

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Number 154, April 2008

We seem to be in the annual 'awards season' with the Oscars and BAFTAs all taking place recently. If there is a prize for hypocrisy it must surely go to those Members of Parliament who have protested against the closure of post offices in their own constituencies but then voted against a motion calling for an end to the programme of closures. I will refrain from saying what I really feel about those that purport to represent and govern us. However, this programme seems to have no rational basis in that profitable offices are closed while others remain open. So many have to go in each area and no account is taken of the views of local inhabitants. All this, if some sources are to be believed is forced upon us by the unselected bureaucrats of the EU. Four years ago, when a number of offices were closed, Post Office officials said this was necessary to ensure the survival of the rest of the network. Do not be surprised if another batch of office are forced to close in 2010/11.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The AGM and Auction will be held on **26th April 2008** at St Germain's Church Hall, Portland Road, Birmingham. The AGM will start promptly at 1.00 pm and will be followed by the auction at 1.30 pm. Full details are given in the auction catalogue which is enclosed with this issue.

On **10th May** our meeting will be held in conjunction with the Worcester Society's Annual Fair at **Oldbury Park Primary School, Worcester**. The meeting which will begin at **1.30pm** will be devoted to members' displays on '*Unusual or Misspelt Handstamps*'

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

On behalf of the Society I would like to thank Roy Summers and Stanley Cohen for the books they have recently donated to the Society's library. Roy has given a copy of his '*An Introduction to Wolverhampton Postal History*' which a superbly presented publication. Colour is used throughout to illustrate a large number of covers and postmarks, and, although only 38 pages in length, the book contains a wealth of information.. There are details of all the postmasters from 1696 to 1980; the times of dispatch of the various mails in 1958; a list of all the sub-offices with their dates of opening and, in all too many instances, dates of closure; and a map showing the location of all the rural sub-offices. Roy is to be congratulated on this book which I hope will encourage others to produce something similar for 'their town' and which deserves to be more widely available. Copies have also been lodged with the Wolverhampton Archives and the Wolverhampton History & Heritage Society.

Mr Cohen has donated a twenty page study '*Birmingham Squared Circles*'. I had always thought that a study of the squared circles of Leicester was difficult with the nine series and various recuts. I am awestruck at the detail given in this book which traces the usage of each hammer, showing the extensive wear that often occurred with the consequent need for recutting. The many illustrations are all in colour. An epilogue which describes a recent find shows that there is still much to be discovered about these fascinating postmarks. This book is an absolute must for any collector of Birmingham postal history. However, unless you are familiar with all the terms used by Cohen and his collaborators you will need the larger work to hand.

THE JANUARY MEETING

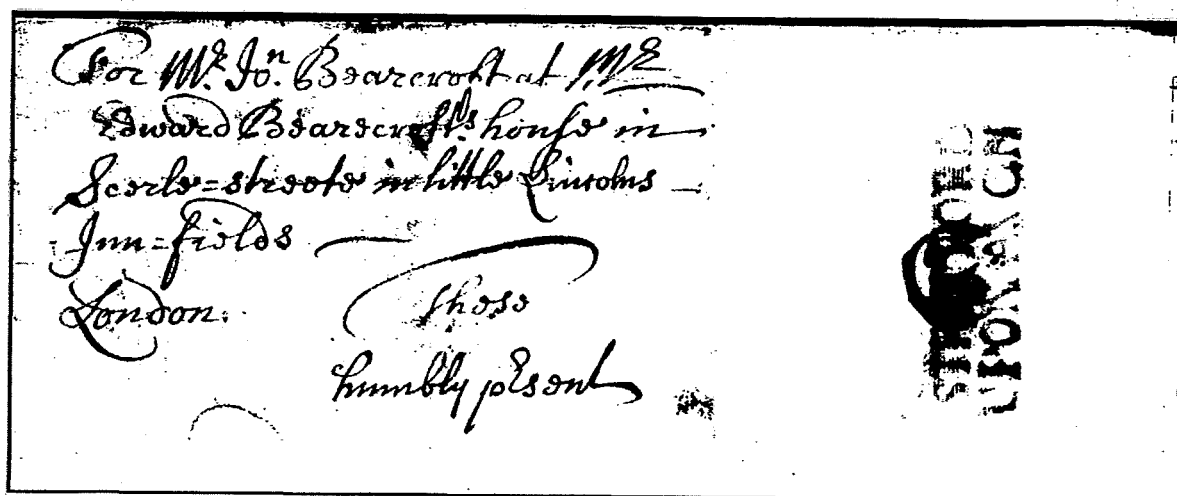
Bryan Jones, Solihull, and current Chairman Midland Philatelic Federation, provided the display for a well attended meeting held at the Carrs Lane Centre, Birmingham, on 12 January 2008. The subject of the display being "The Postal History of Stratford-on-Avon" comprising around 170 sheets covering the period 1707 through to 1923.

The first half of the display covered the period 1707 to 1842, commencing with a range of two and three line handstamps from the period 1707, this being the earliest known use of a Stratford on Avon marking, to 1784. Examples of all recorded types of mileage markings followed, leading into a section devoted to the seven different Stratford-on-Avon Penny Post markings, including one item showing both Warwick and Stratford Penny Post markings on the same cover. Towards the end of this period we were shown the first instances of the use of the No 2 and No 3 Receiving House marks of Wellesbourne and Bidford. This section was followed by examples of the first types of circular datestamps leading onto a comprehensive section showing the use of the oval "Paid at Stratford A" handstamp in red (1840) and black (1841/early 1842). Also included was a selection of "Missent to Stratford on Avon" markings, the first type in red and black, the second two line marking being one of only two so far recorded. This section also included a number of items missent and re-directed, with various manuscript markings. The first half concluded with examples of the Maltese Cross used at Stratford, including one 1840 item tying a Penny Black.

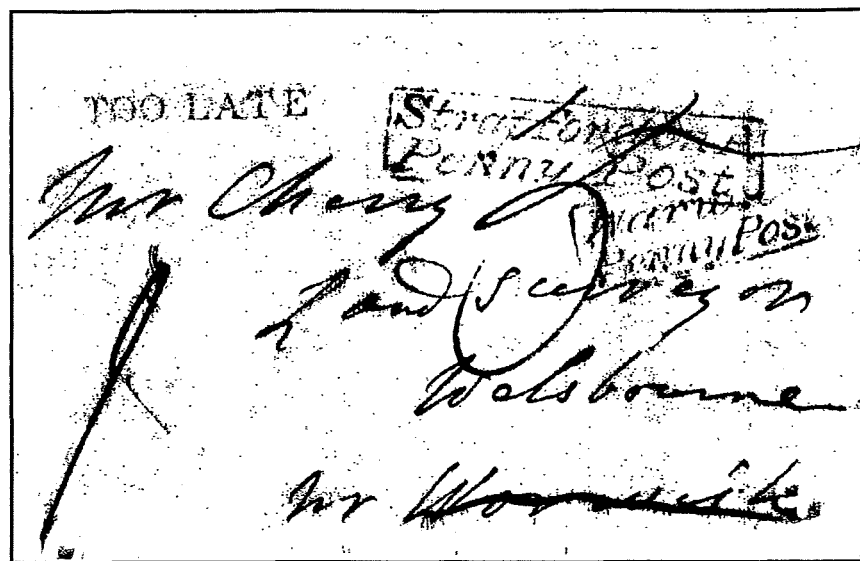
The second half commenced with early examples of the Stratford "skeleton" datestamp, followed by a section on the first sub-office located in Stratford, the Church St office, showing its undated circle handstamp in red, blue and black, spanning the years 1851 to 1856. Stratford-on Avon used no less than eleven different duplex markings during the period 1863 to 1908, all were then illustrated in the next section. Several examples of mail carried on the Stratford and Midland Junction Railway, all carrying examples of their "railway carriage" stamp followed. A number of late 19th and early 20th century covers with instructional markings were shown including both 1d and 2d with "754" numeral below, plus other redirected and refused mail items. Examples of the 1924 skeleton with "missing T" in Stratford were shown with dates during the two week life of this marking, together with a corrected handstamp used on the final day. The display concluded with a large section covering the Local Post from the Holy Trinity Church using the 1/- Shakespeare Stamp, initiated as a fund raising exercise in 1899, with stamps produced by Bradbury Wilkinson through until the early 1920's. Included were a number of examples with the "Cinderella" stamp tied by the postmark (prior to 1908) followed by a range of proof sheets taken from the Bradbury Wilkinson archives showing various colours and printings.

The vote of thanks was given by Derek Smeathers, who commented that it was unusual to see such a comprehensive display devoted to just a single town. The quality of many of the markings shown was commented on, with pointed references being made to several significant items which Bryan had glossed over during his presentation, but which were of considerable significance in their own right. As is generally the case in such meetings those present were able, in several instances, to provide Bryan with additional information on some of the items shown, something that he was more than grateful for. The meeting concluded at 3.30pm with reminders of the February meeting at the Black Country Museum.

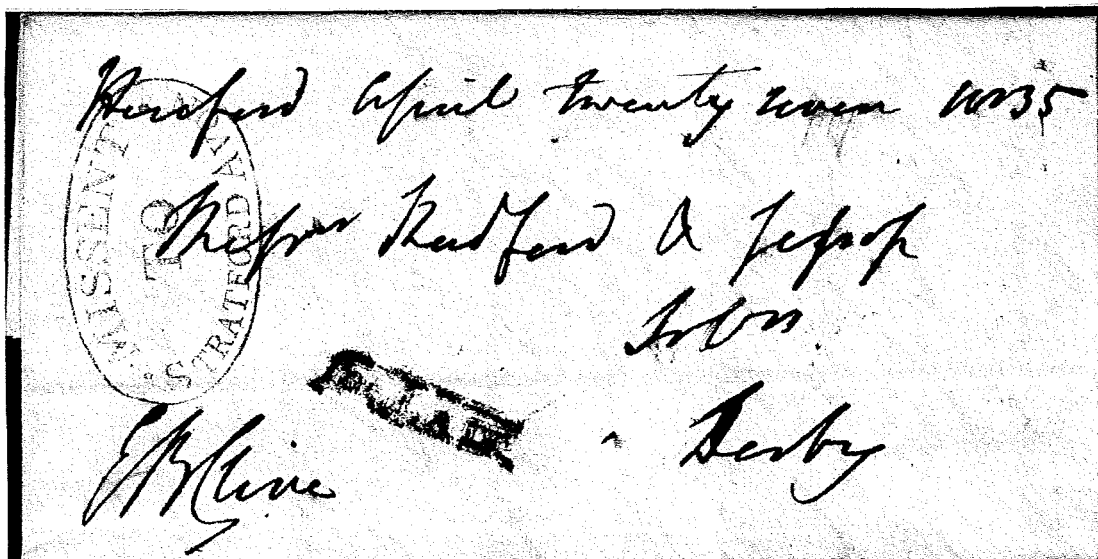
1707 STRATFORD/UPON AVON



Stratford on A/Penny Post



1835 MISSENT/TO/STRATFORD AVON



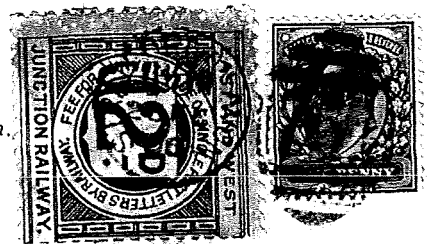
RECEIVED
APR 27
1835

No. 59..

