

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to Martin Evans of Okehampton, Devon whose interests include the postal history of Cambridgeshire, philatelic literature as well as the general postal history of Great Britain; Dr Toby Mottram of Cublington, Leamington Spa who collects the postal history of Leamington; and Jon Tucker of Mollington, Banbury who collects Military Mail as well as postal history from Oxfordshire, Wales and the Holy Land.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Our next meeting will be on **13th November** at the premises of **Warwick & Warwick** (CV34 5DB). At **11.00am** members will display *Large Items* or *Unusual Items*. Then at **1.30pm** Tom Slemons will display *Unusual Aspects of Suffolk Postal History*. Tom, a professional pilot, began his Suffolk collection in 1974, originally seeking just penny blacks and Mulreadys! In the search for Suffolk Mulreadys, he met Malcolm Lowe, the American author of the standard work on Mulready Advertisements, who wanted to update his work but was not well enough to do so; he asked Tom to do it. Tom said that he would but only after he had retired and, thus, in 2005, he met with Hugh Jeffries, editor of the SG QV part 1 catalogue. Hugh was impressed with Tom's research and thus originated Tom's vast revision of the SG list of Mulready advertisements in the 14th edition of the catalogue. An update of Malcolm Lowe's work is in hand.

Tom, who lives in America, first exhibited in 2007, beginning with a one frame exhibit of Suffolk penny blacks, then a three-frame exhibit of Suffolk Mulreadys and finally a full Suffolk postal history exhibit. All have gained one or more gold medals at national level. His latest exhibit at London 2010 won a large vermeil. We are privileged to have him visit the Society and hope he will be greeted with a good attendance.

On **4th December**, after an absence of three years, we return to Burton-on-Trent – to what is now the National Brewing Centre. From **10.30am** there will be members' standing displays of *Illustrated Covers*. This will be followed at 12.30pm by lunch. Then at **2.00pm** Eric Grimshaw will display *Victorian Pictorial Envelopes*. If you wish to join us for lunch please contact Richard Farman on 01283-566515. Lunch, coffee and tea are expected to cost about £16 in total.

Our first meeting of 2011 will be held at **Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham** on **8th January**, beginning at **1.30pm**. The afternoon will be devoted to members' one board displays on a topic of their own choice.

CO-ORDINATING EDITOR

As Chris Jackson has resigned from the above post, the Society is seeking someone to fill the position, and, in particular, to take forward the Society's next publication, an update to the entries for the midland counties in the British County Catalogue. If you are interested, please contact either the Chairman or the Secretary.

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

As is usual the weather, despite a wet start to my journey down the M4, was kind to us when we met on 11th September at Kington St Michael for a joint meeting with the Somerset & Dorset Postal History Society. This meeting had been keenly anticipated for our speaker was Malcolm Ray-Smith who was to display *'Early British Letters'*. Our high expectations were more than met. What follows here is a brief account of two or three letters in each frame which caught my eye. The reason for this is that a number of members at the meeting expressed a wish to see a transcript of Malcolm's notes as they were so informative. I am very grateful to Malcolm for allowing me to reproduce them after the report of the meeting.

The first frame consisted entirely of material from the sixteenth century, beginning with a letter of 1513 which asked for money and men for the king. Malcolm said that a letter of 1562 from the mayor of Haverfordwest to the President of the Marches in Wales was possibly carried by a Civic Post, but more likely by a bailiff of Haverfordwest. A letter sent from Norwich to London in 1586 predates the earliest mention of a postmaster at Norwich by fifty years. "pag le porto d4" – the sender paid fourpence postage was to be seen on an item, concerning a "dispute about gold from the mine" sent in 1590 from Barnstaple to London.

Malcolm showed us a number of letters from the Civil War period. Of particular note here was a letter sent on 14th November 1644 by Lord Mount-Eagle in the besieged town of Knaresborough to Lord Fairfax. Letters sent from an officer on one side to an officer on the other side are very rare. An example of an urgent military dispatch was a 1644 letter from Edmund Wynham at Bridgewater to Prince Rupert.

There were many notable from the second half of the seventeenth century that caught my attention but there is only space to mention a few of these. It is possible that a letter from London to Norwich was carried by Jason Grover at a cost of 2d. We saw an example of a Bishopmark from the first year of use – 1661. A plague year letter (1665) from Will Morris at Parliament, meeting in Oxford, to Sir Edward Harley at Brampton Brian was handled by James Hickes, Clerk of the Chester Road, who stayed at his post during the plague. An addition to the address had been made in a second hand giving Ludlow as the nearest posttown.

A fine Exeter 'E' on a letter sent in 1699 from Tiverton to Exeter was the first item in the sixth frame. This was followed by two examples of the Bristol 'B' on letters to Wellington (1700) and Dublin (1705). The remaining frames in the first half of Malcolm's display contained early town marks along with 'X' marks of the crosspost. Among the latter were: 'BATH-X' to Tibberton (1710), 'WELLS/X' (1709), 'SHREWS/BURY X' (1711) and 'WOTTEN/UNDEREGE/X' (1714). Among the early town marks were 'MINEHEAD' (1703-4), 'BRI.WATER' (1705), 'HURST GRN.' (1706), 'WEL.N.BOROUGH' (1709), 'BIRMINGHAM' (1714), and 'WORKSOP' (1718). The final item in the Part One was an example of the double ring 'FROM YORKSHIR' on a letter of 1715 to Trentham Hall, Staffordshire. It was endorsed "post pd 3d" and "by Manchester bag".

Malcolm told us that Part Two would discuss the development of different styles of town marks up to 1800. In doing so he produced about ninety different covers, so I can only describe a few of these. The first cover showed a combined town and charge mark "Gl/2d" from Glasgow on a letter to Edinburgh. Among a number of marks unrecorded in the County Catalogue were: 'MAN/CHESTER' (1726), 'BEVERLY' (1721), a two-line 'HOLMS/CHAPELL' (1726) and another two-line mark 'BIRMING/HAM' (1732) used in conjunction with a two-line mark of Kidderminster on a letter to Gloucester. A number of other items caught your Editor's eye. A 'X=/CHURCH' on a letter which was sent from Christchurch to Basingstoke. From Warwickshire came a letter of 1739 which carried a mark with the name of the county town between horizontal lines. We saw examples of Bristol marks with 'RIS' and 'TOL' in loops of the 'B' and one of these covers also carried a framed mark of Bewdley on a letter of 1740 to Kempsey near Worcester. One item that I had not seen before was the pictorial Lamb and Flag of Perth used in 1751 on a letter to Perth. The Oxfordshire collectors were well catered for with a 'WAILING/FORD' from 1774 along with the first-type mileage marks of Faringdon (1785), Woodstock and Oxford on the same cover of 1785 and Nettlebed (1789). There was a chance to see an example of the very rare 'Birmingham Chandelier' mark used in 1772. We saw two examples of the marks used in some village receiving house marks in Devon – H for Hatherley and K for Kingsbridge. For those interested in maritime mail there was an example of the 'FALM:o' used on a letter to New York. It is believed that this mark was used only on Packet Letters. Although there is so much more that I could describe, I will end by mentioning that we saw some superb examples of the decorative handstamps used at Stockport in the 1790s.

The length and warmth of the applause at the end indicated that we had been treated to a truly outstanding display of British postal history.

Your Editor owes a particular debt of thanks to Malcolm for making his notes available to me. Without them this write-up would have been impossible, such was the quality and quantity of material we had seen.

As in the past, the 'Jolly Huntsman' served an excellent lunch. I cannot remember the last time that I could not eat all that was put in front of me but on this occasion I could not quite make it to the end. Then it was back to the village hall for members' one board displays.

Brian Purcell began with two straight-line marks of Chipping Sodbury – 'SODBURY' (1768) and 'SODBURY G' (1819). We saw three different types of Bristol 'B' – the first, third and sixth types. Also from Bristol were examples of two-line marks, 1720 and 1729 as well as a superb example of the 'Bristol Bullseye' used in 1773.

The Cross Post was Eric Lewis's chosen topic, beginning with a letter sent in 1729 from Bristol to Wolverhampton which showed a 'BRIS/TOLL' mark. Another letter from Bristol was sent to Worcester in 1747. A letter of 1730 from Kidderminster to Bath was endorsed 'X post', while one of 1759 from Bewdley to Ireland carried the endorsement 'X post to Chester'. Later, Eric produced more items on this theme, including a letter sent in 1785 from Worcester to Bewdley which showed a charge for a single post stage of 2d, and one from Shrewsbury to Ludlow endorsed 'By Bishops Castle'.

Peter Basterfield showed us material from Bath, beginning with a letter of 1706 to Bath and one sent to Dublin in 1707 at a cost of 9d. An inspector's mark 'HB' was to be seen on a letter of 1720, authorizing an alteration in a charge. Of particular note was a letter of 1712 marked 'Free' and signed on the front 'R Allen'. This would have been written by Ralph Allen when he was only eighteen years old.

Roger Broomfield's theme was provincial penny posts, particularly those from Herefordshire. He began with a letter sent from Hampton Court, near Leominster, to Harewood which showed the penny post marks of both Leominster and Harewood. The rest of Roger's display consisted of material from the penny posts under Hereford with the marks of Letton, Weobley and Peterchurch.

The next two contributions were of material from Nottinghamshire. Mick Gill started with the earliest known mark of Mansfield – 'MANS/FIELD' used in 1734, and followed it with the earliest mark of Newark (1756). There were letters from Newton-on-Trent (1799) and Tuxford (1709 and 1756). A so far unrecorded and misspelt mark 'RETD FORD' used in 1762 was of particular note. Alan Marshall, our other Nottinghamshire contributor, displayed number of two-line marks of Nottingham from 171, 1713, 1721, 1729 and 1742. The strikes from the 1720s were of the 'NOTING/HAM' variety. Alan then strayed over the county boundary with a 'LOUG-/BOROW' used in 1710.

