MIDLAND MAIL

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

President: Mr. W.S. Chester

Chairman: Richard Farman

Treasurer: Trevor Clewley

Secretary: Elizabeth Lewis

NUMBER 63, JANUARY 1990

It is a well-known principle of military tactics that a wise commander does not squander his resources on too wide a front but concentrates them where they can be most effective. It is a tenet that we postal historians possibly should heed. The response to my last editorial prompts a number of questions. Are there too many postal history societies? Is there an optimum size for a society? Given that there is a limit to the number of people interested and active in the hobby are we in danger of spreading our jam too thinly? For instance could someone enlighten me as to why two "national" societies (the Postal History Society and the Society of Postal Historians) are necessary. A comparison of their publications seems to indicate that they cover much the same ground.

There seems to be a thriving interest in local postal history, Surrey now being added to the list of county societies. Yet there are dangers in this approach for local postal history needs to be seen in a wider context if it is to be meaningful. Also a small society may not be able to withstand a drop in membership - something which might be only a temporary matter for a larger body. As the previous editor has said our Society has achieved the ideal in terms of its interests - not too little, not too much but just right. However there does seem to be a need for a body to coordinate the activities of those interested in the varied aspects of the postal history of this country. After all there are only fifty-two Saturdays in the year.

I am very much indebted to Denis Salt for the index to the previous seventeen issues which appears at the end of this issue.

THE ANNUAL AUCTION

It seems a long way off until 28th April when our Annual Auction will follow the Annual General Meeting but details of any lots that members wish to enter will be required by 3rd March, i.e. the date of the March meeting in order that a catalogue can be produced and distributed in good time bearing in mind the time required for our overseas members to receive it and submit bids.

Please send descriptions with an assessment of the condition based on "Poor", "Good", "Fine" or "Superb". Also clearly indicate the number of items in each lot together with a fair market valuation and your reserve price if any. The actual lots can be brought to the auction on 28th April.

Your committee particularly the Treasurer, always appreciate lots given by members to be auctioned for Society funds prior to the auction proper. Can you perhaps find a lot or two for sale in this way.

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

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

On 3rd February at the Guildhall, Worcester we shall be holding our Annual Competitions. The three categories are for material from (i) pre-1840, (ii) post-1840 and (iii) post-1939. The meeting will begin at 1.30 p.m. and is being held at the venue of the Three Counties Federation Annual Fair.

We return to Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham on 3rd March when the speaker will be Mr. Douglas Muir whose display will be on Postal Mechanisation. The meeting will begin at 1. 30 p.m.

THE DECEMBER MEETING

Some twenty members attended the traditional December gathering at the Bass Museum, Burton-on-Trent on 16th. December. As usual the arrangements made by our Chairman were excellent, the seasonal warmth of our meeting place totally dispelling the gloom and damp outside.

Unfortunately the latter meant that your Editor arrived rather later than intended so cannot report in any great detail on the displays provided by members. However he did notice a variety of topics being covered - Worcestershire, Shropshire, Mail to Ireland, Derbyshire, a fascinating display of Victorian Christmas Cards and a number of models including a tram with a letter box.

After an excellent lunch we came to the main part of the day's entertainment which was provided by Victor Short of Ashwell in Rutland. It would be impossible to write a conventional report of Mr. Short's display, so varied was it in nature.

Victor, who is the founder of the Philatelic History Society, began by outlining how he had began to form a collection of philatelic history. This had involved taking a Transit van, which he subsequently filled, to the Rhyl works of Thomas Cliffe who for many years supplied materials to the philatelic trade. Amongst the items Victor managed to obtain were postcards which Thomas Cliffe had used to advertise his business; one of these showed his van with the words "XL STAMPS" on the sides. Several members had early memories of stamp collecting revived by the packet of a Stamp Collectors Outfit, an XLCR Stamp Finder and various XLCR packets of stamps. Those from French Equatorial Africa struck a particular chord with your reporter.

We were then challenged to identify three items of equipment associated with the stamp trade. They resembled mediaeval instruments of torture. The first proved to be for making stamp hinges. The second not only made the hinges but packed them. The last was used for waxing the cards to which the stamp packets were attached, not as your Editor suggested, for regumming Penny Blacks.

Other items which caught my eye were a prospectus for the conversion of Stanley Gibbons into a limited company in 1898, various old price lists which made one jealous of past collectors until one realised that in real terms the stamps were probably no more expensive than today, and a postcard sent in 1873 to Alfred Smith & Co which read " Gentlemen, Please send me some more sixpenny packets of stamps, by return of post, as I am quite out of them..."

Finally Victor turned to the history of the stamp hinge. Hardly a promising topic yet the twelve sheets we were shown were taken from a ninety sheet collection. I particularly liked those gummed on opposite sides so they did not need to be folded and so allowed the stamp to lie flatter on the page.

As one member commented Victor's approach was like a breath of fresh air, and we had been well and truly entertained.

STAMP WORLD LONDON 90

By now everyone will know that Stamp World London 90, the ten-yearly international stamp and postal history exhibition, will be held at Alexandra Palace between 3rd and 13th May. What you may not know is that our Society is not to be left on the sidelines. On Wednesday 9th May, the day of the Postal History Society's evening buffet reception at the Transport Museum, the Midland (GB) PHS will have use of room C from 10.30am to 1.30pm. We plan to invite other local postal history societies to join us in providing a fixed display of 100 sheets and we hope to be able to welcome members - and potential members with a little refreshment. Our publications will be on sale, of course, and this will be a splendid opportunity to rest weary feet for a few minutes and to chat to other local postal historians before returning to the fray. Please make a note of the date - Wednesday 9th May.

CORRESPONDENCE

Denis George has written, with regard to the tailpiece in the last issue, enclosing an extract from "Slogan Postmarks of the UK, 1917-69." by Parsons, Peachey and Pearson. This states that four dies, of the type illustrated, made of plastic in a steel frame were used at Coventry, Croydon, Leicester and Romford & Dagenham. The die at Coventry broke on the first day and was discarded.

Mr. de Rousset-Hall has written concerning the Lubenham datestamp scrapped in 1967 (MM60/9). This was discovered at the Lubenham office in its original type box. The date set up was 2 FE 29. The date is probably a genuine last day ahead of the introduction of the double circle die that lasted until the sixties.

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GREAT BRITAIN
1580-1901

Elizabethan to Victorian

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THE JANUARY MEETING

This was the Society's first meeting of the season at our Birmingham "HQ". It attracted 16 members and apologies were received from a further three whose absence was unavoidable. We had been asked to bring nine sheets of "Christmas Gifts or Recent Acquisitions" and it soon became clear that more than a few members had been quite generous with themselves during the festive season, presumably to relieve their better halves of the problem of choosing the right item.

Trevor Clewley's display was, frankly, a disappointment. One expects Trevor to show at least 81 single circles on nine sheets but, alas, 80 were missing. Having read Vivien Sussex's guide suggesting one or two covers to a page and bowing to more convential tastes, he lost his nerve and opted for turn-of-the-century letters from Wales to India, all redirected within India. He followed with a selection of free fronts with some nice provincial marks, one dated 8 January 1840 (free franking didn't cease with the uniform 4d post). There were telegrams (remember those?) with hooded circle "confirmation" stamps and, finally, a group of 18th century covers questioning the legitimacy of a 5d. charge in 1792 (correct, we thought). Overall a fine miscellany and not really a disappointment at all.

Ches, our President, had a remarkable collection of cachets, many rarely seen and some in unique combination. If your house had been demolished, your address corrupted or the postage overpaid on a metered letter, Ches had an appropriate cachet. We liked the one that said "Go e Away".

Alf Fieldhouse has been winning awards and competitions all over the place so this must have been like relegation to the third division. He had some fine paid marks from provincial towns including Aberystwyth, Birmingham, Northampton and Wolverhampton, the contents providing more entertainment. A Minchinhampton Penny Post letter with an unrecorded "No.1", possibly of Nailsworth was spotted.

Denis Salt had some lovely strikes of early Shrewsbury handstamps, notably from 1724, 1768, 1775 and 1777. (Eight of his nine items were ex-Stobbs and therefore of particular interest.) The first Oswestry mileage mark was unusual in that the mileage was below the name rather than before it but the highlight was possibly a 1708 "Sheffnale", a fine and early example of a provincial namestamp.

Derek Smeathers can be relied on to produce some unusual items (he once tried to "sell" a canal letter as "maritime"). There were Peterborough coded skeletons with single code letters, a Towcester letter referring to the practice of sending half banknotes by post and a note from the Bishop of Llandaff telling Francis Freeling that he would, henceforth, be Bishop of Peterborough and that his signature on free letters would change accordingly. An unrecorded bright blue strike of "Missent to Weedon" rounded off his Christmas stocking.

Harold Wilson's display will be remembered for his account of a search through a dealer's stock of Edinburgh (railway) backstamps. All were the same price except one cheaper item. Inevitably that, if one had the knowledge to recognise it, was a stamp used on just <u>two</u> evenings! A numbered "5" stamp on a letter carried on the Manchester & Liverpool Railway in 1837 turned out to be nothing to do with charges but, almost certainly, an indication that it travelled on the 5th train of the day, a mark only used on mail for delivery in the Manchester area. There were several crash covers (planes, not trains) and an unusual Derby skeleton of 1851.