Per...*E. & W. Junction* Railway.MORTON PINKNEY,
From.....Station.

POST ON ARRIVAL AT

Stratford-on-Avon



REV. L. GRAHAM,

KIRTON RECTORY,

NEWARK.

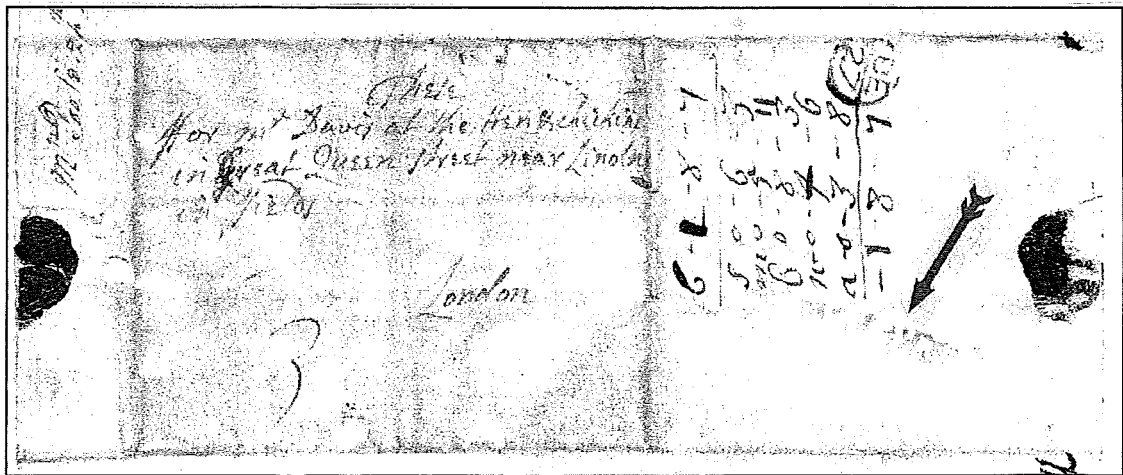
East and West Junction
Railway Letter

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

There was a very satisfactory attendance of close to twenty members at the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, on 16th February to see Frank Bennett's display of Hereford City. We should have seen the display at the equivalent meeting last year but a heavy local snowfall had led to the meeting being abandoned. This time we were favoured with wall-to-wall sunshine.

Frank told us he was more interested in the social context of the material than in the earliest and latest dates of each postal marking and therefore his display would not necessarily be in chronological succession. He gave us some key early dates, beginning with the first recorded postmaster of Hereford, a Mr Philpotts, in 1672 and with the first evidence of an official post office in 1682. In 1677, the city was served from Gloucester, a by-post from the Bristol Road, a situation that continued for many years (see our 'Holkham' map). A stagecoach service – not a mailcoach, of course – began in 1774 and the journey to London took one and a half days.

However, the first letter we saw pre-dated the official post, being a Civil War letter of 1654 concerning the war in Hereford. If the city had Royalist sympathies, it could not prevent a Cromwellian soldier writing from the same place in 1658. The first letter Frank had found going into Hereford was dated 1699 and the first recorded Hereford namestamp was a single line mark on a letter of 1708. (Other early letters he did not highlight were those of 1722, with the second two-line Hereford mark, and another of 1737, with the fifth two-line stamp from Orleton, both sent to London.) Interestingly, there was a soldier's letter of 1740 from Hereford and one wondered why troops were needed in the city at that time. Frank suggested it may have been because of nearby turnpike disorders, particularly at Ledbury. A letter of 1792 concerned the lottery, proving that such lotteries are not new, and he was able to match it with a photocopy of an extract from The Times of 1792 giving the lottery results. These were two good examples of his interest in the context of the material shown. Fortunately he didn't neglect further early marks and included two examples of the first mileage stamp (133) and of the later mileage marks, including the scarce 149 stamp of 1802 and the later 141 marks. (An explanation of these very different mileage figures, based on the then prevailing routes through Gloucester and Worcester, is to be found in the Society's latest book.)

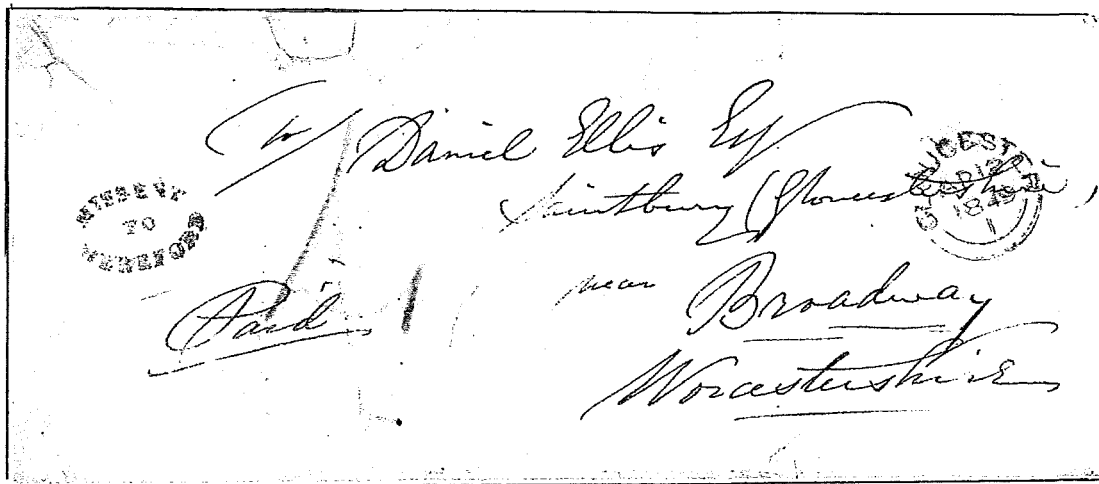


24th December 1708 letter from Stretton, near Hereford, to London
with the earliest recorded Hereford namestamp.

We moved into the post-1840 era with examples of locally used 1d blacks on cover and a 2d blue (with lines) coming into Hereford from Newport, not to mention Mulready letter sheets with red and black circular mileage marks. Among the undated circular marks (UDCs) displayed were those of Weobley, Kentchurch, Kings Acre and High Town and there were rubbers from such as Hampton Bishop, Clehonger, Lugwardine and Little Dewchurch. Inevitably there was an example of Hereford Penny Post (pre-1840) but also those of Weobley and Letton (post 1840). A number of letters were shown going into and out of Hereford from abroad and, for the postage due enthusiasts, postage due letters from abroad. The first half was rounded-off with material relating to the Mitre Hotel in Broad Street, Hereford, including photographs, postcards and letters.

The second half of Frank's display began with instructional marks, including 'Too Late' (in different forms), 'Missent', 'More to Pay' and late fees. One had been surcharged, in spite of being obviously a printed letter, because the superscription had been typed in script. An 1849 letter addressed to the Broadway area (but not to Sir Thomas Phillipps!) was struck with a lovely 'Missent to Hereford' oval stamp in blue ink. There were "Free" letters of, inter alia, 1772, 1796, 1801 and 1832. Returning to Frank's interest in the context of letters, your scribe was attracted to two concerning a certain William Brydges. The first, dated 1754, was addressed to him at Bath with the instruction "Turn at Gloucester/By the Cross Post" and a second, an even earlier letter of 1713, from him to his wife, staying with her father at his Grays Inn residence, and struck with what is probably the only recorded example of the first Hereford two-line mark. Several members were greatly attracted to an Act of Parliament of 1824 concerning roads in Radnor, Hereford and Merioneth, not least because it was picked up for peanuts and yet had its original wrapper addressed to Sir John Cotterell MP. As they say, "find me another". Two years later, from 1826, was a communication from the Hereford Pitt Club, inviting the recipient "to celebrate the birth of that illustrious statesman and patriot the late Rt Hon William Pitt". Again unmentioned by Frank, there was a large single line Hereford of 1763 on an entire to Bungay. Of local interest was an 1840 bill from the Black Lion Inn in Hereford and another of 1844 with an attractive heading from the well-known Green Dragon Inn. The alcoholic link extended to a Bulmer's letter (to a cousin's business), and an account of the Duke of Norfolk's election tactics.

For those who enjoy parcel post labels, we saw examples from the main Hereford office but also Eign Road, Ryelands St, Allensmore, Fownhope and Barrs Court, under Hereford. The railways were represented by commercially used covers with railway stamps from 1879 and, much later, 1932, not to mention a postcard of Barrs Court station at Hereford when it was a joint Great Western and London North Western station. There was an unusual Special Delivery receipt and an 1879 Telegraph Office notice of an incorrect charge that must have given the addressee an unpleasant shock for an additional 10/10d was required of him! We learned that Sir Edward Elgar had a Hereford connection or enough of one to justify the inclusion of a signed postcard to his publisher and, finally, Frank's love of cricket had to come to the fore. (Yes, he co-authored a book on Herefordshire cricket.) We were told of Jack Sharpe, a local sportsman at the turn of the 20th century, who made present day "all rounders" look like narrow specialists. However, a true highlight was a postcard from Brian Johnson, the unforgettable 'Jonners' of test match reporting fame, written in an almost illegible scrawl because, as he acknowledged, of his intoxication! I think I would have used it on the cover of the book.



A letter dated 12th April 1849 to Saintbury, near Broadway, but missent to Hereford where it was struck with the blue-green 'Missent to Hereford' oval mark.

In his generous vote of thanks, Malcolm Allinson commented that Frank had spoken without a single note and yet he had felt it necessary to write on several sheets, merely to thank him adequately. We had seen a very individual display and, joy of joys, we had been given time to study it at length.

