



MIDLAND MAIL

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



Chairman:
Elizabeth Lewis

Treasurer:
Trevor Clewley

Secretary:
Richard Farman

Number 48, January 1987

My heartfelt thanks to those of you who have responded so well to my appeal for articles. One of my main concerns is to try to strike a balance between the various aspects of postal history and between the counties covered by the Society. The more contributions that I receive, the easier it will be for me to find the right balance. Especially, I would welcome material on those areas which have received little coverage so far. I am fortunate that I probably find it easier to get to P.O. Archives than do most members, so now that my Leicestershire research there is nearly finished, I will try to find material on those areas. If there is anything you would like me to look out for please let me know.

Since this is supposed to be the time for making New Year's resolutions, may I suggest that, circumstances permitting, you resolve to attend as many of the meetings as possible. Generally the meetings are well attended, but it would be nice to see a few more faces, and I am sure that we all can learn something from the displays. The range and diversity of material shown at our meetings always amazes me. One would have to have a very narrow range of collecting not to find something of interest. Also it would be difficult to find a more friendly and helpful group of people than the members of the Midlands Postal History Society.

THE ANNUAL AUCTION

It seems a long way off to 2nd May when our Annual Auction will follow the Annual General Meeting, but details of any lots that members wish to enter will be required by the middle of March so that a catalogue can be produced and distributed in good time.

Please send descriptions with an assessment of the condition based on "Poor", "Good", "Fine" or "Superb". Also indicate clearly the number of items in each lot together with a fair market valuation and your reserve price if any. The actual lots should be brought to the auction on 2nd May.

Last year we were again pleasantly surprised to receive a number of items to sell for Society funds, and anything you can give in this way to be sold at this year's auction will be greatly appreciated by your committee.

Please send a list of lots for the auction to:
Mrs E. Lewis, 27 Rathbone Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B67 5JG.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting will be at Dr Johnson House, Birmingham on Saturday 17th January at 10.30 a.m. when members are invited to show nine sheets on "Parcel Posts". This meeting will be followed by a committee meeting to which the county editors are invited. The following meeting, also at Dr Johnson House, will be on Saturday 21st February at 2 p.m. This will be the occasion of the two Annual Competitions, one for nine sheets of mainly pre-1840 material and the other for nine sheets of mainly post-1840 items. So if you have not yet started work on your entries now is the time to do so.

Advance notice - the speaker at the meeting on 21st March will be Mr. L.D. (Mac) McConnell.

CORRECTION Your editor must have fallen asleep during the last A.G.M. or was distracted by the auction lots, for he confused the date of this year's A.G.M. with that of the Three Counties Meeting at Stroud. Please note that the A.G.M. and Auction will be held on 2nd May. The Three Counties Meeting will be held at Stroud on 11th April; full details will be given in the next issue, but please note that the meeting starts at 10.30 a.m. and lunch will be available.

THE SHREWSBURY MEETING

This joint meeting with the Shropshire Postal History Society was attended by thirty six members and guests. The morning session opened with Frank Peach, representing the Society, showing Tonga. (If you are wondering what connection there is between Tonga and Midlands postal history, I am told by the secretary that the answer is that Frank lives in Derbyshire). Starting with material from 1897 Frank showed postcards, postal stationary and registered letters to illustrate the development of the postal services. Noteworthy items included the only known internally used letter sheet; a cover showing a barred oval said to be used to cancel remainders and also on cover a Chief Postmaster cachet. Frank then looked at the "stars" issue of stamps beginning with the 6d and 1/-. When the postage rates were reduced to 4d and 8d overprints were introduced; these were covered in some detail. This was a very interesting display of material that is not often seen.

Ivor Roberts, on behalf of the Shropshire Postal History Society, displayed material relating to Church Stretton including early prints of the town, early postal history, postmarks, postcards together with some attractive letter sheets. Amongst the items which caught your reporter's eye were the use of the boxed 153 mileage mark used as a backstamp in 1840 and a very nice notice of delivery of a registered letter. Altogether a delightful and well illustrated display of local postal history.

After lunch the entertainment was provided by Keith Parker whose subject was the period 1870-1920. The display contained so many items of exceptional quality that it is difficult to single out any particular items. Perhaps it will be sufficient to say that we saw examples of fiscal stamps used postally, the Stock Exchange forgeries, Oxford and Cambridge College stamps and several attractive items dealing with the 1914 postage dues. In addition to the stamps were a cover marked with a diagonal blue cross so that it should be diverted to avoid mail bag apparatus; various early postcards; items relating to parcel posts including a private parcel post label of Marshall and Snelgrove and a railway parcel which was a letter tied by string.

A vote of thanks to all was proposed by Sheila Hart; our thanks are due to her for organising such an enjoyable day. I would like to thank Richard Farman for providing these notes of the meeting.

THE DECEMBER MEETING

More than twenty members attended the annual gathering at the Bass Museum, Burton-on-Trent. This was the tenth meeting to be held there and to commemorate the occasion a souvenir booklet of the museum is enclosed. Richard Farman usually comes up with something special for these meetings and this year was no exception. It really was a privilege to see the material shown by Dr. Frank Bottomley whose subject was "Free Franks".

Dr. Bottomley began by showing various Acts of Parliament relating to the Franking System beginning with the Ordinance of 1654 which confirmed the privilege for Members of Parliament and various Officers of State. The first section of covers consisted of items from the Commonwealth period, the first of which was a "Haste Post Haste" of 1653 to the Commissioners of the Admiralty and Navy in Whitehall endorsed "Special Service of the State". In addition it was marked with the post house times at Gravesend, Dartford and New Cross. Also from this period was a letter of 1658 from Henry Cromwell, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland marked "Free". From the Restoration period Dr. Bottomley showed a letter signed by Charles II and endorsed "Dispatch away this with care & speed franck". This was followed by a letter sent in 1661, from Portsmouth to the Admiralty, showing, as well as a Bishopmark, the words "For His Majesties Special Service". We then saw a number of letters showing the changing style of a manuscript P (for privilege?).

When the Post Office revenues passed from the Crown to the State in 1764, the FREE handstamps were introduced. Starting with an example from the fifth day of use, Dr. Bottomley traced the development of these handstamps through the undated circular types, showing the initial of the Inspector of Franks (1787-1791), to those incorporating a crown. The 1795 Act curbed the use of the franking system; this was illustrated by covers marked with the handstamps "Above Privilege Number" and "Above Privilege". The first half of the display was concluded with a variety of official printed wrappers such as those of the House of Commons and Parliamentary Proceedings. Notable were a document of 1814 authorising the Land Tax Registry stationery, and an unused tete-beche pair of these covers.