Elizabeth Lewis completed the first half, not with nine sheets but with nine postal artifacts, all very desirable. They included postal scales, a letter balance with coiled stamps, a lovely roller ruler, a writing case (complete with travelling inkwell) and two sealing sets, one Victorian and the other Edwardian, the former with a spirit lamp and the latter with a candle.

After tea, Roger Broomfield's contribution once again confirmed his penchant for obscure items from mid-Wales. It is one thing for Welsh names to roll off Roger's tongue; entirely another for the reporter who has to spell them. Inevitably a ~~Machn~~ ~~Macen~~ Machynlleth cancel cropped up (it always does), this time on a letter with a "Can Office" handstamp (an office under Shrewsbury). On the same theme, we saw Garthmill and Berriew UDCs when the offices were under Welshpool (I think) rather than Shrewsbury. Less esoteric was an 1838 letter from Bromsgrove to Carno (one we can spell) with the very scarce mark of Newtown Penny Post.

Don Keen, one is relieved to report, had a display on a single theme - Siam in WW II. He showed cards to and from a prisoner of war, a Red Cross enquiry about a soldier and, unusually, a Japanese card from Siam. All related in some way to the building of the infamous railway.

Ted Coles was also able to establish a unified theme - Airgraphs. The system began in 1942/3 and the illustrations were apparently the work of the local forces' offices and so of varying competence. We saw airgraphs from Britain, North Africa, the central Mediterranean forces, SE Asia and Persia & Iraq - probably a "full house".

Chris Beaver began with an explanation of why Tipton straight line stamps can be found on covers with a Tipton CDS. This will appear in the next issue so no more will be reported except to say it will help to where Horseley Heath and Tipton Green are located. Chris included a very nice penny black cover with a S/L "Tipton". The remainder of his display was of various S/L marks from the Birmingham area and therefore of wide interest.

John Calladine had recently acquired what he thought of as the "penny blacks" of provincial handstamps - the Bristol and Exeter Bishop marks of the first (1697) cross post. From the Glos/Herefs border, there were two letters of 1834, both from the same village of Lea and both addressed to Kent, which had two different handstamps. One bore a "Lea Penny Post" and was charged 11d; the other a boxed "Lea" and was charged 10d. (It was suggested to him that items picked up by the mailcoach bore the latter mark but, when there was no mailcoach expected, letters travelled to Gloucester via the Penny Post.)

Eric Lewis' first item was a delightful engraved notice for a school in Abergavenny which proudly boasted that a bed was allowed for <u>each</u> boarder! As usual, Eric pulled our collective leg with a supposed 14-line cancel and a card with an "insufficiently addressed" cachet which he professed not to understand. (When we looked at it, it was entirely in oriental characters!) An item which declared on it that 2/6d extra would be paid if delivered by 8am on Sunday apparently achieved its aim and gained the messenger not 2/6d but 3/6d - a lot of money in the 19th century.

Our chairman, Richard Farman, completed the afternoon with an impressive selection of postcards relating principally to pre-WWI military camps at Rugeley and Brocton. Some unlikely groups had their own cancels (Penkridge Bank, Soldiers' Club Brocton etc) but the card addressed to Brocton Camp and re-addressed to the camp hospital caught the eye. One envisaged an unfortunate end to the first use of a firing range by enthusiastic volunteers. For Trevor's sole benefit, Richard included an unrecorded "Rugeley Camp" single circle.

This had been a lively meeting with many queries posed and answered. Alf learned that his obscure maritime (?) handstamp was applied by a Dutch post office but you have to be a Ted Coles to know a thing like that. All in all, a most worthwhile afternoon.

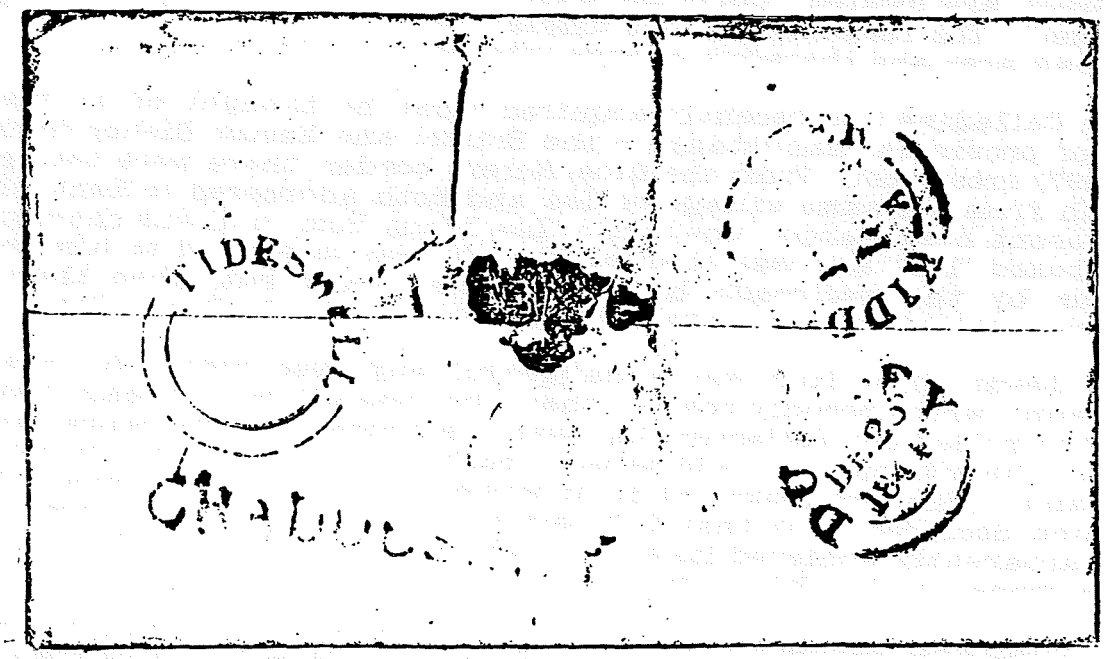
The Editor would like to thank John Calladine for once again providing a report of a meeting.

CHADDESLEY - A MARK OF DISTINCTION

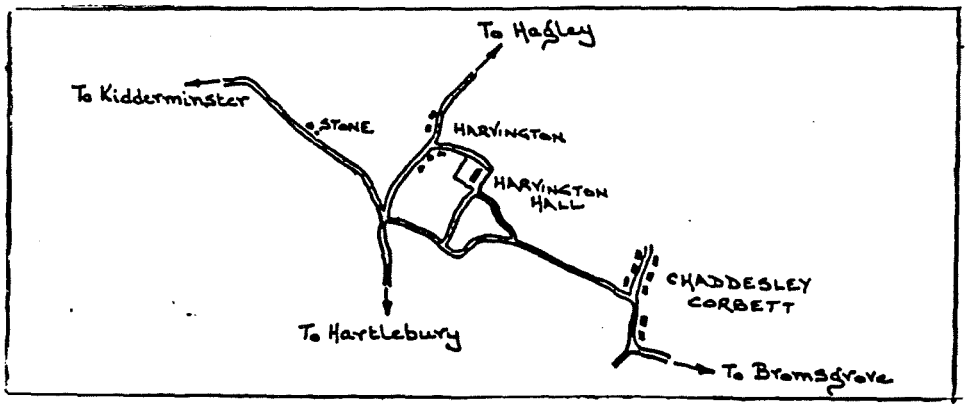
by John Calladine

Arguably the most interesting handstamp listed and illustrated in the Society's book of post-1840 undated straight line marks is that of Chaddesley, Worcestershire (MSL241). The sole example recorded was in Mike Young's collection, struck in red ink on a letter to Worcester dated 22nd April 1844. The handstamp, in large seriffed capitals and measuring approximately 63x7mm, is unlike any other in the book and appears to belong to the eighteenth rather than the ninetenth century.

Thanks to the eagle eye of Chris Beaver, a second example of this mark has now been noted. It is on a letter from Tideswell, a village in Derbyshire, and the address side bears a Bakewell cds of Christmas 1844 where the adhesive stamp might have been expected. Postage was paid in cash, however, and the cover quaintly endorsed by the sender "free paid one ld". On the reverse, as seen in the illustration, there is a fine strike of the Tideswell C2 UDC in blue and transit stamps of Dudley and Kidderminster in black. The addressee is a James Mackrell Esq at "Harvington near Kidderminster Worcestershire". The "Chaddesley" mark is in an indeterminate colour which may be a faded black or an oxidised red ink.



The Society's UDC book shows two stamps for a Worcestershire Harvington, under Evesham, but this is not the village of the address. The Harvington in question is a hamlet on and adjacent to the present A450 between Hartlebury and Hagley or, more significantly in postal terms, close to the intersecting A448 from Kidderminster to Bromsgrove, about three miles south-east of Kiddeerminster and one and a half miles from Chaddesley Corbett, a larger village on the Bromsgrove road.