THE MARCH MEETING

Our meeting on 8th March at the Collingwood Centre, Great Barr was devoted to members' displays on the topic of "*Surcharged Mail*". There was some discussion as to whether or not some of the material shown fitted that description. The tenth edition of the Oxford Dictionary defines a surcharge as "1 an additional charge or payment ... 2 a mark printed on a postage stamp changing its value." I will leave readers to make up their own minds about the material shown.

Richard Farman began the proceedings with covers of Express Mail which according to Richard "was surcharged for the extra service". We saw a range of different labels as well as the various rates charged. A letter sent from Syston to Market Harborough in 1911 was charged 3d instead of the normal rate of 4d. Another item of interest was a letter sent from Malvern to Chichester charged 1½d postage and 6d Express Fee, but then redirected. On redirection the Express was cancelled.

The larger part of Bob Viney's display consisted of material originating from or sent to Rutland. An item sent at the printed paper rate was uprated in the Returned Letter Office, while a letter sent from Weston-super-Mare to Uppingham was twice readdressed and charged accordingly. Bob also showed mail from abroad including a letter from Maryland.

A variety of handstruck '2's formed the basis of Guy Bridges display. A letter sent in 1840 had not been prepaid so was charged two pence. In 1842 Portsmouth used a very large '2', while Bodmin did so in 1863. Guy finished with a selection of these marks from various London offices.

The first cover shown by Derek Smeathers was a 'Free' which had been charged since the writer had written the date as the fifth of the month, but had posted the letter on 4th. A letter from 1840 with a penny black had been surcharged as the letter weighed more than ½ ounce. A penny black cover sent from Edinburgh to Peterborough was charged one penny for redirection to Stamford.

Alan Marshall produced a number of covers showing the large boxed marks used to indicate that ½ d postage was due for returning an undeliverable letter to the sender. We saw examples on letters sent from Nottingham to Derby (1898), Nottingham to Manchester (1896), and Leeds to Nottingham (1900). Alan ended with a privately produced registered envelope which had been stamped with the mark "Posted out of Course/583" as it had not been handed in at a post office.

Mick Gill showed us a number of items where an Inspector's Crown authorised an increase in the rate. A letter sent from Retford to Suffolk in 1805 had the rate increased from 9d to 10d. The rate on a letter sent from Newark to London in 1804 was doubled from 8d to 1s.4d., presumably because it contained an enclosure. The treble rate of 2s.6d on a letter sent from London to Southwell in 1821 was crossed out and replaced by a manuscript "1¼ oz 4/2". Mick finished with two postcards of Newark which were "Contrary to Regulations" as they were impregnated with glitter.

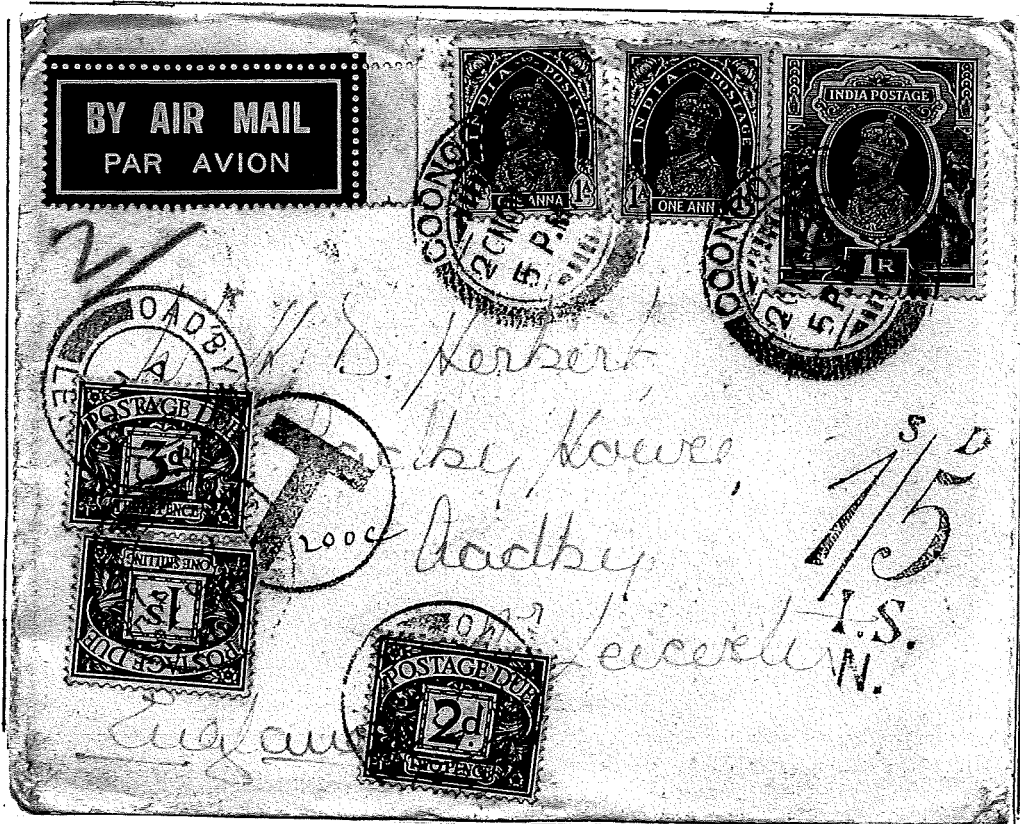
John Soer began on the same theme - cards which were surcharged as they carried glitter, and showing the 1^d/449 mark along with others such as "Liable to Letter Rate/365" and "Contrary to Regulations/449". He then showed a number of items sent shortly after an increase in postage rates but which had been franked at the old rate, so attracting a surcharge of double the deficiency. John ended with a letter sent from India to Oadby in 1940 which showed a handstamp which denoted a 1s.5d surcharge.

Handstruck '2's on overweight and unpaid mail were displayed by Chris Jackson. We saw two different ones from Broadway, small one used at Bromsgrove in 1858 on a letter to Hull, a much larger one from the same place used in 1870 on a letter to Shrewsbury, and two different ones from Dudley. Chris ended with a cover showing the very rare '2' of Stourbridge.

As is usual on these occasions, some members had brought along a second display. Mick Gill showed us a number of surcharge marks used at Newark in the 1950s. Among Alan Marshall's material were a letter sent from Nottingham to London in 1844 showing a 2 with the mark 'MORE/TO/PAY' in a circle, and a letter of 1911 from Sweden to Grimsby where it was marked 'not known' before being sent on to the Returned Letter Branch in Nottingham, from where it was returned to Sweden. Derek Smeathers produced a number of modern items from Northampton. Of particular note was the mark 'CLEARED BY NORTHAMPTON/REVENUE PROTECTION/DO NOT SURCHARGE'. An unfranked envelope from a Midlands auction house was stamped 'SURCHARGE/NORTHAMPTON'. Even Royal Mail levy a buyer's premium. Finally, Richard Farman showed us a number of 'Notices of Objection' which were sent at a cost of 3d - 1d postage plus a reduced registered rate of 2d. He also showed us A Jury Summons sent at the same rate.

SOME ITEMS FROM THE MARCH MEETING

The first cover was sent from India in November 1940 and arrived in Oadby on 7th January 1941. Can anyone explain the charge of 1s. 5d.? The fact that the Inland Section had such a handstamp surely indicates that such a surcharge was made not infrequently.



The second illustration is of an item that was sent at the printed paper rate five days after the rate had been raised from threehalfpence to two pence. A charge of twice the deficiency was levied.



A NEW NORTHAMPTON HANDSTAMP

by Derek Smeathers

When the British County Catalogue was first issued, (Volume 1 was published in 1978), the numbering system adopted was clear and simple; but a good deal of foresight was used to leave gaps where it was suspected that other marks, as yet undiscovered, would eventually come to light. Over the years, this policy has paid off and several new handstamps have been found - very often to fit a gap exactly. When approached by this Society about a possible successor to the BCC, the late Professor Barrie Jay particularly asked that the numbering system be continued, and most of us agree with that.

Now, another new handstamp has come to light for Northampton and yet again a purposeful gap in that numbering system was sitting there waiting for it! The new mark was reported by our Chairman, Paul Bradshaw, on a recent purchase and a copy of the front of the letter (dated 25th November 1749) is shown in fig. 1. As is usual from this period, it is not a perfect strike but there is a clear enough image to see that the T of "NORTH" is directly above the T of "AMPTON". In the very similar mark known used in 1748, the upper T is directly above the O. In the absence of the whole strike it is not possible to measure the size. However, using these differences, I have now recognised a strike of the handstamp in my own collection, on a letter dated 11th May 1752 which I had previously thought to be the earlier postmark. While it, too, is far from perfect, the two together are sufficient together to show acceptable measurements.

So, the BCC moves a step closer to a perfect listing, with the new entry based on Paul's report filling the gap between NN120 and NN122. Here it is:

NN121 2 NORTH/AMPTON 25 x 10 Black 1749-52 G

To help with measurements, I experimented with computerised images, trying different colours, enlarging and reducing, and copying on top of one another. One result is offered here (fig. 2) in the form of enlarged examples of the three similar handstamps, the *new* one being an amalgam of Paul's and the right-hand end of mine. These three images are twice the actual size, and were easier to measure enlarged. The 1748 illustration is from the original tracing by Geoff Oxley whose card index shows six examples known in April and May 1748. He marks it "Note: all very blurred strikes". As I now have no example of it (in view of the above) and have no others reported, the usage dates of NN120 are altered to read "1748" in the BCC listing. If any readers have an example of any of these three postmarks, or any others from Northampton in the period 1748 to 1761, I shall be delighted to have a photocopy (with dates!!). There may still be more to come!

