MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Number 153, January 2008

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

We visit the **Black Country Museum** on **16th February** when Frank Bennet will display material on '*Hereford City*'. Then on **8th March** our meeting will be held in conjunction with the Streetly Society's Annual Fair at the **Collingwood Centre, Great Barr.** The fair opens at 10am. There will be a committee meeting at 11am and at 1.30pm members are invited to give one board displays on '*Surcharged Mail*'

THE AGM AND ANNUAL AUCTION

These will be held on 26th April 2008. The AGM will start promptly at 1.00 pm and will be followed by the auction at 1.30 pm. In order to distribute the auction catalogues in good time, particularly to our overseas members, it is necessary that lots are handed to Eric by the latest at the meeting on 16th February. Alternatively, they may be sent to Mrs E Lewis at 27 Rathbone Road, Smethwick B67 5JG by 16th February. Please give full descriptions together with estimated market values and your reserve price.

Please note that there will be a **minimum reserve price of £3.** Also the increments in the bidding will now be: up to £10 - 50p; from £10 to £20 - £1; from £20 to £50 - £2; from £50 to £100 - £5; over £100 - £10.

A gift of surplus material that you may care give to sell for Society funds would be much appreciated. The money raised by the auction not only gives us an opportunity to dispose of surplus material or to acquire items for our collections, but also raises a valuable amount of money, so keeping subscriptions down.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Chris Jackson whose display '*Penny Posts in Worcestershire*' came first and was awarded a silver gilt medal in the Postal History class at the MPF Autumn Assembly. Chris was representing the Redditch Society.

THE JON BAKER TROPHY

It is time again for you to look back at the editions of Midland Mail published last year and to let the Editor know which article, in your opinion, was the best to be published there. Please let the Editor have your nominations preferably by the date of the March meeting, but definitely by the beginning of April. Possible contenders are: '*Near Smethwick Chapel*', *'Denbigh Hall'* (both in MM148); *'A Railway Journey in 1841', 'A Northampton Receiving House', 'A Newark Conundrum and an Ollerton Discovery, 'MA or MR for March'* (all in MM149); '*The German Pioneers', 'The French Republican Calendar* (both in MM150); *'The First train will be Three Months Early', 'Prison Censorship - Rampton', 'Interesting Recent Finds'* (all in MM151); *'A Worn Birmingham Undated Circle', 'A Daventry Cover'* (Both in MM152). There may be others so do have a good look at last year's issues.

A TRIBUTE TO RON PARSONS, 1919-2007

The Midland (GB) Postal History and the Birmingham Philatelic Society are extremely sorry to announce the death on 15th November of Roland Arthur Parsons, known to the philatelic world as Ron, after a heart attack. Ron, who was 88 years old, started collecting stamps at the age of eight - some eighty years of continuous collecting developing into various specialised fields over the years.

The exact dates when he joined each of the above societies is not known, but his membership of the Birmingham Philatelic Society can be traced back into the 1950s while that of the Midland Postal History Society goes back to the early years of the Society which was founded in 1975. Apart from these two societies , Ron was also a member of the G.B. Philatelic Society and the T.P.O. Society. His interest in T.P.Os - perhaps his main philatelic interest - led him to join other specialist societies such as the Australian and South African which countries of course operated T.P.Os on a large scale. In fact, his philatelic interests included most countries operating these.

His other great interest was undoubtedly Scottish Postal History of which he again built up an excellent collection. Ron was quite active in our two societies up until the time of his wife's, Jean, prolonged illness, and his own illness five years ago. His most recent display we have been able to place a date against is an evening display on '*T.P.Os of the World*' presented to the Birmingham Society in October 1996.

Prior to WWII, Ron was employed in the Post Office, starting in a sorting office and, at the outbreak of war joined the Royal Signals, serving in France, North Africa and Italy. While in Italy, one of his main tasks was erecting telegraph poles, thus maintaining a connection with his post office duties to which he returned after the war. Later he transferred to the Health and Social Security Service at Erdington where he was an inspector up until his retirement.

Jean and Ron celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in 2006, receiving an anniversary card from the Queen, but unfortunately Jean died last year.

Ron remained an active collector right up until his death, having purchased current editions of Stanley Gibbons G.B. and Commonwealth catalogues. He seemed remarkably fit for his age when the writer visited him in October and the news of his sudden death came as a shock. Both Societies were represented at his funeral by Don Keen, David Venables and Eric Lewis.

Our condolences are extended to his two daughters, Ruth and Lorna, their husbands, his four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

EL

THE CHRIS BEAVER 'ARCHIVE'

Before our much-missed member Chris Beaver died, he asked the Society to remove all the contents of his study with a postal history context immediately after his death. He explained, in some detail, what one could expect to find on each shelf and in each drawer of his desk. Having no room in the then Co-ordinating Editor's house to accommodate them, they were moved to a garden shed, which is reasonably dry if not warm or spider-proof.

Our Editor, John, has since removed some of the photocopied pages taken from the Royal Mail Archive and also some of the maps. However, the bulk of the material remains and currently occupies a volume of about 20(w) x 50(l) x 15(d) inches. Most of it comprises photocopies of material from the Archive, both A3 and A4, old philatelic correspondence on a range of subjects and, most importantly, very many manuscript A5 pages – sometimes on the backs of old hymn sheets or Orders of Service – in Chris's inimitable hand.

Much of the material relates to Staffordshire but there are subjects that Chris hoped others in the Society might progress. In particular he had planned to produce comprehensive information about the mailcoaches of Ireland and Scotland, as he had for England and Wales. He also hoped that someone would look at the work of the Riding Surveyors in Ireland. Much of the research is probably present and among those handwritten notes. The relevant photocopies are also likely to be present.

If any member (and particularly one with an interest in the postal history of Staffordshire) could find a proper home for this archive and be prepared, at their own pace, to organize it, they would be providing the Society with a most useful service. There is no doubt the notes are already methodical, because Chris worked that way, and they have been stored, as much as possible, in the order they were in when removed from Chris' study. Anyone who might be able to assist, is asked to contact the Editor or John Calladine.

'THE MILEAGE MARKS AND MAIL ROUTES TO LONDON, 1784-1840' AND A GOLD MEDAL

As reported in MM151, the above book was awarded a Gold Medal at the Ninth New Zealand National Literature Exhibition held in June. We now have a copy of the judging sheet showing the comments and marks awarded in each of the four sections.

TREATMENT OF CONTENTS Comment: Easy to use	35 marks out of 40
ORIGINALITY, SIGNIFICANCE, DEPTH OF RESEARCH Comment: Excellent research and depth	33 marks out of 40
TECHNICAL MATTERS	14 marks out of 15
PRESENTATION Comment: A delightful publication.	5 marks out of 5



THE NOVEMBER MEETING

On 10th November over twenty members met at Dorridge for an afternoon devoted to members' displays on '*A Village in my County*'. Chris Jackson began the proceedings with a look at **Feckenham**. He explained how Feckenham came to have a penny post; in fact it was served from both Stratford-on-Avon and Bromsgrove. Chris showed us the boxed 108 mileage mark and the only recorded copy of a straight line mark. Of particular note were two Ship Letters, one of which came from Philadelphia through Bristol, while the other - charged at the double rate - came from New York through Liverpool. We remained in Worcestershire as Malcolm Allinson produced a lovely display of postcards of **Astwood Bank**. These included views of the church, various chapels, public houses, the post office and several side streets.

Guy Bridges then took us on a short tour of Shropshire with visits to **Ackleton, Acton Burrell** and **Adderley**. We saw UDCs, a number of parcel post labels as well as postcards showing the post office in each of these villages. **Bidford** in Warwickshire was Alan Godfrey's chosen village. Alan explained that Bidford had been part of the Stratford Penny Post and showed us the 'No 3' handstamp used in 1835 and (surprisingly) in 1842, followed by the UDC issued in 1843. In 1909, the name of the village for postal purposes became 'Bidford-on-Avon' and we saw a skeleton of October 1909 covering the change in datestamp. Alan finished by showing a number of parcel post labels.