After the break, Dr. Bottomley showed a number of items from Scotland. Amongst these were: the first recorded use of a "free" in Scotland in 1698; the very scarce FREE/E, in a circle, used at Edinburgh from 1772 to 1788; two unusual manuscript endorsements on letters which were charged, the first was "year wrong dated" on a letter sent on 1st January 1796 but which the sender had dated, on the front, as 1795, and the other was "Member left this delivery on the 19th" on a letter sent on 21st October. By the 1795 Act the Member had to be within twenty miles of the place at which the letter was posted.

Then it was time for the mysterious "O" handstamp. First a letter on which the charge marks had been cancelled and an unclear strike of the handstamp had been supplemented by a clear one. Next an example on a letter, of 1815, from Ostend to London. We were then shown an example of the sideways O from the Lady Lichfield collection. This was followed by a number of examples of the faked hndstamp - without the date, only the 18 of the year and some with no O. (the stamp had a distinctive break in the rim).

Finally the end of the Franking System was illustrated by a wrapper sent to Robert Wallace, and a letter sent on 9th January 1840 from the Earl of Northampton to Lady Smith.

Harold Wilson proposed the vote of thanks which was endorsed by those present in no uncertain manner. A further "thank you" is due to the Secretary for arranging yet another enjoyable afternoon in Burton-on-Trent.

Instructions No. 20, 1850.



By Command of the Postmaster General.

NOTICE to the PUBLIC,

AND

Instructions to all Postmasters, Sub-Postmasters, and Provincial Letter Receivers.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
June, 1850.

ON and from the 1st of July next, the following Regulations will come into effect:—

1.—All Letters posted at any Rural Receiving Office for places within the United Kingdom must either be prepaid by Stamps, or be sent unpaid, as Money Prepayment for Inland Letters posted at such Offices will be abolished.

2.—The postage of Foreign and Colonial Letters may be paid in Money at all Rural Receiving Offices, including those where no Money Prepayment has hitherto been allowed.

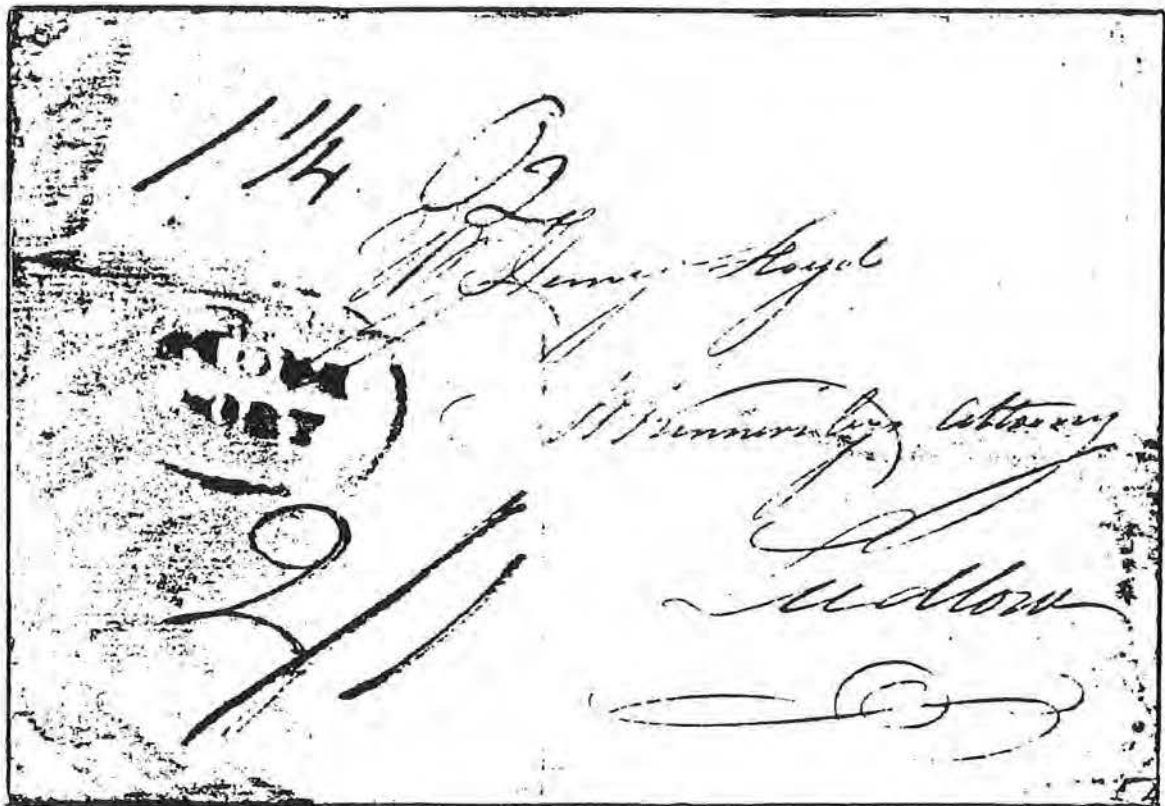
3.—The Letter Boxes at the Rural Receiving Houses will in no case be closed until within ten minutes of the time fixed for the despatch of the Mail.

A MYSTERY POSTMARK

by Elizabeth and Eric Lewis

The undated cover reproduced below bears what appears to be an unrecorded handstamp. The only suggestion so far received from members who have seen the cover is that the mark could possibly be STOUR/PORT in an oval frame. The rating of 2/1d for 1½ oz suggests that this was a fairly local letter which would fit in with this suggestion, but without a definite date it is impossible to define the limit of distance.

Our Worcestershire editor, Mike Young, who first suggested Stourport as a possibility, would obviously like confirmation of the same. Has any reader a similar mark on a cover which identifies the town of origin and/or date both of which are lacking on this cover?



From the P.O. Circulars of 15th March 1892 and 10th November 1896.

Caution as to Dated Stamps.

All Counter Officers are warned to be on their guard against a person who has recently called at various ~~Post~~ Offices and endeavoured to obtain either a dated stamp itself or an impression thereof. He is described as being about 20 years of age; light haired; and of gentlemanly appearance.

Impressions of Post Office Date Stamps.—Applications for by Collectors.

With reference to notices upon this subject which appeared in Post Office Circulars Nos. 906, 946, and 1092, of the 15th March, 1892, 15th November, 1892, and 9th July, 1895, respectively, Postmasters, Sub-Postmasters, and Counter Officers generally are informed that date stamps must not be used for purposes other than Official purposes. They must not, for example, be used to stamp pieces of paper tendered by persons who are making collections of impressions of Post Office date stamps.

MODERN COLLECTING CAN BE FUN

by Roger Broomfield

Yes, I do agree with our eminent Salopian, and to illustrate this I relate the following series of events.

