MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

President: Richard Farman

Chairman: Chris Jackson

Treasurer: Elizabeth Lewis

Secretary: Mel Matthews

Number 137, November 2004

CONGRATULATIONS

Our congratulations to Brian Atkins who was awarded a gold medal for his five-frame entry of Shropshire postal history at the recent Vancouver National Philatelic Exhibition (VANPEX 2004). He also gained the award for the best Brotish Commonwealth exhibit. It is pleasing to see that Brian is flying the flag for Midlands postal history in the far west.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

There is a change of venue for the meeting on **13th November**. Because of problems connected with the insurance of the building, the meeting will not take place at the Scout Hut. Instead, we will meet at **St Germain's Church Hall, Portland Road, Birmingham**, starting at **1.30 p.m.** when Alan Marshall will display "*Nottinghamshire*".

On **11th December** we hold our whole-day Christmas meeting in Burton-on-Trent at the Coors Visitor Centre, formerly the Bass Museum. From 10.30 a.m. there will be standing displays by members on "*My Oldest Material*". Lunch, the cost of which will be about the same as last year, will be at 12.30 p.m. Then, at 2 p.m., Michael Scott Archer will give a display on "*The Post in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth the First*". If you intend to join us for lunch could you please let Richard Farman (tel. 01283 566515) by 4th December.

Our first meeting of 2005 will be on **15th January** at St Germain's when the afternoon will be devoted to members' displays of "*Wartime Mail*".

BLACK COUNTRY MUSEUM

The Black Country Museum intend to replicate a 1920s post office in the museum village. They would welcome input from anyone with knowledge of post offices from that period. In particular, they would be very interested to see any interior shots of sub-offices. Also, anyone who collects Post Office ephemera is invited to take them along to the museum so that they can be scanned to make replicas. The items the Museum are seeking include: telegram forms, gun/dog licences, postal orders, pension books, posters, sheets of stamps, and any other items that might have been found on a post office counter. The museum also wish to acquire items such as a 'Ludlow' type wall box, handstamps and items of uniform such as a summer pattern shako, lapel numerals, good conduct stripes, and jacket with red piping.

If anyone is able to help, could they please contact Stephen Howard at the Black Country Museum, Tipton Road, Dudley DY1 4SQ or or 0121 5579643. Alternatively the e-mail address is info@bclm.co.uk.

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

Our new season began on 18th September at Kington St Michael with a joint meeting with the Somerset and Dorset Postal History Group. It must surely be the first time that this Society has held a meeting in premises where there is a post office. There is a sub-office in the village hall at Kington St Michael. The day began with a standing display of "*Mail by Rail*" by Harold Wilson who, because of illness, could not be with us. However, we do send our very best wishes to Harold.

The title given by John Forbes-Nixon to his display was "*Eclectic Victorian Postal History*". To describe John's display as eclectic is something of an understatement for it was very wide ranging, covering an enormous number of topics. For that reason I am not going to attempt a conventional write up for nothing short of a page describing each single sheet could do justice to John's display. It was a truly fascinating range of postal history which it was a privilege to have seen. What follows is no more than a description of a few items among many that caught your reporter's eye.

Among the first few items shown by John was an envelope in the shape of a fish and sent from Taunton in 1843. On 1st June 1901, the stamps of Queen Victoria were demonetised. A postcard sent on the 31st May with the small halfpenny stamp of Queen Victoria contained the following verse:

"Quaint little label
Still it is able
To carry this card through the post.
But with the next sun
Its course will be run
And its value be that of a ghost."

There then came a number of letters associated with Queen Victoria. These included a letter from Queen Victoria's mother; a letter from Victoria with no stamp and surcharged twopence as she had given up her franking privilege; and examples of the Queen's personal writing paper.

Three sheets were devoted to very small envelopes, one of which was no larger than four penny stamps. There was a Parcel Post label of 1884 from Trescoe in the Isles of Scilly. An enormous "Too Late" from Manchester contrasted with a tiny one from Folkestone. A letter to "Cue Gardens" was endorsed "Try Kew".

