that there was not an intermediate post-town of sufficient size to act as a central vouching point.

Although it strictly has nothing to do with Short Letters, part of a bye-letter voucher from Leicester is shown on the next page.

Received Note All Post Bills which differ in the two Amounts must be sent with your Vouchers ticked into that to which they belong.
 No 5 Byr & Croys Post Letters received at Leicester from

These bills are to be the same as those on the Post Bills Received

	Dunstable						Woburn						Huntingdon						2 ^d Totl
	Rate of Postage 9			Rate of Postage 8			Rate of Postage 8			Rate of Postage 7			Rate of Postage 7						
Date	Unpaid	Paid		Unpaid	Paid		Unpaid	Paid		Unpaid	Paid		Unpaid	Paid					
1824	L	S	D	L	S	D	L	S	D	L	S	D	L	S	D	L	S	D	
June 6						11			10				10	11				8	
7									8				17	8			1	8	
8			9			9							5	-				1	
9			9						3	-			11	2		1	2	11	
10						1 10			9				7	9				1	
11			1 6						1 4				7	1				18	
12			2 3						10				11	7	1	6	1	2	
13									1 1				9	8				8	
14			9			9							7	-		2	11		
15			1 6			1 5			2	-		8	15	1		1	2	1 8	
16			2 3						1			2	8	7					
17			9			1 10						8	5	8		7		1	
18												10	5	7		1	2		
19			9			9			1 4			8	5	10		1	9	3 4	
20			9						1 4				9	-	1	4	1	2	
21			9									10 6	12	1					
22						9			8			6 1	18	-		4	1	2 6	
23													10 9	5					
24			9										6 5	-	1 6	1	2	10	
25													9	11				8	
26			1 6			10			1 10			1 2	10	10		7		8	
27			1 6						1	-			14	6		10		3	
28						2 1			1 4				10	1		1	2	9	
29									1 4			9	10	9		7		11	
30						9			8			11	6	-		7			
31																			
July 1													6 8		8			2 -	
2						11						10	6 6			2 4		2 5	
3			9			9			1 7			1 2	11 10			1 2		1 4	
4									1 10				11 8			2 11		2	
5						9			8				11 6		1 1			2 9	
1 st Total	-	17	3	-	6	1	-	12	8	-	13	2	-	12	6	1	6	7	14 15 1 - 6 11 1 6 3 1 9 9 5
Add the Add'l Postage		9											4	3		7		11 6 10	

Sent to the Post & Croys Post Letter Office in London the 3rd July

K. G. 22

BIRMINGHAM RURAL POSTS

Listed below are the details of the proposed posts mentioned in the proposed revision of rural posts under Birmingham, dated 25th. February 1856. (Post 14. Ref. 227, p. 155ff.). In response to queries I received after the last edition, I would add that often there was no alteration to a particular post. Possibly there was an increase in the allowance for delivery paid to the sub-postmaster, or the opening of an office. For instance in the first post described below the only alteration was an increase in the delivery allowance from 5/- to 7/- a week. As regards the opening of new offices, it will be useful to consult pages 92 and 94 of the UDC book. Some of the posts were shortly to be altered, as will be seen in the next edition.

Birmingham - Nechell's Green

Nechell's Green.

By Sutton Coldfield Mail Cart daily. Delivery by sub-pmr.

Birmingham - Hunt(on?) Hill

Gravelly Hill, Oak Hill, Hunton Hill.

By Sutton Coldfield Mail Cart daily. Delivery by sub-pmr Gravelly Hill.

Birmingham - Short Heath

Erdington, Mere Green, Woodhouses, Birches Green, Harbortree Green, Pipes Hayes, Stockland Green, Short Heath.

By Sutton Coldfield Mail Cart daily. Delivery by letter carrier and sub-pmr Erdington.

Birmingham (Erdington) - Curdworth

Penn Mill, Warmley Ash, Hurst Green, Minworth, Curdworth.

By Sutton Coldfield Mail Cart daily to Erdington, thence by messenger. Delivery at Penn by sub-pmr.

Birmingham - New Hall

Wild Green, Maney, Maney Hill, New Hall Mill, New Hall.

By Sutton Coldfield Mail Cart with delivery and collection by sub-pmr Wild Green.