Derek Smeathers showed us a number of seventeenth century letters to and from Northamptonshire. Of note was one sent in 1673 to the Earl of Arlington, the Postmaster General at Castle Ashby. Derek also showed carriers' letters from 1675 and 1679. The latter showed a charge of 2d and a 'C' in a circle. Paul Bradshaw also began with Northamptonshire material from Brackley (1720 & 1723) – a two-line mark between two horizontal lines, 'TOCE/STER' used in 1720 and 1722, and a two-line mark of Thrapstone (1748). Paul then appeared to provide a trailer for the November meeting with marks of Ipswich (1756), Woodbridge (1773) and the earliest recorded mark of Southwold (1777).

Stuart Geddes displayed a wide range of material from Newport, Monmouthshire, including various two-line marks, a serpentine 'NEWPORT M' of 1792, various boxed mileage marks and a circular undated mileage mark.

Richard Farman's first item was a letter sent in 1701 from Bolton to Chester via Stone which showed the very early mark of Bolton. He then went on to show us much early material from Staffordshire such as handstamps from Stafford (1710 & 1711), Tamworth (1713), Litchfield (1713) and Stone (1706 & 1710). The letter from 1710 was marked 'Free' but was charged. The 'Free' was then endorsed on arrival in London. In a later contribution, Richard showed more covers from Stone as well as a letter sent in 1717 at a cost of 3d from Lichfield to Coventry via Coleshill with the two-line handstamp 'LITCH/FIELD'.

Material from Somerset was displayed by Tony Osmond who began with the 'X' mark of Taunton. This was followed by a number of Taunton straight-line marks from 1704, 1762 and 1781. There was also an example of the first-type mileage mark. Tony ended with a letter showing two strikes of a stone mark used in 1753.

Trevor Radway showed us Stroud postal history, beginning with a letter sent in 1711 from London to Frampton and endorsed 'by Stroud bag'. A number of mileage marks included the unusual first type mileage 'STROUD/G 105' (1788) and the boxed mileage 'STROUD·G/109' (1802).

The Society owes an enormous vote of thanks to John Calladine and the ladies who helped him for arranging such a fantastic day of postal history. Our new season has certainly started on a very high note.

TALK FOR DISPLAY AT KINGTON ST. MICHAEL

by Malcolm Ray-Smith

PART ONE

My display is in two parts, the first covering a couple of centuries up to about 1715 and the second looking at developments later in the eighteenth century. This means that virtually all the items I am showing today are pre 1800, but I am going to say much more about the first part of the display than the second one.

The early official posts were organized solely as Royal Mail. That is to say, their purpose was to expedite the distribution and collection of letters to and from the Sovereign and his or her Secretaries of State. This enabled the administration of the realm by distributing proclamations, collecting taxes, and keeping in touch with mood changes in the Royal court or potential dissatisfaction in the provinces. Thus a letter from early in the reign of Henry VIII is by Sir Francis Bryan who writes to ask for money and/or men from a landowner in Norfolk. The King was preparing to visit the King of France, a trip which involved transporting 5,000 of his supporters and the building of a magnificent temporary palace at the site of the field of Cloth of Gold.

In the reign of Elizabeth is a letter from the mayor of Haverfordwest to the President of the Queen's Council for the Marches in Wales. During her reign an influx of foreign merchants helped to build the British economy by rapidly expanding our trade with the continent. These merchants had already formed their own posts. The foreign element of these – by far the most significant part – is outside the scope of my subject today. However the archives of the Corsini family from Florence include many inland letters sent while a branch of their business operated in London and the display includes a sample of these. Some of the letters bear a second address panel, written in a different hand, giving details of where in London the addressee is to be found and it is thought these were added by the London postmaster of the Merchant Strangers, Raphael van den Putte. There is also a letter to the High Sheriff of Norfolk seeking the creation of a committee to plan how to drain the Fens – a project which later had a dramatic and lasting effect on the fen country. Another letter is a report from a Queen's Messenger in Plymouth in 1593 which cost him 6d to have carried to court. None of these items show the place of posting on the exterior of the letter.

The display also includes several warrants for riding work to carry official letters or proclamations, each bearing authority for a specified amount to be paid to those who had completed their tasks. An item of 1633 bears eleven Privy Council signatures on orders to Hereford setting out the king's wishes in regard to collecting money to pay for entertaining the Master of Musters. In 1635, Charles I was persuaded to open the official post to use by other writers upon payment of postage. The rates of postage were set out in royal proclamations. Until 1635 ordinary folk had to make their own arrangements to secure delivery of their letters. This could involve trusting a neighbour or friend – or sending a servant. If all else failed the public carriers were trustworthy but very slow, though we know they had schemes whereby multiple carriers achieved delivery over long distances. We know little about how much they charged or how the proceeds were shared when several carriers were involved. A few items delivered by carriers are displayed.

A letter of 1636 from Chippenham to Nottingham is endorsed "from Chippenham" which I interpret as meaning that the postmaster there had collected the postage. The payment system was designed to keep control in the office in London, with letters to London being paid for on delivery and letters from London being prepaid. Items via London, or not passing through London, were supposed to be prepaid which is partly why I believe the "from Chippenham" endorsement signifies that the local postmaster collected the postage. This letter has what I think is the first recorded manuscript postal endorsement from a provincial town.

Many towns had for years employed a civic postman to deliver letters between merchants locally. Some footposts walked to and from London, or elsewhere as directed, to deliver and collect letters. Such a footpost employed by the Mayor and Jurats of Dover was Edward Ranger who carried letters from London to Dover or vice versa but made deliveries along his way, including a displayed item dated May 1637 from Mayfair to Sittingbourne. Ranger was dismissed in 1649, on orders from the Committee for Both Kingdoms, because he was suspected of being too loyal to the late king who had been executed in January that year. This letter was my earliest item by far when I first acquired it from the late Michael Jackson over thirty years ago, sparking off an enduring interest in early letters.

King Charles I distrusted Parliament and from 1628 he ruled for eleven years without once calling one, but eventually shortage of funds drove him to recall Parliament in 1640. Years of frustration over Prayer Book changes, dubiously raised taxes and the operations of the Court of Star Chamber all led to very sharply expressed opinions, and when the king attempted to arrest several of his severest critics, the feelings boiled over. The eventual outcome was a series of Civil Wars of which one consequence was the withdrawal for several years of postal facilities for the public. During the Civil Wars the respective sides maintained the own information networks to collect and disseminate intelligence, collect taxes and administer the territory each controlled. A few Civil War letters are included, selected from a larger number I own.

When Parliament gained the ascendancy they attempted to negotiate with the king, but he proved himself duplicitous, so no respect or credence remained by the time he was brought to trial, swiftly followed by his execution. The aftermath resulted in the Commonwealth and then the Protectorate, with Oliver Cromwell clearly the one man able and willing to accept the onerous responsibility of leadership. During the Commonwealth an effort was made to restore normality, including reopening the post to public use, and attempts were made to regulate rates and prevent abuses. The Posts were privatised by granting one individual the right to 'farm' them upon payment of an annual rent which was set at a level that only produced a profit if the overall income increased significantly. One result was that carriers were prohibited from taking letters along post roads – except when they accompanied a delivery of goods to the same addressee. This period saw the first legislation concerning postage and postal operations, and the first granting of the franking privilege – that is free postage – to Members of Parliament and key officials "on the business of the State". A few examples are included in the display, as is a copy of the Ordinance of 1654. The death in 1658 of Oliver Cromwell led to a period of uncertainty until by 1660 it became clearly acceptable to the vast majority of the population to invite Charles II to resume the monarchy.

In mid-1660 the new king arrived from Holland. Numerous petitions were received from a number of people, including postal workers, who claimed that they had lost their positions through loyalty to his father. All legislation passed during the Commonwealth and Protectorate was deemed unlawful and parliament was very busy passing new laws, including, in December 1660 one for 'Erecting a Post Office' and setting out the postage rates for inland and foreign letters. A copy is displayed. Henry Bishop, a new Postmaster General, took up his role and was quickly made aware of the many complaints of delays in the post. His response was to introduce the eponymous first datestamp mark in 1661. In the display is a letter from Peele Hall which I believe arrived in London on the day before the introduction of the datestamps. Also shown are a number of early Bishopmarks. Despite the disruptions caused by the plague in 1665 and the Great Fire in 1666, the Post Office continued to function and gradually the frequency of the posts and the number of branch roads increased, all recorded by notices in the London Gazette. One effort to attract more custom was the adoption of the first slogan postmarks: an example from St Osyth to London is displayed: 'ESSEX/ POST GOES/AND COMS:/EVERY·/DAY:'.

The appointment of inspectors to check postal rates led to their being issued with crown marks to authorise changes to incorrect postal rates. Another aspect of growth was the encouragement of local entrepreneurs in various parts of the country who, in return for an annual rent, were allowed to keep all the income from bye-posts in their area. These bye-post renters made significant contributions to postal history. The Chichester bye-post renter was Richard Tayer who was slow in submitting up-to-date accounts. So he was ordered to add a distinctive mark on his letters to enable the office in London to identify them. His first mark is known as a 'Hot Cross Bun', soon followed by a large capital I in a circle. Three letters travelling up the road from Portsmouth bear a Tudor Rose mark and I wonder if these are another variation of Tayer's mark because it is known that his bye-posts reached well into Hampshire. Several items are displayed and I invite you to make up your own minds about the Tudor Rose exhibits.