There were several items from the time of the Franco-Prussian War. The first showed the effect on mail sent to India which was routed through Brindisi instead of Marseilles, and so was charged 1s 4d rather than 1s 1d. On of the balloons carrying mail from Paris ended up in Norway where the letters were put into the post. We also saw examples of mail carried in "Les Boules" - balls sent down the Seine in the hope they would get past the besieging Prussians. One of these turned up in 1910.

Another section was devoted to mail from the outer islands of Scotland. A letter sent from Westray, in the Orkney Islands, in 1855 had the adhesive cancelled by the obsolete Maltese Cross at Westray. It was also backstamped with the Westray/Penny Post mark.

A letter sent to a Miss Stanley in Cheltenham had the signatures of twenty-eight different postmen who had tried to deliver it. In a section on postcards we saw one posted on the day before the official date of introduction as well as one from the first day of use of the 1¼d.

Finally, a postal history joke which is probably better than most that we will find in the Christmas crackers.

Q What evidence do we have that stamps were not used in the reign of Henry VIII?

A The queen's head was not worth a penny.

After a very good lunch it fell to various members of the two societies to entertain us. John Milliner started the proceedings by showing how the registration fee changed over the years from the initial rate of one shilling which had to be paid in cash. Trevor Radway showed us examples of the "Late Fee" marks of Edinburgh and Glasgow of which the latter are very scarce. A copy of the appropriate Act of Parliament started Tony Osmond's display on the parcel post. We also saw two examples of the first type of label and one of the orange labels used on the London to Brighton parcels service. A piece of sheet music had been covered with brown paper. On the inside of the paper was a parcels label.

Malcolm Allison concentrated on the handstamps of the Uniform Fourpenny Post. Among examples from the Midlands were those of Nottingham, Leominster and Worcester. Adrian Almond showed us examples of Maltese Cross cancellations before producing a number of "Wessex Cancellations", including those of Ashburton, Chumleigh, Newton Abbott and Torrington. A number of items relating to the coronation of Queen Victoria were shown by Eric Lewis as well as a penny black cover on which the obliterator virtually covered the Queen's face. The dealer's description was "Postmarked clear of the corner letters."

Among the skeleton postmarks of the 1840s shown by Mike Welch was a very large framed mark from Wellington. Chard and Bridgewater were other towns represented. Derek Smeathers produced a letter sent in 1786 from Thrapstone to Bristol which concerned the bequests, made by Sir John Elliott in his will, to his four children by four different wives. The bequests were unequal are were probably " ... according to the degree of belief he had of their being his ...".

Elizabeth Lewis produced a number of fascinating items, chief of which was a stamp snake in which the penny stamps had been cut to a circular shape and then charred at the edges to give it a very realistic appearance. A penny black cover with a straight-line mark of Studely on the front was the first item displayed by Chris Jackson who then went on to show us a number of handstruck '2's, including those from Broadway, Bewdley, Bromsgrove and Dudley. Richard Farman showed a superb illustrated letter-sheet, a valentine and a number of early birthday cards. Of particular note in Alan Moore's display were two Mulreadies. One was cancelled with the orange-vermillion Maltese Cross of Bristol; the other was used in 1850 and cancelled with the 104 numeral handstamp. Roger Martin's display also contained a Mulready but this carried the No 7 mark of Pill in the Bristol Penny Post. Roger also showed a cover with three penny blacks.

Our thanks are due to John Calladine for arranging a day of superb postal history as well as a very good lunch.

THE OCTOBER MEETING

On 16th October we met at the premises of Warwick and Warwick and the topic for the afternoon was "*Other Collecting Interests*". Eric Lewis started the proceedings with a varied collection of items of Mauchlin ware with postal connections such as stamp boxes, letter racks and rulers with the postal rates on the back. A range of phone cards, including a complete set from the Falkland Islands was the first part of Alan Godfrey's display. He then went on to show us a range of crested china pillar boxes, including examples from Birmingham, Worcester and Cheltenham. Malcolm Allison started with a look at the early line-engraved stamps of Queen Victoria. There were penny blacks with the corner letters MA from each of the plates and the start of a reconstruction of plate 3 of the two penny blue. Then came a collection of miniatures of single malt whiskeys. As the bottle appeared not to have been opened we had to take Malcolm's word that the bottles did not contain cold tea. Surely, this is a remarkable example of self-discipline.

