



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



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'More to Pay'

Those who take an interest in the antiques trade will be familiar with the Buyer's Premium. For anyone who has managed to remain untutored in this notorious levy, few words are needed to explain it. The leading auction houses or, to be pedantic, some of the auction houses decided to charge every buyer at auction a percentage (usually 10%) of the hammer price as an additional commission. While it is true that, at the same time, some reduction in the seller's commission was made, the aim was to increase both sales volume and unit profits. An unpleasant side-effect of the premium was that it attracted VAT.

The levy was opposed by the larger part of the antiques trade who suggested that there had been collusion between the major antique auction houses. When one of these subsequently reduced its premium from 10% to 8% and the trade quietly dropped its opposition, the outcome was dubbed a sell-out by many customers. The practice of charging a buyer's premium spread to certain of the stamp auction houses. Some clients, who were never asked what they thought of the scheme, responded by voting on it with their feet.

The news that in 1982/83 one of the best of the postal history auctioneers would move its major postal history sales from the south coast to London was welcomed by bidders who found the journey to the seaside time-consuming and expensive. However, the bad news came with the good. The auction house announced that, at its London auctions, a buyer's premium would be introduced.

The buyer's premium can only add to the cost of postal history material

It is specious to suggest that the buyer fully adjusts his bids to take account of it. If the auction houses had believed that, there would have been only marginal advantage in introducing it. The inevitable result of the premium is that the trade pays more for postal history material and the increase is fed through to the customer.

If postal history collectors believe the buyer's premium to be against the best interests of the hobby, they should act in unison and who better to apply pressure on the auction houses than the bodies who claim to represent the collector and the trade. The same bodies might also consider some action to convince dealers who still quote selling prices ex-VAT to fall into line with the vast majority and offer items at a recognizable inclusive price. Like buyer's premium, there will always be a suspicion that it is a ploy for hiding part of the real cost and the two schemes can be stamped with the same unwelcome cachet - 'More to Pay'.

The December Meeting

Sixteen members attended the meeting at the Bass Museum on 11th December the best attendance at Burton for some years. A dozen members joined the Secretary for lunch - fortunately not at his expense. The attraction of the afternoon was James Grimwood-Taylor's display of Irish Postal History. In fact it was Mrs Grimwood-Taylor's collection and it was a great pity that she was indisposed and unable to see for herself what a splendid display it provided. The aim of the presentation was to show that an Irish local collection has the same charm as an English one but with the added spice of a little Irish eccentricity. Two small areas were covered in detail; Newry (now in Northern Ireland) and Ballymote and Collooney in County Sligo.

The display of Newry opened in the right vein with a c1780 map of Ireland bearing a footnote "In some parts they live at a loose uncivilised rate and are therefore termed Wild Irish". Newry straight lines, mileage marks, CDS' and Paid marks were followed by marks of Bainbridge, Flurrybridge Markethill and Rosstrevor including two early money letters. There was a superb ld black on cover from Newry, an anti-intoxicating liquor label, Irish-type 'spoons' and overseas mail to many destinations. Appropriate in a Burton-on-Trent setting, were two headed letters from Newry Brewery. There was a notable 'RLB Dublin' boxed in purple and a lower case 'Katesbridge RH' of 1845. Contemporary early prints of the Newry area showed how beautiful it had once been.

The focus moved to Ballymote and Collooney with a fine group of pre-stamp manuscript endorsements, an abbreviated 'B'ymote' with mileage, two types of 1840s/1850s postage dues, an 1890 parcel post label and a railway letter stamp c1905 to mention only a few items at random. This was followed by selected items from the rest of Ireland including a 1760 straight line 'Armagh', an 1800 straight line 'Ireland' struck in red in London, some re-directed and interestingly missent Irish letters and an 1858 cover with the 2d blue adhesive stamps affixed with wafers !