There was no official post to Chaddesley Corbett before 1840. A private messenger was established in 1842, probably financed by public subscription. It was not until March 1844 that an official post from Kidderminster was approved, following the line of the present A448. A C2 UDC was issued within a few days on 18th March 1844 but, alas, it read "Chaddesley-Corbell" and there is no evidence that it was ever used. Surprisingly, no attempt was made to correct it and it was 20th March 1845, more than a year later, before a "Chaddesley-Corbett" UDC was available. This UDC is not uncommon and a number of examples in blue or red have been recorded. While there can be no statistical significance in just two examples of the straight line "Chaddesley" mark, it is worth pointing out that both date from the period between the establishment of the office (and the issue of a mis-spelt UDC) and the availability of a corrected UDC. It is not unreasonable to surmise that the receiver at Chaddesley Corbett used the straight line stamp as an interim identification of his office.

The question remains - from where did the straight line handstamp come? There are three plausible possibilities. The Chaddesley receiver (or the postmaster at Kidderminster) may have had the handstamp manufactured locally. That seems an unlikely answer because the procedure for obtaining an official replacement would have been well known in 1844 and the straight line stamp appears well-worn rather than new. It may have been a relic of Chaddesley's two years of unofficial post but, if that were true, it is surprising that no examples have been seen. A more likely explanation is that it is one of those odd handstamps, known from the second half of the eighteenth century, that relate to villages with no post office or postal significance but boasting the home of an important family. The obvious parallel is the "Hagley" handstamp of 1781, thought to have been used on behalf of the Lyttleton family at nearby Hagley Hall, and possibly held at the post town. However, there is no house in Chaddesley that, in the eighteenth century could be fairly described as a "stately home" nor, as far as is known, a family of great influence.

The possible answer takes us back to the address of the letter being discussed. The hamlet of Harvington may have had few dwellings but it did include, on the Chaddesley side, a home of considerable historical significance, Harvington Hall. Harvington Hall came into the possession of the Earls of Warwick in about 1344 and in 1359 the Earl bought the manor of Chaddesley Corbett which was incorporated into the estate. It is as a Roman Catholic stronghold during the years persecution that the house is best known and it probably has the finest surviving examples of priests' hiding-places in the whole of England. In the eighteenth century, when the handstamp of interest may have been used, Harvington Hall was occupied by the Throckmorton family who also owned Buckland, in Berkshire, and Coughton Court, Warwickshire. After 1800, Harvington Hall was virtually forgotten and, though never totally abandoned, it remained neglected and largely untouched until much needed renovation was undertaken in the 1930s. It is well worth a visit.

Were the Throckmortons a family of sufficient stature to warrant the use of a special handstamp on their mail? Harvington Hall was not the principal family residence but they were certainly a family of substance. Just a single example of eighteenth century use of the Chaddesley handstamp might provide an answer. In the meantime it is more likely that further strikes from 1844 will turn up to taunt us.

SIX-DAY POSTS,1741

Further lists of towns having a six-day post from London have emerged since the index was produced for those which have appeared in recent issues of Midland Mail. I am indebted to Denis Salt for providing a copy of the 1741 list. This was almost certainly a result of Ralph Allen's 1741 contract.

General Post-Office, London, July 1, 1741.

The Postmaster-General for the better Information of Merchants, Traders and others, have directed this Notice to be given, That the Bags for the following Towns are dispatched from this Office every Night, and the Letters delivered in Return every Day (Sundays excepted).

Abingdon
Attleborough in Norfolk
Bath
Becconsfield
Beccles
Bristol
Burntwood
Bury St. Edmunds
Cambridge
Canterbury
Claremont
Chatham
Chelmsford
Chertsey in Surry
Cirencester
Colchester
Croydon
Cobham
Darking
Dartford
Deal
Dover
Endfield
Esher in Surry
Epsome
Farringdon
Feversham
Gravesend
Grays
Gerrards Cross
Glouceste
Guildford
Hartford
Hampton Court
Hampton Town
Hanworth in Middlesex
Ham in Surry
Hamwick in Surry
High Wickham
Ingatestone
Isleworth
Ipswich
Kilvedon
Kingston
Kingston Wick
Lalam in Middlesex
Leatherhead
Littleton in Middlesex
Lowstoff
Lynn
Maidstn
Moulsey in Surry
Newmarket
Norwich
Oxford
Petersham
Portsmouth
Queenborough
Richmond in Surry
Ripley
Rochester
Royston
Rumford
Sandwich
Saxmundham
Sittingbourne
Shipperton in Middlesex
Stoke in Norfolk
Southall
Sunbury in Middlesex
Thame
Thanet
Thames Ditton in Surry
Thetford
Teddington
Twickenham
Uxbridge
Walton on Thames
Weybridge in Surry
Windsor
Wingham in Kent
Windham in Norfolk
Witham
Witton in Middlesex
Yarmouth

N.B. Tunbridge Bag goes every Night from Midsummer to Michaelmas only.

Bags for the following Towns are dispatched from this Office on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; and the Letters in return are delivered Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays

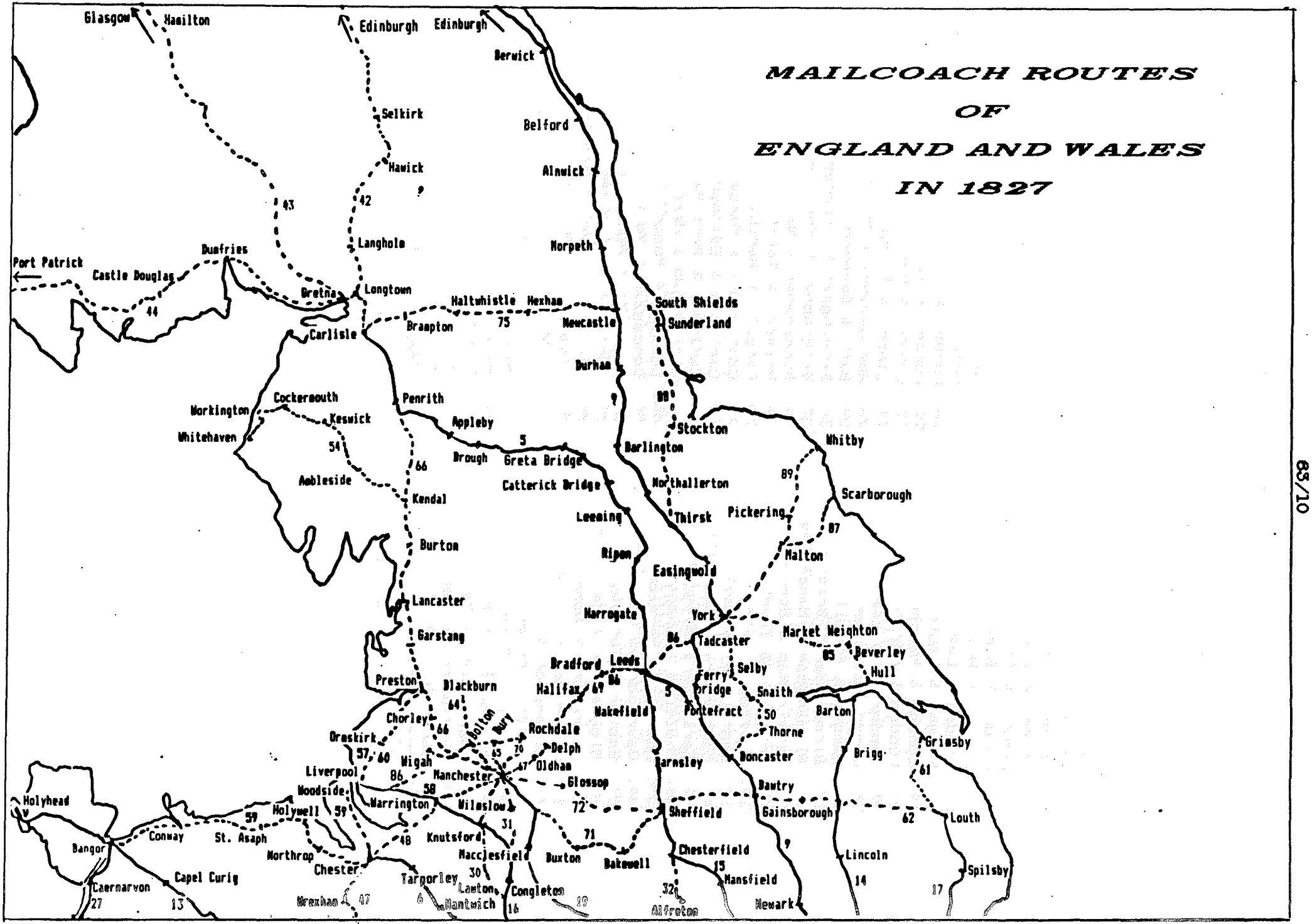
Arundel	Eastgrinstead	Lewis	Rygate
Brighthelmston	Godalmin	Midhurst	Steyning
Chichester	Haslemere	Petworth	Shoreham