Derek Smeathers took us to Cumbria, showing postal history from the Whitehaven area. Edwardian postcards of Wolverhampton was Roy Summers chosen interest. John Soer too showed postcards but of Wokingham. Truly esoteric was Paul Bradshaw's display of the postmarks of Japanese TPOs. Most attractive was Mel Matthew's display of art on French stamps, supported by appropriate postcards and concentrating on the French Impressionists. Roger Broomfield remained with postal history - not Herefordshire but mail sent in the period 1861-65 to the lead mines in Lisburn, near Aberystwyth. He traced the route taken , initially through Aberystwyth, then Via Llanidloes and finally Aberystwyth.

Truly stunning was John Calladine's collection of enamelled boxes - the so called Battersea Boxes but which were actually made in Bilston. John told us that there were eighteen firms producing these boxes in Bilston in 1760. David Scott showed us Cartes de Visite , concentrating on those produced by Birmingham photographers. Of particular interest to your editor were envelopes used by John Burton & Son, who had an office in Leicester, to send out their photographs. Photography was also Martin Scrogg's chosen theme, starting with large Victorian photographs of Chipping Norton, going on to postmen on Cartes de Visite, and finishing with Book Post items related to photography.

Richard Farman showed postal history relating to people in prison. Of particular note was a letter of 1599 sent to Walter Bagot, High Sheriff of Staffordshire in which the writer pleaded for his liberty. Eric Lewis produced what appeared to be a medieval instrument of torture, but he assured us it was a 'Stanley 55' moulding plane which was sold with 55 different profile cutters. Chris Jackson ended what had been a fascinating afternoon by showing us a large volume '*Coaching Days of England*' which contained some superb prints.

Our grateful thanks are due to Messrs Warwick & Warwick for allowing us to use their premises.

TOWCESTER ATTORNEYS

by Derek Smeathers

Two letters, recently purchased, have added more than just two extra items for my collection; each is directly connected with letters that have been in my collection for years.

The earliest of them is a letter from solicitor Thomas Grant, on which he has written the date 30th June 1797, although it is transit-marked in London on 3rd July on its way to an attorney in Ludlow. Mr Grant enclosed half a £20 bank note and half a £25 one, saying that he would send the other halves when he has had a reply. I bought this letter at the April auction of the Society. Already in my collection is a letter from William Grant to the same addressee, dated 10th July 1797, saying "*My Father directed me to send you the inclosed half notes if a letter came from you acknowledging the receipt of the other half ...*". So now we know that father and son were at this time in the legal practice together. It is interesting that the father refers to the mutual client as "Miss Newboro", whereas the son, William, calls her "Miss Newborough" - perhaps a case of the older lawyer using a more familiar phrasing?