From a contact with the Hereford post office, I heard, at the beginning of 1985, that all the old double ring handstamps were to be replaced as soon as possible by new single rings. Later, on 17th June, I received a call to say that stamps for several offices had been sent out that day from the Stores with the instruction that they were to be put into immediate use. The closest to my place of work was BROMESBERROW, a very small office which, I believe, does not even have Girobank facilities. I thought that it would be nice (despite being "philatelic") if I could get a strike of this new handstamp used on the first day, and so, during my lunch break (I hasten to add!!) I drove out to the village carrying an envelope bearing an assortment of Machins - oddments out of the wallet - to post it Registered.

When I arrived and asked the sub-postmaster about his new stamp, he looked blank for he knew nothing about any new handstamp, and anyway, the post had not arrived (it was only about 1 p.m.). After I had explained everything, the cover was left (strictly against regulations, I presume) and it duly arrived in Malvern about three days later. Imagine my surprise to see that the first 'E' had been left out of the name.

A quick phone call to Hereford. Oops!! "If the old stamp has not been broken up, it will be reinstated" I was told. It was very soon confirmed that this was indeed to happen. I thought that I had better not miss this, so I prepared another cover and trotted out to Bromesberrow to see again the sub-postmaster who, by this time, thought I was mad. In due time, this cover reached Malvern. Nearly three weeks had elapsed between the two dates but to my surprise, the numbers on the registration labels were only two apart, and I wouldn't mind betting that the one between was used on the monthly accounts. So there cannot be many other registered covers bearing the "wrong one".

Purely for the sake of completeness, I had to have a cover serviced when the corrected stamp was put into use and this too is shown.

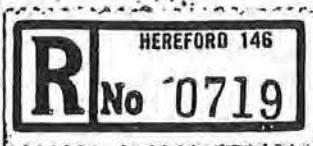
Yes, modern collecting is fun, even when it is "philatelic", or at least, philatelically inspired.

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



Mr. R.W. Broomfield,



Mr. R.W. Broomfield,
78 Court Road

(W)



Mr. R.W. Broomfield,
78 Court Road,
MALVERN,
Worcs.
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SIX-DAY TOWNS AND THREE-DAY ROADS -
THE CHESTER ROAD EXAMINED

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

"Everson's Witness to Cross Posts" (MM 47/14ff) was written in ignorance of both the 1768 and 1775 lists of towns having six-day postal communication with London which are illustrated in the Editor's addendum. The article as prepared asked if anyone knew of lists between '63 and '82. These two help to confirm a theory long held - that the Chester Road itself may not have been six-day until 1785. Several years of questioning have elicited no clear evidence to the contrary. It is time to present the known facts for consideration.

Similar lists were published in newspapers or road books dated at the G.P.O. 25th October 1755 (132 "six-day" towns), 22nd June 1761 (59 additional, but not all the others remained six-day), 10th October 1763 (191 places), 6th September 1768 (202), 5th April 1775 (268) and 1782 (246; precise date unspecified when published without amendment for 1785). There is also a list of 27th November 1786 (127 post towns six-days a week "accommodated also with a bye and cross post every day"), the peculiarities of which will be discussed below but do not affect the present investigation.

The following towns on the Chester Road occur on each of these lists from the year shown:

Holyhead 1768;
Bangor, Conway, St. Asaph, Northop and Holywell all 1786;
Chester, Nantwich and Stone all 1755;
Coleshill 1786;
Coventry and Daventry 1761;
Towcester 1786;
Dunstable, St. Albans and Barnet all 1761.

There were several other stages where horses were changed which were probably not sufficiently important places to have a London bag, but there is little likelihood that any of the English towns named had been omitted from earlier lists for that reason. Bye-night mails from London travelled by Oxford and Birmingham for some of the towns on the Chester Road, while Daventry and Coventry were so served through Northampton (Postal History 228 p.10 and MM 46/3,5).

How Holyhead, but no other Welsh town on the Road, had six-day communication with London from 1768 is problematic. Evidence from the annual "Royal Kalendar" (which generally confirms rather than anticipates the evidence of the G.P.O. lists) is that St. Asaph, Northop and Holywell all first appear in lists of places with a daily, except Sunday, post from London in the 1784 edition, correct at 14th June of that year. Even then and throughout the 1780s Bangor and Conway were omitted, contrary to the "1786" and other evidence. Michael Scott-Archer is initiating further research in North Wales and Cheshire. Here we concentrate on the Midlands.

What particularly encouraged an expectation that the theory may be soundly based was a letter from Samuel Johnson mentioned by Howard Robinson in "The British Post Office - A History" (1948). It was on Tuesday, 1st August 1775 and at Lichfield that the Great Cham wrote this to his friend Mrs. Hester Thrale in London: "I forgot that that the post went out yesternight and so omitted to write.

I therefore put this in the bypost and hope it will come." (Letters of Samuel Johnson, vol. 1, p.359, edited by G.B. Hill, 1892.) On "post-nights" a letter would go straight to the capital, but he was uncertain how reliable and how quick the "bypost" service would be since he was not in the practice of using it. He had been writing to and from Lichfield and London, home-town and adopted city, for most of his life. On that visit he wrote four other letters to Mrs. Thrale, on the previous and following Wednesdays and Saturdays; no doubt then he expected to catch the post arriving in London on the Friday and Monday mornings and

missed that which arrived on Wednesday. Could it be an innovation to be able to communicate between the two places more than three days a week? Did the reluctance to use the bypost arise because the Chester Postroad was served by locked mailcarts, the bypost not? Did others act in the same way? One way of testing such suggestions would be to study the volumes of Johnson's letters, especially by trying to determine the day of the week each letter between the two places was sent and received; that remains for the future. Boswell mentions two letters from London which were received at Lichfield during their visit together in 1776. One came in the morning of Saturday 23rd March for Peter Garrick from his brother David; the other, which announced the death of the Thrales' only son, came 'by the post' on Monday 25th, 'while we breakfasted'. These letters will have left the G.P.O. on post nights, the Thursday and Saturday, the mail-carts for Chester taking about thirty hours to Lichfield at four m.p.h. (cf. the Life of Johnson, by James Boswell, Penguin edition p.201ff). Immediately at hand for testing was a limited number of letters to London of the period, sent from Lichfield and places beyond in Staffordshire, each displaying a Bishopmark of the date of arrival. That ongoing exercise continues to surprise. "Bye-day" arrivals consist of a 1771 letter from Newcastle-under-Line which reached London on a Thursday, and one from Wichnor (a receiving house between Burton-on-Trent and Lichfield and therefore like those towns on the Derby to Birmingham cross post) which arrived on a Tuesday. The other dozen, between 1768 and 1785, arrived on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays. Others please emulate.