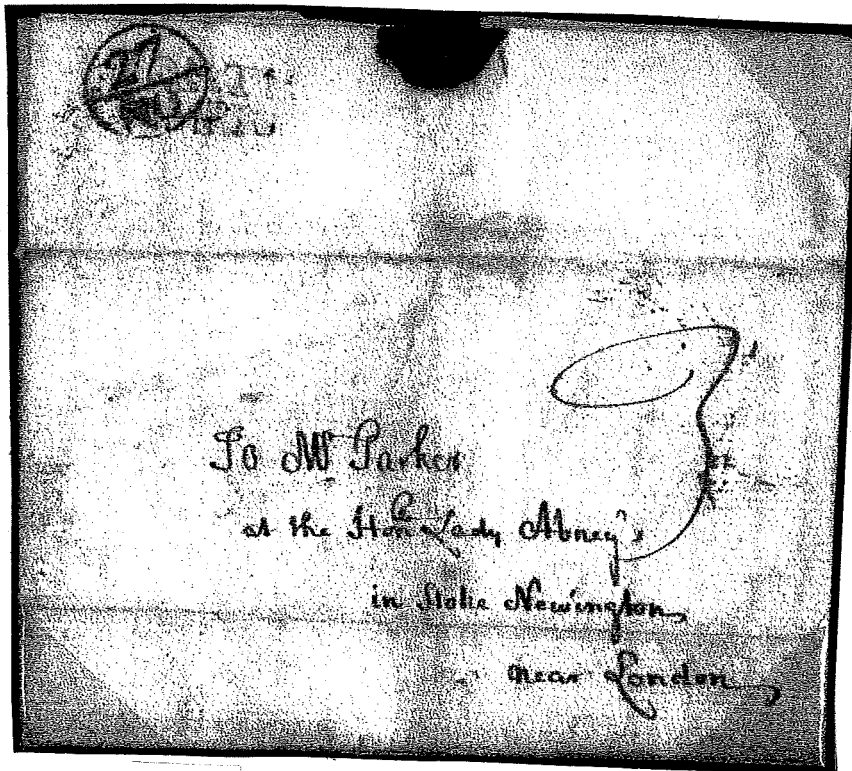
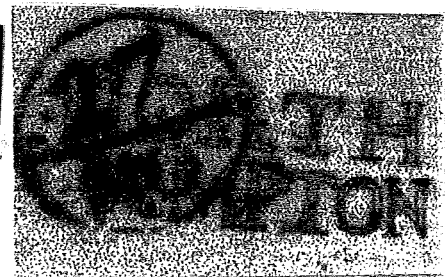
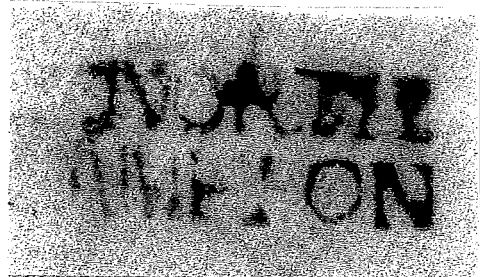


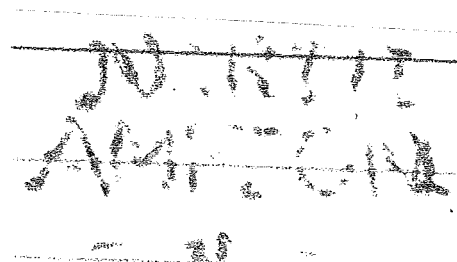
Fig. 1



1749



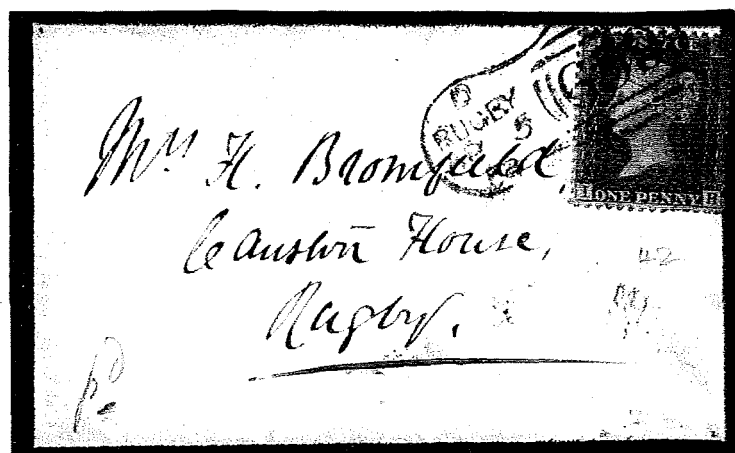
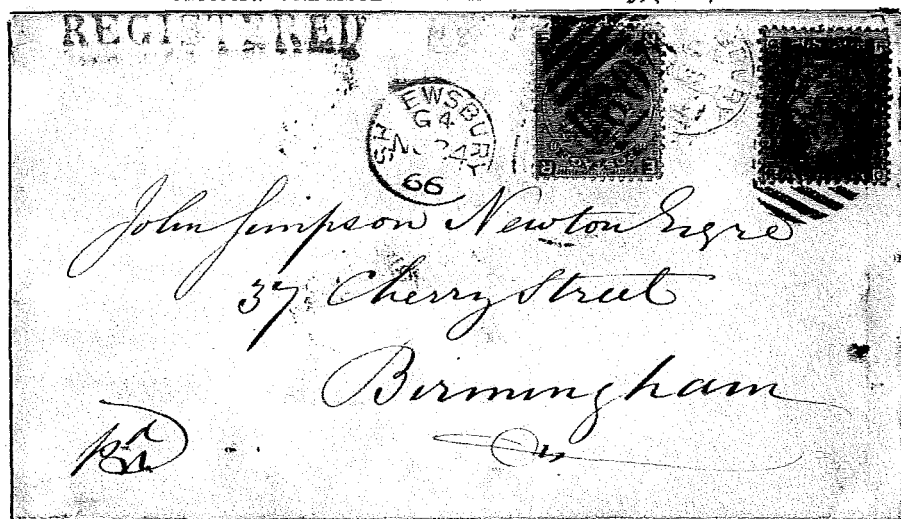
1761



1748

Midland Counties Postal History: a regular feature of our sales.

Unrecorded REGISTERED mark of Shrewsbury, (1866)



Nice Rugby 'shoe' duplex (1858) with UDCs of Bilton and Newbold on Avon

Contact James Grimwood-Taylor or Ken Baker



CAVENDISH HOUSE,
153-157, LONDON ROAD,
DERBY DE1 2SY, ENGLAND
Tel: 01332 250970 (4 lines; 24hrs.)
Fax: 01332 294440 :Fax

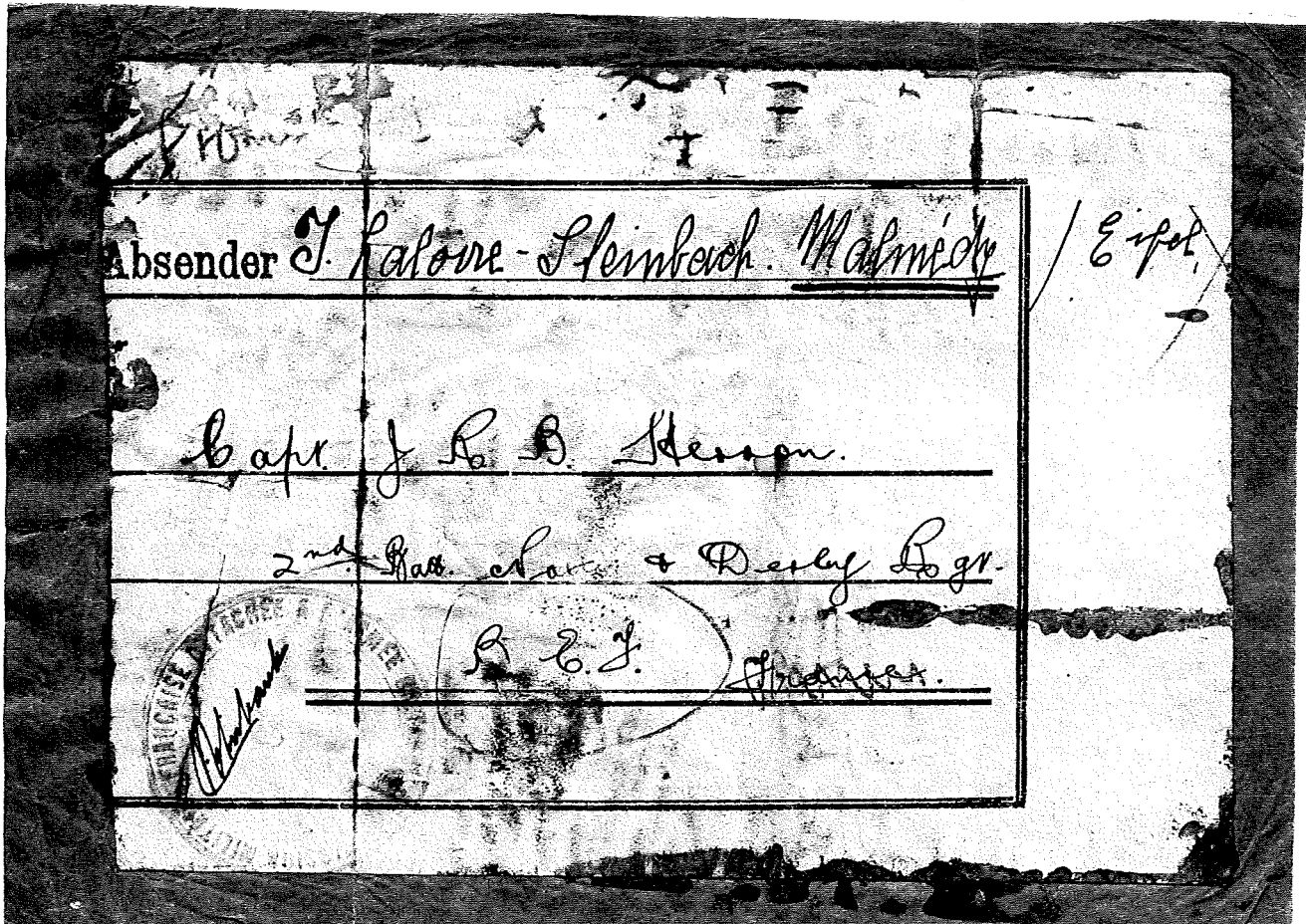
E-mail: stamps@cavendishphilauc.demon.co.uk
www.Cavendish-Auctions.com

A MILITARY PARCEL

I am indebted to Mike Brindle of the Belgian Study Circle for sending copies of the two items illustrated below. The parcel label was sent from Malmedy and addressed to Capt J.R.B. Herron of the 2nd Battalion of the Notts & Derby Regiment (The Sherwood Foresters) with the handstamp of the French Military Commission attached to the B.E.F. The associated parcel post label is franked with adhesives to the value of 9d and bears an unidentified British military cancel.