The Midlands covers a wide area and apparently includes Radnorshire for Sadie Cole took us to **Peny-bont**. We saw the two-line marks of 1792 and 1821 as well as the straight-line mark struck in black and blue inks. Next came the '420' 1844 type of numeral canceller followed by examples of the VOS numeral handstamp used in the 1850s. Sadie finished with strikes of the current counter handstamp.

Colin Fountain produced a range of postcards showing the post office at **Lower Slaughter** in the various buildings that it had occupied up until its closure in 1990. These included buildings such as Vine House, Bridge Cottage and River Cottage. Later, there was time for Colin to show material from Uley, including the straight-line mark (1808), the UDC (1831) and a postcard used in 1909 showing the post office. Still in Gloucestershire, **Painswick** was the next place to be visited. Among the items produced by John Calladine were: the straight-line marks of 1791 and c1802, the boxed 110 mileage mark used in 1803, the mileage erased mark, an undated Painswick Penny Post item, letters carried in the penny post of Cirencester, and, finally, a skeleton used in June 1907.

Then, we moved on to Nottinghamshire, firstly to **Ollerton** which Mick Gill described as a "sizeable village". Mick outlined the early posts to Ollerton and went on to say that the first post office had been in the Hop-Pole Hotel. An invoice from there gave the cost of dinner as 2/6 while stabling for the horses was 15/-. Mick then showed us the straight-line marks of 1797 and 1800, the boxed mileage mark used in 1801 which was followed by a number of mileage marks showing distances of 134 miles and, latterly, 137 miles. Later, there was time for Mick to display strikes of the UDC, a twopenny blue cover of 20th July 1840 struck with an Ollerton traveller in green ink, and a cover of 1843 carrying two twopenny blues and struck with the single-arc datestamp. Alan Marshall took us first of all to **Retford** from where he showed the mileage mark used in 1804 as well as a redirected letter from Mansfield with the mileage removed mark, and then to **Ruddington**. Of particular note was the earliest and latest recorded dates of a skeleton used in 1905.

John Soer displayed a range of material from **Mountsorrel** in Leicestershire. he began with the boxed 97 (the distance from Leicester to London) mileage mark, went on to the unusual double circle, the datestamp with twin arcs and a range of twentieth century material.

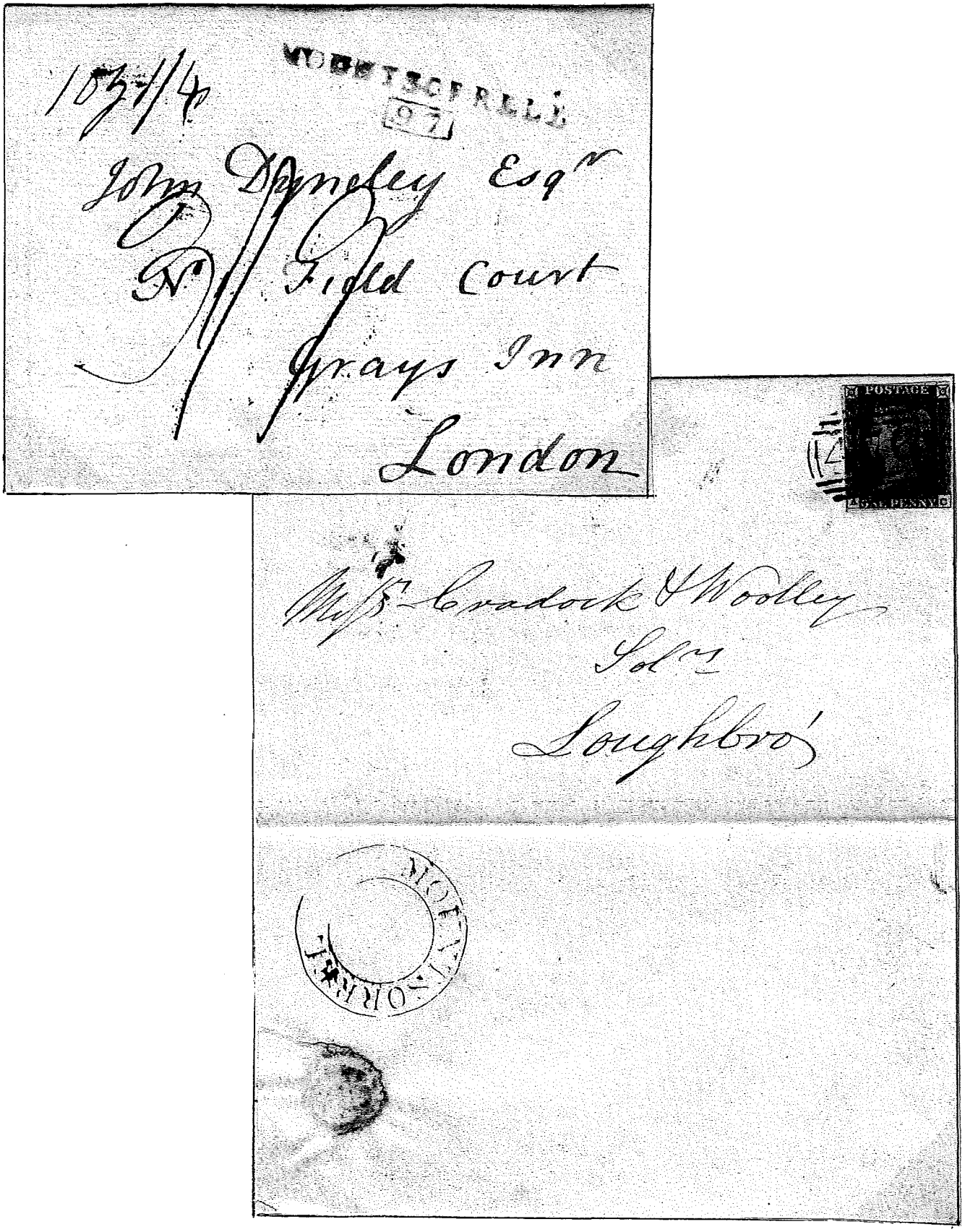
We remained in the East Midlands as John Forster took us to **Braunston** in Northamptonshire from where we saw the straight-line italic handstamp used in 1837, various dated circles, modern SIDs as well as photographs of the post office. Derek Smeathers showed material from **Castle Ashby**, also in Northamptonshire. Derek began with a letter sent in 1673 by the Earl of Northampton to the Earl of Arlington (the PMG). A letter sent to the Earl of Northampton in 1712 was endorsed 'per Ashby bagg'. Derek then showed us two covers (1761 and 1774) struck with the two-line mark, an illegal frank signed by the Earl, a map showing the villages served from Castle Ashby, before finishing with a postcard sent in 1905 showing the post office. Later, there was time for Derek to display material from **Weedon**. The importance of Weedon was that an enormous barracks (Weedon Royal) had been built there in 1805. Among the many items produced by Derek were: the italic '*Weedon*' used in the Daventry Penny Post in 1836, the 'P1' mark used in December 1840, the 'Too Late' and 'Missent to/Weedon', the '851' numeral cancellation, a skeleton with a '5' at the base, duplex marks and parcel post labels.

As on other afternoons devoted to members' displays we had seen a very wide range of excellent material. The very good attendance, filling the room, was gratifying to see.

MOUNTSORREL - TWO ITEMS FROM THE EDITOR'S DISPLAY

The upper cover shows the boxed mileage mark on a letter sent from Sileby in August 1814. Thec mileage of 97 was that of Leicester. The charge of 3s. 9d was that for a letter weighing 1¼ ounces carried a distance from 80 to 120 miles.

The lower item shows the unusual and undated double-circle issued in May 1837 shortly after Mountsorrel had been made an official sub-office. The cover of August 1845 also shows the '**476**' numeral cancellation of Mountsorrel.



THE DECEMBER MEETING

Despite the appalling weather, there was a very good attendance and convivial atmosphere at the Coors' Visitor centre on 8th December. The morning was taken up by members' standing displays on '*Post Boxes*'. A fascinating range of material from postcards to china models was on view.