Denis Salt's "Mail Routes in England in 1756" (Postal History No. 228) gently pointed to 'possible shortcomings' concerning a map printed in Howard Robinson's "Britain's Post Office" (1952), since repeated in Alan Robertson's "Post Roads, Post Towns and Postal Rates" and elsewhere. In fact that article convincingly indicated that most of the roads there shown as having a daily postal service, save Sunday, from London had no more than a three-day service at that date. It had been chiefly a misinterpretation of the wording of Ralph Allen's Own Narrative, Appendix 2, which caused the errors of that "1756" map.

Other authors seem to have been misled by a G.P.O. notice of December 1768 into a similar supposition. Though it was oddly phrased and punctuated, Londoners at the time probably gathered its meaning quite well. When it was printed in 1943 in the Postal History Society Bulletin No. 25, Guy Crouch suggested, among other comments, that it contained an "interesting reference to the establishment of Six Day Posts to and from London", which is true but open to misunderstanding. Martin Willcocks in "England's Postal History" (p.24) comments that "it would appear that slightly before this date the post on all major post roads had been made a six-day post." An alternative suggestion, in accord with the theory and now put forward for consideration, is that the notice may be saying that the London letter carriers have hitherto gone round the city collecting letters, for the General and Foreign Posts specifically, on three evenings a week only, but will now do so every week-night in order to promote the under used bye-night mails. (It has to be remembered that until 1764 the bye-night mails had been separately organised at Prior Park, Bath, and it was not until the '90s that the distinct Bye and Cross Road Letter Office, renamed Bye Letter Office in the '80s, was integrated into the Inland Office of the G.P.O.). There are fascinating details in this notice, justifying a quotation of the full text, from the London Gazette, No. 10894.

"General Post Office, December 17, 1768.

His Majesty's Postmaster-General being desirous to render the Six Day Posts, which have been established at a great Expence to most of the considerable Towns in England, Scotland and Ireland, as universally beneficial as possible, have been pleased to order the Letter-Carriers to go round their respective Walks with their Bells every night in the Week, Sundays excepted.

The many instances of Letters being delayed by the Persons entrusted to bring them to this Office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, as likewise of their not putting them into the Receiving-Houses, in order to embezzle the Penny, it has been customary to give with such letters on those Days, has induced their Lordships to give Directions at the several Receiving-Houses to take them in, both Foreign and Inland Letters, to the usual Hour, every Day in the Week, except Sunday, without any Gratuity.

All Persons who may be obliged to send their letters after that Hour to the Bell-Men should be cautious whom they trust therewith, to prevent their being either detained till the next Day, or destroyed for the Pence.

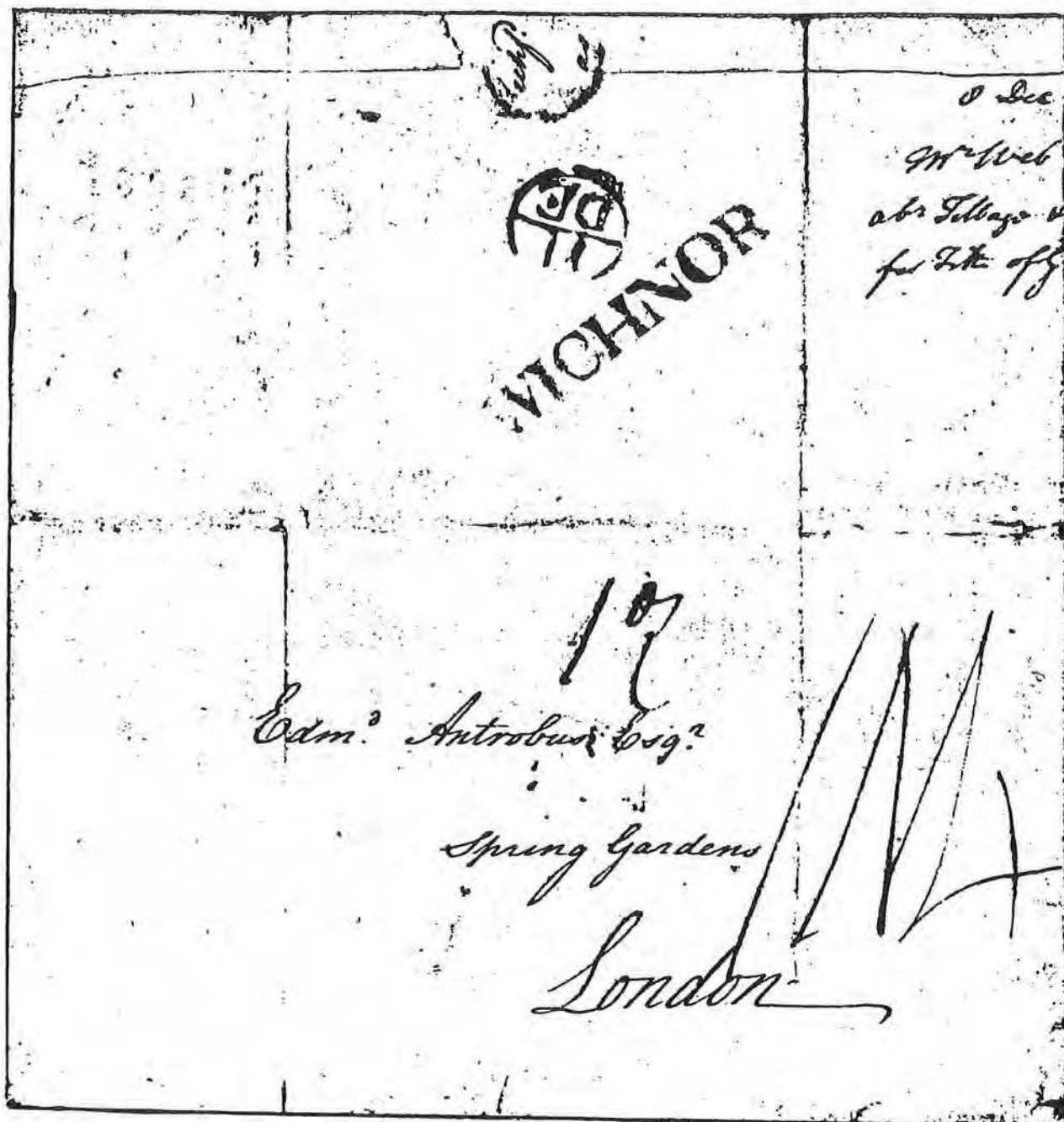
Each Letter-Carrier will for the Future, besides the usual Ticket at his Breast, be furnished with a printed one of the Hour he is daily dispatched from hence, in order to produce it to such Persons as may desire to be satisfied their Letters are not delayed.