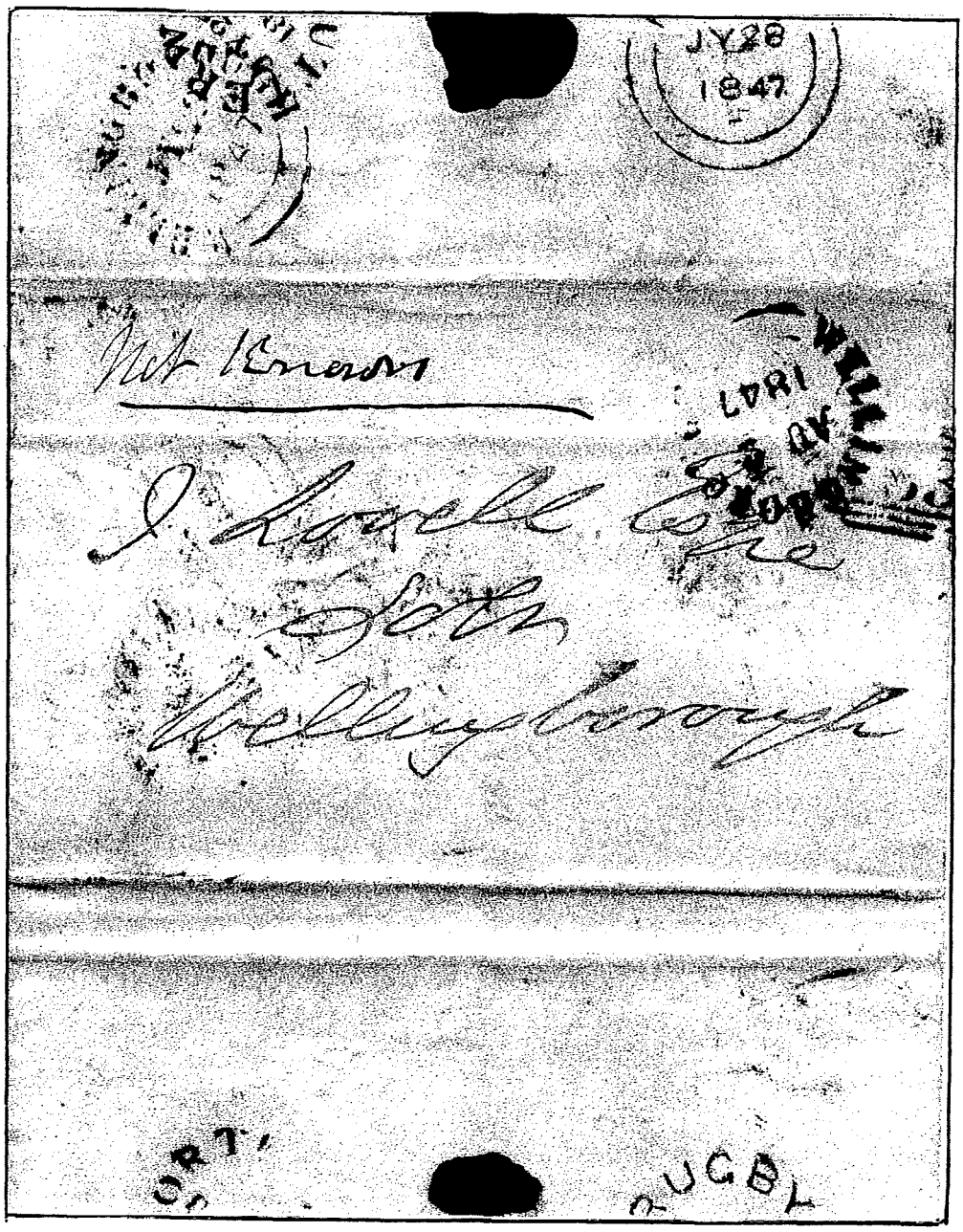
Each of these letters was charged 6d at Towcester (the rate to London). This was the single rate for "exceeding 60 miles up to 100 miles" of the Act of 1796. Towcester's first mileage stamp showed **61**, but in 1798, Carey's First Edition confirmed the distance as 60 miles 5 furlongs which would have resulted in a charge of 5d. The second Towcester mileage mark was in use by 1802 and showed **60**, but by then the correct charge for 60 miles had gone up to 6d anyway.

In London the 6d charge was deleted from each letter; the first was then seen to be a Double Letter and endorsed 1/ 2 (Ludlow was 142 miles from London) but then it was realised the whole journey of 202 miles was to be charged for, and the endorsement was changed to 1/ 4. In contrast, the later letter was not recognised as having enclosures and was merely charged 8d Single.

Another attorney, John Lovell, set up in Towcester soon after the Grant's practice had ended in 1812. For many years I have had a letter dated 28th July 1847 sent from Lutterworth addressed to "*John, Lovell Solr Wellingborough*" and carried by railway between Rugby and Wellingborough via Blisworth. The letter makes an appointment for the writer (Mr Fox) to receive Mr Lovell at his Lutterworth office on Thursday the 5th August. It is interesting because the letter could not be delivered and is endorsed "*Not Known*". The penny red adhesive has been removed and the Wellingborough double arc of 2nd August has been struck in its place. Why?? There is nothing to indicate that the letter was actually returned to the sender, but surely it was.

Last year, I acquired a letter dated 3rd August and written by John Lovell at Towcester to Fox in Lutterworth. He begins "*Your letter of yesterday's date is the <u>first intimation</u> I ever had of your appointment, for your letter of 28 ult. (of which you have sent me a copy) I assure you never came to me.*" Can we deduce why? Did Fox get his letter back but did not wish to admit his own mistake?