After an excellent lunch, our guest speaker, Avice Harms, gave a talk on '*The History of the Post Box*'. Avice began by asks the audience for descriptions of a letter box, before going on to outline the history of the posts in this country. The main part of Avice's talk consisted of a slide-show illustrating the development of the letter box. Even if I had been able to make notes fast enough, it would not be possible in the space available to give details of every slide so I will merely pick out the main themes of the presentation.

As is well known, the first roadside letter boxes were erected in the Channel Islands in 1852. However, one of the earliest surviving boxes erected on the British mainland, and dating from 1853, is to be found near Holwell in Dorset. In November 2004, the Post Office wanted to remove this box but a vigorous campaign led to its remaining in situ.

A rather ugly type of box was installed in London in 1855. The year 1856 saw the introduction of pillar boxes in the form of a fluted column. Some of these, with a crown on the top were over eight feet high. At the same time the design was altered to incorporate the collection plate, the royal cypher and the words 'Post Office'. In the following year the horizontal aperture, rather than a vertical one, became standard. The first national standard pillar box was introduced in 1859 and was produced in two sizes. However, the postmaster of Liverpool complained that even the larger box was not big enough, so an even larger box, with a crown on the top, was manufactured for that city.

In 1865, the distinctive 'Penfold' box with its hexagonal shape was introduced. We saw slides of a number of different examples including a blue one in the Railway Museum at York. However, the plain cylindrical box became the standard from 1879. Those produced up to 1887 do not carry the royal cypher - the so called 'anonymous boxes'. By 1883 a lower aperture had become standard. Other than the boxes with two apertures there was little change to the design until the introduction of the square box in 1968.

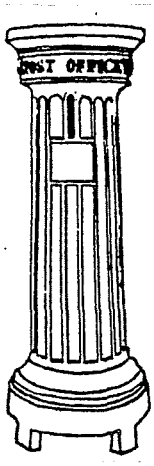
Avice then went on to show examples of the royal ciphers some of which were very ornate. The next section consisted of slides of different apertures of which there were a surprisingly high number. One had an upper hinged flap.

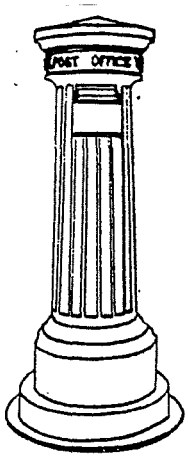
After the pillar boxes came a series of slides on the development of wall boxes. Of particular note here was one box which had the 'EVIIR' cypher at the top but 'GVR' on the door. We saw slides of a very wide range of Ludlow boxes including some with the 'EVIIIR' cypher.

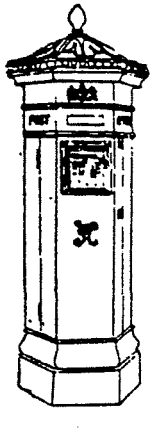
Next, came slides on lamp boxes - those for putting on posts. We saw examples from most reigns as well as those made of wood. On one example was a collection plate with the words 'According to the Tide'. Finally, Avice showed us slides of boxes with a variety of stamp machines attached to them.

In addition to the slide-show Avice displayed a large number of models, collection plates and letter boxes in the form of candles, money boxes, sweet tins and even a tea caddy.

In his vote of thanks John Calladine said that we had all learned something new that afternoon and that we were very appreciative that Avice's infectious enthusiasm had made it such an enjoyable afternoon.







MORE LETTER BOXES

The photograph on the upper left was taken in the porch of the post office at Goadby Marwood, Leicestershire (the picture on the upper right) in July 1990. The plate on the door reads:

LETTERS
WHICH CONTAIN COIN, IF POSTED AS
ORDINARY LETTERS BE CHARGED ON DELIVERY
WITH A DOUBLE REGISTRATION FEE (OF)?
EIGHTPENCE

The registration fee was fourpence from 1st May 1949 to 30th April 1952. (I discount the period from August 1862 to December 1877.) There was a post office on that site from 1931 if not earlier. I doubt that the box is still there for the office closed in January 2001.

The picture at the bottom shows the post office at Fleckney in August 1992 with its Ludlow type letter box.







THE LOCAL POSTS OF THE MIDLAND COUNTIES TO 1840

In 1993, the Society published its book on the local posts. At the time of its preparation, we had no Oxfordshire County Editor, nor any member known to collect the postal history of the county, and consequently the local posts of Oxfordshire were not included.

There is no immediate prospect of a 2nd edition of the book being published, the priority being production of a 'Midland Counties British County Catalogue'. However, we were able to obtain photocopies of all known minutes relevant to the Oxfordshire local posts from the Royal Mail Archive, before such copying was restricted, and it is now possible to create what is effectively the missing section of the book. There have already been one or two items in 'Midland Mail' about local posts in Oxfordshire but obviously no comprehensive picture.

Since the local posts book was published, the world has moved on. At that time, the text was prepared on a typewriter and the many sketch maps drawn for us by Richard Farman on a National Coal Board computer-aided system that is no longer available to us. It does, however, seem preferable to retain the style of the original, until such time as the whole book is re-vamped, so that the pages may be photocopied, if desired, and added to the original book.

We therefore begin, in this issue of 'Midland Mail', with an introduction to the local posts of the county of Oxfordshire and, in subsequent issues over the next two years, we shall describe each local post in turn and illustrate the postal markings associated with it. There is an urgent need to obtain more usage information for the various penny post marks. If you have any Oxfordshire material, or know someone outside the Society who collects the county, will you please forward any usage information you can glean. It can be sent either to John Calladine (john.calladine@mac.com or 01249-758148) or to the County Editor, Martin Scroggs. Please help if you can.

WINTERS AS THEY USED TO BE

I hope that the above title is not tempting fate. The postcard below shows the post office at Thorpe Satchville, Leicestershire. The premises shown are those of Harry Denny, a grocer, who was the postmaster from about 1927 to 1961. I do wonder if it dates from 1947 for the tracks in the snow appear to have been made by motorised vehicles, and there appear to be bus stops on the road on the right - the present B6047 which runs from Market Harborough to Melton Mowbray.