Tayer was one significant bye-post renter. Another was Joseph Quash of Exeter who in 1696 approached Henry Pine of Bristol and together they proposed that a new 'branch' road should link their respective cities which were on two different postroads. The Postmasters General approved the innovation – which then formed what we now recognize as the first crosspost – but subject to conditions which included the design and approval of distinctive datestamps to identify the items carried on the new route. The result was the Bristol 'B' and Exeter 'E' marks. The idea was so successful that in 1700 they obtained permission to extend their experiment to Chester, forming what is known as the Great Cross Post. Several examples from this early period and numbers of later crosspost letters are displayed. Crossposts secured quicker and cheaper delivery as they avoided letters being sent via London because journeys into and out from were separately charged.

In the period 1705 to 1707 a great number of places seemed suddenly to adopt their first town marks. It cannot be coincidence that so many places did so in so short a time and I was intrigued by a reference to handstamps being issued to postmasters in the West Indies, mentioned in a letter dated November 1705 cited by L E Britnor in his book on the west Indies packets. Unfortunately, he failed to name his source and I have so far failed to trace it! The late Michael Jackson suggested that the intent behind certain of the marks may have been the need to meet complaints from byepost renters over disputes about sharing the postage on letters passing from one byepost area to another. A possible example of this is Hurst Green, which had two marks in 1706 – and then no more for over eighty years, and was on the border of two different byepost districts in Sussex. A number of these early town marks are included in the display. I placed a pin on a map for each of the places from which one of these early town marks is recorded in order to try to detect a pattern but the result was inconclusive. I think it very likely that my list, prepared from early editions of the British County Catalogues, was incomplete and that further early town names may become known in time.

Eleven posttowns had variations of their town mark incorporating an X, of which two are found only in archives. As all are on early crosspost routes set up by Joseph Quash of Exeter, I believe it is clear they were intended for use on crosspost letters. What I find more puzzling is that for fifteen other posttowns on the same crosspost routes no 'X' mark is recorded. As the known examples are all short lived and all very rare, it may be that other examples have not yet come to light, or have been lost – or maybe they never did exist. I show a list of the known and 'missing' marks with six actual 'X' marks.

At Shrewsbury an 'S' with day and month in its loops is recorded, though I have only a photocopy to show you. At Chester, added to the Great Crosspost in 1700, the letters 'HES' and 'TER' within a larger 'C' are recorded in several sizes and examples are displayed. In early versions of the Bristol 'B' the day and month varieties created the need for a stock of 365 different handstamps so it is not surprising that in later versions the day and month are replaced by 'RIS' in the upper and 'TOL' in the lower loops. I imagine that all these marks were originally intended for use only on crosspost letters but as time passed busy staff used them also on items of general post. Several towns used a dot to replace letters deliberately omitted from places with longer names. For example Bridgewater became 'BRI.WATER'.

In 1711 postage rates were increased by a penny and it may be that Joseph Quash failed to collect the extra penny. However it came about, the fact is that a couple of years later he was declared bankrupt, and his unpaid debt to the government was discovered to be over a million pounds – a huge sum for an individual to owe at that time. The catastrophic failure of this major figure in the cross and bye posts system led to notice being given to all the byepost renters to terminate their contracts, with the renters all being put on fixed salaries plus set rates of allowances for riding work. In 1715 the first regional surveyors were appointed to oversee the work of all provincial postmasters. For a while the rate of new posttowns issuing their first marks slowed down and this coincides with the end of the first part of my display.

PART TWO

I start with a sheet summarizing the numbers of new posttowns and new postmarks issued during the period up to 1800 in England and Wales. The pattern in Scotland tended to lag behind England for a while and local practices there varied from those adopted in England.

In part one I included little from Scotland, though I do own a number of examples of early manuscript town marks on Scottish letters to London or going overseas via London. However several inland marks from Scotland appear in Part Two, starting with a manuscript 'Gl 2d' from Glasgow dated 1716. A number of the letters that follow include directions such as in which bag the letter is to be sent. At this time the main post roads and their branches still only served a modest proportion of the population. Those who lived off these key routes depended on favours from friends or neighbours or had themselves to make long journeys to collect their letters from the nearest posttown or to post letters there.

While many places are recorded as having a town mark in use between certain dates, there are many gaps. In some instances this may reflect that examples from the gap years remain unrecorded, but in a few cases we know letters from such towns were posted without any mark being used. Whether these marks were carelessly mislaid or deliberately destroyed we cannot know for sure, but I suggest the 'losses' may have been deliberate, prompted by postmasters wanting to pocket the cash from prepaid items such as bye-post letters and to leave no trace as to where they had been handed in. It seems likely to me that letters without postmarks are less likely to have been retained by collectors of earlier generations, and so we may now have an incomplete impression of how many letters were not postmarked after their place of posting had been issued with a handstamp!

Eventually the Post Office realized that it had found no way to control the abuses, so in 1720 they delegated the problem to the postmaster of Bath, Ralph Allen, under a national seven year contract to run all of the cross and bye posts. It took him many years under this and later contracts to introduce and enforce effective controls in the form of way bills. These eventually enabled him to prove in court who had been stealing his income and, after severe punishments were given to those found guilty, the abuses were reduced to more acceptable levels. Only in later years, after he had established these effective controls, did Allen undertake the great expansion of crosspost routes for which he is justly famous. In just over forty years he changed the whole network of post roads to look much more like a cobweb than merely the spokes of a wheel, enabling quicker – and cheaper – communications between many places across the whole country.

A few places adopted traditional symbols in their postmarks such as the Lamb and Flag of Perth. Such distinctive marks were generally very short lived; whether this was because the designs did not reproduce with sufficient clarity or whether official attitudes discouraged their use I cannot say. The Lamb and Flag of Perth was soon replaced by a convex mark which lasted for many years.

As the years passed certain trends emerged. Two or even three line marks become more common than the original straight line ones, and the handstamps definitely tend to become larger as the decades pass.

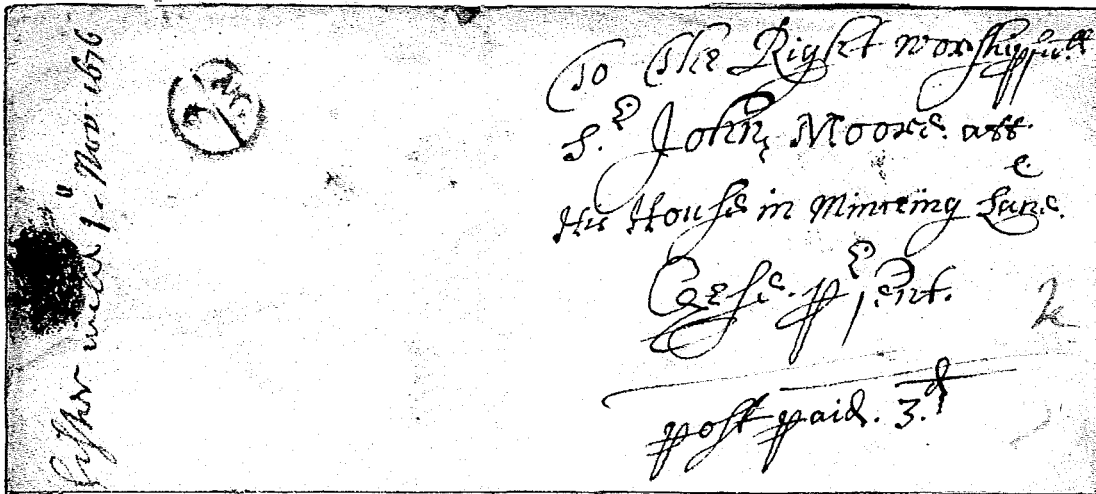
In 1765 the rates of postage were amended to encourage local usage by setting a rate of one penny for one stage and twopence for two stages. In 1784 the rates for under 150 miles increased by a penny and over 150 miles by twopence. In 1796 the wars with France led to a further adjustment of postage rates, with charges in Scotland generally exceeding those for similar distances in England, Wales and Berwick. From 1801, 1805 and 1812 respectively the rates for Great Britain were again adjusted to help raise money for the wars with France.

After Ralph Allen died there was little innovation for twenty years until the introduction of mailcoaches by John Palmer coincided with the introduction of a new series of marks that incorporated the mileage of the posttown to the relevant capital city. One exception to the 'nothing new' attitude that followed the death of Ralph Allen was seen in Edinburgh in 1774 where Peter Williamson emulated the example of William Docwra by setting up a civic penny post, but Williamson managed to remain independent of the Post Office for several years. He adopted handstamps to show if postage had or had not been paid and some later examples are dated. Two letters carried by Williamson are included in the display.