James was permitted to include one or two of his very own items including an outstanding unpaid 'mermaid' mark and a Derry Penny Post item endorsed, somewhat surprisingly, 'To pay only 2d at Muff'. However a 1787 letter from Dublin to Burton-on-Trent ordering Burton beer so that the Paddys could be taught its advantages is now odds-on to change ownership if our Secretary can discover something modest like the Holy Grail to exchange for it.

The memorable display concluded with many sheets of privately carried mail from c1600 to 1875 - by carrier, by caravan, by omnibus, by Royal Messenger and even by the Galloway Post. The appreciation of those who saw James Grimwood-Taylor's display was unmistakeable and, once again, the Bass Museum is thanked by the Society for providing the facilities for the meeting and the local refreshment.

Forthcoming Meetings

The next meeting may well be the most popular the Society has ever held. On Saturday 22nd January at Dr Johnson House, Bull St, Birmingham, Mr Martin Willcocks, the doyen of British postal historians, will present 'Unusual Great Britain' in which he promises historical letters, all kinds of GB postal history, a few stamps, cancellations and even 'locals'. The meeting will begin at 2 o'clock and the room number will be notified on the board immediately inside Dr Johnson House. Committee members should note that a Committee Meeting will precede the main meeting at 1.00pm sharp.

The subsequent meeting will be on Saturday 19th February. (Please make a note of the date as there will not be another Bulletin before it.) This will be the occasion of our annual nine sheet Postal History Competition. Any aspect of GB postal history is admissible; it need not be a Midland topic and no previous experience of competitions is necessary. Elizabeth is the current holder of our elegant trophy and, as Eric has been a previous winner, it is up to the membership to ensure that it does not become an indefinite feature of the Lewis' household furnishings. Please set to work TO-DAY This meeting is also at Dr Johnson House at 2 o'clock.

NO JOKE FOR US ANTSby The Reverend Christopher M. Beaver

A friend has lent me half-a-dozen copies of the Post Office staff quarterly publication 'St Martins le-Grand' for the years around the turn of the century - subscription 3/6 a year for nearly 500 pages. Of primary interest to us are lengthy and authoritative articles on subjects like 'Ralph Allen's Bye-Posts', 'Local Post Office History - Wolverhampton', 'A Short History of the Postcard', 'The Newspaper Post', 'Post Office Progress in the Last 100 Years' and several transcriptions from Lord Dartmouth's Papers of about 1680 (newly discovered) including 'How the Post Office is Managed' and 'Of Postmasters, their Work and Duty'. The only allusion I have come across to the existence of our own ancestors occurs in the July 1898 number where the Editor notices the recently published 'A History of British Postmarks' by J.H.Daniels. Our members may judge the wit of this review a trifle caustic, but let us be grateful the pioneers could be likened to ants rather than mere squirrels:-

British Postmarks

"The Philatelist or Timbrologist or Timbrophilist or Stamp Collector (or by whatever name these hardworking gentlemen prefer to be known) is a person of infinite research. Perforations and gum have been wrestled with and have told him in midnight hours all their secrets, and there is perhaps little now left that a weary world can learn about postage stamps. But the true philatelist, the man who lives and dies for the sacred cause, is not to be daunted. The empire of stamps is exhausted: there remain the Postmarks, a field of enquiry as wide as the writing and posting world. So it comes to pass that Mr J.H.Daniels has bravely attacked a small section of this great area of liberal knowledge, and publishes a history of British Postmarks. This could have been no joke for the laborious author, who takes himself and his postmarks very seriously indeed. And truth to tell, there is evidence in this volume of patient labour compared to which the ant is a dilettante dallying, and of accurate observation which in other fields would have led Mr Daniels to the portals of the Royal Society if not within them. It may be that we slaves of the Post Office ring have such a surfeit of stamps and postmarks that we find it difficult to rise to the level of enthusiasm which alone could sustain what must have been the labour of years it may be that close acquaintance with these sacred emblems has, as in the case of the Sacristan of the story, dulled our reverence for the great world to which we minister. Be that as it may, we rejoice to be able to congratulate Mr Daniels on his performance of what must have been a difficult task and one which cannot fail to give useful pleasure to brethren of his craft."