Mike writes: "In 1917 Captain Herron was with the 2/6 Battalion South Staffs and on 30th November he was gassed at Bourlon Woods during a shattering attack which led to the Battalion being disbanded on 31st July 1918. The Captain appears to have recovered and was transferred to The Sherwood Foresters on 8th December 1918. According to the Battalion War Diary, Capt. Herron joined at Havelange as the Battalion was marching from Valenciennes (France) to Cologne, a distance of 225 miles. The Diary for 13th December 1918 reads '*The Battalion crossed the frontier into Germany, reaching MALMEDY. It was pouring with rain and there was no demonstration of any sort on crossing the border. Malmedy was a welcome change after the small Belgian villages and in our first German billets we were made very comfortable We moved the next day.*' They were at Elsenborn the next day, at the Truppenlager, Mountjoie on the 15th and then moved further into Germany. On 25th March 1919 Capt. Herron transferred to the 11th Battalion The Leicestershire regiment."

Mike would be delighted if any member could give him any information about Capt. Herron or about the procedure for sending parcels while on active service. He does point out that the address label and the parcel post label may not have any connection with one another.



Nettlebed 5th Clause Post

1801

The date of establishment of a Fifth Clause Post between Nettlebed and the village of Watlington is not known precisely but it was at about Michaelmas 1801, some six months after such posts were first authorised on 5th April 1801. The cost of the post was £21 a year, comprising a salary of £6 for the sub-deputy of Watlington, £2 a year to the postmaster of Nettlebed for keeping the accounts and 5/- a week for a messenger between Watlington and Nettlebed, who made the journey 5 days a week.

On 6th January 1802, the Postmaster of Nettlebed wrote to the Surveyor, Mr Woodcock, concerning the circumstances of the postmistress at Watlington. It appears that, since the official 5th Clause Post replaced the private arrangements that preceded it, her salary had been halved to £6 a year and the extra commitment the official post involved also prevented her going out to earn extra money as a charlady! The postmaster believed, if the post continued as it was at that time, the actual receipts would exceed the estimate by four or five pounds a year.

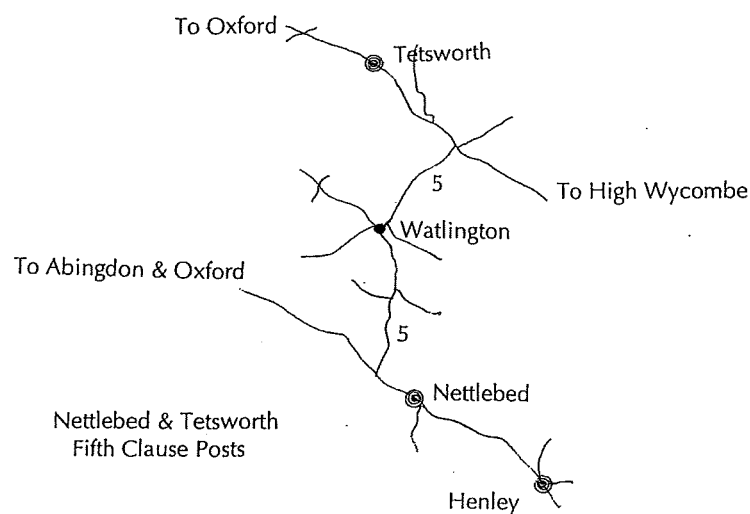
Samuel Woodcock, who happened to be in Bromsgrove at the time, agreed with the submission and wrote to Francis Freeling, Secretary to the Post Office, on 9th January. In his letter, he made the point that he believed the establishment of this post had been more for the convenience of the public than with any expectation that the Revenue would benefit and he hoped the Postmasters General might agree that part of the surplus that now appeared evident should be used to increase the salary of "the poor woman who acts as the sub-deputy at Watlington" to £10 a year.

Freeling's minute to the Postmasters General is dated 12th January and proposes that, as the post is running so favourably and "in the peculiar circumstances of the case", the postmistresses' salary should be increased to £10 provided that the post provided enough revenue to allow such an increase and only while this particular lady held the appointment. It appears their Lordships concurred.

No identifying handstamps of the Nettlebed 5th Clause Post are known.

Reference

Post 40/6H/1802



Tetsworth 5th Clause and Penny Posts

1802-1839

The 5th Clause Post of 1801 between Watlington and Nettlebed was short-lived. On 30th January 1802, those who described themselves as the principal inhabitants of Watlington signed a petition to the local dignitary, Lord Charles Spencer, asking for the route of the post to be changed from Nettlebed to Tetsworth. They asked for the post to run for as many days as might be consistent with the profits of the post and they agreed to pay 1d per letter *and newspaper* over and above postage, both on delivery and collection.

On 5th February, Mr Bartlett, the Surveyor responsible for Tetsworth, wrote to Francis Freeling to let him know that Lord Charles Spencer had raised the matter with him. Mr Bartlett had been to see the postmaster at Nettlebed but had not obtained the information he needed so had contacted Mr Woodcock, the Surveyor responsible for Nettlebed. He now knew that the Watlington receiver's annual payment had been increased to £10 and it appeared this would be "for the present satisfactory". Income from the post over a three week period suggested "the pence" would amount to about £30 in a year. Mr Bartlett added that a daily post was desired because the present official post did not run on a Friday, when the letters sent by private wagons were more numerous than on any other day, or on a Saturday, market day, when a Tetsworth carrier took the letters "to the disadvantage of the Revenue". The Surveyor said he could get a daily ride done for 5/- a week, the same price as before for 5 days. If the £2 paid to the postmaster at Nettlebed was now paid to the postmaster at Tetsworth, the total cost of the post would be £25 a year.

Freeling's recommendation to the Postmasters General reiterated that the arrangement was under the 5th Clause and he said it was simply a case of changing the post town. However, he was prepared to recommend that it should be a daily post rather than five days a week. He pointed out that the expense of the post would not change and that it was the same 5 miles distance from Watlington to Tetsworth as it was from Watlington to Nettlebed.

The Secretary went further and used his minute as an opportunity to explain to the Postmasters General that even a change of arrangements for a small village such as Watlington generated a lot of extra work when setting it up. The post would travel on a completely new line of road and the surveyor would have to write "40 or 50 Letters of Introduction to various postmasters", presumably to make them aware of the change of post town. "Even one of the smallest posts cannot be disturbed without a considerable degree of trouble and attention", he wrote.

The Tetsworth 5th Clause Post continued until the end of 1813. No handstamps are known.

On 13th November 1813, Mr Bartlett wrote to Francis Freeling again to advise him that he had surveyed the Tetsworth office (on his way up from Wheatley) and had found that the postmaster had been charging 1d on all franks and newspapers sent to Watlington since the 5th Clause Post had been established and no one had expressed any dissatisfaction with the arrangements and certainly not during the past four years or so. He suggested it might be opportune to convert the 5th Clause post into a Penny Post. The present expense of the Post was £25-12-0, little changed from 1802, and the pence collected annually amounted to no less than £56. Freeling requested the authority of the Postmasters General to make the change on 17th November 1813. A type 1 Penny Post handstamp was probably issued shortly afterwards.

In September 1817, Francis Freeling received representations from a Mr Tilson of Watlington Park and the Reverend F. Rowden (who wrote from 'Hatchards Hotel' in Piccadilly), both wanting an earlier arrival of the mail at Watlington and a later departure. The Surveyor was not impressed with the application. He pointed out that the Tetsworth postmaster already had to be disturbed at 1am and 3am to exchange mail bags and was then required to get up soon after 6am to make sure the Watlington messenger left at 7am. He pointed out that the messenger was paid only 6/- a week (an increase from the 1802 figure of 5/-) for a round journey of what was now claimed to be 12 miles – the modern distance is half that – and he would want more if he had to spend longer at Watlington. As the "amount of the correspondence" was said to be trifling and the inhabitants of Watlington had six hours in the winter (seven hours in the summer) in which to answer letters, the Surveyor couldn't see they had any just cause for complaint. Freeling supported the Surveyor's argument but sought the backing of the Postmasters General before he replied to the Reverend Rowden. It seems he probably received it.

In May 1836, the receiver at Watlington was alleged to have committed a felony by charging a resident of Watlington 8d for a letter, instead of 5d, and "appropriating the difference to his own use". Little more is known but Lord Lichfield said he would be guided by the Law Officers of the Crown as to the prosecution. Even the theft of 3d by a Post Office employee was seen as a most serious offence.

According to the "Allowances to Deputy Postmasters" of c1838, the foot messenger to Watlington was, by then, being paid in excess of £20 but the Watlington receiver was still being paid the £10 per annum agreed in 1802.

Two types of penny post handstamp are known to have been used in the Tetsworth Penny Post but there are two identifiably different type 3 stamps.

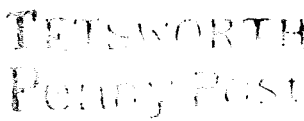
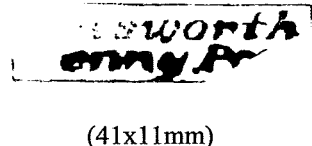
References

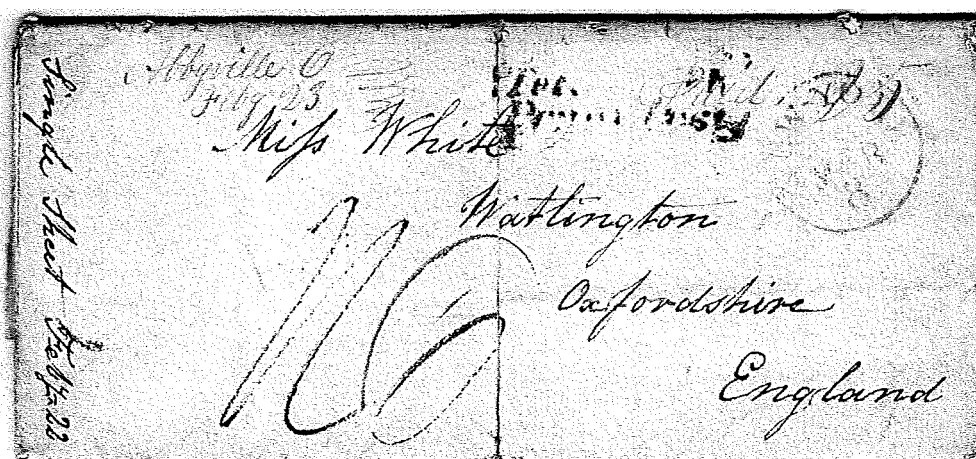
Post 40/25H/1802
 Post 40/305/1813
 Post 40/242/1817
 Post 40/244/1836
 Post 9/132