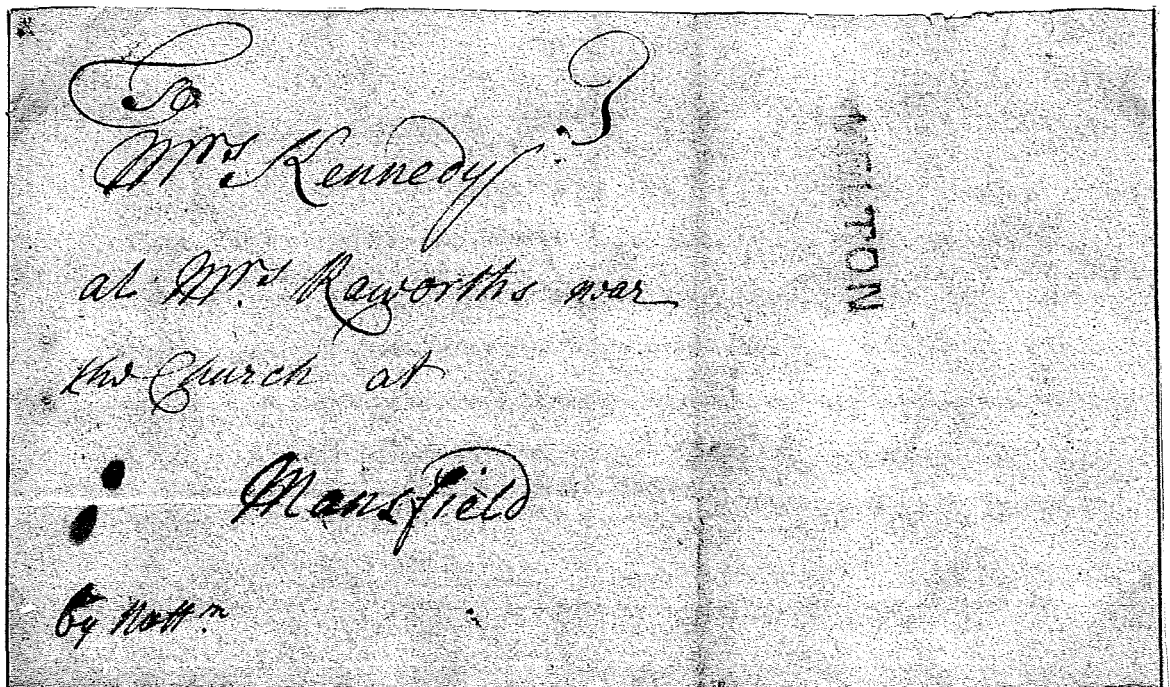
Later still the use of curved marks led to horseshoe, convex, or concave styles. The spelling of places varies from time to time and a few errors of place names occur. In a number of cases local enterprise led to marks of great originality being used, though some – such as the 1772 'Chandelier' used at Birmingham – had very short lives.

TWO ITEMS FROM THE EDITOR'S DISPLAY AT KINGTON ST MICHAEL

A letter sent from Long Whatton in November 1676 and endorsed 'post paid. 3.^d'



Melton Mowbray to Mansfield in January 1736 with the straight-line 'MELTON' (26x4mm)



THE OCTOBER MEETING

As far as I can remember, the Society has never before had a meeting devoted to the postal history of Rutland. That situation was rectified by Bob Viney at our meeting at Carr's Lane Church Centre on 16th October. Bob began by setting the scene with a number of maps of the county and postcards. Two of the latter showed the post offices in Oakham (two different sites) and in Uppingham where the office still occupies the site that it did one hundred years ago. Bob told us that the first half of his display would consist of material relating to the two posttowns of Rutland, Oakham and Uppingham.

The second frame began with two accounts for Royal Messengers from c1584 and 1615/16. The first was an account for a Royal Messenger to the 'excheters' of Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Northants, Rutland, Notts and Derbyshire. Bob explained that Oakham and Uppingham did not have an official post until 1685 when the postmaster of Market Harborough was paid to erect two new stages. Thus it is likely that a letter written in Uppingham in May 1661 was carried privately to Market Harborough where it was charged threepence for carriage to London. This letter was remarkable for it showed an early Bishopmark, 20th May 1661. Another letter, written in 1672, was probably carried privately to Kettering as it was charged twopence, Kettering being less than 80 miles to London. Bob then showed us the earliest recorded handstruck mark from Rutland, 'UPING/HAM' used in 1739 on a letter annotated 'Free' and signed by the postmaster of Uppingham. The same handstamp was used nearly thirty years later, in 1768, on a letter to Edinburgh which carried a total charge of tenpence – 3d to London, 6d London to Edinburgh and 1d for local delivery. A letter of 1774 showed a straight-line 'OAKHAM', the earliest recorded mark of that town. We then saw a hitherto unrecorded mark of Uppingham with large letters used c1783.

The next section began with the '97 Oakham' first type mileage mark on a letter sent to Market Drayton in October 1789. Another first type mileage mark, 'UPPING/HAM 91', was used on a letter sent post paid to Halstead in 1786. After the withdrawal of these mileage marks Oakham used from 1791 a straight-line handstamp with letters 6mm in height. By 1801 this had been replaced by one with letters 4mm in height – an example of what appears to have been a 'standard type' from 1799 to 1801. We then saw the boxed mileage mark of Oakham (mileage 98) used in 1815 on a letter sent to London at a cost of 2/3. By 1818, the mileage shown in the Oakham handstamps had fallen from 98 to 96, while that of Uppingham had dropped from 98 to 90. Both towns used undated circular mileage handstamps, and of particular note here was a letter, showing the 'UPPINGHAM/90' mark on a prepaid letter sent in 1829 from the village of Wing to Rome at a cost of 2/6. While Oakham used a mileage removed mark from 1829 up to the issue of a UDC in September 1831, Uppingham used an unusual lower case postmark of which Bob showed three copies used from 1829 to 1831. (A UDC was issued in March 1833, so it is possible this handstamp remained in use till then.)

Bob then showed a penny black on a cover sent to Uppingham which was followed by two Mulreadys, one a local item from Uppingham to Stockerstone, the other was sent to Coventry. An unusual item was a mark 'Missent to' used in conjunction with the cds of Uppingham struck in green ink in July 1849. The letter was addressed to Empingham which was in the delivery of Stamford not Uppingham.

We saw examples of the numeral cancellations (587 of Oakham, 825 of Uppingham), duplex marks, a registered letter receipt from Oakham, parcel post labels and three skeleton postmarks of Uppingham, used in 1901, 1907 and 1917.

Bob finished the first half of his display with two items relating to Rutlandshire Regiment. He explained that this had been raised in 1740 as the 58th Regiment of Foot but in 1782 was given the title '58th Rutlandshire Regiment'. The first item was addressed to the Commanding Officer at Whissendine. The other came from the Maori War of 1844-46 and was sent by Corporal John Mitchell to Thomas Mitchell in Stamford. It was posted on 19th October 1846 in Auckland, where it was stamped with a boxed paid mark, and eventually arrived in Stamford on 2nd April 1847.

The second half of the display consisted of material from ten of the villages the first of which was Ashwell. Two covers sent from Ashwell, in 1816 to Derby and in 1822 to Uppingham, both showed strikes of the Oakham mileage mark with the distance between lines. Also of note was a skeleton used in August 1912.

A single circle handstamp was issued to Barrowden when a post office opened there in 1879. We saw examples of this used between 1904 and 1912. In 1939 Barrowden was transferred to the delivery of Oakham from that of Stamford, a change reflected in the issue of a double circle 'BARROWDEN/OAKHAM . RUTLAND'.

Belton was represented initially by the use of its cds on registered letters in 1921 and 1923. Since the village was sometimes confused with the Belton near Loughborough, the name was changed in 1982 to 'Belton-in-Rutland', and the datestamps changed accordingly.

A postcard showing the post office started the frame on Burley. A letter sent from Burley to London in 1690 mentioned sending to Oakham for mail. Also of note was a letter sent to Zante in the Ionian Islands via Trieste and Corfu.

Caldecott, over the years, has been in the delivery of a number of posttowns. So we saw the single circle used on a postcard where the adhesive was cancelled by the squared circle of Uppingham. Later postmarks showed the posttown as Market Harborough.

A letter sent from Oakham to the village of Clipsham at the ½d rate carried a manuscript 'Not Known' and a boxed 'R.L.O./Contains A COMMUNICATION/OF THE NATURE OF A LETTER'. Also of note was the collection plate from the letter box at Clipsham Quarry.

A letter sent from London on 17th October 1663 by a Thomas Alanson was addressed 'For your honourable Edward Heath knight/ of the honorable order of/ at his house at Cottesmore Rutland'. It was also marked 'Post Pd 3^d'. From a rather later date was a cover marking the closure on 31st March 1999 of the Tornado Tri-National Training Establishment at RAF Cottesmore.

Empingham was represented by a Mulready and a penny black cover sent to the village, the UDC struck in red and a skeleton dated 20th March 1907.

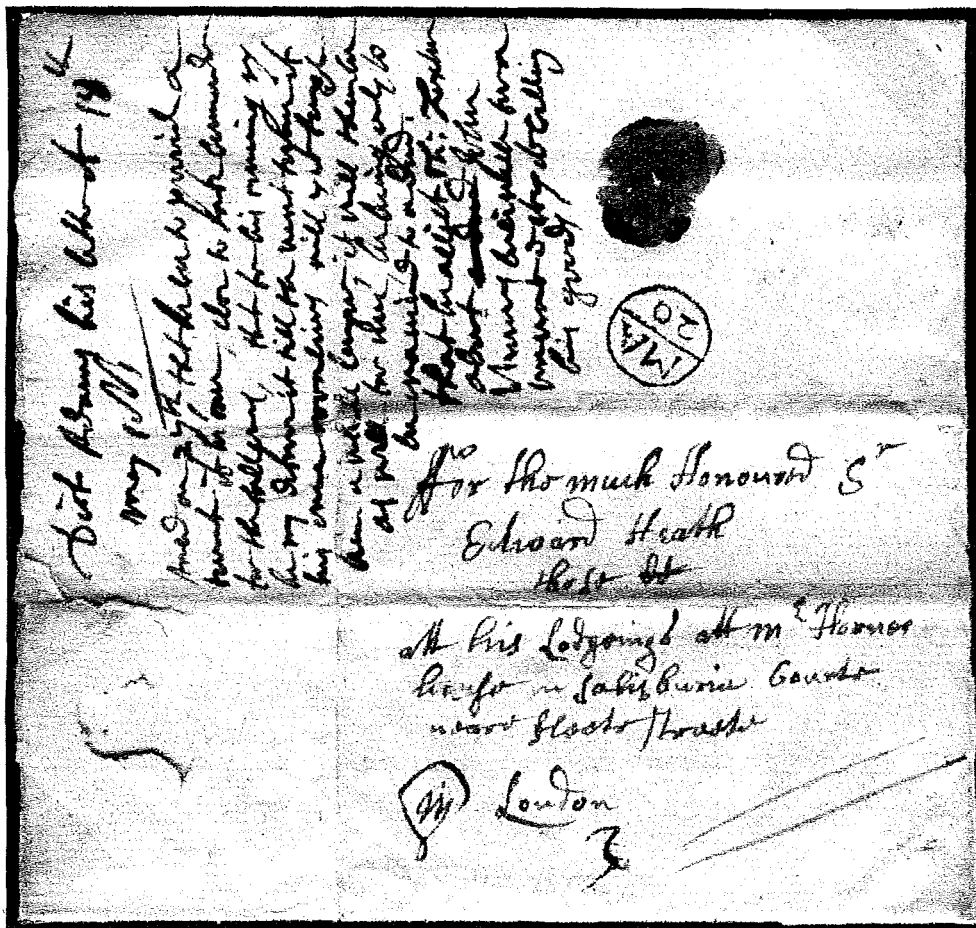
From Exton came a letter sent to London by a James Turner in 1745 and which carried a two-line Stamford mark. Another letter sent from the same village in 1803 was struck with a straight-line 'GREETHAM'. Bob told us that this mark was applied at the Greetham Inn on the Great North Road. A skeleton 'EXTON/OAKHAM' was dated 2nd September 1912.