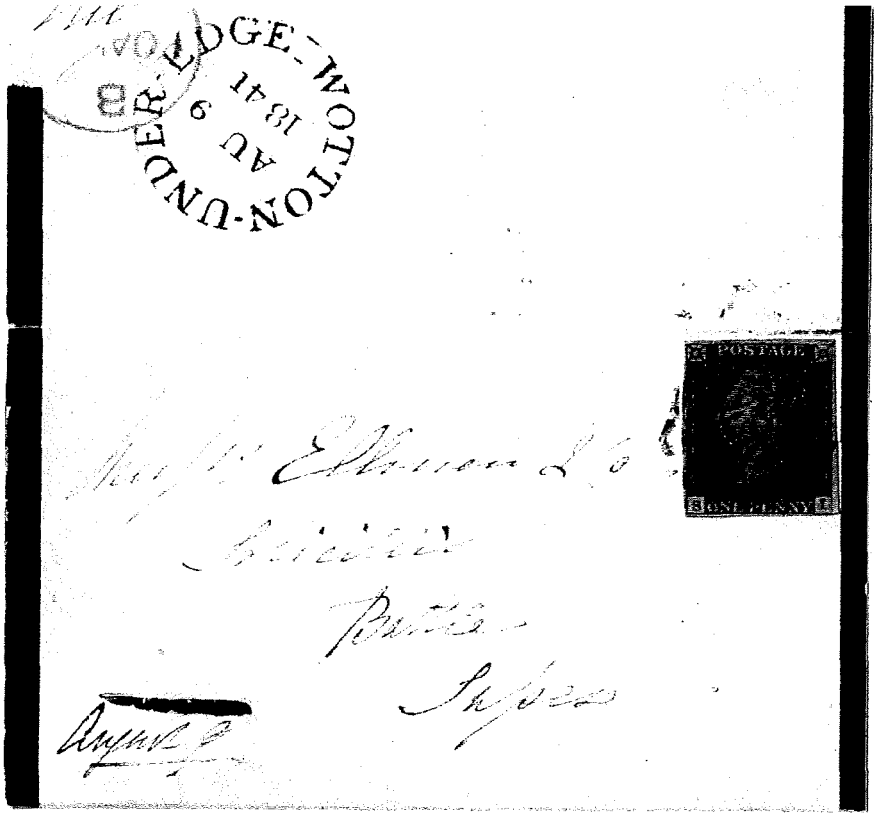
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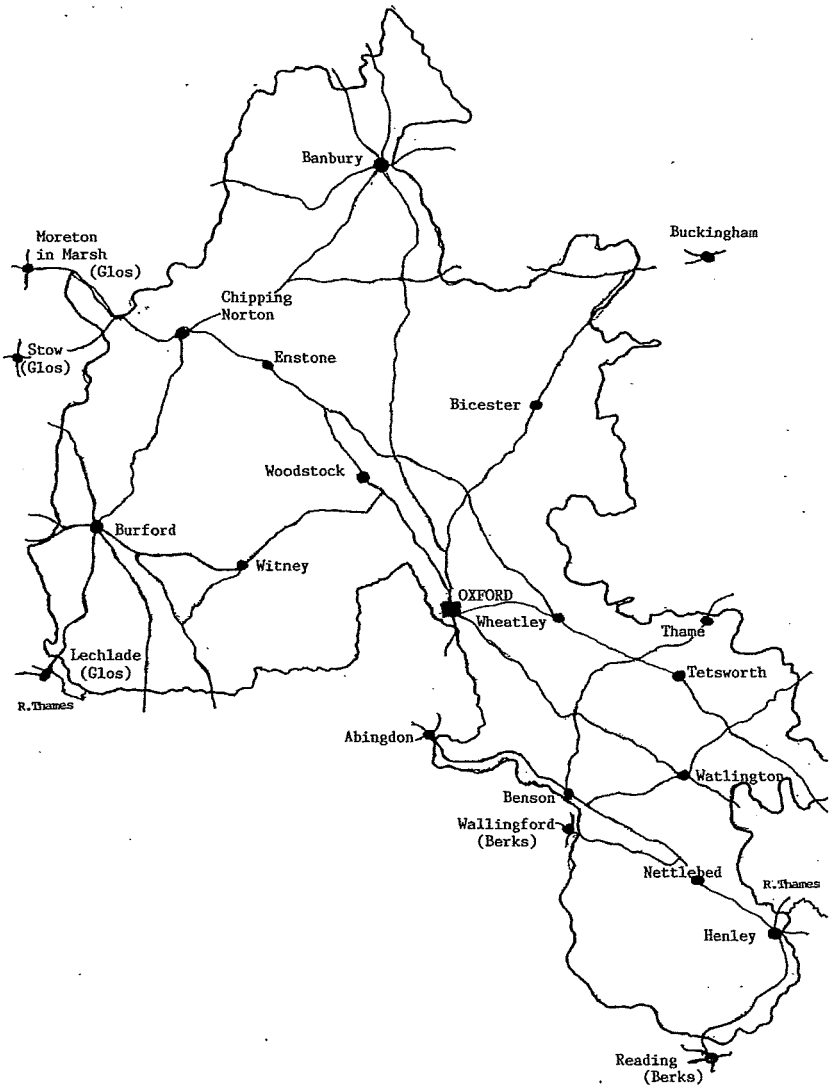
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OXFORDSHIRE

The county of Oxfordshire, almost 50 miles in length and 30 miles wide, is bounded by Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Berkshire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. In the nineteenth century it was chiefly agricultural. Oxford was the only city and 12 towns were described as market towns. The north and west of the county are essentially Cotswold, the east is an area of far horizons and, nowadays, of vast cornfields. The River Thames defines the southern boundary of Oxfordshire, although for an undefined length near and in the city of Oxford, it is known as the Isis. The city of Oxford has a long history. Although the county had been largely ignored by the Romans, the city was founded in the 8th century, when it was known as 'Oxanaforda'. Its noted university, possibly established in 1096, was certainly in existence by 1214.



In 1830, Oxford had a population of about 160,000 and Banbury, the second town, a population of little more than 7000. Agriculture provided most of the employment until 20th century and the county was part of the Cotswold wool trade from 13th century. Although the major postal route from London to Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire passed through the county, there were more than 50 villages with the potential to be served by local posts. (It is not surprising that one of the earliest 5th Clause Posts was established in Oxfordshire.) Among the mailcoaches routed through Oxfordshire were the Gloucester and Worcester Mails, via Henley and Oxford, and, at various dates, the Holyhead Mail, via Oxford, and the Birmingham Mail via Banbury and Bicester.

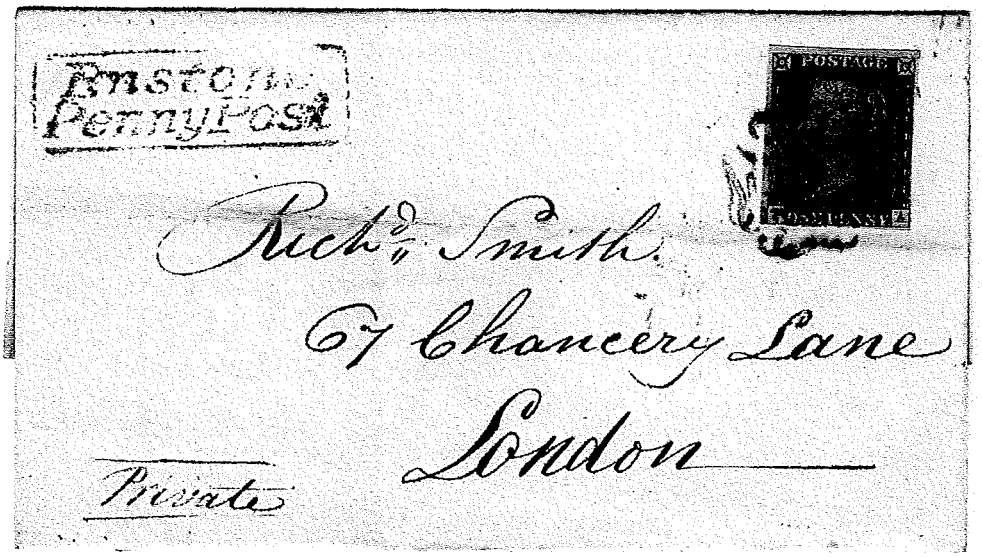
There were undoubtedly a number of unofficial local postmaster's posts in the later part of the 18th century. Where there is knowledge or evidence of these, they are discussed under each relevant town. The local posts are covered in the order of their establishment. They are as follows:

1. Nettlebed 5th Clause Post (1801)
2. Tetsworth 5th Clause and Penny Posts (1802)
3. Enstone Penny Post (1810)
4. Witney Penny Post (1818)
5. Banbury Penny and 5th Clause Posts (1822)
6. Woodstock 5th Clause and Penny Posts (1826)
7. Oxford Penny Post (1829)
8. Chipping Norton Penny Post (1835)
9. Benson Penny Post (1837)
10. Henley Penny Post (1838)
11. Thame Penny Post (1838)

Penny Posts into Oxfordshire from without:

12. Reading (Berks) Penny Post (1811)
13. Wallingford (Berks) Penny Post (1812)

A sketch map will accompany the description of each post, together with illustrations of all the recorded 5th Clause and Penny Post handstamps.