A VISIT TO POST OFFICE ARCHIVES - PART 4

So far, our visits to Post Office Archives have led us to consult just one or two easily-identified volumes. The aim this time is to find out what we can about the postal routes that linked our chosen city, town or village with the rest of the country. It is a more diffuse topic and, consequently, it is a little harder to pinpoint the references.

Before exploring the Archives, it is worth while to remind ourselves of the contents of Alan W. Robertson's economical and invaluable reference book 'Great Britain; Post Roads, Post Towns and Postal Rates 1635-1839'. It includes the substance of Thomas Gardiner's General Survey of the Post Office in 1677 which charted the six great post roads. While we can find copies of the original charts in the Archives which contain just a little more information, the maps in the book will serve most purposes. Mr Robertson's book also includes a map of the 'Great Roads and Principal Cross Roads in 1756' and another of 'Mail Coach Routes in England and Wales in 1835'. For some readers there may be no need to take the subject any further.

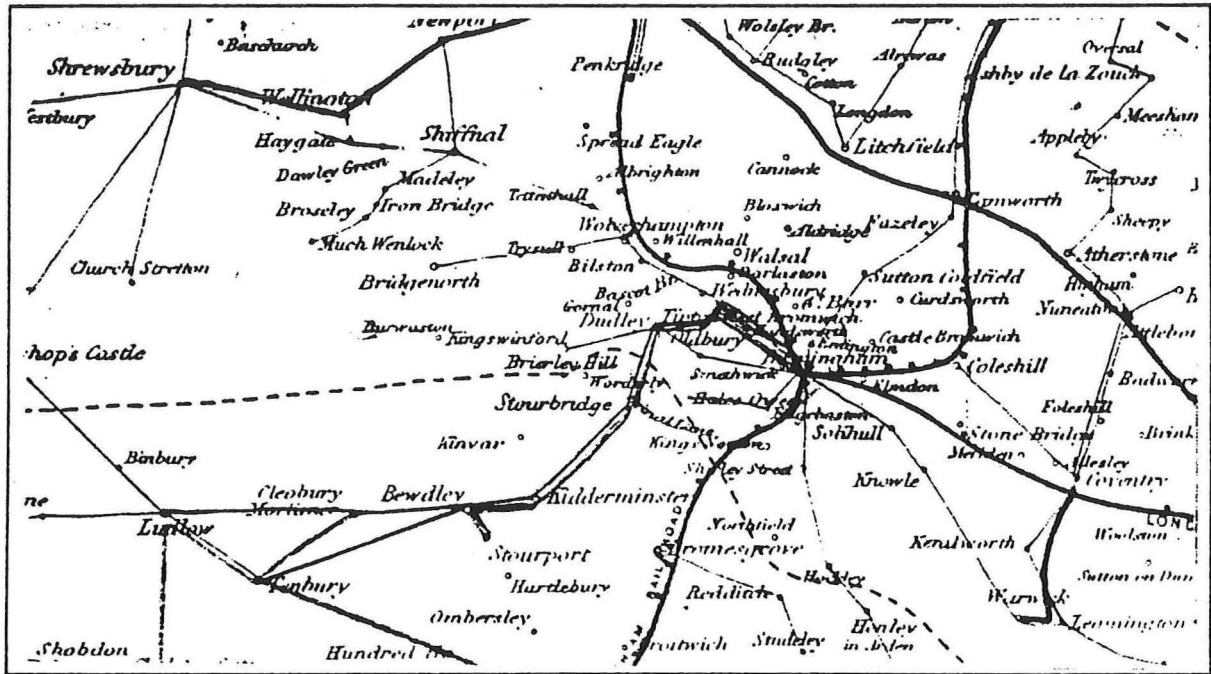
However, for those who venture as far as Post Office Archives, the shelves to head for are those under Post references 10A, 10B and 11B. They contain a considerable number of maps (usually on linen and folded) and, while it would be impractical to list them all, the following should be useful to those interested in the postal history of the Midlands:

- 1807 Circulation of Letters.
- 1807 Circulation of Letters to and from Birmingham.
- 1823 Armed / Unarmed Rides Return.
- 1823 England and Wales Postal Map.
- 1831 Birmingham Penny Posts Map.
- 1837 Town Plans (some showing the free delivery area).
- 1839/40 England and Wales Postal Map.
- 1863 England and Wales Circulation Map.
- 1869 Circulation of Letters.