Birmingham - Sutton Coldfield

Sutton Coldfield, Holland House, Reddicap Hill, The Rectory, Wheat Moor, Whitehouse, Moor Hall, Shepherd's Pool, Little Sutton to Sutton Coldfield.

By Mail Cart. Delivery by sub-pmr.

Birmingham - Little Aston Hall

Doe Bank, Four Oaks, Mere Pool, Hill, Watford Gap, Blake Street, Hill Oak (Hook?), Little Aston, Little Aston Hall.

By Mail Cart to Sutton Coldfield, thence by messenger daily with delivery.

Birmingham - Water Orton

Saltley, Washwood Heath, Ward End, Bennetts Hall, Bromyard Forge, Little Bromwich, Stechford, Hodge Hill, Castle Bromwich, Water Orton.

By Castle Bromwich messenger. Delivery at Saltley twice daily by letter carrier to make mid-day collection to and from the day mail from Birmingham. Sub-pmr to deliver at Castle Bromwich.

Birmingham - Marston Road

Small Heath, Bordesley Green, Green Lanes, Whitmore House, Golden Hillock, Yardley, Sheldon, Easthall Bridge, Marston Green.

By messenger. Delivery twice daily at Small Heath by letter carrier to make mid-day collection to and convey the day mail bag from Birmingham.

Birmingham - Bickenhill

Wells Green, Sheldon (Guildhouse?), Elmdon Hall, Elmdon, Bickenhill.

By messenger daily to deliver all the letters. (A further note states that the salary and allowances of S.P. Elmdon were to cease. Presumably the office closed.)

Birmingham - Stockfield House

Acock's Green, Flint's Green, Stockfield House.

By Henley in Arden Mail Cart. Delivery by Acock's Green sub-pmr.

Birmingham - Libbards House

Solihull, Garratts Green, Hillfield, Libbards House.

By Henley in Arden Mail Cart. Delivery by letter carrier.

Birmingham (Solihull) - Charmans Cross

The Elms, Load Heath, Moot House, Olton Mill and Hall, Beggarley Green, Langley Farm, Olton Green, Squire's Coppice, Charmans Cross.

By messenger from Solihull six days a week.

Birmingham (Solihull) - Copt Heath

Ivy Hall, Maid's Cross, Pinfold, Elmdon Heath, Catherine a Barnes, Walford Hall, Berry Hall, Ravenshaw, Cow Hayes, Henwood Mill, Copt Heath.

By messenger from Solihull six days a week.

Birmingham - Knowle

Knowle.

By Henley in Arden Mail Cart. Delivery by sub-pmr Knowle.

Birmingham (Knowle) - Baddesley Clinton

Knowle Hall, Springfield, Temple Balsall, Fen End, Chadwick End, Bedlam, Baddesley Clinton.

By messenger from Knowle six days a week.

Birmingham (Knowle) - Baker's Lane

Longdon Hall, Widney Hall, Bentley Heath, Four Ashes, Packwood Gullett, Dorridge, Knowle Grove, Rotten Row, Norton Green, Darley Green, Baker's Lane.

By messenger from Knowle six days a week.

Birmingham (Hockley) - Aspley Heath

Hockley, Rotherham Oak, Ilshaw Heath, Bedsworth, Salter Street, Earlswood, Tybourne Lane, Birchley Cross, Gilbert's Green, Aspley Heath.

By Henley in Arden Mail Cart and messenger six days a week.

Birmingham (Hockley) - Kingswood Brook

Aylesbury House, Packwood, Packwood House, Lapworth, Lapworth Wharf, Harboro Banks, Kingswood Brook.

By Henley in Arden Mail Cart to Hockley thence by messenger six days a week.

Birmingham (Hockley) - Old Berrow

Umberslade, Tanworth, Great Fordhall, Ullenhall, Old Berrow.

By messenger daily delivering all the letters.

Birmingham - Henley in Arden

Henley in Arden

By Mail Cart from Birmingham. Delivery by sub-pmr. (The mail-cart from Birmingham via Solihull and Knowle appears to have replaced a more direct ride.

A ride from Knowle to Solihull was also abolished.)

Birmingham (Henley in Arden) - Great Alne

Wootton Wawen, Little Alne, Aston Cantloe, Great Alne.