POSTAL HISTORY OF THE WORLD
BILL PIPE

THE MAGPIE

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MIDLAND POST OFFICES OPENED OR CLOSED DURING 2007

by Ken Smith

BIRMINGHAM		
Bourn brook (TSO)	closed 6/9/2007	
DERBYSHIRE		
Ambergate, Belper	closed 30/5/2007	
Ridgeway, Sheffield	closed 3/5/2007	
Stanton-in-Peak, Matlock	re-opened 12/4/2007	
Tansley, Matlock	closed 24/4/2007	
Turnditch , Belper	closed 29/5/2007	
GLOUCESTERSHIRE		
Down Ampney, Cirencester	closed 9/8/2007	Village Hall burned down. Reopened 25/10
Redbrook, Monmouth	reopened 11/6/2007	Had closed at Village Hall 18/10/2005
Edinburgh Place (TSO), Cheltenham	closed 3/8/2007	
HEREFORDSHIRE		
Bartestree, Hereford	closed 12/6/2007	
Colwall, Malvern	closed 20/6/2007	
Hope-under-Dinmore, Leominster	closed 24/1/2007	
Brampton Road (TSO), Hereford	closed 23/7/2007	
LEICESTERSHIRE		
Normanton-le-Heath, Coalville	closed 30/1/2007	
Willoughby Waterleys, Leicester	closed 22/2/2007	
Beaumont Leys (TSO), Leicester	closed 13/2/2007	
LEICESTER (Bishop Street)	relocated to W.H. Smith 8/11/2007	
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE		
Pitsford, Northampton	closed 5/1/2007	
Rushden	reopened 22/7/2007	Had closed temporarily 10/6/2007
Weldon, Corby	closed 5/1/2007	
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE		
East Markham, Newark	reopened 30/5/2007	
Walkeringham, Doncaster	closed 31/7/2007	
Burton Road (TSO), Nottingham	closed 3/3/2007	
OXFORDSHIRE		
Bletchington, Oxford	closed 5/1/2007	
Hambleden, Henley-on-Thames	closed by 9/9/2007	In Buckinghamshire
Milcombe, Banbury	closed 31/1/2007	
Rose Hill (TSO), Oxford	closed 19/3/2007	
RUTLAND		
Langham, Oakham	reopened 27/3/2007	In Village Hall. Had closed 26/10/2006
SHROPSHIRE		
Bicton Heath, Shrewsbury	closed 22/6/2007	
Gobowen, Oswestry	reopened 7/9/2007	Had closed 17/5/2006
Leegomery, Telford	closed 5/1/2007	
Middleton Scriven, Bridgnorth	closed 1/10/2007	
Trefonen, Oswestry	reopened 16/7/2007	Had closed 24/8/2006
Upton Magna, Shrewsbury	closed 2/3/2007	
Yockleton, Shrewsbury	reopened 2/4/2007	Had closed 6/6/2006

STAFFORDSHIRE

Elford, Tamworth	reopened 13/2/2007	In Village Hall c/o Kings Bromley PO
Pool Fold, Stoke-on-Trent	closed 1/5/2007	
Wood Lane, Stoke-on-Trent	reopened 2/7/2007	In Community Centre. Had closed 15/11/2005
Dale Hall (TSO), Stoke-on-Trent	closed 4/5/2007	
East Fenton (TSO), Stoke-on-Trent	closed 22/6/2007	
Hanley B.O., Stoke-on-Trent	relocated on 11/10/2007 to W.H. Smith	

WARWICKSHIRE

Pailton, Rugby	closed 26/10/2007	Armed robbery

WORCESTERSHIRE

Blackwell, Bromsgrove	closed 9/5/2007	
Clifton-on-Teme, Worcester	closed 3/7/2007	Reopened/relocated 10/9/2007

I have checked all of the above on the P.O. website , and all the offices reported as closed have been deleted while all the reopening have been added. However, there are several offices which have been reported as closing during November and December which are still shown on the website. I have therefore played safe, and omitted them from the list. They are:

Drews Lane (TSO), Birmingham	closed 5/11/2007
West Boulevard (TSO), Birmingham	closed 10/10/2007
Apperknowle, Sheffield (in Derbys)	closed 11/10/2007
Marston Montgomery, Ashbourne	closed 12/10/2007
Minsterworth, Gloucester	closed 8/10/2007
Badby, Daventry	closed 11/10/2007
Sneinton Boulevard (TSO), Nottingham	closed 14/11/2007
Cleobury North, Bridgnorth	closed 19/11/2007
Norton, Shifnal	closed 29/10/2007
West Felton, Oswestry	closed 29/9/2007
Acton Trussell, Stafford	closed 23/10/2007

PATTISHALL P.O.W. CAMP - AN EPILOGUE

by Derek Smeathers

Those who were at the meeting in Warwick in October may remember the display I gave on the concentration camp at Pattishall. Time was pressing, and the Chairman had asked us to be brief, so I did not go on to tell the story of what came after the camp had closed - which was in November 1919. Collectors of P.O.W. mail have probably seen the excellent new book by Graham Mark published by the Postal History Society which devotes several pages to Pattishall. I hope I may be forgiven for offering a few more words and pictures to expand the final paragraph of Graham's article on this camp.

Eastcote House itself had been part of the camp, but after 1919 it was returned to its owners. The grounds, more than sixty acres, had been covered with wooden huts which housed several thousand prisoners, with a hospital, recreation rooms and a large dining room. This latter building (shown on a postcard, fig. 1) seems to have been a type of prefabricated construction of huge dimensions. When the remainder of the huts, property and equipment went on sale in 1920, this building was bought by Northampton Corporation and re-erected near to the large Abington Park in Wellingborough Road. Here, it and the area of parkland nearby were used for public entertainment, exhibitions and, particularly, dancing. The building was called the Palais-de-Dance and rivalled the facilities at Franklins Gardens at the opposite end of the town Bassett-Lowke erected a narrow gauge railway in the park to give public rides, and the Palais housed several exhibitions. One such was open for two weeks in 1924, with 'courts' representing wonderful things from around the world (taking its cue from London's British Empire Exhibition). It was called "EAST AND WEST" with many 'wonders', from a Chinese bible cut to ribbons in the Boxer Rebellion to an authentic Bedouin tent. As far as I know, there were no special posting facilities, but a coloured advertising label is known (fig. 2) used in the weeks leading up to the opening on 14th May 1924.

About a year later, the Palais closed and was bought by Henry Butcher who converted into a motor garage and salesroom. The business prospered, and he sold it in 1930, complete with the building of the old POW dining hall (fig. 3) twenty-three years later he repurchased it with a view to an expansion of his motor business. A new brick building was put up in 1956, and with its completion, the old pre-fab was demolished - not quite the fairy-tale ending to an 'international' building.