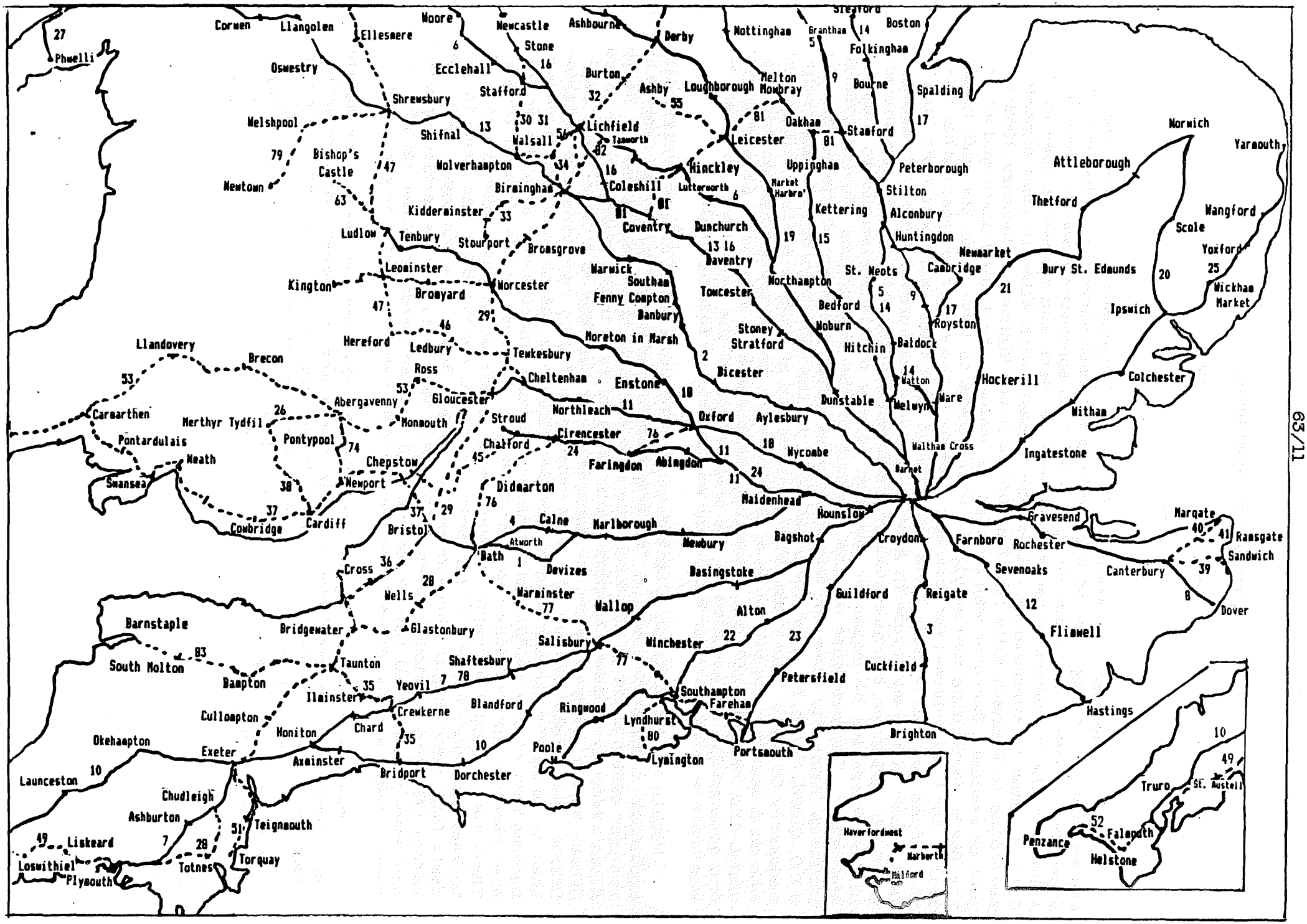
By Order of the Postmaster General
J.D. Barbutt, Secr.

MAILCOACH ROUTES, 1827

The following is a list of mailcoaches in a set of timebills, most of which are dated 1827. On the maps which follow, those routes which originated in London are shown with a solid line; others are represented by a broken line. Not all the stages are shown. Also the routes which operated in Scotland only are not shown.

1. London & Bath
2. London & Birmingham
3. London & Brighton
4. London & Bristol
5. London & Carlisle
6. London & Chester
7. London & Devonport
8. London & Dover
9. London & Edinburgh
10. London & Falmouth
11. London & Gloucester
12. London & Hastings
13. London & Holyhead
14. London & Hull
15. London & Leeds
16. London & Liverpool
17. London & Louth
18. London & Ludlow
19. London & Manchester
20. London & Norwich
21. London & Norwich
22. London & Poole
23. London & Portsmouth
24. London & Stroud
25. London & Yarmouth
26. Abergavenny & Merthyr Tydfil
27. Bangor & Phwelli
28. Bath & Devonport
29. Birmingham & Bristol
30. Birmingham & Liverpool
31. Birmingham & Manchester
32. Birmingham & Sheffield
33. Birmingham & Stourport
34. Birmingham & Walsall
35. Bridport & Taunton
36. Bristol & Taunton
37. Bristol & Milford
38. Cardiff & Merthyr Tydfil
39. Canterbury & Deal
40. Canterbury & Margate
41. Canterbury & Ramsgate
42. Carlisle & Edinburgh
43. Carlisle & Glasgow
44. Carlisle & Port Patrick
45. Chalford & Chepstow
46. Cheltenham & Hereford
47. Chester & Hereford
48. Chester & Manchester
49. Devonport & Falmouth
50. Doncaster & York
51. Exeter & Torquay
52. Falmouth & Penzance
53. Gloucester & Carmarthen
54. Kendal & Whitehaven
55. Leicester & Ashby
56. Lichfield & Wolverhampton
57. Liverpool & Lancaster
58. Liverpool & Manchester
59. Liverpool & Holyhead
60. Liverpool & Preston
61. Louth & Grimsby
62. Louth & Sheffield
63. Ludlow & Bishop's Castle
64. Manchester & Blackburn
65. Manchester & Bury
66. Manchester & Carlisle
67. Manchester & Delph
68. Manchester & Knutsford
69. Manchester & Leeds
70. Manchester & Rochdale
71. Manchester & Sheffield
72. Manchester & Sheffield
73. Manchester & Stalybridge
74. Newport & Abergavenny
75. Newcastle & Carlisle
76. Oxford & Bristol
77. Portsmouth & Bristol
78. Salisbury & Exeter
79. Shrewsbury & Newtown
80. Southampton & Lymington
81. Stamford & Birmingham
82. Tamworth & Birmingham
83. Taunton & Barnstaple
84. Worcester & Kington
85. York & Hull
86. York & Liverpool
87. York & Scarborough
88. York & South Shields
89. York & Whitby
90. Aberdeen & Fochabers
91. Aberdeen & Inverness
92. Aberdeen & Peterhead
93. Edinburgh & Aberdeen
94. Edinburgh & Dumfries
95. Edinburgh & Glasgow
96. Edinburgh & Glasgow
97. Edinburgh & Stirling
98. Frasersburgh & Burness Toll
99. Glasgow & Greenock
100. Glasgow & Perth
101. Inverness & Thurso


MAILCOACH ROUTES
OF
ENGLAND AND WALES
IN 1827
Glasgow
Hamilton
Edinburgh
Edinburgh
Berwick
Belford
Alnwick
Morpeth
Selkirk
Hawick
Langholm
Dumfries
Port Patrick
Castle Douglas
Gretna
Longtown
Carlisle
Brampton
Haltwhistle
Hexham
Newcastle
South Shields
Sunderland
Durham
Stockton
Darlington
Whitby
Scarborough
Pickering
Malton
Thirsk
Northallerton
Workington
Cockermouth
Keswick
Whitehaven
Penrith
Appleby
Brough
Greta Bridge
Catterick Bridge
Leeming
Ripon
Easingwold
Ambleside
Kendal
Burton
Lancaster
Garstang
Harrogate
York
Tadcaster
Market Weighton
Beverley
Hull
Selby
Ferry Bridge
Snaith
Barton
Bradford
Leeds
Halifax
Wakefield
Pontefract
Thorne
Preston
Blackburn
Chorley
Ormskirk
Bolton
Bury
Rochdale
Delph
Oldham
Liverpool
Wigan
Manchester
Glossop
Barnsley
Doncaster
Brigg
Grimsby
Louth
Lincoln
Spilsby
Holyhead
Woodside
Warrington
Wilmslow
Sheffield
Gainsborough
Bawtry
Holywell
Conway
St. Asaph
Bangor
Caernarvon
Capel Curig
Northrop
Chester
Knutsford
Macclesfield
Buxton
Bakewell
Chesterfield
Mansfield
Newark
Tarporley
Lawton
Congleton
Nantwich
Alfreton
Wrexham
27
13
47
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16
18
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47
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43
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44
75