By messenger from Henley in Arden daily, with delivery.

Birmingham (Henley in Arden) - Buckley Green

Witley Green, Kite Green, Preston Green, Preston Bagot, Finwood Green, High Chimneys, Bushwood Hall, Lapworth Park, Liveridge Hill, Bird in Hand, Buckley Green, To Henley in Arden.

By messenger from Henley in Arden with circular delivery, and collection at Preston Bagot six days a week.

Birmingham - Monk Path

Sparkbrook, Wake Green, Hall Green, Broom Hall, Langley Farm, Longfield Hall, Shirley, Shirley Heath, Light Hall, Monk Path.

By messenger. Deliveries at Spark Brook, Hall Green and Shirley by sub-pmrs; that at Spark Brook to include the conveyance to, and second delivery from Birmingham.

Birmingham - Headley Heath

Pershore Road, Stirchley, Lifford, Cotteridge, King's Norton, Walker's Heath, Headley Heath.

By messenger daily with delivery, except at King's Norton - by sub-pmr.

Birmingham - West Heath

Selly Oak, Northfield, West Heath.

By messenger daily with delivery except at Northfield and Selly Oak.

Birmingham - King's Wood

Balsall Heath, Moseley, Moor Green, School Green, King's Heath, Alcester Lane End, Yardley Wood, Solihull Lodge, King's Wood.

By messenger. Delivery at Balsall Heath twice daily by sub-pmr. At Moseley by letter carrier to include the midday collection to and delivery from Birmingham.

Birmingham - Halesowen

Green Farm, Harborne Heath, Hart's Green, Harborne, Beech Lane, The Quinton, Halesowen.

By mounted messenger daily. Delivery by sub-pmrs.

Birmingham (Halesowen) - (H?)inckley Hill

Hawne, Belle Vale, The Furnace, Olive Hill, Long Lane, Hinckley Hill.

By messenger six days a week to collect at all the places in the evening.

Birmingham (Halesowen) - Romsley

Hasbury, Lower Hasbury, Quarry Hill, Hayley Green, Upper Lutley, Field House, Romsley, Hunnington, Romsley.

By messenger six days a week.

Birmingham - Smethwick

Smethwick.

By Dudley and Brierley Hill Mail Cart. Delivery by sub-pmr.

Birmingham - Oldbury and Birmingham - Langley

These were served in the same way as Smethwick.

Birmingham - Queeslet

Lozells, Birchfield, Perry Barr, Perry, Perry Hall, Paper Mill End, Oscott, Oscott College, Queeslet.

By messenger daily with delivery at Oscott and on the road.

Birmingham - Tan House

Lozells, Birchfield, Wellington Road, Oak Hill, Brown's Green, Cherry Orchard, Hamstead Villa, Great Barr, Newton, Tan House.

By messenger daily with delivery except at Great Barr etc.

Birmingham - Over Witton

Aston Park, Aston, Lower Witton, Witton Hall, Over Witton.

By messenger daily to deliver all the letters.

COINCIDENCE OR COPYING?

The two items illustrated below were submitted by John Calladine. Surely it cannot be chance that the texts of an item from a remote office in Michigan and one from Gloucester are so similar? Who copied someone else's work?

Head Post Office
Royal Mail House
Eastern Avenue
GLOUCESTER
GL1 1AA

Dear Customer,

We sincerely regret that the enclosed has been damaged in handling by the postal service.

Although we make every effort to ensure that each one of the many millions of letters and packets we handle daily is treated quickly and without damage a mishap occasionally does occur.

I can assure you that we are constantly working to improve our processing methods to keep such failures to a minimum and would ask you to please accept our apologies for any annoyance and inconvenience you have been caused.

Yours sincerely,

Manager
Customer Services Unit (CSU)

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE
ROYAL OAK, MI 48068

Dear Postal Customer:

We sincerely regret the damage your mail received during handling by the Postal Service and hope this incident will not seriously inconvenience you. We realize your mail is important to you and you have every right to expect it to be delivered in good condition.

Although every effort is made to prevent damage to the mail, occasionally this will occur because of the great volume handled and the rapid processing methods which must be employed to assure the most expeditious distribution possible.