Finally Greetham was represented by the two straight-line marks applied at Greetham Inn. The larger mark was applied to letters to Twickenham (1798) and Newark (199), while the smaller version was to be seen on a cover sent to Lichfield in 1810.

Rutland may be the smallest county in England but Bob showed that it has a wide range of fascinating material. Covers from Rutland are not easy to find so it is a considerable achievement on Bob's part to produce such a comprehensive display.

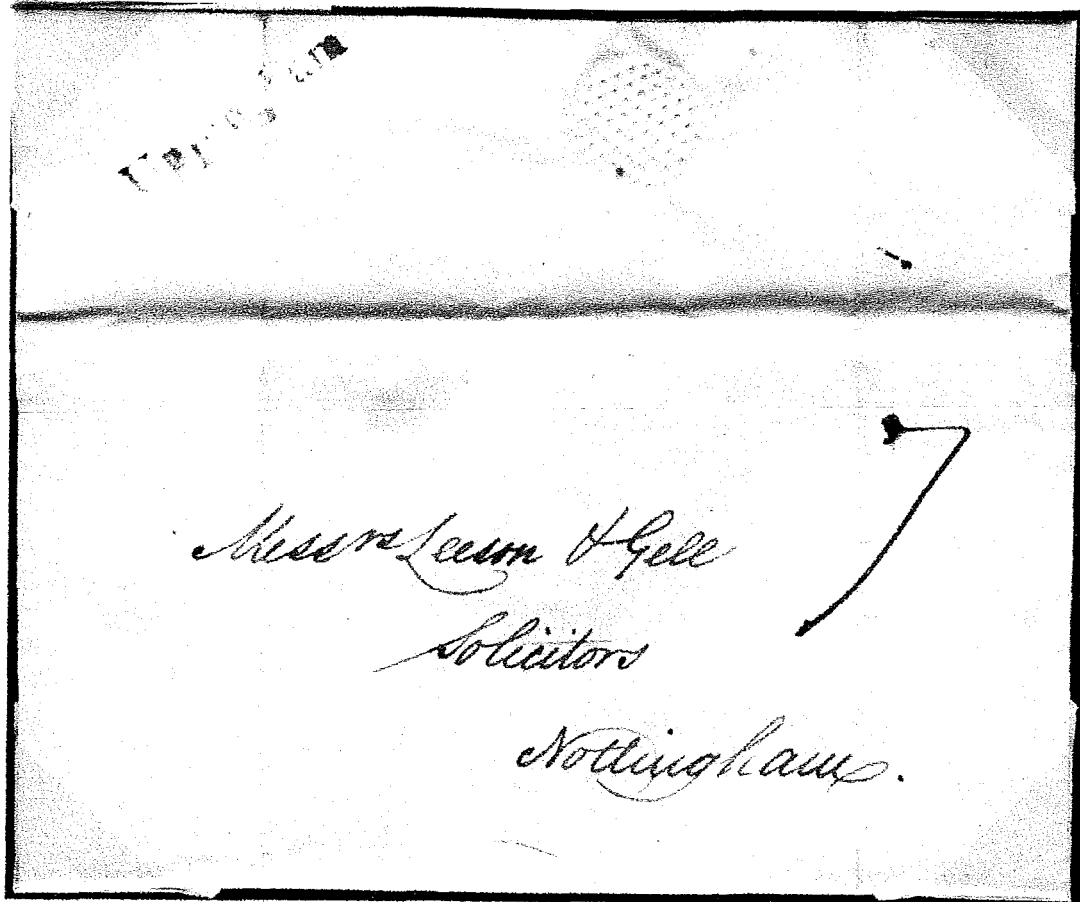
SOME ITEMS FROM BOB VINEY'S DISPLAY

A letter from Uppingham dated 18th May 1661 and which shows a Bishopmark for 20th May.
This is the earliest Bishopmark in private hands.

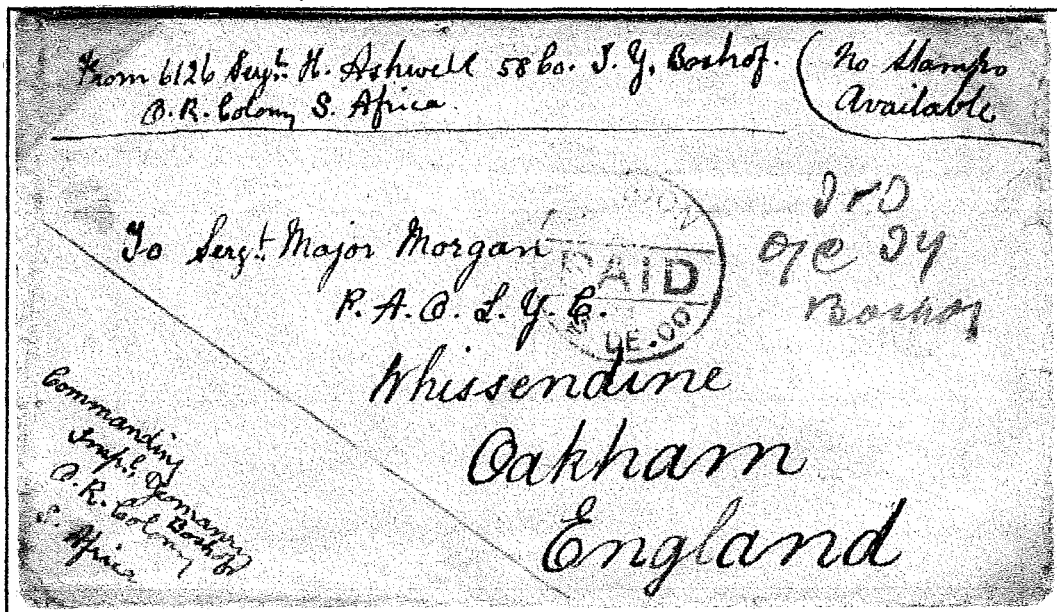


167/10

A letter sent from Uppingham in December 1829 which shows the unusual lower case mark of Uppingham.
This was possibly introduced locally by the postmaster after the use of mileage marks ceased.



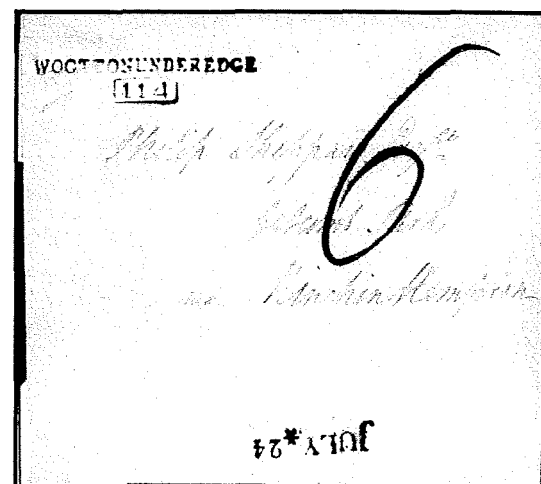
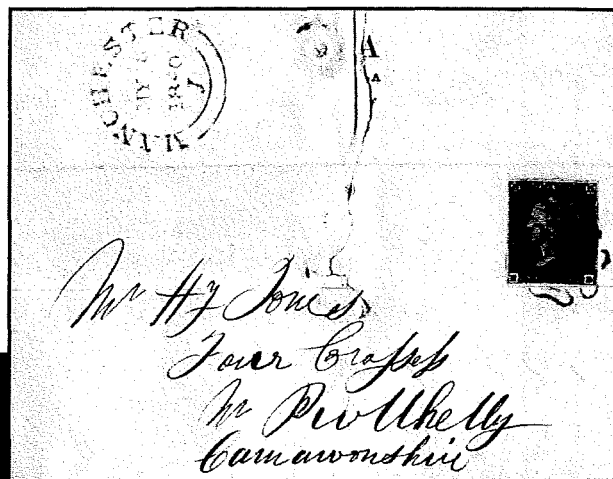
This letter which contained a 26 inch long snake skin was sent from Boshof, 30 miles to the northeast of Kimberley.
The reverse shows a Kimberley cds for 10th November 1900 and the Oakham cds for 3rd December 1900.