*By Command of the Postmaster-General
Anth. Todd, Secretary."*

The first G.P.O. six-day list to contain all the post towns on the Chester Road, as has been stated, was that of 1786. This notice is different from the previous six in important respects. The occasion of its publication was the extension of Palmer's Plan to York, Newcastle and Edinburgh (the last of the main routes to be converted), and it was therefore issued over the name of Charles Bonner, Palmer's deputy at the London Mail Coach Office, instead of that of Anthony Todd, the Secretary to the P.M.G. It lists only those post towns with six-day postal communication with London which also had a seven-day postal communication with towns on the Great North Road (or were on that road) and which therefore sent bags to one another by cross and bye posts, not through London. So it includes no towns south and west of London; the Worcester Mail Coach happens to be mentioned, but Worcester is not listed; Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourbridge are whereas Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon are not. There is no reason to suppose this list is inaccurate once its intended limitation is clarified, though it must surely be an oversight that York does not appear. No attempt to order the towns alphabetically beyond their initial letters may betray haste in its compilation. Plenty of other post towns not listed also had a six-day post with London and seven-day cross and bye posts, and it may be few of the public found this notice clear. The art of devising announcements whose import is obscure to the uninitiated is not a skill confined to government officials of the 1980s.

If this examination of evidence concerning the Chester Road finds any favour, it may prompt similar investigation concerning the frequency of postal services on several other routes prior to the introduction of mail coaches.

On the opposite page a bye post letter is shown. Few eighteenth century letters were stamped at General Post receiving houses. However the letter illustrated was stamped at Wichnor Bridges on the Derby to Birmingham cross post. Since it arrived in London on a Tuesday - 11th December 1781 - it will have gone on the bye mail from Birmingham and not turned onto the Chester Road at Lichfield. It was charged at four times the single since it weighed over 1 oz.



Editor's Note: We had hoped to illustrate Chris's article with a copy of the 1786 list but it has not proved possible to obtain a reproduceable copy in the time available. There is a copy on page six of the booklet, issued with the "mail coach" stamps in 1984, "Speed, Regularity and Security, In Celebration of the Royal Mail."

I would like to thank Chris for drawing my attention to the fact that Wooburn and High Wycombe are included on the 1768 list and should not have been marked with a cross on page seventeen of the last edition. My apologies for this error. I have now taken the advice which, in my youth, I gave to a number of gentlemen at Filbert Street, Leicester - I've got a pair of specs.

THE PEOVER PAPERS
AND THE MIDLAND COUNTIES

From the work of Dr. J.W.M. Stone, M.B.

Part Four

C31 20CT73 Vol Two, p8. To Mr. Barber at Stone asking if he can settle the new branch or leave it as it is; if settled it would turn to both their accounts. He would not have been willing to continue Mr. Barber's salary to the height it is but in prospect of it. Col. Whitley had asked Mr. Hicks to acquaint him that Lady Gerard is much unsatisfied with him, not only as to not franking her letters (in that Col. Whitley hopes to have satisfied her, however he would not dispute it much with a lady) but in several other particulars.

C32 40CT73 Vol Two, p9. He writes to Mr. Barber stating that those paid Irish letters that had the endorsement of the stage whence they were sent might easily have been charged by him on the person that received the money (account of them being kept, and notice given to the office, at the foot of Mr. Barber's bills). The other, that had "the blinde-Post-paid" upon them should have been charged on Litchfield as in the case of other by-letters that have no superscription whence they came.

N2 70CT73 Vol Two, p12. To Mr. Baldock at Newark informing him that he is willing to let him have the by-letters at £10 which, if he dislikes, Col. Whitley must expect a just account of.

C33 90CT73 Vol Two, p13. A further letter to Mr. Barber saying that he begins to fear for his new branch; no people are more fit to agree with the people than he and Mr. Eccles (Manchester). Col. Whitley will write about the Irish letters as he advises, but is a little surprised what he writes of an agreement with Hodgkinson, there being no resolution yet taken in the business.

Bg4 1NOV73 Vol Two, p40. To Mr. Philpotts at Hereford. The present from his uncle, made to Col. Whitley, he receives as a civility from Mr. Philpotts.

Bg5 1NOV73 Vol Two, p41. To Mr. Webley at Gloucester. Is sorry he (to excuse his neglects and the badness of his horses) lays the blame on the lessening of his salary. If he is not pleased with it, to give Col. Whitley fair warning and he will ease him of it.

C34 20NOV73 Vol Two, p63. To Mr. Felton at Stafford. Received his, which was sent to him to offer choice to take a deputation (Editor's Note: See MM 44/8) or act without it (the charge being so great) which he may do if he desire.

C35 11DEC73 Vol Two, p83. To Mr. Cranke at Birmingham saying that he does not demand £20 p.a. for the by-letters of Birmingham alone, but for all of his branch, viz. Worcester, Salop, Ludlow and intervening places. He thanks him for his civility in offering Col. Whitley's servant accommodation if sent to watch the receipt of Birmingham, but Col. Whitley must send also to other towns. If Col. Whitley proves that he does not give true account in his whole branch, he will be liable to the penalty of his bonds.

C36 20DEC73 Vol Two, p92. To Mr. Barber. He is glad he has settled his new branch. As to his proposal to have another from Latongate, he is afraid it will disoblige Lord Brereton to take all the profit out of Hodgkinson's (Brereton Green) hands; on the other hand he knows not how to refuse so reasonable a request from such as the Barron of Kinderton. He would be glad if Mr. Barber can persuade them to let their letters go as now, but if they will not, it is certain they may order their letters to be left where they please and send whom they please for them.

C37 25DEC73 Vol Two, p97. To Mr. Holbech at Coleshill saying that he shall have the by-letters for £4 p.a.