Corwen
Llangollen
Ellesmere
Moore
Newcastle
Ashbourne
Derby
Nottingham
Sleaford
Granthan
Boston
Folkingham
Spalding
Bourne
Melton Mowbray
Oakham
Stamford
Peterborough
Norwich
Yarmouth
Attleborough
Thetford
Wangford
Scole
Yoxford
Wickham Market
Ipswich
Colchester
Mithan
Ingatestone
Hockerill
Bury St. Edmunds
Newmarket
Cambridge
Huntingdon
Alconbury
Stilton
Kettering
Uppingham
Leicester
Hinckley
Lutterworth
Market Harboro'
Coleshill
Birmingham
Coventry
Dunchurch
Daventry
Northampton
St. Neots
Bedford
Woburn
Hitchin
Baldock
Royston
Watton
Melwyn
Ware
Dunstable
Aylesbury
Wycombe
Walthan Cross
Barnet
Haidenhead
Hounslow
Gravesend
Margate
Ramsgate
Sandwich
Dover
Farnboro
Rochester
Sevenoaks
Canterbury
Croydon
Bagshot
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Chalford
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Enstone
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Fenny Compton
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Stoney Stratford
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Stroud
Cheltenham
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Ross
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Pontardulais
Carmarthen
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Penzance
Falmouth
Helstone

A SURVEY OF SURVEYORS

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

Part 2

Lumley's successor as Resident Surveyor, Christopher Robinson, requires explanation, for though two of his brothers had been surveyors he had not that experience himself. If a prime purpose of such an appointment was to liaise with Allen and the surveyors whose offices were at Bath and represent them at the G.P.O., it must be surmised he had worked closely with Allen in some capacity. According to Kenneth Ellis (The Post Office in the Eighteenth Century, 1958) the post of Resident Surveyor was created "to manage the inland posts and advise the Board concerning new services", which looks to have been the end result rather than the original purpose, and to apply to the first such post rather than the second; several writers have not noticed that there weremore than one, in fact. Some of the surveyors in Allen's time had been previously on the staff of the G.P.O. in London, but he certainly preferred to select his own. Unfortunately in the Narrative he makes no mention of any of his assistants by name - Appendix 1, "Improvements on the Revenue of the Post Office" during 1720-61 includes "Annually saved in Surveyors and other necessary Officers for the G.P.O. £1695, which for 40 years is £67,800." By the mid-1750's one of those "other necessary Officers" was young Philip, third son of Ralph's brother Philip, who was on a salary from his uncle of £600 as what may be termed his confidential clerk, and received £300 p.a. travelling expenses as a surveyor - an additional one apparently. He assisted in the preparation of the Narrative. In effect he was trainee-substitute for Ralph who was by then in failing health.

Within a week of Ralph Allen's death on 29th June 1764, Philip was officially appointed a surveyor, and a "supernumerary surveyor" promoted from the younger office staff of the G.P.O. was also added to the establishment. Ralph Allen's records were soon transferred from Prior Park to the vicinity of Lombard Street, as pre-determined in the contracts, for the "Bye and Cross Road Letter Office" was established on 19th September with Philip receiving two salaries, that is as its Comptroller and as Resident Surveyor. All the existing surveyors became part of the B&CRLO establishment though undoubtedly as hitherto they also received instructions from the Resident Surveyor of the Inland Office. There was a "junior surveyor" subsequently appointed at each vacancy until 1771 to keep the total number of surveyors constant, two resident and four in the field (and reverting to three from that date). Every new surveyor from 1764 before 1787 had previously been at the G.P.O. They did not have particular areas and were probably all London-based; each full surveyor remained on £300 p.a. despite being entitled First, Second or Third Surveyor according to seniority.

The seventh and eighth decades of the century saw considerable improvements in the condition of main roads and consequent development of stage-coach and "posting" services. Unless mail-carts count, there were no significant innovations from the Post Office establishment and no effective response to the illegal carriage of mail in coachmen's and traveller's baggage and pockets. The surveyors were content to keep on in what had now become time-honoured ways, their minds closed to innovative ideas for providing a better service to the public. One of them, George Hudson, without doubt competent and conscientious, summed up their attitude to John Palmer's Plan by insisting that the post was "now almost as perfect as can be."

To judge from the hostile reaction which persisted when the Plan began to be implemented, the appointment in 1787 of Francis Freeling, a singularly efficient protege of Palmer, as a new surveyor with a brief covering the whole Kingdom must have been bitterly resented by the long-serving surveyors, resident and riding. What were two year's experience acting for him compared with their inside knowledge? However a mixture of complacency and belligerence was no qualification for promotion or even for retaining important positions in the establishment, not then anyway. The Royal Commissioners' report of 1788, which uncovered many abuses in the administration of the Post Office, made public for example that Philip Allen, paid as for two jobs, habitually appeared in the B&CRLO for three or four hours on three days a week. He had departed this life before that was published, and both jobs went in 1793. One surveyor was superannuated in 1787. The other two riding surveyors of the "old establishment" (belonging to the B&CRLO) together with four new ones (part of Palmer's office as Comptroller-General and nominated by him) were distributed each to be responsible for a specified portion of England and Wales. Those of the "New Establishment" had a salary of £100 p.a. at first (though three of the four were postmasters), with a guinea a day for expenses when absent from home, a device to encourage their travelling.

After the abolition of the Comptroller-General's Department in order to get rid of Charles Bonnor in 1795, all six riding surveyors became part of the Inland Office where Freeling's authority and efficiency effectively controlled the whole Post Office administration in the waning years of Anthony Todd's freehold, and completely so once he became Secretary on Todd's death in 1798. Freeling sent the surveyors their instructions and expected to receive detailed reports of their actions. The need for separate resident surveyors in London had passed.

SURVEYORS 1720-1787

(Known names in chronological order of first appointment as surveyor. Dates in January to March until 1752 have been adjusted to modern reckoning, e.g. 22nd March 1741 in the records is given as 22nd March 1742.)

JOHN LUMLEY, postmaster and cross-postmaster of Abingdon 1712-31, was "our first surveyor", appointed in 1720, probably on 24th June or soon after. It seems likely he was employed by Ralph Allen in some other capacity in 1740-42 for he was re-appointed on 25th March 1742 in Kemp's place. The following July he was made the first "Resident or Principal Surveyor" in London, at first still paid by Allen but from August 1743 by the Receiver-General after Treasury approval of having a surveyor on the establishment. He was said to have served as a surveyor for twenty-eight years when he died apparently in 1748.

MR. HASLAM may have been appointed shortly after Lumley, though no evidence has been found of the names of others who served in the 1720s. The only evidence is letters to him in 1730-34 from Allen. Since most of Allen's surveyor's do not appear to have been G.P.O. staff previously and Lumley only to have been a postmaster, it may be assumed most of the surveyors until 1764 had some relevant experience as Allen's assistants in Bath or came to his notice and were trained there by him.

JOHN CARTER similarly may have been the third original appointee in 1720 though there is no record of him extant prior to 1734. He was the senior riding surveyor in the last yearsof his life which ended in 1745.

JEREMIAH ROBINSON must have been appointed in 1734 on Haslam's death (retirement or dismissal being improbable alternatives). He himself died in 1742, still in his prime to judge from his brothers' later service.

FRANCIS KEMP was appointed "a surveyor of the roads" on 4th April 1740 "to be paid by Ralph Allen to commence Lady Day last". He was sent a week later to Bath for his "orders from Mr. Allen", so may not have been Allen's choosing, made more likely by his being discharged on 22nd March 1742. (Between 1737 and 1744 the bare facts are mostly precise, in Post 58/1, though no explanation is given for the occasional dismissal.) It would appear he temporarily replaced Lumley since Ralph Allen's contracts consistently provided for his payment of three surveyors, approved and actually appointed by the PMGs, and there is no evidence for other riding surveyors in England and Wales in the period June 1720 to June 1764.

ATKINSON ROBINSON was appointed on 13th October 1742 following his brother's death. On 12th May 1762 he succeeded another brother as Resident Surveyor in London though he was off work ill in 1767 he continued in that office until his death in 1771.

HENRY TOLCHER was appointed on 10th August 1743 when the Resident Surveyorship became established, so that there were again three riding surveyors. He was discharged on 31st July 1745.

ROBERT BLYFORD was a temporary acting surveyor from 7th January 1746 for two months following Carter's death; he had been clerk to the Deputy Accountant at the G.P.O., and returned to that duty.

WILLIAM HATHORNE acted instead of Blyford from 17th March 1746 until his own appointment as a surveyor became effective on 4th April 1746. By a process of elimination he must have been in office until 1763, but his end is not recorded.

JOHN WILSON eventually filled Tolcher's place on 25th March 1746, at the end of what must have been a difficult period for Allen. Wilson had had nearly five years as the senior riding surveyor when he was made Secretary of the Post Office in Dublin from 5th January 1767, probably the first such appointment of a surveyor and some indication of their status.

CHRISTOPHER ROBINSON was appointed as Resident Surveyor from 21st March 1749, following Lumley's death, without having been a surveyor first and in preference to his own brother who was the senior man in the field. It must surely mean he had long experience of the workings of the cross-post organisation in Bath. In 1760 it was ordered that the Resident Surveyor instruct "all letter receivers in Town that shall be hereafter appointed." The team of surveyors remained unchanged throughout his time in London, that is until he died in 1762.