fig. 1

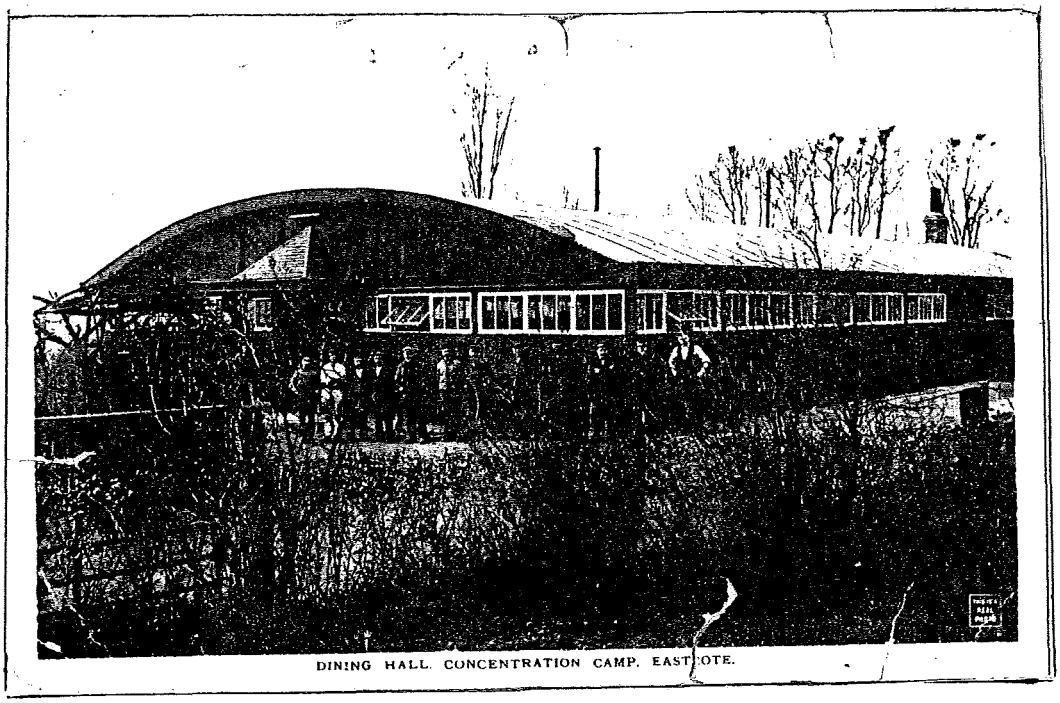


fig. 2

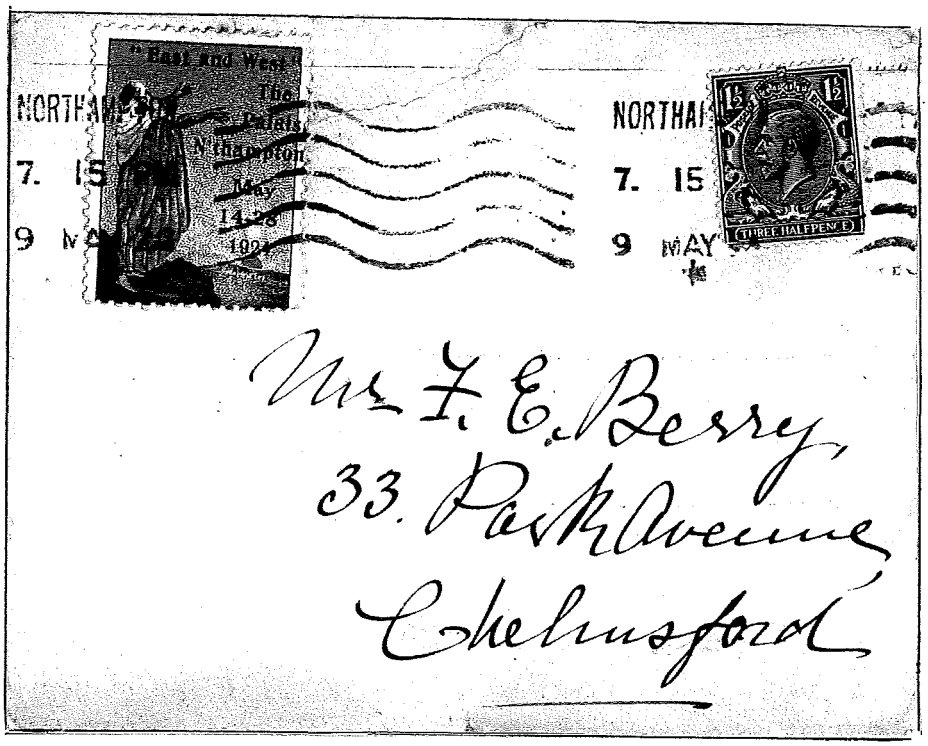
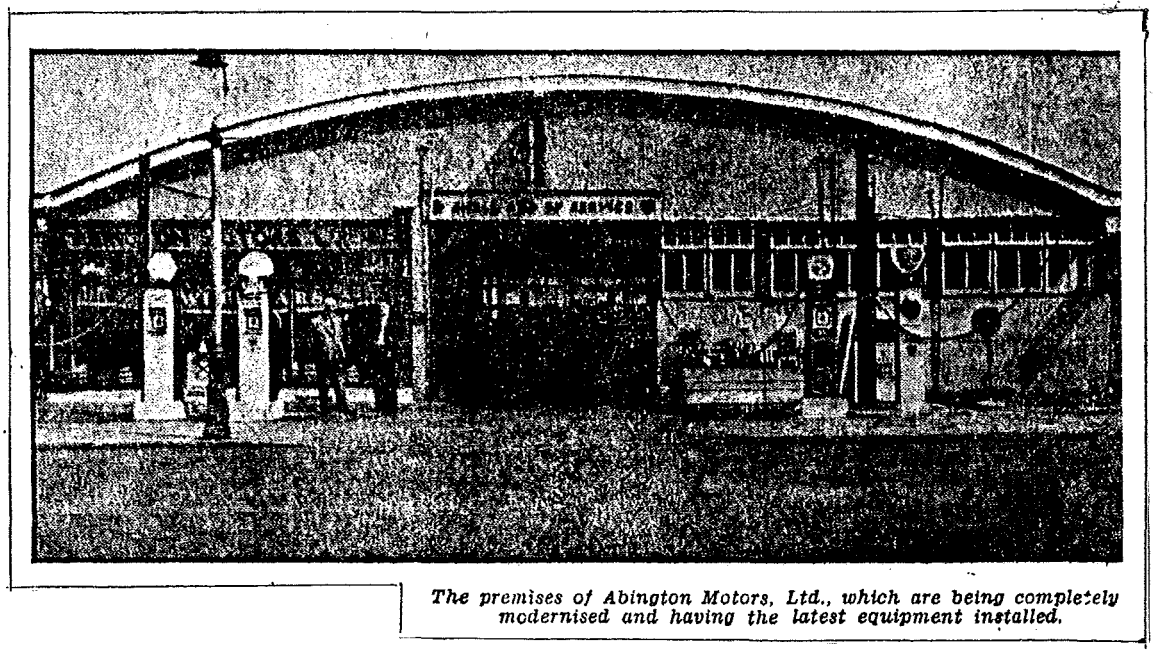


fig. 3



The premises of Abington Motors, Ltd., which are being completely modernised and having the latest equipment installed.

FROM THE BEAVER ARCHIVE - MAIL SENT BY CIRCUITOUS ROUTES

What follows is extracted from a document in Post 96/20, Part 1 dated 10th March 1791 and titled ' *Not passing through London -nA list of a few places with rates of postage as they are compared with what they would be, were the letters not sent circuitously.* ' Freeling, who at the time was the Resident Surveyor, adds the comment 'Many more might be adduced - the major part of the above is where the increase is 2d and 3d. The instances where the increase is 1d. only are too numerous to be mentioned." It does seem that, after about the first thirty entries, Freeling gave up calculating the distance the letters were carried

PLACES	NUMBER OF MILES SENT	REAL DISTANCE	PRESENT RATE	RATE ACCORD[G] TO DISTANCE
Cardiff to Hereford	100	55	5d	4d
Ludlow to Leominster	73	11	4d	2d
Ludlow to Presteigne	87	24	5d	3d
Ludlow to Kidderminster	50	22	4d	3d
Hereford to Swansea	134	64	5d	4d
Cirencester to Burford	54	17	4d	2d
Cirencester to Northleach	44	13	4d	2d
Cirencester to Cheltenham	35	18	4d	2d
Faringdon to Burford	34	13	4d	2d
Banbury to Warwick	59	19	4d	2d
Coventry to Banbury	92	27	5d	3d
Stratford-on-Avon to Evesham	41	18	4d	2d
Bridgnorth to Bewdley	50	16	4d	2d
Bridgnorth to Kidderminster	47	14	4d	2d
Bridgnorth to Shrewsbury	48	20	4d	2d
Bridgnorth to Ludlow	90	19	5d	2d
Shrewsbury to Bishops Castle	104	21	5d	2d
Shrewsbury to Stafford	54	33	4d	3d
Shrewsbury to Nantwich	80	31	5d	3d
Shrewsbury to Bewdley	70	36	4d	3d
Nantwich to Stone	37	21	4d	2d
Whitchurch to (Market) Drayton		12	4d	2d
Stafford to Newport		15	4d	2d
Newcastle to Nantwich		16	4d	2d
Newcastle to Leek		10	4d	2d
Leek to Cheadle		10	4d	2d
Coventry to Lutterworth		16	4d	2d
Coventry to Nuneaton		8	4d	2d
Coventry to Hinckley		10	4d	2d
Hinckley to Leicester		14	4d	2d
Coventry to Atherstone		13	4d	2d
Northampton to Stoney Stratford		15	4d	2d
Leicester to Uppingham		19	4d	2d
Market Harborough to Rockingham		10	4d	2d
Leicester to Oakham		14	4d	2d
Warwick to Northampton		31	5d	3d
Chesterfield to Bakewell		12	4d	2d
Sheffield to Bakewell		17	4d	2d

In 1791 the rates for a single letter were:

2d - not exceeding one post stage
3d - not exceeding two post stages
4d - above two post stages up to 80 miles
5d - 80 to 150 miles.