Cavendish's 24/25 November auctions..

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2 Catalogues, available end October,
or on-line at
www.cavendish-auctions.com



Lot 1000 in our September sale-
SOLD for £585

Our March 2011 Auction is building
now - please contact Ken Baker, Ian
Kellock or James Grimwood-Taylor
if you would like to consign to this
special postal history sale.
General Collections in January.

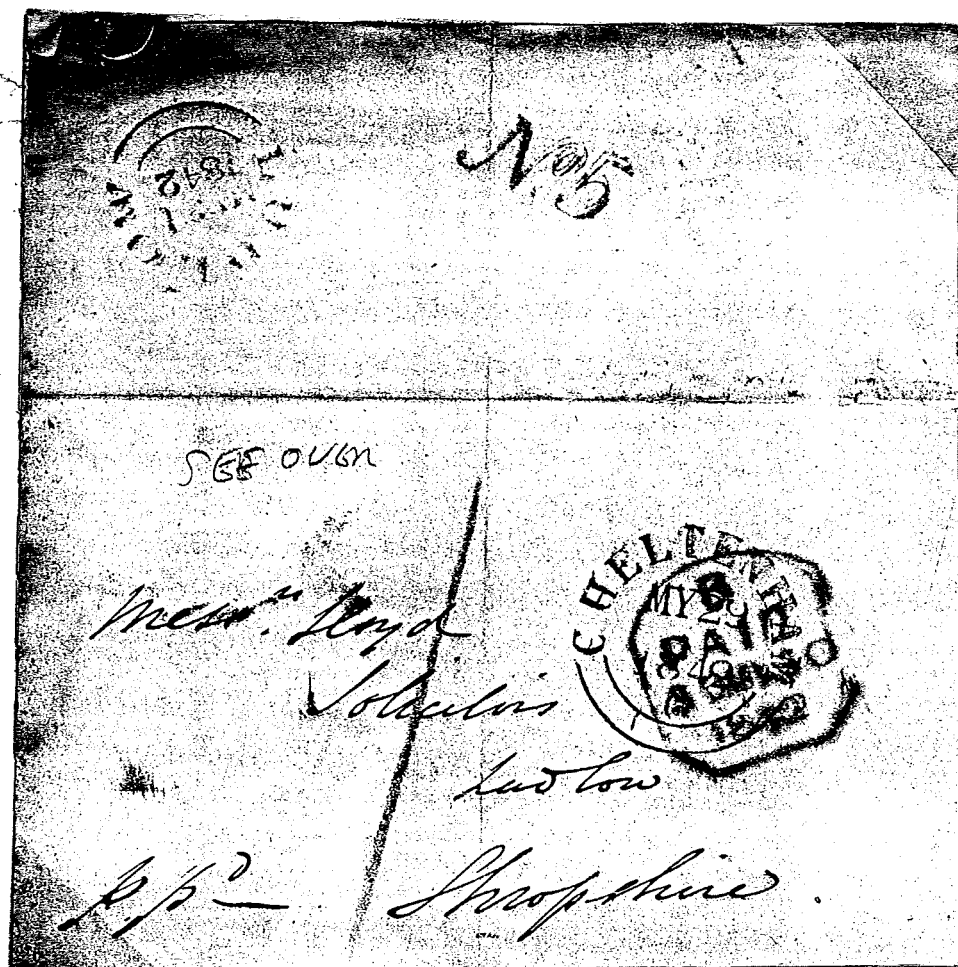


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CHELTENHAM PENNY POST MARKS

I am indebted to Norman Higson for sending the two illustrations shown below in response to the recent article on penny post marks used after the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage (MM166/3). The first shows the 'N^o. 8 of Bishops Cleeve used on a Mulready sent on 2nd December 1840. The second shows a strike, in red ink, of the ornate N^o 5 of Charlton Kings on a letter sent in May 1842. Norman has four copies of this handstamp used between May 1842 and April 1844.



WHAT A WAY TO GO!

by Mick Gill

I recently purchased a letter, dated 17th February, written from Kirkby (in Ashfield) to the Dean of Lincoln at Lincoln. Charged 4d it has a '141 MANS/FIELD' mileage mark on the reverse together with a manuscript '5', indicating an additional 1d charge for local deliver. The contents are most enlightening.

The sender, the Rev Greville, states that he should have taken an earlier opportunity of acquainting the Dean with the state of his (the Dean's) parish, "*had he not been Induced to postpone it from the Probability of a Communication presenting itself less expensive than that of the Post;- particularly as I wish'd to transmit to you the Lists and Arrears of my Parochial Diary. But as these would swell my letter to the size of a Packet I shall defer delivering them into your hands, til I have the Pleasure of seeing you at Kirkby.*"

He then reports the death of two of the Dean's parishioners at Kirkby. Thomas Farnsworth died on 25th February – clearly this should have been January – and Thomas Knowles who was killed on 2nd February.

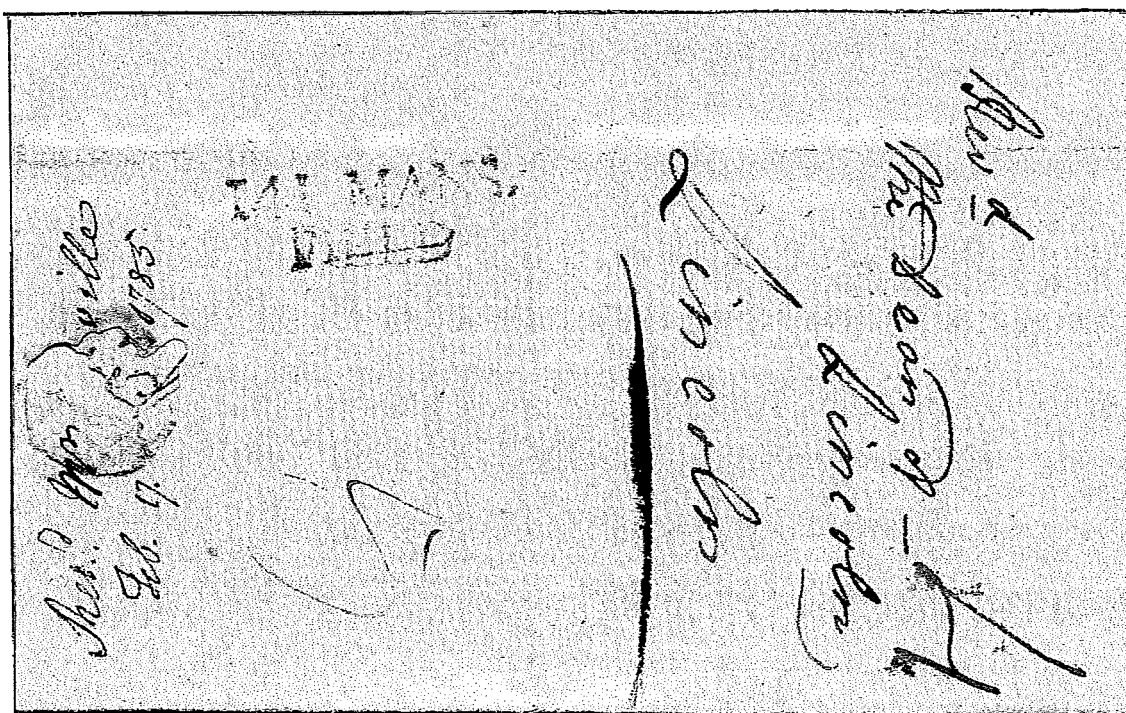
He states the Dean would have been prepared to expect the death of Thomas Farnsworth "*from his extreme old age ... which gives little pain especially as he breathed out his last without feeling the agony which generally attends those who dye in the flower of youth or vigour of manhood.*" Also that for some three weeks proceeding his death, Thomas, "*gradually lost all recollection – began to play with his Buttons and to exhibit many other forms of second childhood*" which prevented him from administering the sacrament.

As regards Thomas Knowles, the Dean will be shocked "*beyond expression;- particularly as it was owing to his extreme drinking.*" Thomas "*was intoxicated at Mansfield*" but "*persisted notwithstanding the advice of his friends, to drive his team home that evening;- unfortunately before the wagon was ready for departureas he stood upon the top of it making water he reeled – pitch'd upon his head and was killed upon the spot.*" He goes on to say that the misfortune is aggravated as Thomas "*had married a girl about three weeks before his death, and was preparing to Bring her over to live at Kirkby.*"

The Rev Greville then continues with a report of the death of a third parishioner, John Heath, son of Will, of Sutton (in Ashfield). His was "*an instance of premature death equally severe and lamentable.*" John was, "*found on Sunday morning frozen to the ground in Sutton Breck.*" According to a Mr Clarke, one of the jurymen at the inquest, John had called at the Hut, a hostelry on the Nottingham – Mansfield road, on his way home from Nottingham and, *having Drank more than was sufficient – proceeded on his way home but being numb'd with the severe cold – fell off his horse – and (as it is conjectured) was frozen to death.*"

Ending his letter, the Rev Greville states that he understands both young men had frequently dined with the dean who would have not thought that "*they would have been cut off from the residue of their Days by such untimely accidents.*"

The Hut, opposite the entrance to Newstead Abbey at Ravenshead, is still a popular Nottinghamshire watering-hole. Don't Drink and Drive is clearly nothing new!