Nearby is a long series of volumes of Cary's mail coach routes and itineraries spanning the years 1785 to 1830. While these are of value to those researching routes to the major towns, they are of limited use to those whose area of interest lies away from a mail coach route. Also worth a mention is Patterson's Roads of 1829.

These maps and books should provide a sound basis for research into the principal and secondary post routes. The maps will tell you which mode of transport (horse, foot, omnibus etc) was used to deliver letters to

the more minor towns and villages. To obtain greater detail of local mail deliveries, it is worth examining the schedules of the rural postal routes to be found under Post 14 Volumes 223-230. Fortunately these volumes are well indexed. The contents largely concern alterations to rural deliveries in the 1850s and include a list of places served on each walk, the frequency of the walk and the wages paid to the sub-postmasters and messengers.



One tip should be passed on. Several of the important maps, particularly those showing the Circulation of Letters, use colour to distinguish between, say, horse posts and foot posts. It is a good idea to go armed with four or five coloured pencils so that this information can be transcribed while the original is at hand. As the illustration shows, the vital distinctions are lost on a photocopy.

(The final part of this short series will look at the contents of Posts 40 and 42 - the PMG Report Series covering the period 1790-1840.)

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THE BRITISH COUNTY CATALOGUE OF POSTAL HISTORY - Shropshire Section.

Mr Martin Willcocks, publisher of the British County Catalogue of Postal History, has very kindly given permission for Steph Stobbs (sub-editor for Shropshire) to reproduce in the Bulletin any additions, amendments and date extensions to the original listing. Will any members who have not already sent Mr Stobbs such information please do so before the end of March so that an up-to-date list can be prepared for publication in the May issue. PLEASE ACT NOW

(If you don't have Steph's address, the editor will forward information.

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WE WOULD LIKE TO BUY QUALITY POSTAL HISTORY FROM THE FOLLOWING

CLASSIFICATIONS:-

MIDLANDS area, especially SHROPSHIRE, DERBYSHIRE.

TRANSATLANTIC (North America, Canada to or from Europe).

EARLY INSTRUCTIONAL MARKINGS of the British Isles.

IRISH, WELSH & SCOTTISH items pre c.1900

General G.B. Postal History

PLEASE CONTACT US BEFORE SENDING MATERIAL.

The Sideways Duplex Cancellation in the 1860s - a postscript.

Following the item in Bulletin No.26 on late use of the sideways duplex, Steph Stobbs took the trouble to analyse the goings-on in Shropshire. Only Shrewsbury and Wellington had sideways duplex stamps, the former issued in October 1857 and the latter in April.

At Shrewsbury, he reports use of the sideways duplex simultaneously with the first type upright duplex from 1859 to 1864:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
1859										@			
1860	+		@	@					@			@	
1861		@					@		+		@		+ Sideways duplex
1862		@											@ Upright duplex
1863	+	+						@		@	@		
1864					+		+	+		@			

It certainly suggests more frequent use of the sideways duplex than expected. Was it random or controlled ? (Statisticians please consider.)

At Wellington, the sideways duplex was used at the same time as the numeral killer but went out of use two years before the first upright duplex. Steph's last example of a sideways duplex at Wellington is 1 March 1862.

PARCEL POST LABELS FOR SALE

PARCEL POST. Bourton (JOU) under Rugby		X LIST Letter and Number.	POSTAGE. S. D.	
		Insurance, Registration Fees.		5
FOR POSTAGE STAMPS.				

PARCEL POST. BIRMINGHAM QMW (Newhall Street)		X LIST Letter and Number.	POSTAGE. S. D.	
		Registration and Express Fees.		5
FOR POSTAGE STAMPS.		OFFICE STAMP.		