HANDSTAMPS OF THE TETSWORTH PENNY POST

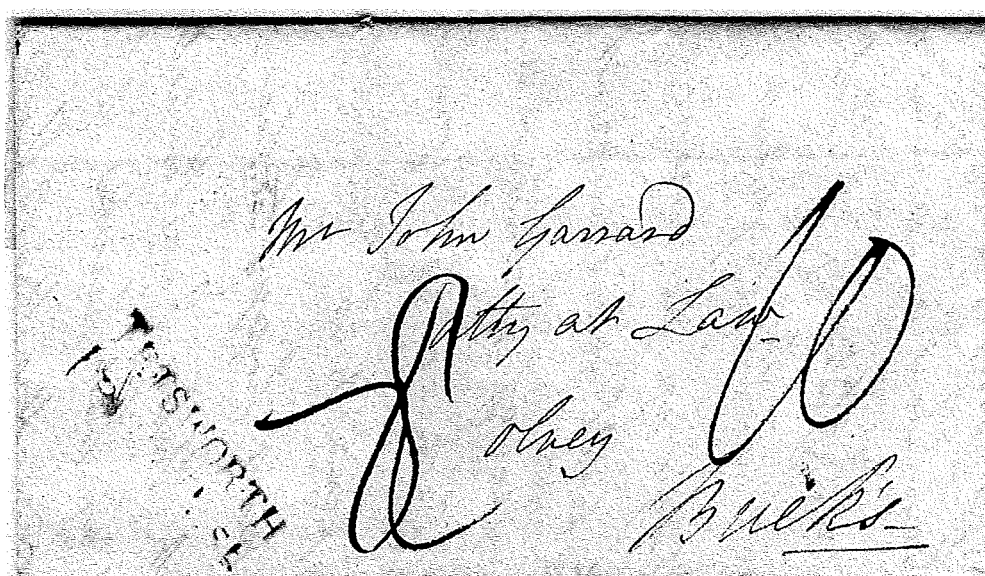
Post town: Tetsworth

Receiving house: Watlington

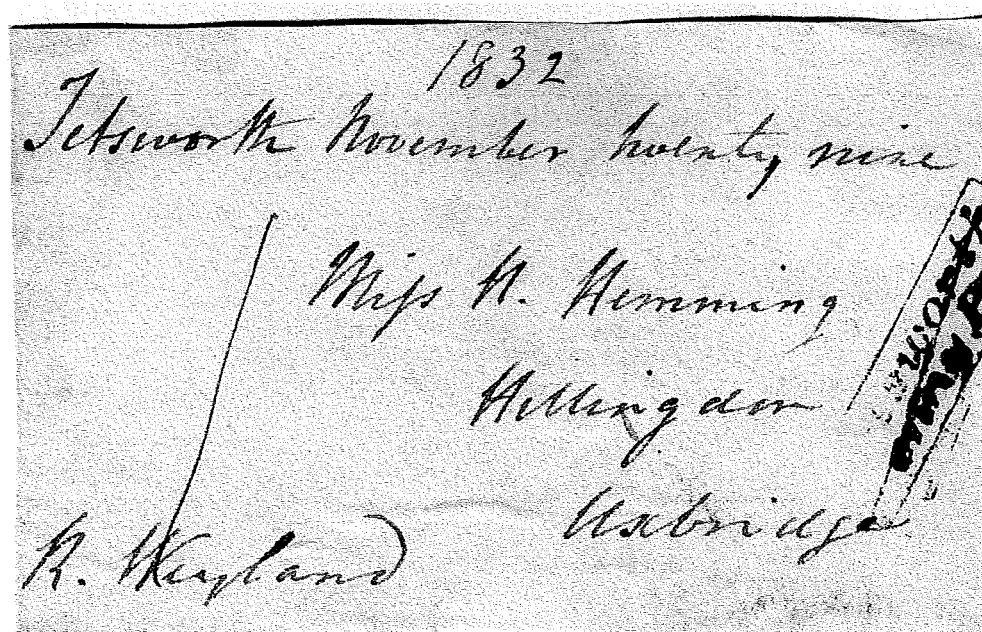
MLP1101		B	(18)13-14OCT24	C
MLP1102	 (41x11mm)	B	29NOV32	E
MLP1103	 (42x13mm)	B	15APR35- (18)38	D
MLP1104		B	26MAR15-15APR35	C



A letter of 1838 from America, delivered to Watlington in the Tetsworth Penny Post.



The type 1 handstamp on a letter to Olney dated 26th March 1815.



The type 3 handstamp – the first of two – on a free letter to Uxbridge dated 29 Nov 32.

“THE ERROR WAS SOON CORRECTED”

by John Calladine

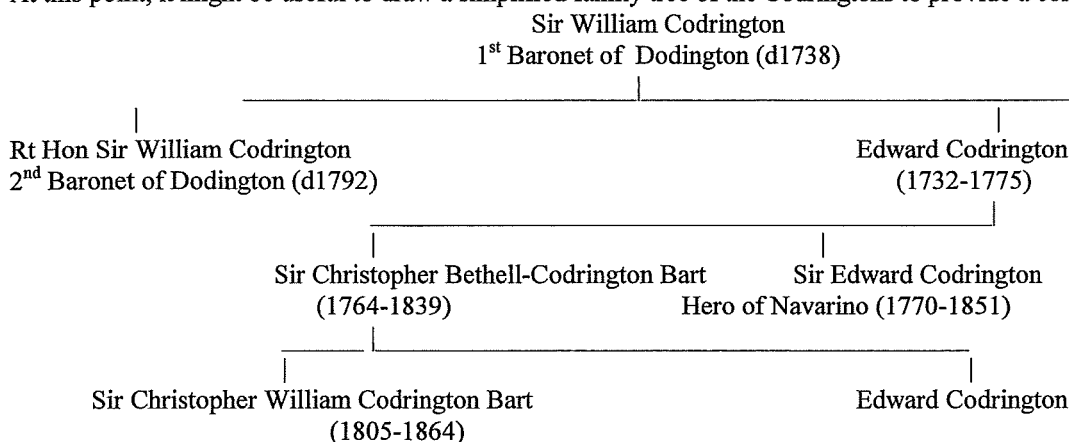
As a schoolboy stamp collector, intent on collecting every stamp in the world or, at the very least, acquiring more than my friends, I was given a printed stamp album. My assembly of Greek stamps amounted to little more than a few boring ‘Hermes heads’ but, at the top of the page allocated to Greece, the album had a more interesting illustration. It was of a stamp issued in 1927 to commemorate the centenary of the Battle of Navarino and featured the head and shoulders of a rather bald but aristocratic admiral with the inscription “Sir Codrington”. The text beneath the illustration has remained with me to this day. “Greece, in honouring Sir Edward Codrington, called him Sir Codrington. The error was soon corrected”.

This mystified me. Surely the Greeks must have called him “Sir Connington” or some such thing but, no, the name appeared correctly as “Codrington”. At that age, no one had told me that knights are addressed by their first name and never solely by their last name. Throughout the short time I owned the album, the supposed error in the stamp eluded me. I doubt I knew anything of the Battle of Navarino. It was fought on 20th October 1827 between an Ottoman and Egyptian armada and a combined British, French and Russian naval force under the command of Edward Codrington. In spite of its numerical inferiority, the allied fleet demolished the enemy and Greece was freed from the Ottoman Empire. Have no doubt, Admiral Sir Edward Codrington was and is a Greek hero.

By the late 1940s, I was collecting solely the stamps of Germany and the German States. I never expected Greece or Sir Edward Codrington to cross my path again. In 1948, I was unaware of a collecting hobby called ‘postal history’ and even less aware, if that were possible, of the discovery of a correspondence that had come to light in a stately home in Gloucestershire, known as Dodington or, with its extensive grounds, as Dodington Park. The lodge at the entrance of a long drive leading to the house is about as close to junction 18 of the M4 as it is possible to be, just north of it on the A46 but only a few miles from Bath, to the south. The original manor house was built in 1557 but the great days of Dodington began at the end of that century when it was acquired by the Codrington family. Sir John Codrington had been a standard bearer to Henry V, no less, but the family’s fortune was made in the West Indies in the 17th century from its sugar plantations. The fortune was indeed made on the back of the slave trade, as was so much money in the Bristol area, but not directly from it. The Codringtons did not operate slave ships.

The growth of Dodington began in the 1760s when Sir William Codrington employed ‘Capability’ Brown to landscape a vast park surrounding the manor and paid him the not inconsiderable sum of £1368 to do so. In 1796, Sir Christopher Bethell-Codrington, began to rebuild the gabled Elizabethan manor house in a grand style and employed James Wyatt, then also working at Windsor Castle and the Houses of Parliament, as his architect. Sir Christopher Bethell-Codrington was the nephew of Sir William, who had disinherited his son, but, more relevantly in the context of this text, the elder brother of Sir Edward Codrington, the hero of Navarino. Sir Edward would return to my world but it would be sixty years before I had the opportunity to appreciate it!

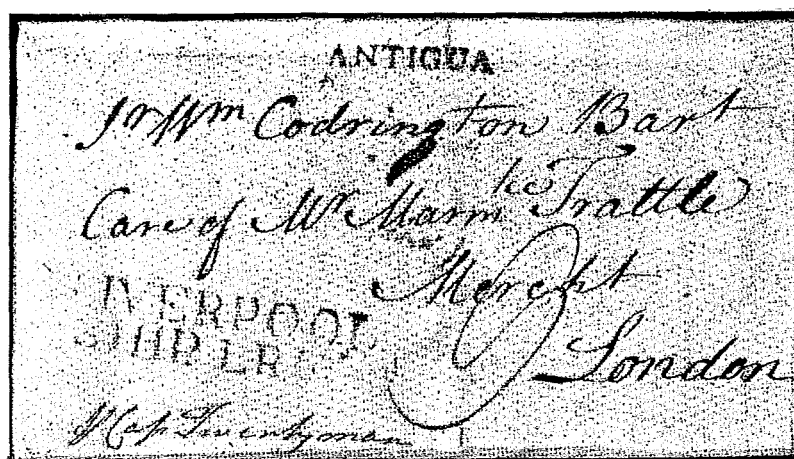
At this point, it might be useful to draw a simplified family tree of the Codringtons to provide a context.



There are, of course, many more brothers and sisters, irrelevant to our interest. Sir Christopher who reconstructed the house, had at least fifteen children and employed six nursery nurses. He is the member of the family of particular interest to us.