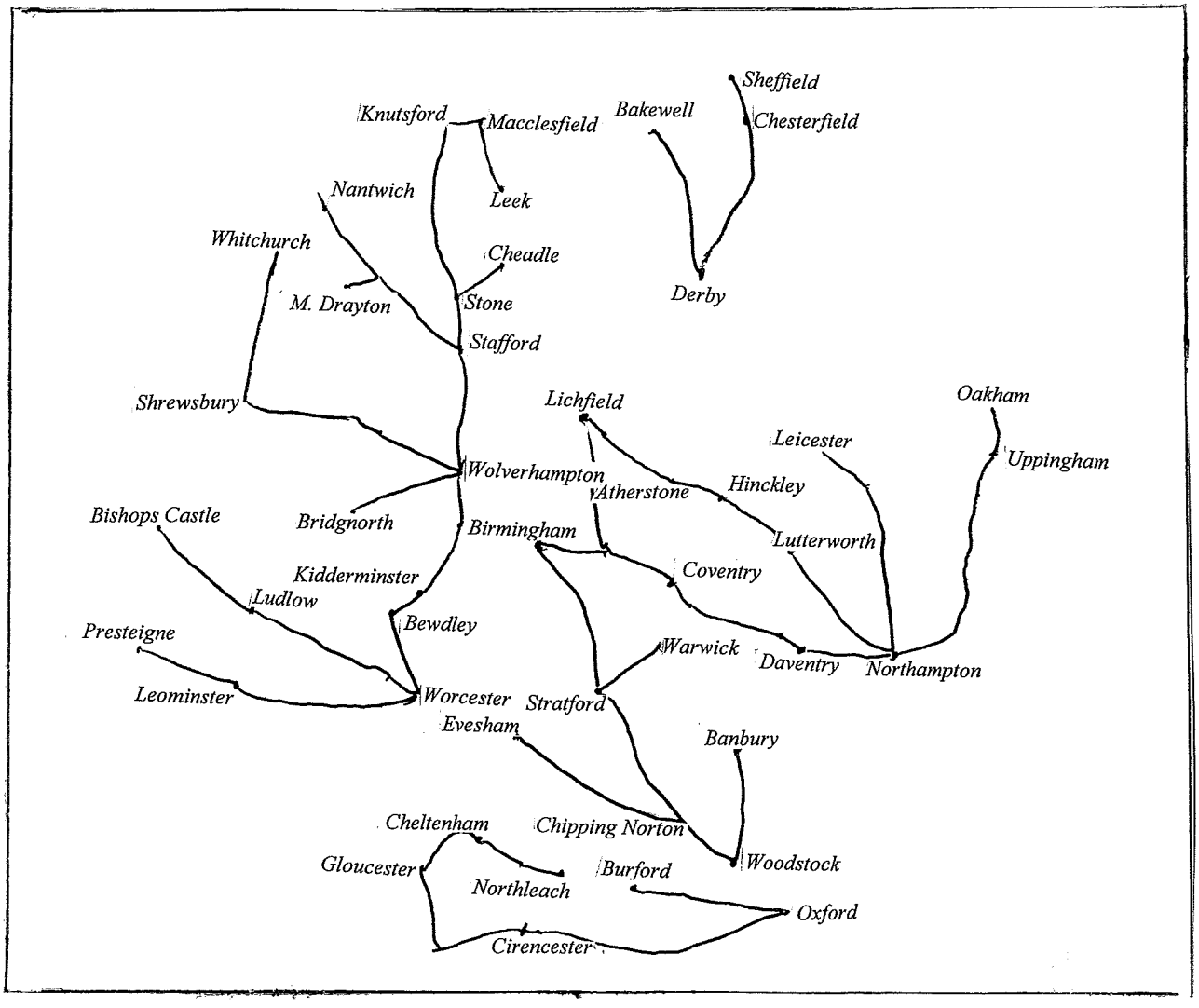
I hesitate in trying to interpret some of this data, particularly as there is no circulation map of 1791 available to my knowledge, and I am certainly no expert on the postal history of the West Midlands. So if there are any errors in what follows I will be delighted to publish a correction in the next issue.

The large differences between the number of miles carried and the shortest distance in the case of mail sent from Ludlow to Leominster and Presteigne was caused by the fact that the mail was initially sent eastwards to Worcester. As regards mails from Bridgnorth to Bewdley, Kidderminster, Shrewsbury and Ludlow, these would have gone via Wolverhampton, and for Ludlow through Worcester too. Similarly, mails from Shrewsbury to the places listed would have been dispatched via Wolverhampton. Surely, Whitchurch to Market Drayton would have involved a journey through Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton and Stafford - giving a distance a little over eighty miles.

Letters from Cirencester to Burford would have gone eastwards to Oxford, as would those from Faringdon, while those for Northleach and Cheltenham would have gone westwards to Minchinhampton and then to Gloucester.

A distance of 92 miles from Coventry to Banbury must surely have entailed a route through Birmingham, Stratford, Chipping Norton and Woodstock. The route from Stratford-on-Avon to Evesham could also have been via Chipping Norton, though via Worcester is a possibility. A distance of over eighty miles from Warwick to Northampton is difficult to explain. Did it involve a route through Stratford-on-Avon, Birmingham and Daventry. Letters from Coventry to places such as Hinckley would have gone via Lichfield.

Letters from Leicester to Uppingham and Oakham were sent through Northampton and Kettering. Those from Leicester to Hinckley also went through Northampton.



FROM THE BEAVER ARCHIVE
- BIRMINGHAM ALLOWANCES

Post 9/132 contains details of the annual allowances for sub-deputys, penny post receivers, messengers etc paid to the postmaster/postmistress at each post town. The period covers seems to be from about 1838 to about 1845. In some instances the sum paid is crossed out, indicating that the payment had ceased. I have indicated where this is the case with an asterisk *.

Birmingham

Mail Cart to & from Sutton Coldfield	£80.*	
Mail Cart to & from Stratford-on-Avon - 23 miles	£200*	
Daily Mail Cart to & from Leamington - 24 miles	£220	
Daily foot messenger to & from Halesowen - 8 miles	£46.16.00*	
Daily Mail Cart to & from Tamworth - 16 miles	£144	
Daily foot messenger to & from Great Barr	£36.10.00	
Messenger to & from Kings Norton 18/- per week	£46.18.07	
Daily Horse Post to & from Dudley thro' Old bury - 8 miles	£80.	
Daily p.p. messenger to Castle Bromwich - 6 miles	£41.12.00*	
(Castle Bromwich crossed out and replaced by Minworth)	£46.16.00	
Daily Ride between Dudley and Kingswinford	£40	
Northfield p.p. receiver	£10	
Northfield for forwarding Bags to and from Kings Norton	£5*	
Brierley Hill p.p. receiver	£25*	became £30
Tipton p.p. receiver including delivery	£57.06.06*	
Kings Norton p.p. receiver	£10	
Halesowen sub deputy	£15	
Halesowen letter carrier	£5	
Great Barr p.p. receiver	£10	
Knowle sub deputy	£10	
Knowle for delivery	£5	
Elmdon p.p. receiver	£10	
Sutton Coldfield p.p. receiver	£20	
Curdworth p.p. receiver	310	
Oldbury p.p. receiver including delivery	£20	
Oldbury for free delivery (loss of perquisites)	£8	
Handsworth p.p. receiver - including delivery*	£36.10.00*	became £15
Edgbaston p.p. receiver	£10.08.00*	became £15
Edgbaston Letter Carrier	£26	
Edgbaston Second Letter Carrier	£26.16.00	
Smethwick p.p. receiver	£12	
Smethwick Letter Carrier	£8*	became £14
Erdington p.p. receiver	£10	
Erdington p.p. receiver for free delivery	£8	
Shirley p.p. receiver including free delivery	£10	
Castle Bromwich p.p. receiver	£10	
Sand Pitts Receiver	£6	
Handsworth Letter Carrier	£31.05.08	
Duddleston Street Receiving House	£6	
Duddleston Street Receiving House for taking the bag to the Post Office	£6	
6 Receivers in Birmingham. £6 each	£36	
Second daily collection of the R. H. Letter bags by the L. Carrier in time for Night Mail	£28	
11 Letter Carriers. Total Allowance	£567.17.04	
2 Letter Carriers £4 each for collecting letters from four of the Receiving Houses	£8	
2 Additional Letter Carriers to effect a Midday Delivery	£104.05.08	
1 Extra District Letter Carrier	£52.03.00	
4 Additional Letter Carriers £52.3 each	£208.12.00	
1 Stamper	£57.07.00	
Daily Foot Messenger to & from Elmdon	£36.10	