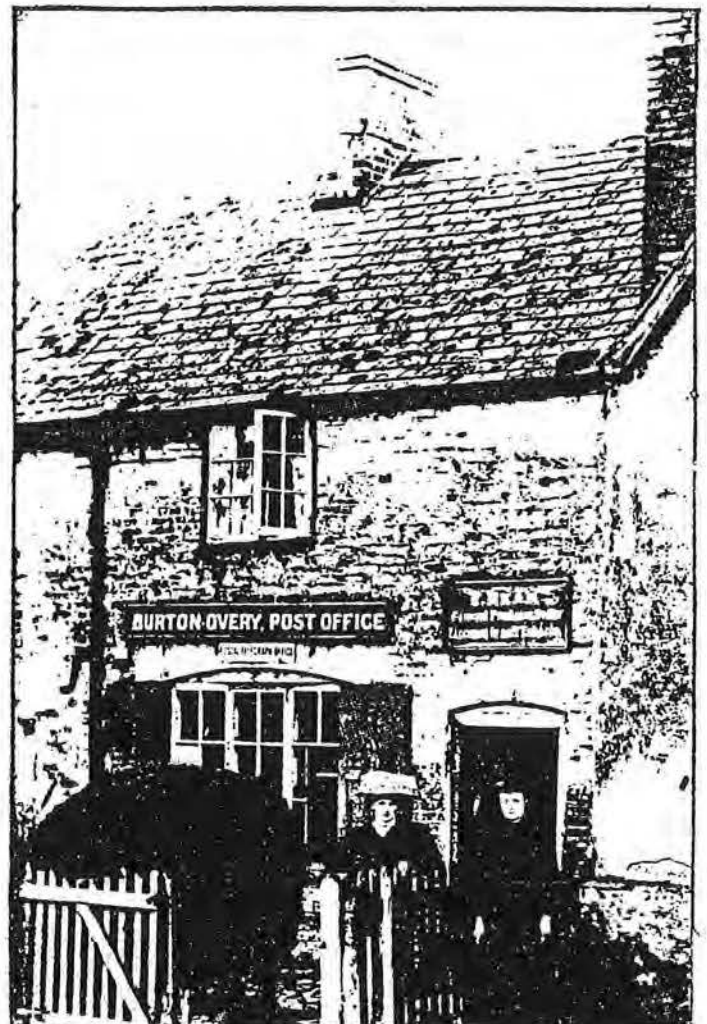
(To be continued)

TWO VILLAGE POST OFFICES

Illustrated are two postcards (the top one is enlarged) of two Leicestershire post offices, of about 1910, which I did not show at the October meeting.

The Sibstone (Sibson) office was in the small building attached to the house at the centre-left of the picture. From the site of the Cock Inn, it appears that the houses have been demolished; in fact the A444 now runs through the site.

The message on the back of the Burton Overy card states 'That is Miss Read with no hat on'. The present office occupies the same building.



REDIRECTED PACKETS

by Elizabeth and Eric Lewis

We recently came across a Post Office wrapper used in 1965 to enclose a bundle of redirected mail. These wrappers were obviously used to save Post Office staff the laborious job of re-addressing a number of letters and to enable them to treat the resulting package as one item. They would, of course, only be used when a person had requested and presumably paid for their mail to be redirected.

Note the layout of the labels which enabled them to be wrapped around more than one size of bundle.

Has any other member come across such an item? It is improbable that many have survived as the vast majority would be destroyed on opening. Perhaps someone could also tell us if they are still in use today.

W65583/10780 350m. 3/54 J.W.A. G451		P688 G (57794/42)
REDIRECTED PACKETS THIS BUNDLE MUST BE DELIVERED UNOPENED TO:		
Name and Address	<i>Mr. Gordon Adams</i> <i>Kennerley bustle</i> <i>Kennerley</i> <i>Hereford -</i>	
	Made up by Date stamp or Name of Office 	
NOT TO BE USED for ADDRESSES OUTSIDE GREAT BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND.		
REDIRECTED PACKETS THIS BUNDLE MUST NOT BE CUT OPEN		
REDIRECTED PACKETS THIS BUNDLE MUST NOT BE CUT OPEN		

BOOKS THAT MAY INTEREST YOU - 15

From a new list compiled by Ted Heath

ASH, Russell "Dear Cats: the Post Office Letters". Pavilion Books, October 1986, 112 pages, 20 line drawings, £6.95 (ISBN 1-85145-085-8). For more than a century a dedicated team of cats has been on the payroll of the Post Office. The book is based on a collection of original letters and memoranda preserved at P.O. Archives.

BOTTERILL, David "Kenilworth Posts" Kenilworth History and Archaeology Society, 1985. Available from R.A. Storey, 9 New Street, Kenilworth CV8 2EY, £0.10

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REYNOLDS, P.R. "Machine Cancellations of Wales, 1905-85". From Welsh Philatelic Society, 87 Gabalfa Road, Sketty, SA2 8ND. March 1986, 95 pages, illustrated, 5 maps, paperback, £3.50. (ISBN 0-904098-03-6).

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FOR

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A COMPARISON OF THE 1807 CIRCULATION MAPS
OF BIRMINGHAM AND DERBY

The Birmingham map (P.O. Archives Post 10A) is dated October 1807; that of Derby 6th April 1807. On the Derby map has been written "...new circulation in Mr. Hart's district in consequence of the establishment of Mail Coaches from Sheffield to Halifax and Huddersfield, and from Leicester to Coventry by which communications these places have the same circulation as Birmingham." I imagine that this addition was made in 1810 as the Leicester to Coventry mail coach ran for the first time on 29th October 1810. The very thick line joining the above towns to Birmingham was probably added at the same time.

Before looking at the maps it is possibly relevant to mention a ruling of Freeling concerning instances when there were two possible routes for a letter to take. The matter arose in 1829 when complaints were made about letters sent from Wellingborough to Oakham. The shortest route was through Kettering but the timing of the rides was such that unless a letter was posted before 6 a.m. it took two days for the letter to travel the 28 miles. On the other hand, letters posted before 8 p.m. reached Oakham the following afternoon but the route was through Northampton and Leicester at a cost of 8d. as opposed to 6d. by way of Kettering. Freeling's ruling was that the faster route, even if it was the more circuitous, according to the time of posting was to be used. He added "persons to whom time is not so much an object as the expense, can easily regulate the putting in of letters."

There are differences in circulation to various towns, and we will consider each area in turn starting with the counties of the Midlands.

Leicestershire/Rutland

The apparent difference in the routes of letters to Melton Mowbray, Oakham and Uppingham is probably due to the difference in dates of the maps. The Leeds - Nottingham - Bedford - London mail coach was established in the summer of 1807, so by the autumn Derby almost certainly sent its letters by the route shown on the Birmingham map. Also of note is the fact that before 1810 both towns sent letters to Hinckley through Northampton rather than Lichfield. However it is likely that in 1792 letters from Birmingham went through Lichfield. (See an article in the next Midland Mail).

Derbyshire

The route from Birmingham to Ashbourne through Macclesfield and Leek is most surprising. In fact, I find it difficult to believe that so circuitous a route was used. On the list of Birmingham mails dated 19th April 1807, shown on plate 19 in England's Postal History, the only towns in Derbyshire not sent by the Sheffield mail were Buxton, Tideswell and Chapel-en-le-Frith. If the route was used the single rate between 1805 and 1812 would have been 8d. Can anyone confirm this?

Worcestershire

The Derby letters for Stourbridge, Kidderminster, Bewdley, Stourport and Evesham were sent through Worcester, whereas those for the first four towns from Birmingham went through Wolverhampton, and those for Evesham through Chipping Norton.