RICHARD ARBUTHNOT was appointed on 12th May 1762, the same day on which Atkinson Robinson became Resident Surveyor. After twenty-five years "in the saddle" he was forcibly retired in 1787 to make way for the "New Establishment". He was the only surveyor to span the years from Ralph Allen to John Palmer, unless Philip Allen be allowed to count as another.

EDWARD COMBER was the last surveyor chosen during Ralph Allen's lifetime, in 1763. His commission, though not precisely dated, is the only one recorded in full: "...punctually following and performing the instructions we have given or hereafter shall give you; our respective Deputies therefore, their Servants and all other Persons concerned are strictly to obey you as our Riding Surveyor ..." (Post 58/1 page 33ff. It is plain that the form of words was the same as in 1720 and there is reference to it on the last appointment under the "old establishment" in 1771). Comber was appointed to be a "Clerk of the Road" at the G.P.O. five or six years later.

PHILIP ALLEN, Ralph's nephew and trained with a view to taking over his "farm", was formally made a surveyor by the PMGs from 5th July 1764, a week after his uncle's death, no doubt in order to receive a salary while the transfer from Bath and establishment of the Bye and Cross Letter Office in Exchange Alley was effected. Philip was appointed both its Comptroller and its Resident Surveyor from 24th October, that is with two salaries £300 and £200 p.a. respectively. He seems to have died in office, disheartened and under a cloud, about 1787.

(Until 1771 the other Resident Surveyor and all the riding surveyors were always on £300, though Atkinson Robinson was allowed an additional £100 from 1767 for coach hire when his health prevented his continuing to live in London. From 1771, probably, the Resident Surveyor, in the Inland Office received £400, the others, under the B&CRLO as far as salaries were concerned, were unchanged.)

GEORGE HODGSON, previously a "Junior Clerk or Facer of Letters" in the Inland Office from February 1760, was the only person to be appointed as a "Supernumerary Surveyor", from 5th July 1764. His salary began at £200 and was later raised to £300 though he was not promoted at the next vacancy. His job was "to be assisting as often as occasion may require the three others in the execution of any orders the PMG may give relating to this branch of the Duty whether with respect to the General or to the Bye & Cross Road Posts." All along, of course the riding surveyors had been liable to receive orders from more than one source. Hodgson became one of the three in about 1768, was the surveyor of the Northern District from 1787, when the six districts were formed, and there continued into the next century frail and greatly valued, the last of the "Old Establishment" and paid accordingly until 1809.

NATHAN DRAPER, after a trial or training from 19th November 1766 was appointed a surveyor with effect from the date of Wilson's appointment to Ireland. On 13th December 1771 he became Resident Surveyor at the Inland Office following the death of the last of the Robinson brothers. Being bitterly opposed to the Mail Coach Plan, in operation as in prospect, he was not taken into the Comptroller General's staff in 1787. However he did retain his office until at least 1792, effectively if not actually replaced by Freeling that year.

WILLIAM MAXWELL was the first of two to be appointed "Junior Surveyor", in 1768 or 1769. A "Junior" on £200 p.a. was evidently additional to the establishment and meant to be in training as well as on trial; in the nineteenth century it meant something different, the surveyor most recently appointed. For Maxwell, with no vacancy occuring in the meanwhile, it was actually training for the postmastership of Bath, where he went in 1771.

JOHNSON WILKINSON was only briefly a Junior Surveyor from 4th September 1771 until Draper's elevation before the end of the year left a gap for him as Third Surveyor. Though appointed in 1787 as surveyor of the S.E. of England (later if not then called the Home District) he resented directions from both Palmer and Freeling and proved uncooperative until forcibly retired in 1799 - claiming the surveyors of the "Old Establishment" had a freehold for life.

FRANCIS FREELING acted as and was paid as a surveyor by John Palmer from 5th April 1785, and was appointed a surveyor "generally over the whole Kingdom" as part of the "New Establishment" introduced on 5th March 1787. By 1795 (Palmer and Bonnor having ruined their chances) he was effectively running the G.P.O. rather than Anthony Todd, becoming Joint Secretary with him in 1797 and taking over the following year.

JOHN STANTON followed Philip Allen in the dual appointment running the Bye and Cross Letter Office from 1787 until 1793 when the appointment was abolished. He was still receiving his pension in 1821. A separate office with an accountant etc. to check bye letter vouchers persisted until 1831. (Post 14/2 has B&CRLO records 1774 to 1831).

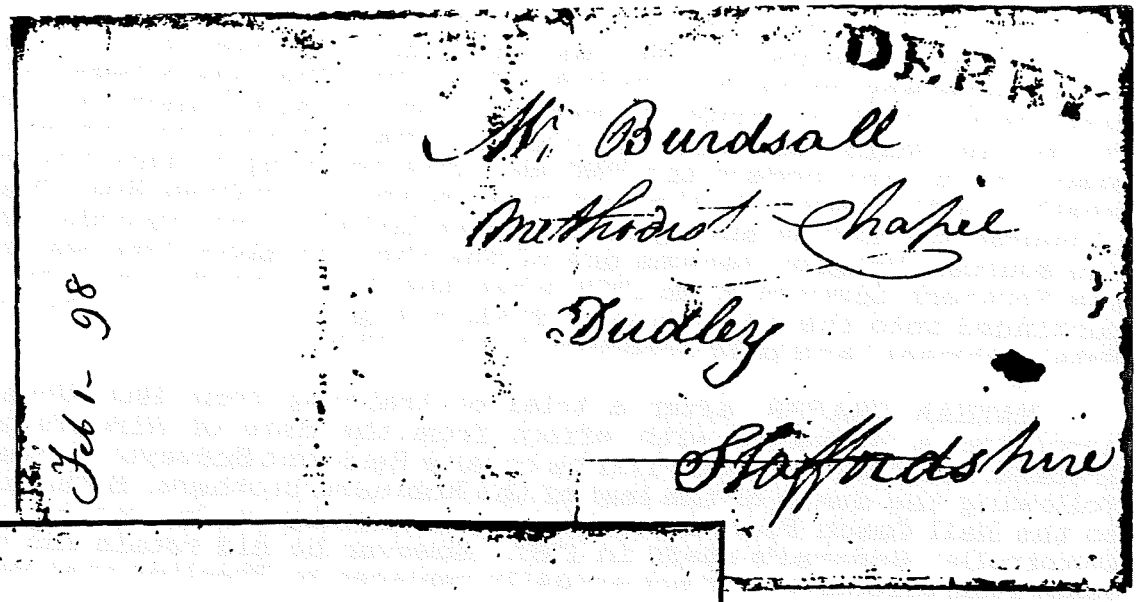
SAMUEL LOTT (appointed surveyor of the Western District on 10th October 1785), SAMUEL WOODCOCK (appointed to the South Wales District on 10th October 1785), CHRISTOPHER SAVERLAND and GEORGE WESTERN, the first three of them postmasters as well, were all appointed District Riding Surveyors of the "New Establishment" during 1787, authorised by Treasury Warrant of that January, and all of them belonging to the Comptroller General's Department, that is under John Palmer with CHARLES BONNOR his Deputy and its Resident Surveyor - for a few tumultuous years.

*****

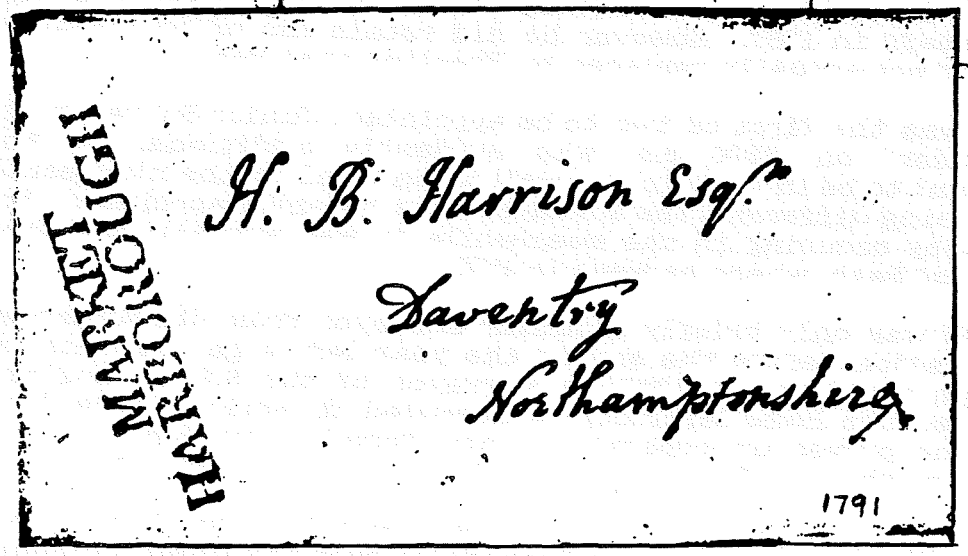
COMPETITION

Below is the third part of the competition in which you have to calculate (guess?) the rates which have been erased from the covers shown.