1st Clerk	£140*	became £160
2nd Clerk	£110*	became £130
3rd Clerk	£90*	became £100
4th Clerk	£90*	became £100
5th Clerk	£80*	became £90
6th Clerk	£80*	became £90
7th Clerk	£70*	became £80
8th Clerk	£70*	became £80
9th Clerk	£60*	became £70
Additional Clerk	£60*	became £70
Additional Clerk	£60	
3 Additional Clerks	£180	
3 Additional Clerks	£180	
Messenger to assist in the Office	£57.07.07	
Salary (present Deputy)	£400	became £500
Rent	£112.10.00	
Coals & Candles	£20	
Gas	£75	
Stationery etc.	£45	
Servant	£12	
3 Additional Clerks £60 each	£180	
2 Additional Clerks	£120	
1 Additional Clerk	£60	
5 Additional Clerks £60 each	£300	

The following is taken from Wrightson & Webb, Directory Of Birmingham 1839, but evidently prepared in 1838.

POST OFFICE, BENNETT'S HILL.

The Letter Box closes at 10 in the evening for the dispatch of the London and Bristol Mails, and half an hour previous to the departure of any of the other Mails. The Delivery at the Office Window commences at 7 in the morning, with the Letters brought by the Mails from London, Bristol, Leamington, Tamworth, Stourport, Worcester, Holyhead, Sheffield, and Third Railway. Letters brought by the other Mails are ready for delivery in 30 minutes after their arrival, until 10 in the evening, at which period the Delivery Window is closed. The Paid-letter Window is open until 11. There are two General Deliveries, by Letter Carriers, throughout the town; the first commencing at 8 in the morn., and the second at 4 after 5 in the even., except on Sundays, when there is no afternoon delivery.

BRISTOL.
Arrives 2 8 A.M., departs 11 30 P.M.—With Bags to and from Falmouth, Exeter, Bath, Bristol, Gloucester, Dursley, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, Wootton, Worcester, Droitwich, Bromsgrove.

LONDON.
Arrives 2 50 A.M., departs 10 50 P.M.—Banbury, Barnet, Buckingham, Coventry, Daventry, Dunchurch, Dunstable, Fenny Stratford, Northampton, Southam, Stony Stratford, St. Alban's, Tring, Towcester, Watford.

LIVERPOOL FIRST RAILWAY.
Arrives 8 10 A.M., departs 2 45 A.M.—Walsall, Wolverhampton, Penkridge, Stafford, Stone, Eccleshall, Newcastle, Preston Brook, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Warrington, Manchester, Liverpool, Dublin (when the Packet reaches Liverpool in time).

CHIPPING NORTON.
Arrives 10 32 A.M., departs 3 0 P.M.—Warwick, Stratford-on-Avon, Shipstone, Oxford, Chipping Norton.

BILSTON (Messenger).
Arrives 12 0 Noon, departs 2 30 P.M.—West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Bilston.

LIVERPOOL SECOND RAILWAY.
Arrives 4 30 P.M., departs 11 15 A.M.—Wolverhampton, Stafford, Warrington, Manchester, Liverpool.

LONDON DAY.
Arrives 4 50 P.M., departs 8 0 A.M.

YARMOUTH.
Arrives 5 2 P.M., departs 7 45 A.M.—Coventry, Grantham, Hinckley, Leicester.

LEAMINGTON.
Arrives 10 0 P.M., departs 5 0 A.M.—Solihull, Warwick, Leamington.

TAMWORTH.
Arrives 10 20 P.M., departs 5 0 A.M.

STOURPORT.
Arrives 10 30 P.M., departs 5 0 A.M.—Dudley, Stourbridge, Bewdley, Kidderminster, Stourport.

WORCESTER.
Arrives 10 30 P.M., departs 5 0 A.M.—Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Worcester.

HOLYHEAD.
Arrives 10 30 P.M., departs 3 30 A.M.—Bangor, Carwen, Chirk, Holyhead, Llangollen, Oswestry, Ruthen, Shiffnall, Shrewsbury, Wellington.

SHEFFIELD.
Arrives 10 30 P.M., departs 3 30 A.M.—Lichfield, Burton, Derby, Nottingham, Wakefield, Sheffield, Chesterfield, Barnsley.

LIVERPOOL THIRD RAILWAY.
Arrives 11 15 P.M., departs 4 30 A.M.

MISCELLANEOUS.
Arrive 7 0 P.M., departs 9 0 A.M.—From Great Barr, Hales Owen, Castle Bromwich, Oldbury, Sutton.

RECEIVING HOUSES FOR GENERAL POST OFFICE.

Mr. W. Hewitt, Grocer, Hagley-row
Mr. E. Gunn, No. 1, Kenyon-street
Mr. W. Drury, No. 30, Lancaster-street
Mr. T. Ash, Druggist, Prospect-row
Mr. T. White, 235, Bristol-street
Miss Davies, Lower-terrace, Sand-pits.
Mrs. Wood, 172, High-street, Deritend

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS

by Alan Marshall

Telegraphic transmission started initially in 1837 and consisted of either dots and dashes on a paper ribbon or a pointer indicating letters on a panel. By the mid 1850s these methods had been superseded by a sounding instrument. The Second Telegraph Act of 1869 gave the Post Office the exclusive privilege of transmitting telegrams within the UK. The telegraphic service thus came under the Post Office in 1870 with a charge of one shilling for twenty words and including free delivery within one mile of any post office. No charge was made for the names and addresses of the sender and recipient.

Given the dates mentioned above, as a matter of interest and challenge, how many members can beat the example of 21st March 1871shown along with its original envelope? (The envelope is dark orange in colour, hence the dark copy.)

No. of Message.....

Charges to pay £.....,.....s.....d.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

Dated Stamp of

STTINGBOURNE MR 21 71

Delivering Office.

Regulation as to Inland Telegrams.

If the Receiver of an Inland Message doubts its accuracy, he may have it repeated on paying half the cost of its transmission to him. In the event of an error having been made, the amount paid for repetition will be refunded on application to the Secretary.

Office of Origin Eastwood. *Handed in at* 11.15 a. M., *Sent out at* .....M.

From J. S. Barber Eastwood

Messrs Percy Lodall and Brown & Wheeler Sale

Words	Charge	
20	1/-	Blackmoor cannot come But Frames two others should not Mottenger be Sent to engage one at once and Sheetent delay.
25	1/3	
30	1/6	
35	1/9	
40	2/-	

When the cost of a reply to a Telegram has been prepaid, and the number of words in the reply is in excess of the prepayment, the sender of the reply must pay for any excess of words over the number so prepaid. The reply must be handed in at the Office from which the original Telegram was delivered.

A prepaid reply to a Message must be handed in within two days from the date of the original Message, or it will be charged for in the ordinary way, but the money prepaid will be returned on application to the Secretary.

Telegrams may be re-directed from town to town at an extra charge of *one-half* the ordinary inland tariff, fractions of threepence being reckoned as twopence, but in such cases they must not have been opened.

N.B.—It will materially assist the Department if, in making any inquiry respecting this Telegram, the Applicant will enclose this form in his Letter. In the case of a Foreign Message, the application should be addressed to the Administration to which the Message was handed in the first instance.

Jas. Truscott & Son, London.