Gloucestershire

The statements concerning Evesham also apply to Morton-in-the-Marsh, Broadway, Bourton-on-the-Water and Chipping Campden. Derby to Northleach was via Worcester; Birmingham to Northleach via Oxford.

Warwickshire

Nuneaton received its letters through Hinckley - see Leicestershire.

Northamptonshire

On the introduction of the Leeds - Bedford - London mail coach the rides between Wellingborough and Kettering, and between Oundle and Rockingham were withdrawn. So presumably letters from Derby to Rockingham, Kettering and possibly Higham Ferrers were then sent through Nottingham.

Eastern Counties

The noticeable difference here is that Birmingham letters for the whole of East Anglia, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Lincolnshire as far north as Folkingham and Louth were sent through London. On the other hand, apart from Essex and a few towns on the southern borders of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, the Derby letters went by way of Newark, but not through London.

Northern Counties

Here there was little difference between the two circulations. Mail from both towns to the North of England on and to the east of the road running through Newark, Wetherby and Greta Bridge, and the branches from this road to Worksop, Otley, Harrogate, Ripon and Askrigg are shown as going through Newark. There is a discrepancy between this and the 1807 list of Birmingham mails, previously referred to, which says that Durham and Northumberland letters went on the Manchester mail.

The rest of Yorkshire apart from Skipton and Settle was served through Sheffield. Letters for Westmoreland, Cumberland and Lancashire apart from Warrington, Liverpool and Ormskirk went through Manchester in both instances.

Since Manchester was reached by different roads from the two towns, the places in Cheshire on the road from Birmingham received their Derby letters through Manchester. The towns on the road from Derby received their Birmingham letters in the same way.

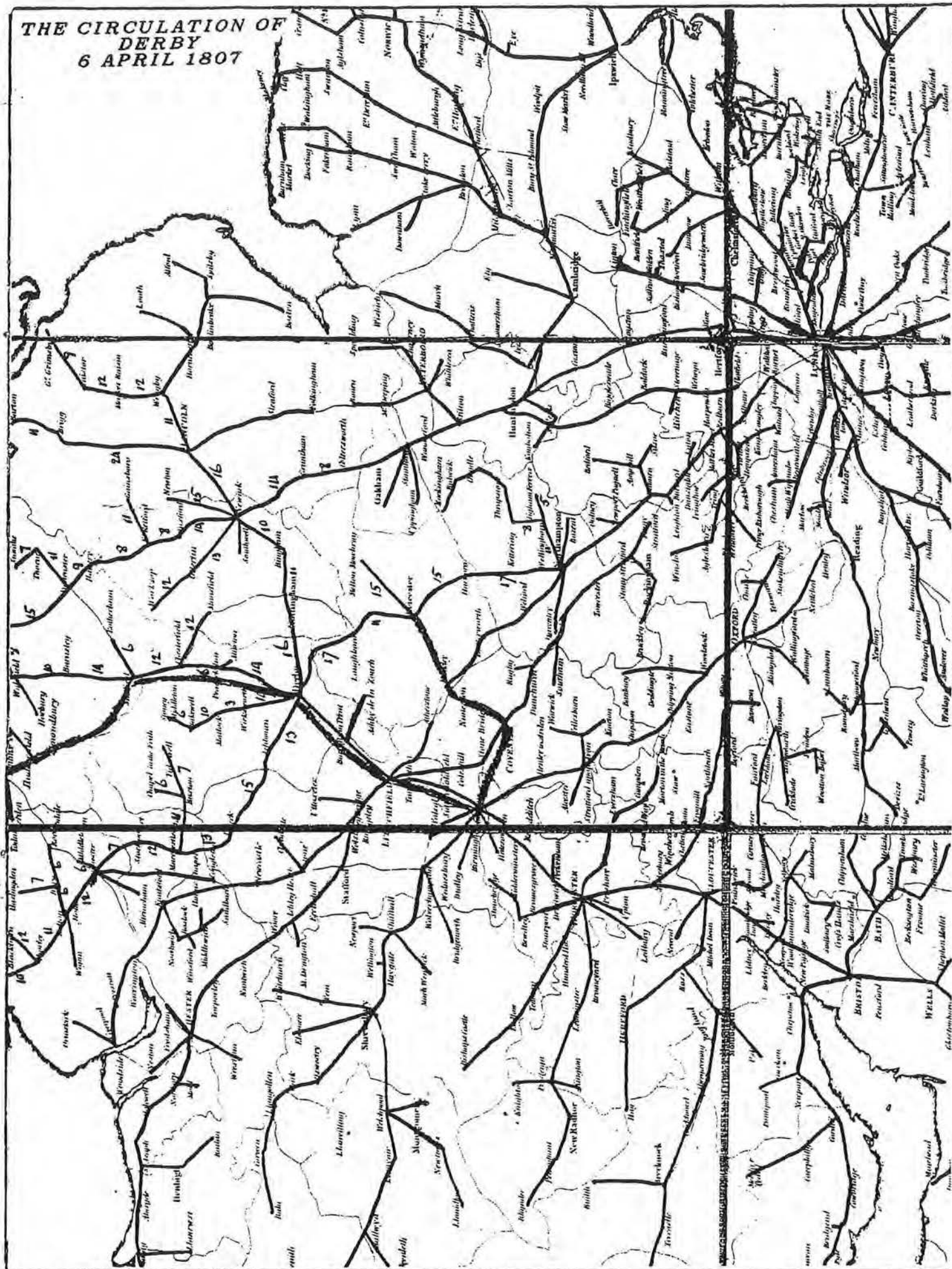
Southern Counties

Again there were very marked differences in circulation here. From Derby letters were sent via London for towns, on each of the main routes, as far west as High Wycombe, Marlborough, Devizes, Wincanton, Yeovil and Lyme Regis. For Birmingham a similar boundary lay further to the east taking in Oakingham, Stockbridge, Alresford and Fareham.