PARCEL POST. KNOWLE (KEG) under Birmingham		X LIST Letter and Number.	POSTAGE. S. D.	
		Registration and Express Fees.		
FOR POSTAGE STAMPS.		OFFICE STAMP.		

PARCEL POST. BIRMINGHAM Handsworth (QMN)		X LIST Letter and Number.	POSTAGE. S. D.	
		Registration and Express Fees.		
FOR POSTAGE STAMPS.		OFFICE STAMP.		

The Bulletin has sung the praises of parcel post labels more than once. Both in their own right and as a source of scarce postmarks, they can be an invaluable feature of a postal history collection. A collector in Kent has a number of parcel post labels that he would like to sell, individually if desired, to members of our Society. Members known to collect Birmingham have already been sent a list of labels from the Birmingham 'town' offices. Enclosed with this Bulletin is a list of the available labels from offices 'Under Birmingham' and from other Midland counties, notably Warwickshire. Most labels are of the period 1895-1912, carry no adhesive stamps and are priced from £1-75 to £2 each. Please contact Mr Donald if you are interested and let him know which labels you wish to see and whether you would take multiples from one office with either different label printings or different postmarks. Mr Donald has agreed to send up to 20 labels on 7 days approval or as many as you want, of course, if cash is sent.

Sample labels submitted to the Editor are illustrated above. If you are seeking further information on parcel post labels, see James Mackay's book listed under 'Books that may interest you'.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Editor has had a letter - AND a Christmas card (from the Secretary) :
Denis Salt writes from Shrewsbury:

"The Guest Editorial in the November Bulletin draws attention to the immense value of close co-operation with one's local Record Office. One particular aspect of the value so far as the postal historian is concerned, is the opportunity of seeing correspondences which often include continuous runs of letters. Only by a study of numerous letters and their postal markings in the Shropshire Record Office was I able to produce my article on the Shifnal and Ironbridge Penny Posts which appeared in The British Mailcoach No.29 (June 1981). Many of the letters I recorded then were in private collections, but I also recorded 70 letters in the Shropshire Record Office with either Shifnal or Ironbridge Penny Post marks.

Perhaps of less importance, but illustrating the point I am making, is information about the dates of use of the Shrewsbury handstruck stamps between 1790 and 1801. The British County Catalogue of Postal History shows only two substantial gaps, namely 29 Nov 1796 to 2 Jan 1798 (13 months) and 8 Mar 1800 to 14 May 1800 (2 months). The dates were recorded mostly from two continuous correspondences, running to several hundred letters each, one from Jan 1793 to 29 Nov 1796 and the other from 2 Jan 1798 to 16 Mar 1799; the remainder were taken from smaller correspondences at the same source and letters in private collections, and all letters of the period that I have seen fall within the above dates."



ROGER HUDSON

36, West Street,

WARWICK CV34 6AN

Telephone: Warwick (0926) 492326

Send for a copy of my latest list of GB cover material from 1840 onwards. It contains a wide selection of interesting and unusual items. All 'Wants Lists' for specific items or county material receive my personal attention.