J



K



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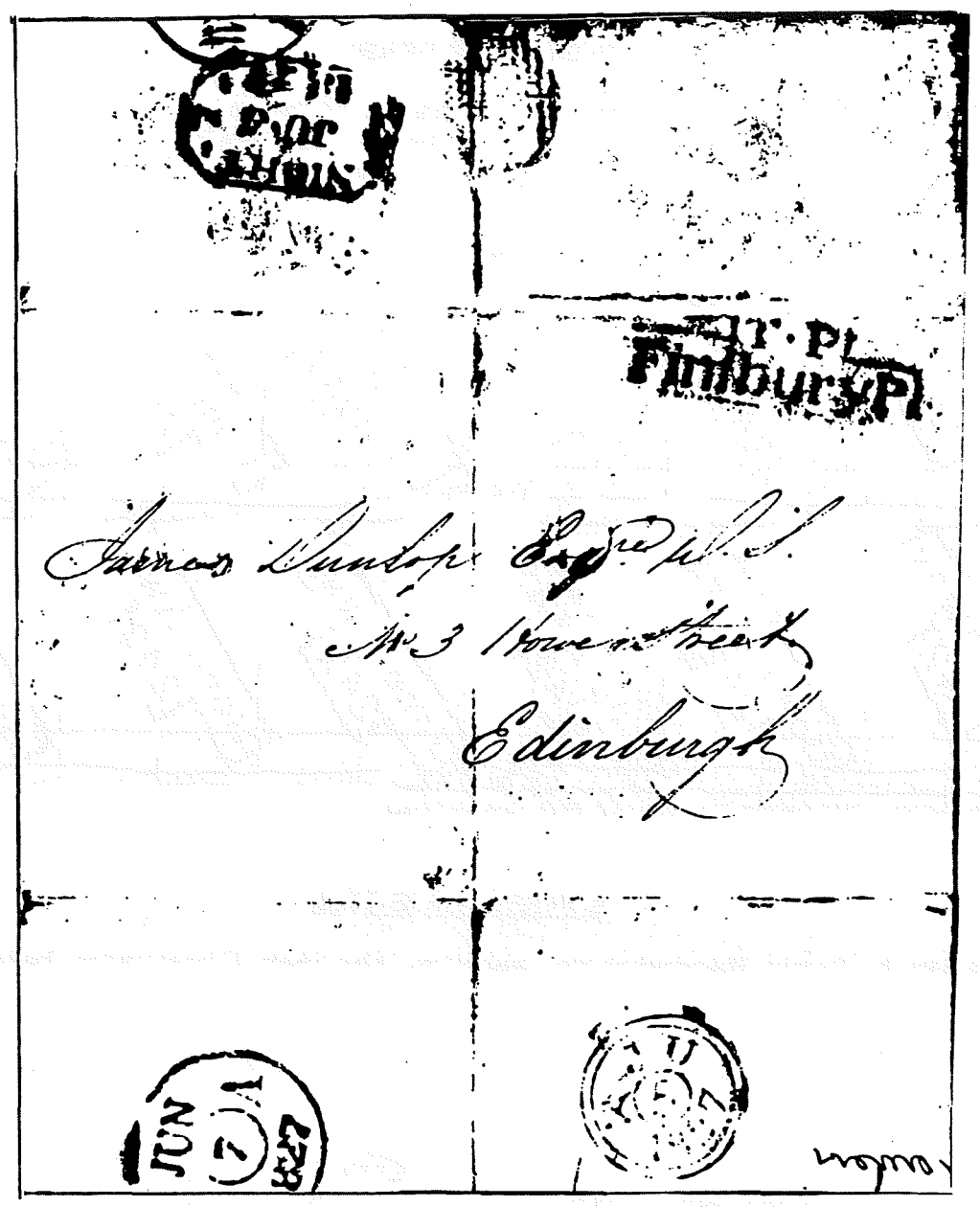
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G.B. POSTAL HISTORY

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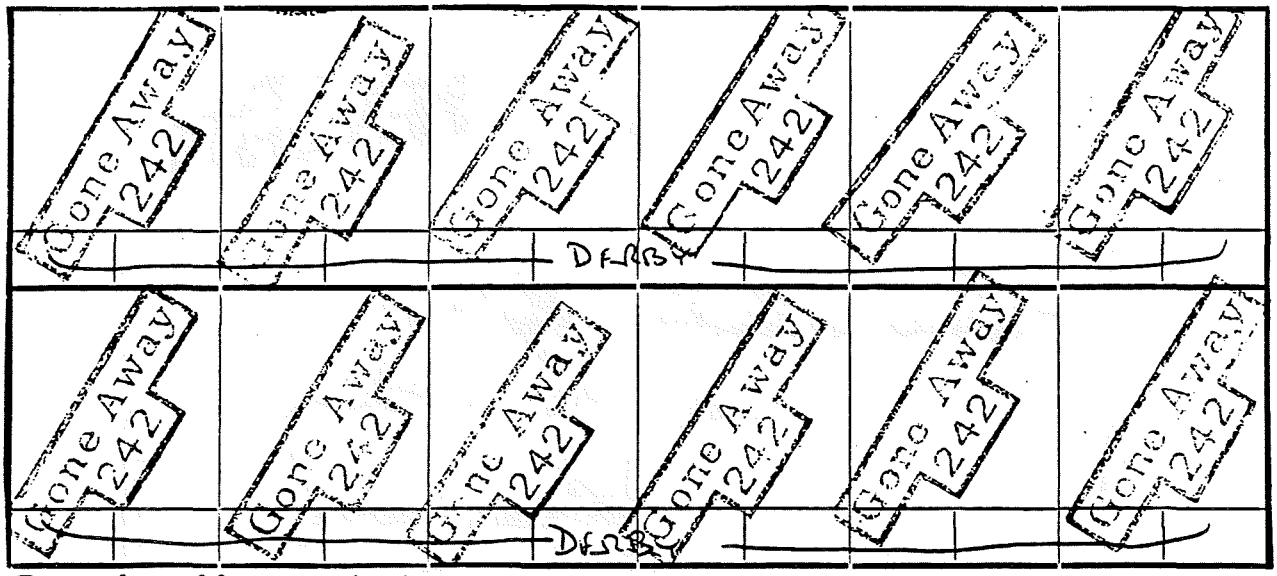
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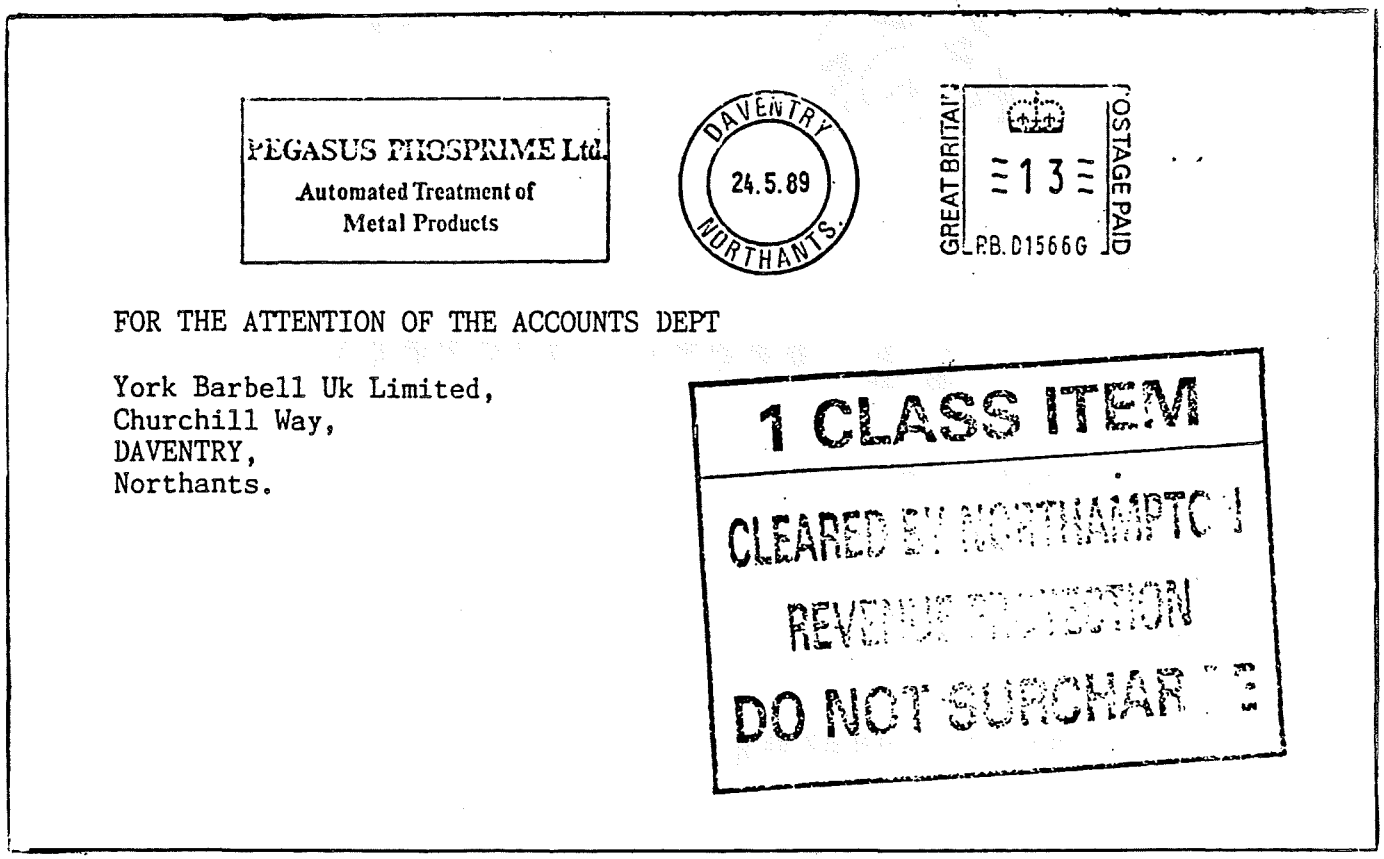
Are the inhabitants of Derby in the habit of "doing a moonlight flit"? I am sure there is another reason for the issue of twelve "Gone Away / 242" handstamps to Derby in 1967. Can anyone tell me what it is?