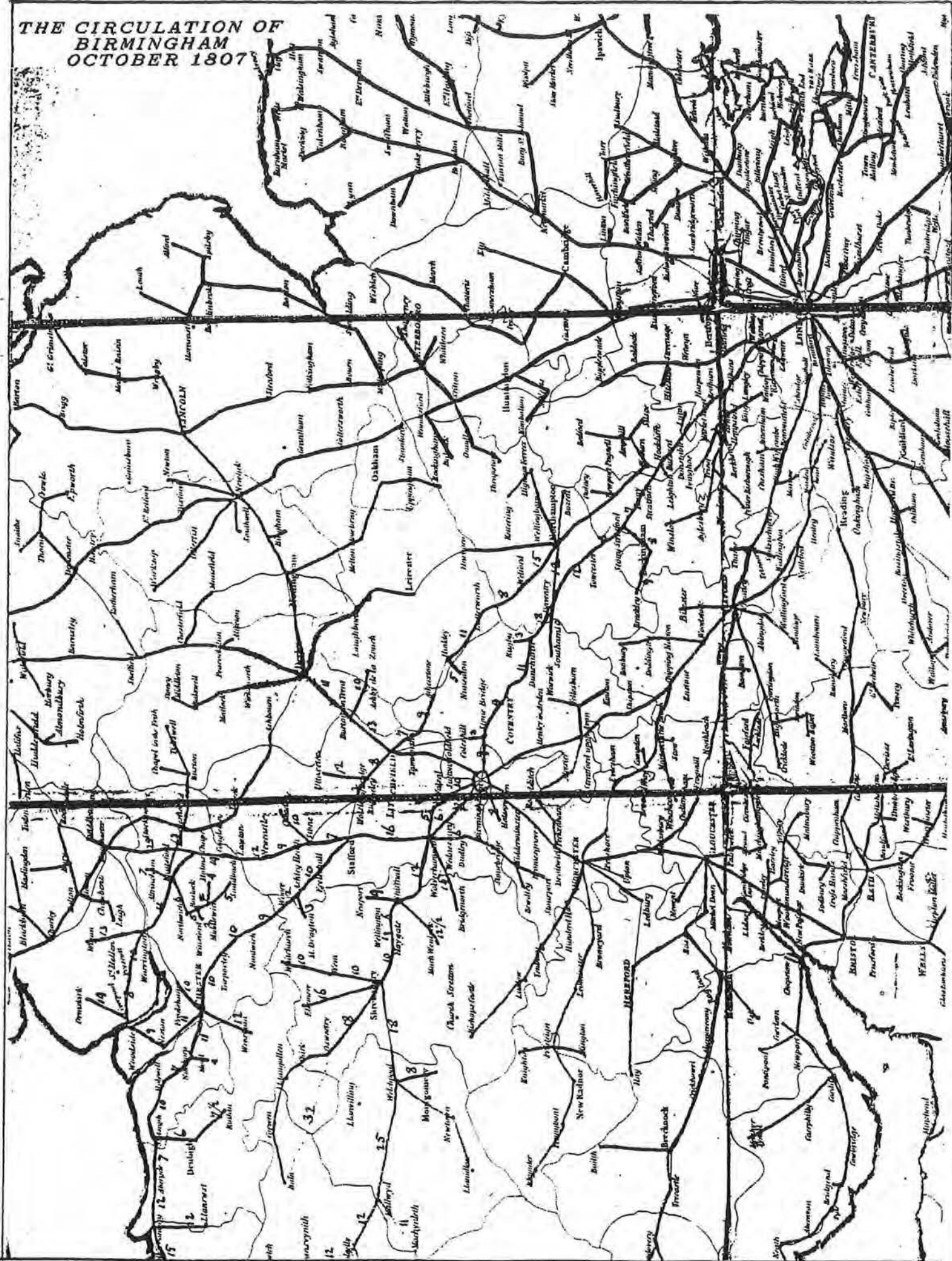
For those members who, like me, are fascinated by old maps, I have shown below the cartouche from the Derby map. It is worth more than a passing glance.



THE CIRCULATION OF DERBY 6 APRIL 1807



THE CIRCULATION OF BIRMINGHAM OCTOBER 1807



REDUCED TO NOTHING

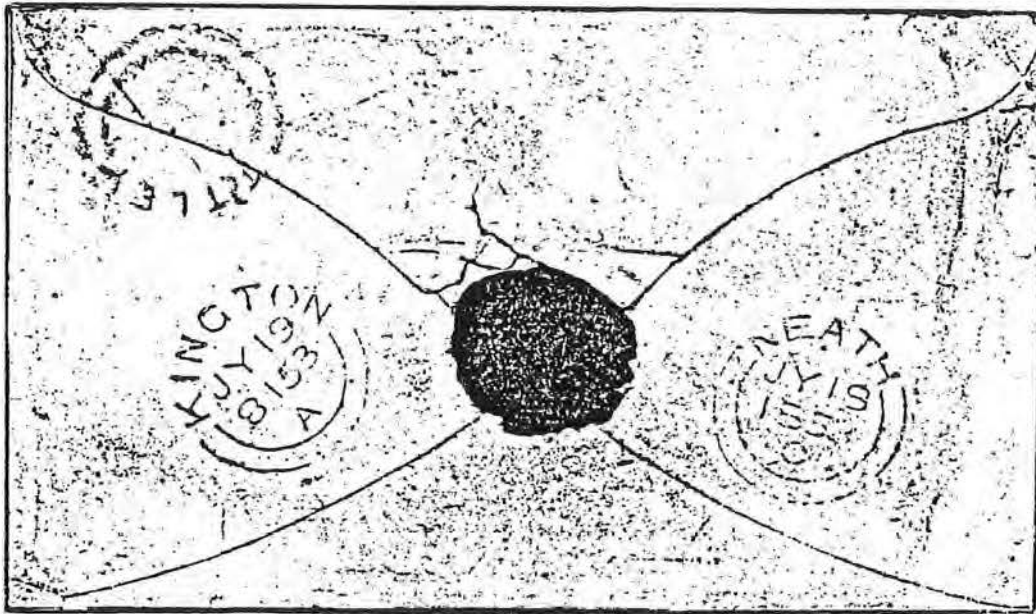
Elizabeth and Eric Lewis suggest that those members whose interests over the years have turned from stamps to postal history may be interested to see the following extract from a recent catalogue produced by a well known midland philatelic auction house.

	Estimated Value	No. of Items
485 Eighty diff. ...		
486 Wholesale QE.II high values. ...		
Castles (Crowns & no wmk) & Machins (incl. Gulls)		
Face £125. Also sm. lot 1958-60 Crowns Phos & Ord blocks & single unmted. mint.		
487 Wholesale. 1980 London min. sheets, 75 copies. FACE OVER £32	£100	75 M/S
488 7 Albums containing a very comprehensive colln. of QE.II Commemorative stamps mainly in unmounted mint blocks of 4		

Members will no doubt draw their own conclusions.

TAILPIECE

The tailpiece of the last edition did show some peculiar dates but Roger Broomfield wonders if the example of the Titley mark shown below is the latest recorded use of an undated circle. However he hesitates to report it to the Coordinating Editor.

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

The next edition will appear in early March. It will contain reports of the January and February meetings in addition to an extract from a surveyor's journal. As for the rest, I am waiting to be inundated with articles. So please, all contributions to:

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