POSTAL HISTORY IN WASHINGTON DC

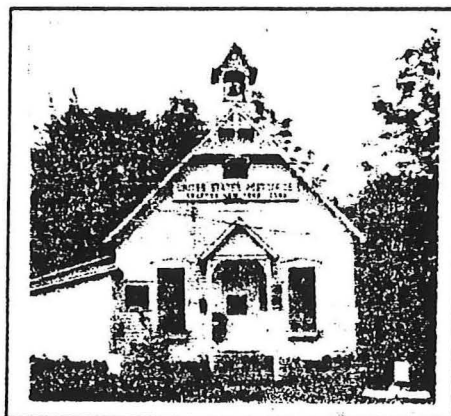
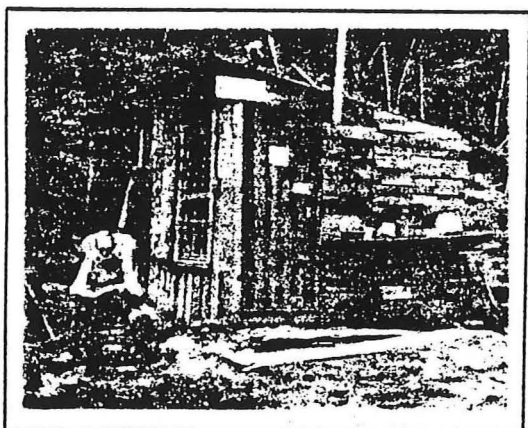
Anyone fortunate enough to spend a holiday in the United States should try to include in it a visit to Washington DC. Among its many splendid sights are the museums of the Smithsonian Institution lining both sides of the Mall between the Washington Monument and the Capitol building. The nearest of these to the White House is the National Museum of History and Technology.

As its name might suggest, this museum encompasses a vast range of material. Such diverse subjects as house interiors, sailing boats, newspaper printing and First Ladies' dresses indicate that almost anyone can find something of interest. However, one might not realise that it contains an excellent section of postal history tracing the development of the mails not only in America but in Britain and Europe, the former having, of course, an enormous impact on the posts of the United States. This part of the museum is known as the 'Hall of Stamps and the Mails'.

The exhibits are laid out spaciouly and clearly with an easily-followed chronological progression. There are some mouth-watering but not

unexpected items such as penny blacks with early cancellations. There are displays which follow the development of the railroads for moving mail and, later, the development of the air mails. Every facet of postal history seems to have been covered. The major surprise is that the curator has managed to include reconstructions of early American post offices or even, from later years, actual examples ! He has gone further and, in the entrance hall of the National Museum of History and Technology, a 19th century country-store post office now serves as the museum's own post office.

The illustration on the previous page is of the museum's representation of an American Post Office/Printshop, typical of the second half of the 18th century, and is taken from a booklet 'American Post Offices' which is one of a large series of booklets produced by the Smithsonian and available in its museum bookstores. From the same source are the pictures below which only go to show that rural post offices in the United States still take some surprising forms.



Books that may interest you- 4

English and Welsh Postmarks Since 1840. 4,660 illustrations, 254pages £10-20
 British Post Office Numbers. 1924-69. 303 illustrations, 50 pages £3-45
 Telegraphic Codes of the British Isles 1870-1924. 115 illust., 90pages £5-10
 The Parcel Post of the British Isles. 1,350 illust., 232 pages £8-70
 Irish Postmarks Since 1840. 2,085 illustrations, 222 pages £8-70
 The Postal History Annual 1981. 118 illustrations, 58 pages £3-45
 The Postal History Annual 1982. Many illustrations, 59 pages £3-40

All prices are postage paid in the UK and all the above are available from the author: James A. Mackay, 11 Newall Terrace, Dumfries DG1 1LN.

Stop Press

The same author will be publishing a major new work on Registered Mail during 1983. Details will be included as soon as the book is published.

Tailpiece

Many elusive handstamps were issued in the last quarter of the 19th century. Illustrated are a selection of Nottingham marks recorded in the Steel Impression Books of Post Office Archives by whose courtesy they are reproduced.

To what Place.	Date when sent.	Stamps.
<i>Nottingham</i>	<i>1877</i> <i>5 Jan</i>	Contains a communication of the nature of a Letter. 583
		Of the nature of a Letter 583
		Found open and resealed at Nottingham
		Found at Nottingham without contents
		Found at Nottingham without a cover
		More to pay above ____ oz 583
		Improper enclosure 583
		Not called for 583
		Address contrary to rule 583.

Looking Ahead

The next issue of the Bulletin is due on 1st March. It will include reports of the January and February meetings and the result of our annual Postal History Competition. Also scheduled for the next issue is a Staffordshire CDS Conundrum and a droll description of some Midland Post Offices before 1840. Please send articles, items for illustration or Letters to the Editor to:

John Calladine, Dunley House, Cranham. Gloucester GL4 8HQ