CARRIERS and the CARRIAGE of the MAIL

by Brian Atkins

Definitions of the word 'mail' suggest that it relates to written communication via a postal system but as James Grimwood-Taylor observed in a scholarly revue in issue Number 230 of *POSTAL HISTORY*¹ letters were also carried by carriers. He argued that prior to the post office Act of 1711 (9 Anne Cap 10) common carriers could legally carry letters, whereas after that Act the letters they carried had to relate to something the carrier was conveying. He even illustrates a 1715 letter conveyed by a carrier endorsed "*With a sammon* (sic)", imagine the ripeness of both of these on receipt; if the salmon existed that is, for the underlying suggestion is that endorsements such as this were used to circumvent the expensive postal system. The letter in question did not have any charge marks on it, so we cannot tell its cost relative to the postal system, though an 1837 letter from Monzievaird (Perthshire) to Edinburgh, endorsed '*with a box*', has 5/5 added, which presumably is the charge for letter and box.

To further illustrate the post-1711 arrangements, Graham Moss in *The Middlewich Letters*², shows a number of letters, which relate to goods carried by the barges on the Trent & Mersey canal system. In *Midland Mail* No 108/7³ Brian Atkins illustrated a similar letter, endorsed '*p boat*', and carried on the Shrewsbury Canal from Wappenshall to Shrewsbury, replying to an inquiry about non-arrival of goods.

However, entries in the diary of Eleanor Butler, one of the Ladies of Llangollen⁴, show that the carriers did carry letters alongside the postal system. The diary entries have further interest in that they show the ladies received official mail from the post offices at Oswestry and Wrexham, see below:

Thursday 17 April 1788: A large parcel came by the Salop coach, forwarded thence by Post

Wednesday 7 May 1788: The Irishwoman brought us a letter which Francis the carrier got at Oswestry. It was from the Barretts and written on Sunday, but forgot by Mr. Francis Berkeley the postman, in his Bag. How very provoking.

Friday 24 October 1788: Francis brought the postbag from Wrexham. Letter from Lord Bessborough dated 16th (plus two other letters – my brackets).

Wednesday 3 December 1788: Letter by the Bath carrier from Mrs Hunt, Chester (no mention of a parcel with the letter to satisfy the 1711 Act).

Monday 2 February 1789: At two post arrived, delay occasioned by the Oswestry bag being sent to Welsh Pool (sic) and vice versa. Fine gentlemen these post masters at Salop and Oswestry.

September 1789: Letter received from Lady Anne Wesley addressed "To Miss Butler, Llangollen, Salop Post, Oswestry Bag, N. Wales.

Thursday 18 March 1790: The Corwen Carrier brought a letter and a parcel from Harriet Tucker sent on 1st March; he has had it eighteen days in his possession. (This entry would appear to be in line with the Act.)

These selected entries and others, which went on for 30 years, confirm that the official Post and the carriers brought letters to Plas Newydd, the house of the Ladies of Llangollen, who were Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby. In summary the ladies received official mail from Oswestry and Wrexham and letters by carriers from Corwen, Chester, Bath, Bala and Oswestry. It is clear that the carriers not only picked up private letters en route but that they also brought official mail from the post offices to the Ladies. The latter brings up an interesting point; since most mail was sent collect at that time, how was the delivery paid for, did the carrier only bring prepaid mail or did the post offices keep an account with the carriers? Perhaps the ladies were sent a quarterly bill from the official offices. Unfortunately the diary gives no clue to the answers to any of these questions.

Although we don't know the size of the parcel mentioned in the first entry quoted, it is surprising that the official post carried it. That the carriers transported heavier items is evidenced by remarks written by Joshua Blakeway, a flannel merchant, in a 1784 letter from Shrewsbury to Hinkley, which went through the official mail. He writes "*The above which completes your order went by Tomlinson's Waggon to Birmingham from whence I hope you will receive it safely and approve the quality*". Did Mr Blakeway have reservations about the reliability of the carrier, for the letter went by the mail (not with the carrier and the flannel) and has concerns for the safety of the flannel? The March 1790 entry in Miss Butler's diary suggested the carriers were not exactly quick with their deliveries. Mr. Blakeway was probably aware of this and wanted to give his customer advance warning of the delivery, the mail being quicker.

But how much did the carriers charge for parcels and were they regulated? The 1691 House of Commons Committee revealed that Waggoners and Carriers had raised their prices excessively "to the great injury of Trade". Thus the 1691 Act (3William & Mary Cap12) gave authority to the Justices of the Peace of every county to assess and fix the maximum rates charged by carriers for goods brought into the JPs jurisdiction, which rates were to be displayed in the towns. The penalty for over charging was £5 (a huge sum then) to be levied, if necessary, by the sale of the carrier's goods, by warrant of any two justices of the town in which he lived. In 1748 a further Act was deemed necessary whereby the aggrieved party could recover the £5 by the sale of goods not only by warrant of two local justices but also by warrant of any two justices "for the counties of Middlesex and Surrey, City of London or City and Liberty of Westminster", making it less easy for the carrier to avoid a summons. Because of the change the Act also stipulated that every county had to yearly notify the Lord Mayor of the City of London and the Clerks of the Peace of Middlesex and Surrey and Westminster of the rates of carriage fixed from London. The 1756 printed sheet to the right (reduced) was the Town of Shrewsbury's compliance with that Act for that year, with the rates and compliance clearly shown. In 1783 the justices for Leicestershire decided on the following rates⁵:

From London to Leicester for every cwt. 5s 0d. and no more, to Market Harborough 4s. 0d., to Lutterworth 4s. 0d., to Mountsorrel, Loughborough, Market Bosworth and Melton Mowbray 5s. 0d., Hinkley 4s 6d. and Ashby-de-la-Zouch 5s 6d. Quite hefty sums but for weighty items.

The late Denis Salt had access to a 1722/23 correspondence to Broad Clough, which was probably carried by pack horse trains. The letters had endorsements, which indicated that charges had been made over and above the General Post charges. These extra charges were not standard and Denis Salt reasoned "The charges.....probably depended on the carrier concerned, different pack horse carriers charging different rates"⁶. Further evidence of the carriage of mail by carriers alongside the official post.

References.

- 1) Carriers, Common Carriers and the Law, J.L.Grimwood-Taylor, POSTAL HISTORY, the BULLETIN of the POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY No 230 1984 2nd Quarter
 - 2) The Middlewich Letters, Graham Moss, Postal History Society of Lancashire & Cheshire 1989
 - 3) A Shrewsbury Canal Letter of 1844, Brian Atkins, MIDLAND MAIL Number 108, page 7
 - 4) The Hamwood Papers of the Ladies of Llangollen and Caroline Hamilton, ed. Bell, London 1934
 - 5) Roads and their Traffic, John Copeland, David and Charles 1968
 - 6) Early Cross Posts and Local Delivery Charges, Denis Salt, POSTAL HISTORY, the BULLETIN of the POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY No 224 1982 4th Quarter
- Also: The Ladies of Llangollen, Elizabeth Mavor, Penguin, London 1971

Town of
Shrewsbury,
(to wit)

At the General Quarter-Sessions of the Peace of our Sovereign Lord the KING, held at the Guildhall in and for the Town of Shrewsbury and the Liberties thereof: On Friday the 30th Day of April, 1756, being the next General or Quarter Sessions held for the said Town and Liberties, after Easter-Day last.

112 lb. to the C. BY virtue of the Act of Parliament in that Case made, the Justices of the Peace assembled at this Sessions, have assessed and rated the Price of all Land Carriage of Goods whatsoever, (except Money, Plate, or Jewels) that shall be brought from London to this Town, by any common Waggoner, or Carrier, at the Rates and Prices following, (viz.)

l. s. d.

For every Parcel not exceeding 12 lb. Weight — 0 1 0

And for every larger Parcel proportionably by the Hundred, (at 112 lb. to the Hundred.)

Between Lady-Day and the first of November. — 0 7 0

Between the first of November, and Lady-Day — 0 9 0

and no more. And it is ordered by this Court, that these Rates be Printed and sent to the several Serjeants at Mace, Under-Officers and Constables, within the said Town and Liberties, and affixed up in some publick Places in the said Town and Liberties, to which all Persons may resort for Inspection. And that the common Waggoners and Carriers, may not be ignorant of the Law, they are to take Notice, that by the 3 and 4 WILLIAM and MARY, and the 21 GEORGE II, no common Waggoner or Carrier shall take for Carriage to or from London above the Rates so assessed, on pain of forfeiting for every Offence Five Pounds, to the Use of the Party grieved, to be levied by a Warrant of two Justices of the Peace.

By the COURT.

Edwardes, Town-Clerk.

POSTS WITH A (REAL) PURPOSE

by John Calladine

It was in 'Midland Mail' No. 129 of March 2003 that an article appeared with the title '*Posts with a Purpose*'. It told of a number of elaborate cast iron posts on the (current) A3400 – once the A34- between Chipping Norton and Stratford-on-Avon that were alleged to have served a postal purpose. After examining their possible connection with mailcoaches, the penny post, stagecoaches and even the historic Stratford - Moreton-in-Marsh tramway, we came to the conclusion that they had no connection with any of the above but were an elaborate form of milepost. Unfortunately, they bore no mileage information and one could only surmise that wooden boards bearing mileage information were suspended from the arms of the posts, although their design seemed ill suited to that purpose. At the same time, the Milestone Society was alerted to their existence and condition, through that society's newsletter.



There was no known immediate reaction to this information but there was some consternation in the Shipston area when, more recently, one of the posts was apparently stolen. Happily, both the Warwickshire and Worcestershire branches of the Milestone Society were now taking an interest and I am indebted to 'Worcestershire Miles', an occasional newsletter for the (very active members) of the Worcestershire group, for permission to reproduce an old photograph, located by the Warwickshire group, of one of these posts. Had we been ten feet tall in 2003, we might have noticed a slot, about an inch wide in the top of the post, that would have suggested any board bearing mileage information was not suspended from the arms but mounted above them. Although the old photo is of poor quality, it clearly shows that the design of the post did make some sense and that, when complete, the posts were a handsome item of roadside furniture.