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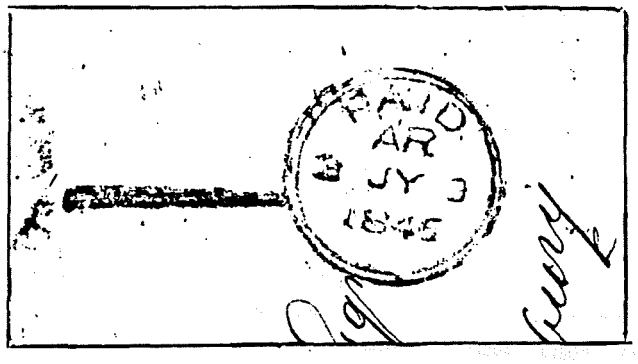
A FIRST CLASS ITEM

My thanks to David Hardwick for sending the item illustrated below.



TAILPIECE

As a follow up to "Through the Magnifying Glass" on the back page of the May 1988 issue, Eric and Elizabeth now find that there must be a left handed collector amongst us as indicated by the following combination of postmarks found on an 1845 cover.



THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

This will appear towards the end of March. There will be an article on Tipton as well as more on rubbers. Nothing else is definite so all articles please to: John Soer, 51D, Barkham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 2RG.

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INDEX TO MIDLAND MAIL

Nos. 46 to 62 inclusive (September 1986 to November 1989).

This Index is divided into two parts, as follows:-

Part 1 relating to counties which are constituent parts of the Midland (G.B.) Postal History Society.

Part 2 General subjects not relating specifically to any of these counties.

Part 1

BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham Mail Coach (Rev. C.M. Beaver) 47/8
Birmingham to Derby Railway Time Bill, 1845 61/13
Birmingham to London Time Bill, 1829 57/19
Birmingham Map of Circulation of Letters, 1807 48/19
Birmingham Missing Letters 53/6
Birmingham Posts, coming into and going from, in 1751 51/7
Birmingham Rural Posts, 1856 51/16
Birmingham Town Offices, 1892-1918 52/18

DERBYSHIRE

Alderwasley Post Office (Harold Wilson) 53/15
Alfreton, local charge (Harold Wilson) 53/11
Bakewell Rural Posts, 1857/58 56/18
Derby Map of Circulation of Letters, 1807 48/18
Derby to Birmingham Railway Time Bill, 1845 61/13
Start of the Derby Road (Harold Wilson) 62/8

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Free Franks and Penny Posts at Cheltenham (R.A. Flamank) 57/8

HEREFORDSHIRE

Bromesberrow, Modern Handstamps (Roger Broomfield) 48/6
Hereford Rural Posts, 1857/58 58/17
Nantmel to Llanidloes,As the Crow does not fly (Roger Broomfield) 52/5
U.D.Cs without Date Slugs (Roger Broomfield) 49/20

LEICESTERSHIRE

Cavendish Bridge, Robbery at 61/10
Leicester Town Offices, 1891-1905 57/10
Letters to Kegworth, Shardlow & Cavendish Bridge in Leicester Bag 58/10
Mileage marks of unofficial offices 59/10
Postal arrangements in Leicestershire 54/13

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Northampton Rural Posts, 1855 53/18
Northamptonshire Rubbers (Derek Smeathers) 62/12
Peterborough Skeletons (Ted Coles) 61/8
Ditto (Derek Smeathers) 62/12

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Nottingham Rural Posts, 1857/8 50/18

SHROPSHIRE

Bow Street (and other Welsh sub-offices of Shrewsbury) 49/4
Christmas Day Delivery at Shrewsnbury (Steph Stobbs) 51/4
Clunton and Donnington Post Offices (Steph Stobbs) 47/6
Prisoner of War Camp, Shrewsbury (Steph Stobbs) 52/10
The RAF in Shropshire during WW II (Steph Stobbs), Part 1 53/16
Ditto Part 2 57/18
Ditto Appx 58/14
Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Posts, 1840-64 55/11
Woore, Letter from Wrexham, November 1817 46/9
Ditto 47/13

STAFFORDSHIRE

Burton-on-Trent Rural Posts, 1852 60/19
Early Receiving House at West Bromwich (Rev. C.M. Beaver) 53/9
Letters "Missent to Lichfield" 52/14
Stone Delivery (Rev. C.M. Beaver) 51/5
Village Rubber Stamps of Staffordshire, 1905-32 (Rev. C.M. Beaver) 60/14
Walsall Penny Post and its Receiving Houses (Rev. C.M. Beaver) 49/5

WARWICKSHIRE

Atherstone Rural Posts, 1852 60/18
Coventry Rural Posts, 1856 52/16
Dunchurch and Rugby 61/9

WORCESTERSHIRE

Upton-on-Severn, introduction of an official post at 61/14
Worcester to Hereford and Worcester to Ludlow Time Bills 56/10
Worcester Rural Posts, 1853 59/18
Worcester to Wolverhampton Time Bill, 1825 52/6

Part 2

Advantages of Uniform Penny Postage (John Calladine) 53/8
Christmas Day Delivery, Advance Posting for 47/12
Ditto Ditto (Steph Stobbs) 51/4
Cross Post Problems 46/3
Ditto (Rev. C.M. Beaver) 47/14
Four Classes of Mail Coach (Rev. C.M. Beaver) 53/5
Inns and Post Offices 56/12
Mail Coach Classes and Auxiliaries (Rev. C.M. Beaver) 57/11
Mail Coach Routes, prior to 1800 (Rev. C.M. Beaver) 55/14
Mail Coach Routes, 1839 58/10
Meter-Franked Mail Irregularities (R. Woodward-Clarke) 50/11
Midland Railway and LNWR Post Offices - E/NR & similar marks 46/8
Named Handstamps for Penny Posts and Sub-Offices 55/10
Pence on Local Letters, Bringing into Account, 1837 (H. Wilson) 54/11
Ditto Ditto (Rev. C.M. Beaver) 55/8
Ditto Ditto (Denis Salt) 55/7

Peover Papers and the Midland Counties (Dr. J.W.M. Stone)			Part 3	47/10
Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Part 4	48/12
Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Part 5	53/14
Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Part 6	54/4
Postal and Philatelic Museum at Athens (John Calladine)				57/6
Post Boxes, A Note on (Robert Hunt)				54/14
Post Towns with Daily Posts (Sunday excepted),		1755		56/17
Ditto	Ditto	1761		57/14
Ditto	Ditto	1763		57/15
Ditto	Ditto	1768		58/9
Ditto	Ditto	1775		60/13
Ditto	Ditto	1782		61/19
Ditto	Ditto	(Rev. C.M. Beaver)		48/8
Ditto	Ditto	(Rev. C.M. Beaver)		54/8
Ditto	Ditto	Early Six-Day Posts		61/18
Rates of Postage in Great Britain and Ireland, 1635-1839 (D. Salt)				59/13
Rating of Unpaid Letters passing through London (May 1837)				56/7
Samuel Johnson's Letters, sent from Lichfield (Rev. C.M. Beaver)				51/8
Short Letters and Bye Letters				51/10
Ditto				52/13
Ditto	Correction			54/1
Short Letter Offices in the Black Country (Rev. C.M. Beaver)				53/12
Steph Stobbs - Obituary				60/2
Surveyors of the Post Office (Rev. C.M. Beaver)				54/16
Ditto	(Rev. C.M. Beaver)			62/14
Surveyor's Report - Mr. Woodcock's Journal, August 1792				49/16
Tradesmen imployed in the Service of the G.P.O. (Rev. C.M. Beaver)				60/6
Ditto	Ditto	1703		61/6
Undated Circular Marks of the Midland Counties (3rd Edition)				60/5
Undated Straight-Line and Numbered Receiving House Marks of the Midland Counties, 1840 - 1860				55/17
Ditto		(Published)		58/6
Withdrawn Handstamps				60/9

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