So it was that, in 1948, what is now known as the 'Codrington Correspondence' came to light at Dodrington. The Codringtons had made their fortune in the islands of Barbuda and Antigua. This correspondence, largely from Antigua between 1743 and 1851, provided a graphic account of the affairs of the family sugar plantations in the West Indies at a critical time, documenting, inter alia, conditions during the wars with France and America, the insurrection of the negroes and the abolition of slavery. Many letters are addressed to Dodrington but others to two merchants in London who were in partnership with the Codringtons. In total there were 516 letters and it is still probably the longest continuous run of correspondence from a British colony that has ever been discovered. The then Sir Christopher Codrington Bart called in Mr Robson Lowe, arguably the first person to study postal history systematically and the head of the great philatelic auction house of its day, to record the correspondence and sell it at auction. Rather like the Corsini Correspondence, Robson Lowe knew it was a shame to break up such a correspondence but he wanted to ensure that a detailed record was made of it for the benefit of later researchers. His book, 'The Codrington Correspondence', was published in 1951 and re-printed in 1968. In it, he set out to record the important content of each letter and, inevitably, the postal markings. These were as gold dust for those with an interest in the West Indies. The first recorded handstamp from Antigua had previously been from 1787. The Codrington correspondence provided examples of no fewer than five earlier handstamps and a host of later straight line and circular marks. Robbie Lowe gave every letter a serial number, preceded by two initials to indicate the writer of the letter. Thus he begins with SP1, a letter written by Simon Punter, their agent, from Barbuda and finishes with JG503, from John Grimes in St Kitts. Because the letters are grouped by sender, JG503 is not, of course, the letter with the latest date.

Assuming the correspondence was auctioned c1951, it is probably too late to discover to whom the various lots were sold. Some few have returned to the market and at least one member of our society is known to have a Codrington letter. What has become apparent, although it should have been evident from the numbering of the letters in the book, is that a small number of letters were excluded from the book and it seems they were letters that had neither a West Indian mark nor, at the least, an interesting ship letter mark. Perhaps the content was also considered too insignificant to justify a reprieve but, many years on and with hindsight, it may have been a mistake to exclude any.

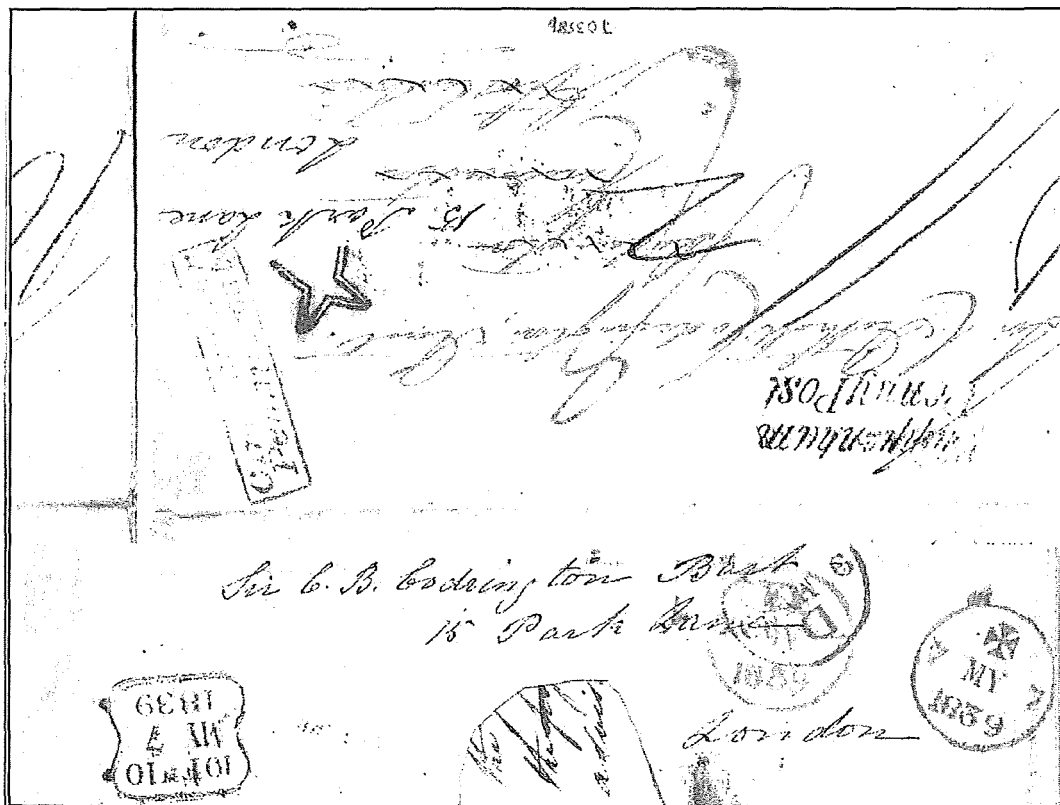


The illustration above is taken from Robson Lowe's book. It shows a quite typical letter from the Codrington correspondence, sent from Barbuda in 1783, with an Antiguan handstamp and a ship letter mark, addressed to the second baronet at the premises of Marmaduke Trattle, one of the family's partners in London. The 'Antigua' stamp is said to be one of only four recorded examples. It was applied at the ship letter office in St John's, the principal town on that island.

It is unsurprising that collectors of English postal history will be as interested in the English marks on the Codrington letters as in the scarce West Indian marks. There are thirty different British and Irish ship letter marks and, whereas Robson Lowe says they are "not extraordinary", some are very scarce. There are, for example, town stamps of Helstone and Lancaster with "Ship" or "Ship Ltr" added in manuscript and two-line stamps from such as Beaumaris, Kingsbridge and Romney. In 2004, our Gloucestershire County Editor, John Hine, went through the book and listed all the Gloucestershire marks recorded on the letters addressed to Dodrington. These included three different Cirencester mileage marks, some giving new earliest and latest recorded dates, and others that one might not have expected, including Moreton in Marsh and Wotton under Edge. Perhaps the highlights were the letters that travelled through the Cirencester Penny Post. This penny post handstamp is one of the scarcest Gloucestershire marks and the correspondence provided no fewer than ten previously unrecorded examples, all later than those known when the Society published its 'local posts' book.

An unusual feature of the Cirencester Penny Post is that one of its two routes took it through Tetbury, a post town, to a receiving house at Cross Hands, some miles beyond Tetbury. The likely reason for this irregular situation is explained in the 'local posts' book and it is unnecessary to repeat it here. Until the Robson Lowe book was examined, we knew of only one letter that had been carried on the Cross Hands branch. Dodington is little more than a mile from Cross Hands. However, from 1836, Cross Hands was also in the Chippenham Penny Post and, historically, there had been occasions when the area around Tetbury had been better served from Chippenham. There was, in fact, a 5th Clause Post between Tetbury and Chippenham for a number of years around 1820. To a Gloucestershire collector, what could be more interesting than a letter that travelled one way to Dodington in a penny post, was redirected to, say, London and travelled away from Dodington in the other penny post? There is one letter listed in Robson Lowe's book that appears to have both the handstamp of the Cirencester Penny Post and the Chippenham Penny Post. It is dated 24th June 1839 in Barbuda and was redirected from Dodington to Brighton.

It was in the middle of January that John Hine drew my attention to another Codrington letter, being sold on eBay and misdescribed, struck with both penny post markings. (He clearly believed it would be of extra appeal to someone with both Gloucestershire and Wiltshire interests!) Furthermore, this was not a letter listed in the Robson Lowe book. Through the good offices of Martin Scroggs, the letter was acquired and duly delivered from South Africa.



It is immediately apparent that the letter bears no West Indian handstamp, the likely reason for its omission from the book. At some time, perhaps by Robson Lowe himself, a pencil note has been made at the bottom of the front that it is 'JO358b', placing it correctly in the book between JO358 and JO359 but giving rise to the possibility that there may be a JO358a somewhere. The writer of this and 46 other letters sent between 1812 and 1839 was John Osborn, who worked for the Codrington family in various capacities. He appears to have given this to a passenger on a ship to hand-carry to London or, much less likely (from the content of the letter), eventually brought it himself. The letter is clearly dated Barbuda March 14th 1839. It entered the post in London on 7th May 1839, addressed to Sir C. Bethell-Codrington Bart, at Dodington, Cirencester, Gloucestershire. There is the datestamp of the Chief Office of the London Twopenny Post for 10FN (forenoon) and a datestamp of the General Post, code E, both for 7th May. There is also a red ink double lined inspector's 'star', a mark said to have been used for 'out of course' or internally delayed letters and a further General Post datestamp, also for 7th May, with a cross instead of a code letter. This stamp is one believed to have been associated with use of an inspector's star. There is no Cirencester arrival datestamp, nor would one be expected, but the letter was carried from Cirencester to Cross Hands in the Cirencester Penny Post and struck with the penny post handstamp. The total charge was 10d, 9d for General Postage (65 to 95 miles) plus penny postage. The letter would

have reached Cirencester and then Cross Hands on 8th May. Whether it was ever hand-carried the short distance from Cross Hands to Dodington, we shall never know but it was returned to the post at Cross Hands the same day, re-addressed to Sir Christopher at 15 Park Lane, London. This time it was carried in the Chippenham Penny Post to Chippenham, where it was backstamped with a circular datestamp on 8th May. From Chippenham, it was taken to London in the General Post and struck with an arrival handstamp, code D, on 9th May. The manuscript charge of '10' has a single line above it and a double line below. Whether this was to emphasise an unpaid charge of 10d or to indicate that the 10d charge was to be paid twice, is uncertain. Conveniently, it was endorsed on the back "Received May 9/C.B.C."