The Warwickshire group of the Milestone Society is now trying to work out exactly what information is on the board illustrated. They believe there was a pointing hand on each side, as well as the expected information about place and distance. There are plans, in conjunction with the local council and the local history society, for the Warwickshire group to restore at least one of these unique posts to its former glory. It is understood that the supposedly stolen post had been damaged by council workmen and put into temporary storage and that a further complete post has been acquired from another source. Our society had come to the conclusion that there may originally have been as many as twenty of these posts and there were certainly seven in place a few years ago, although we located only five.

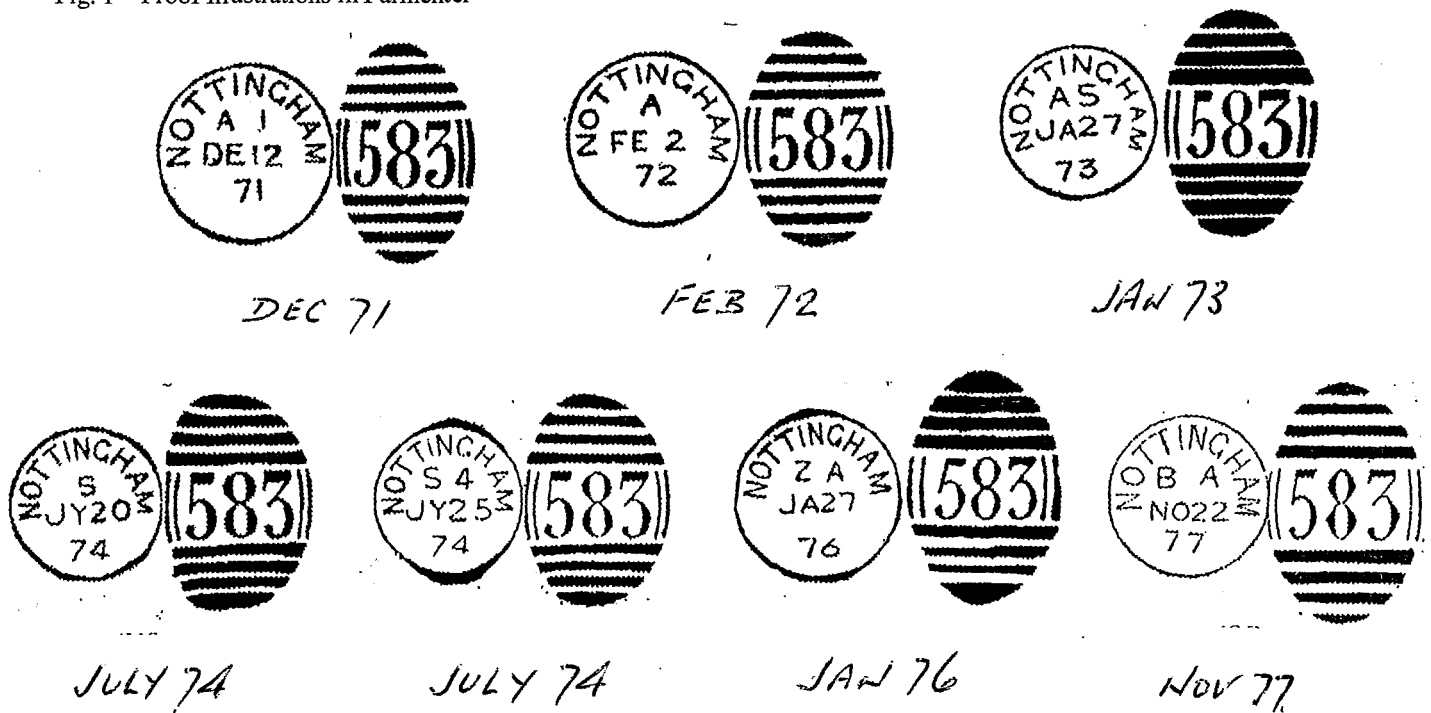
There is some tenuous information that milestones were removed from the road in the 1850s and it is therefore possible these posts were erected in the mid nineteenth century. We did comment, in the original article, that they did not appear to date from the 1830s, when a Chipping Norton – Birmingham mailcoach was established. Nothing like them is known elsewhere and we can only ponder why they were so elaborate, who paid for them and where (in Birmingham?) they were cast.

NOTTINGHAM 4VODB

By Alan Marshall

An investigation into the flat topped '3' 4VODB marks in Parmenter has thrown up some interesting findings. Well over one hundred examples of this particular type of mark were viewed, overlay tracings made and used in an effort to tabulate the dates of use of the seven marks illustrated by Parmenter (fig. 1), along with their dates of issue. However, with the increase in the amount of mail at this time, an overlap with the round topped '3' 4VODA and often poor application, a reliably accurate tabulation was not possible. An identification of the seven marks became the realistic aim within the overall earliest and latest recorded dates of use.

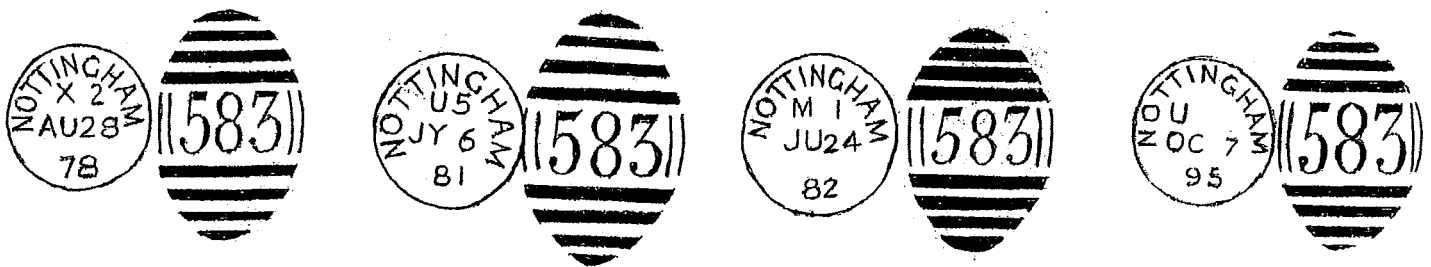
Fig. 1 – Proof Illustrations in Parmenter



An examination of Hall's publication highlighted an illustration with a date of 4th March 1899 but which he recorded in his accompanying detailed listing as 13th March 1890. Consequently the dates of usage can now be rewritten as 12th December 1871 to 13th March 1899.

Of surprise and interest from the exercise was that no examples of the marks from July 1874 and November 1877 were found. On the other hand four different marks were found that did not superimpose on the above, starting with dates in 1878. One example of each is illustrated (fig. 2) – "8th August 1878, 6th July 1871, "4th June 1882 and 7th October 1895. The last of the four appeared six times from 21st April 1881 to 30th December 1896 in addition to an illustration in Hall dated 26th June 1889.k cds.

Fig. 2



The variations of the four additional marks are not considered to be the result of recutting. Analysis identifies a combination of features that support this: increased size of the numerals of '583'; different diameters of the cds; overall dimensions and shape of the barred oval; length of arc, size and spacing of the letters of 'NOTTINGHAM' in the cds.

AN AMENDMENT TO THE SOCIETY'S 'MILEAGE MARK' BOOK

Members are asked to amend page 128 of the 'The Midland Counties Mileage Marks & Mail Routes to London, 1784-1840' by changing the number of the illustration MMM10005 to "MMM 10006" and that of MMM 10006 to "MMM10005".

THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL AUCTION

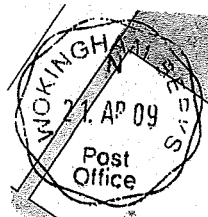
This will take place on Saturday 7th May at the usual venue – St Germain's Church Hall. So that it is possible to distribute the catalogues in good time, it is essential to let Eric Lewis have your lots preferably by the date of the January meeting, 8th January 2001, but at the very latest the date of the February meeting, 12th February. Alternatively, lots may be sent by post to Mr E Lewis at 27 Rathbone Road, Smethwick B67 5JG by 12th February. Please give full descriptions together with estimated market value and your reserve price for each item.

Please note that the minimum reserve for lots remains at £3 with increments of: 50p up to £10; £1 above £10 up to £20; £2 above £20 up to £50; then £5 up to £100; and £10 above £100.

As usual, a gift of any surplus material that you may care to give in aid of Society funds will be much appreciated. These lots usually raise a significant sum of money, so enabling subscriptions to be kept down. So please sort out those surplus items as soon as possible.

A CROWN OFFICE

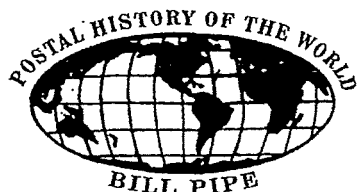
While so many towns and cities have seen their Crown Post Offices closed with the usual post office facilities being transferred to the premises of companies such as W.H. Smith, Wokingham so far has retained its Crown Office. Clearly, someone is proud of this fact for one of the datestamps reads 'WOKINGHAM CROWN OFFICE'. Alas, it seems that is the only one and is rarely used. The copy below is the only strike that I have obtained so far.



THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

I do have a number of commitments in January but I hope that the next issue will be with members by the end of that month. It is more likely to appear on schedule if articles, long and short, are sent to:

John Soer, 51d Barkham Road, Wokingham RG41 2RG



THE MAGPIE

POSTAL AUCTIONS & LISTS
POSTCARDS & EPHEMERA
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POSTAL HISTORY

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Email: magpiebillpipe@free.uk.com