We hope you understand and want to assure you we are constantly striving to improve our processing methods in order that even a rare occurrence can be eliminated.

Please accept our apologies.

Sincerely

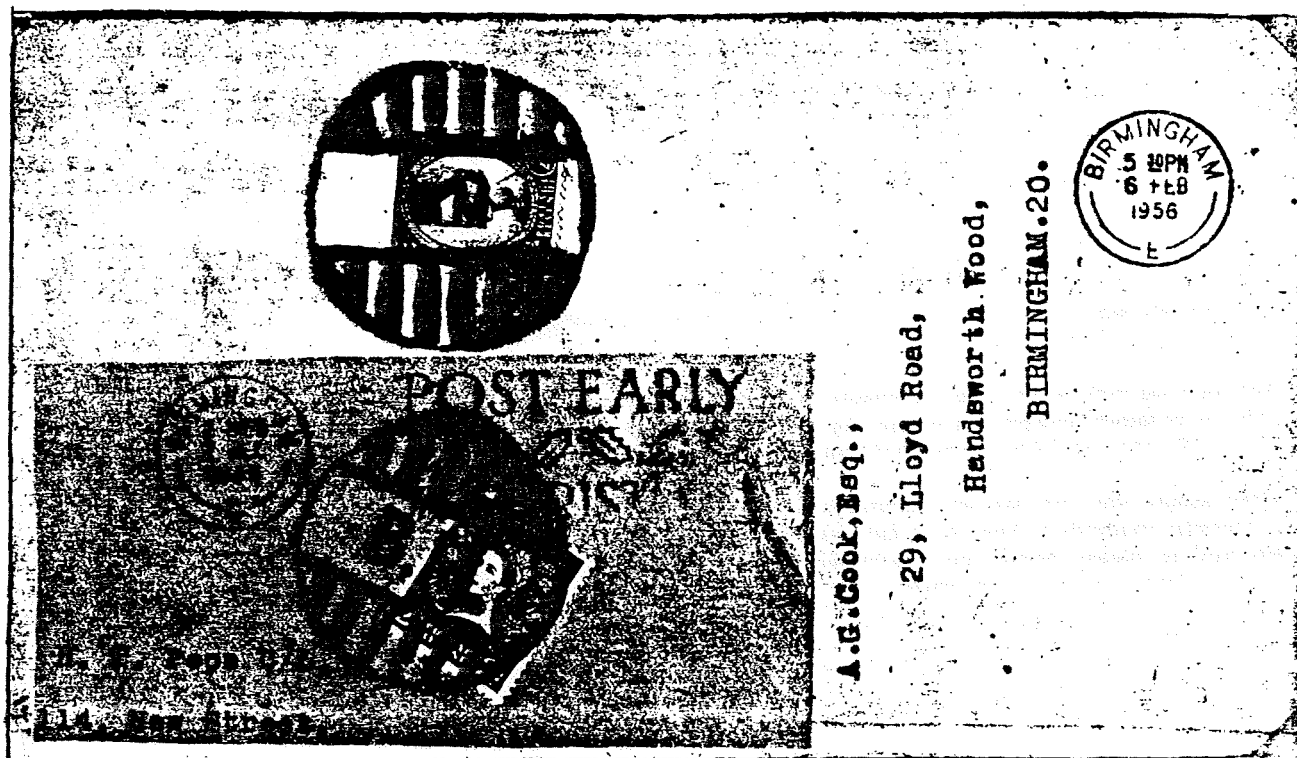
James E. Miller

MSC Manager/Postmaster

Enclosure(s)

THE LARGEST CANCELLATION

Elizabeth and Eric ask if, in contrast to the tiny Birmingham mark depicted in MM46, anyone can produce larger Birmingham cancellations than these "Grilles" used on mail where the machine canceller has missed the adhesives.



THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

This should appear in November. It will probably contain details of the Coventry rural posts, an article on Prisoner of War camp postmarks and a multitude of single circles. Also you will find out why a number of letters were missent to Lichfield in 1809. However do not let this stop you sending articles to:

John Soer, 51D, Barkham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG11 2RG.

Great Britain Postal History

from 1840 to date. County material,

FDCs and the unusual. Send for my latest list.

ROGER HUDSON
36 WEST STREET
WARWICK
CV34 6AN