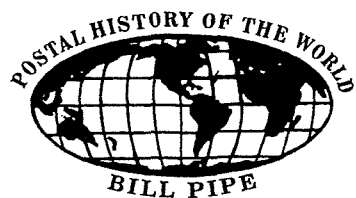
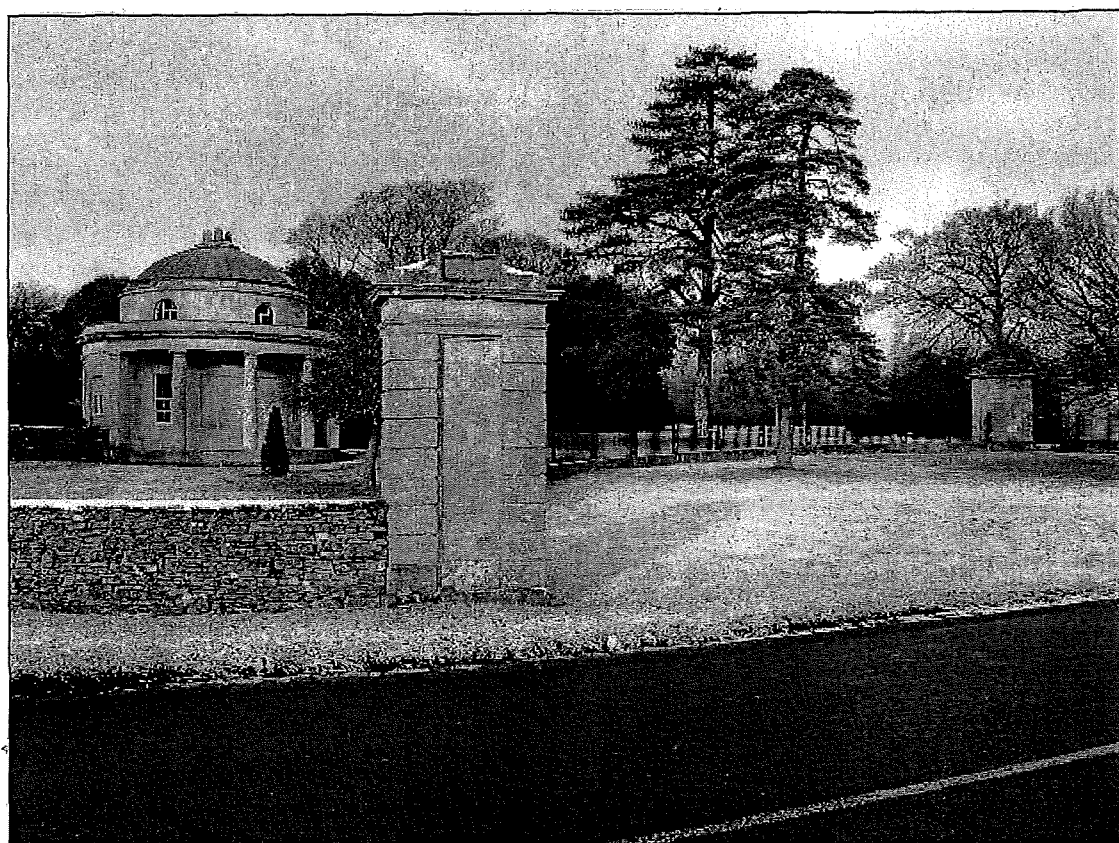
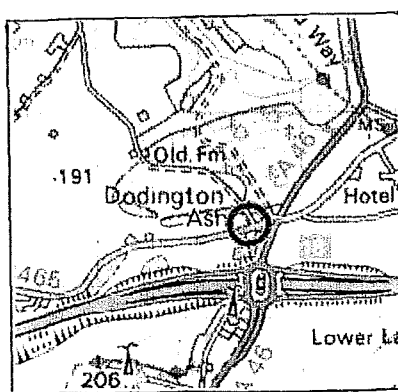
The content of the letter is extensive and possibly of historical significance. The writer begins by saying "in my former letter I have laid before you the destructive effects of both drought and wet upon the provisions crops of the island". He explains that these crops are very different from sugar cane, which is able to tolerate extremes of both moisture and drought. Interestingly, he mentions that an acre of sugar cane will yield £40, whereas corn fetches little more than a tenth of that price. However, the majority of the letter concerns a new plan to extract tannin from mangrove leaves, claiming that he has completely tanned a deerskin, using this extract, in ten days. He is sending a sample to Sir Christopher by the ship "Emerald" (and it may be that his letter travelled with it). He obtained the secret of extracting the tannin from an American and, with mangrove available in limitless abundance, he thinks this may be the way ahead. He goes on to describe the machinery that is needed, the key component being a small 3 horsepower portable steam engine that could be procured in Birmingham. It could be connected to grooved rollers that would macerate the leaves and twigs of the mangrove and, if necessary, the bark. The equipment would be capable of being moved around the island, as needed, with salt water from the mangrove swamps being used in the boiler and local wood providing the fuel. The writer suggests, if Sir Christopher approves of the idea, he will give him much more detail of the process or travel to England to brief him. He believes the steam engine could be manufactured and shipped for a cost of between £150 and £250.

One could not hope to precis the contents of the entire Codrington correspondence for it covers so much of historical significance, not least the emancipation of the slaves, seen, from a grower's point of view, as some kind of parliamentary madness. What is very striking is the number of shipwrecks that occur throughout the period, several of the Codrington ships being lost in local waters. It is ironic that the great house at Dodington, financed by slave labour, should have wrought iron gates at the entrance to the estate that were originally installed at Pagenhill, near Stroud, to commemorate the abolition of slavery in the British colonies in 1834!

It would not be surprising if some who have stayed with this piece are rather more interested in the Codringtons and their estate than in the detail of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire penny posts. The Codrington family remained at Dodington until 1980. At that time, the Gloucester Record Office was able to acquire many of James Wyatt's plans and drawings that, like the correspondence, had been kept at the house. For a time, the great house was open to the public but, in 2003, the Dodington Park estate was bought by Sir James Dyson, inventor of the Ballbarrow and, the bagless vacuum cleaner, for the reported sum of £20 million. The press had a field day at the time, pondering how much it might cost to put it in order and furnish what they described as "the prettiest English country house to have come onto the market for years". There are 15 vast principal bedrooms in the main house but, taking into account staff flats, lodges, cottages and a Dower house, there are said to be 51 bedrooms to furnish. Pevsner's scholarly description is not kind to some aspects of the exterior of the house but he seems uniformly impressed by the interior. He says the grand staircase was not completed until 1813 and it is an unfortunate coincidence that Wyatt, the architect, was killed in that year, returning from the house to London.

The photograph above is of the entrance to Dodington and the building on the left is known as Bath Lodge. This was also designed by Wyatt and has four semi-circular rooms, two on each floor. It is opposite a turnpike house that is an 1840s replacement for the original tollhouse of the 1730s, which was pulled down by local people who resented the charges. In fact, Sir William Codrington claimed some of his fellow country gentlemen lay behind the disturbances. He offered a reward of £20.

The Cotswold Way runs through Dodington Park. Entry at the southern end is close to the junction of the A46 and the road to Tormarton village. Unfortunately, the house is not visible from this walk and, for those keen on pursuing their postal history interests on the ground, they will have to become acquainted with Sir James and seek favoured admission.



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From: Avril Unwin
 Subject: Mooring Date: 31st March 2008
 To: John Soer

As a relatively new member, I have been struck by the number of articles in your journal that concern English postal history of the 17th and 18th centuries, while comparatively little is written about more modern events. Again, as a newcomer, I have been reluctant to burst into print too soon, aware that almost everyone knows more than I do. However, it was a coach journey along the M4 a few weeks ago that has prompted me to contact you.

I am not a fan of express coaches but they have their uses when the railways are disrupted by 'essential' maintenance work. That is how I found myself on a coach, crawling through Hammersmith, on its way to Newport and Cardiff. My companion for the afternoon, in the next seat, was an elderly gentleman, well dressed and reading a book with a degree of apparent erudition. After a while, he turned to me and, somewhat out of the blue, asked me if I was troubled by delays in the postal system. I replied that my concerns were probably much as everyone else's and, particularly at Christmas, I became anxious when letters and packages I had been expecting were slow to arrive but I couldn't say it was an all-consuming passion. "Ah", he said, "things used to be better and never more so than in the war years". He told me that, between 1941 and 1944, he had lived in the south-west near the pretty village of Dunster. "That's where I first heard of 'mooring' and I must say it puzzled me because it appeared to have nothing to do with the nearby coast or with the town of Minehead. It was an expression used at my local post office."

At this point, I thought it only right to confess that I took more than a passing interest in the English postal system and the term 'mooring' had never crossed my path. "In that case", he continued, "I want to show you something you may never have seen and may never see again for I can't suppose many were ever kept or survived". However, before he showed me anything, he thought I ought to be cognizant of the background to what would follow. Of course, even someone of my tender years is aware that, as the menfolk were called-up for active service in World War II, women were recruited into jobs traditionally seen as exclusively male. We have seen photos of them in munition factories, doing work that health and safety legislation would outlaw beyond question if anyone were asked to do it today. However, women munition workers were not in public view and it was the shock of seeing women "clippies" on buses, dressed in trousers no less, that older people remember well. While the public were used to seeing women behind the counter of their local post office, they did not expect to see young girls struggling with large sacks of letters and parcels (with or without the help of a bicycle) on public roads, dressed in the manner of the men whose jobs they had taken.

Dunster is on the edge of Exmoor. Carrying mail across the moor to deliver it, collect it or convey it to the next post town was hard work at the best of time and, during the war years, when petrol was scarce and vehicle availability limited, it often had to be moved on foot or by bicycle. My travelling companion assured me winters were harder in those days and, while carrying mail might have been considered part of the war effort, it was apparently thought an incentive should be offered to the poor girls undertaking this heavy work. He then disclosed the very surprising fact that someone in one of the local post offices had decided there would be a surcharge for mail carried on extreme routes and that the proceeds of the surcharge would be given directly to those who did the work.

He reached in his jacket pocket. I cannot say the contents were in very good condition and they were certainly of a very miscellaneous nature but among them he found an old envelope, folded twice but bearing the expected 2_d blue postage stamp of the war years. "Now", he said, "look at this". He unfolded the letter and turned it over and there on the back was a somewhat indistinct black handstamp, undoubtedly a letter "M" but with the forward leg of the letter crooked or, as we might say, "broken". That he said signified the charge for "mooring" had been paid. The charge at Dunster was an extra _d, bringing the letter postage to a total of 3d. "Moor-ing" I said with some incredulity, "surely the charge would have been for moor-age". "No" he replied, that was what it was called locally. It was called the same at the Dartmoor post offices and I even heard that, knowing of the scheme in the south-west, a charge was levied on Cannock Chase. "But", I protested, "I have never seen that handstamp, nor have I heard of such a charge". He assured me it didn't last long for someone at Head Office asked what this strange mark signified and stopped the charge. "That's why you are unlikely to see anything like this again".

With that he folded the envelope, put it away and returned to his book. With his silence, I dozed fitfully and eventually fell asleep for a while, even through a couple of scheduled coach stops, and I awoke only as we crossed the Severn Crossing into Wales. My companion had gone and I had never asked him his name, let alone whether he would consider parting with his prize. So it is I am asking members. Have you ever found a wartime letter with an "M" stamp on the back, with a broken leg or otherwise? I would particularly treasure any evidence at all of an extra charge for "mooring" on Cannock Chase.