Lovell goes on to say "*... even at this short notice I would if I could attend your appointment, but regret that I am prevented from doing so by the great exertions I shall have to make in the approaching Election for the Southern Division of Northamptonshire - I therefore beg to propose attending you next Thursday week to settle, and will write to my Client to make the appointment.*" Perhaps when the two men did finally meet they discussed what happened to the missing letter. Fox would show Lovell the returned letter (do you think?) or would they tut-tut about the Post Office losing their letters. Maybe Mr Fox was well-named.



Removed adhesive had been cancelled 483 (Lutterworth)

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STANKLIN POST OFFICE

by Ken Smith

My list of Worcestershire post offices contains the entry:

Stanklin, KIDDERMINSTER: open by 1946; closed 1972.

Stanklin was listed in 'Post Offices in the UK' from 1946 until the 1970 edition. It did not appear in the next edition (1973), and, I believe, an order for its deletion was contained in a Post Office Gazette during 1972. The late Eric Mein investigated this office in 1979, but failed to unearth any postmarks. However, Eric apparently wrote to a number of people in Stanklin and received three replies.

The first was from a local farmer: "*I have lived here for over 60 years, and there has not been a PO in Stanklin during that time. Our Post Office has always been 'Stone' and Stanklin is a part of Stone parish ...*"

Another inhabitant wrote: "*I have not been able to find any evidence that a PO has ever existed in Stanklin ... I have asked people who are over 70 years of age ...*"

The Acting Postmaster at Kidderminster recalled: "*I do remember the sub-office at Stanklin. During the war, Stanklin was the site of a National Service Hostel for the billeting of war workers. It was still in use when I returned to the area in 1946, and the PO was part of the hostel, incorporating a shop selling tobacco, stationery etc. The shop and PO were managed by an employee of the hostel who held the rank of sub-postmistress. The hostel closed down in c. 1948 and consequently the sub-office ceased to exist ...*"

Why then did the office remain listed in 'Post Offices in the UK' until the early 1970s. Does anyone have any further information or even a postmark?

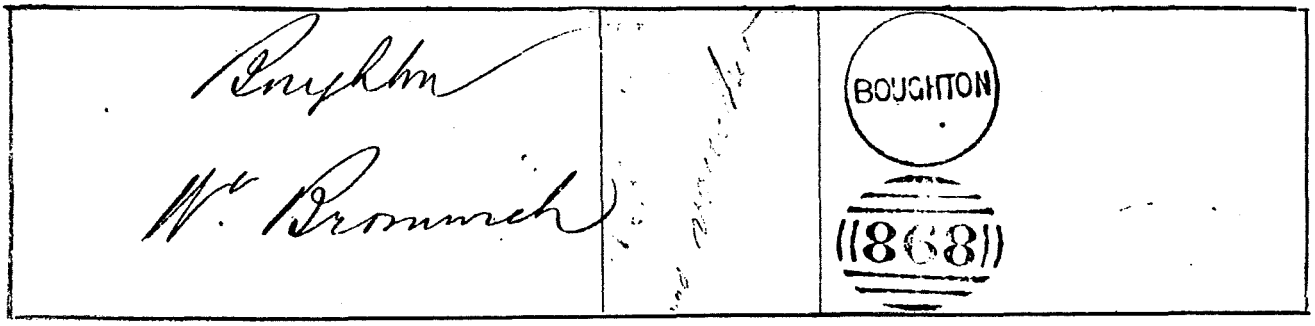
BOUGHTON

by Derek Smeathers

In my article under the above heading in MM114/10 of April 2000, the third paragraph refers to the then newly discovered type D4 undated circle of this village, indicating that it was not entered in the Proof Impression Books. I can now correct this statement and confirm that the entry has been found in volume 14, page 57. There were two reasons for it being unrecognised as a Northants item when the Impression Books were being studied for the first edition of our UDC book. Firstly, the Impression Books normally show the posttown as "To what place" a handstamp was sent - and Northampton should have been shown, but, for whatever reason, it was not. "Boughton" appears instead. Secondly, this was written in ink and looks uncannily like "Brighton" - see the illustration below. Brighton is a well-known posttown, so the mistake is understandable.

The issue date was 20th October 1857 so the cover shown in MM114/10 was stamped just one month after the handstamp had been sent from London.

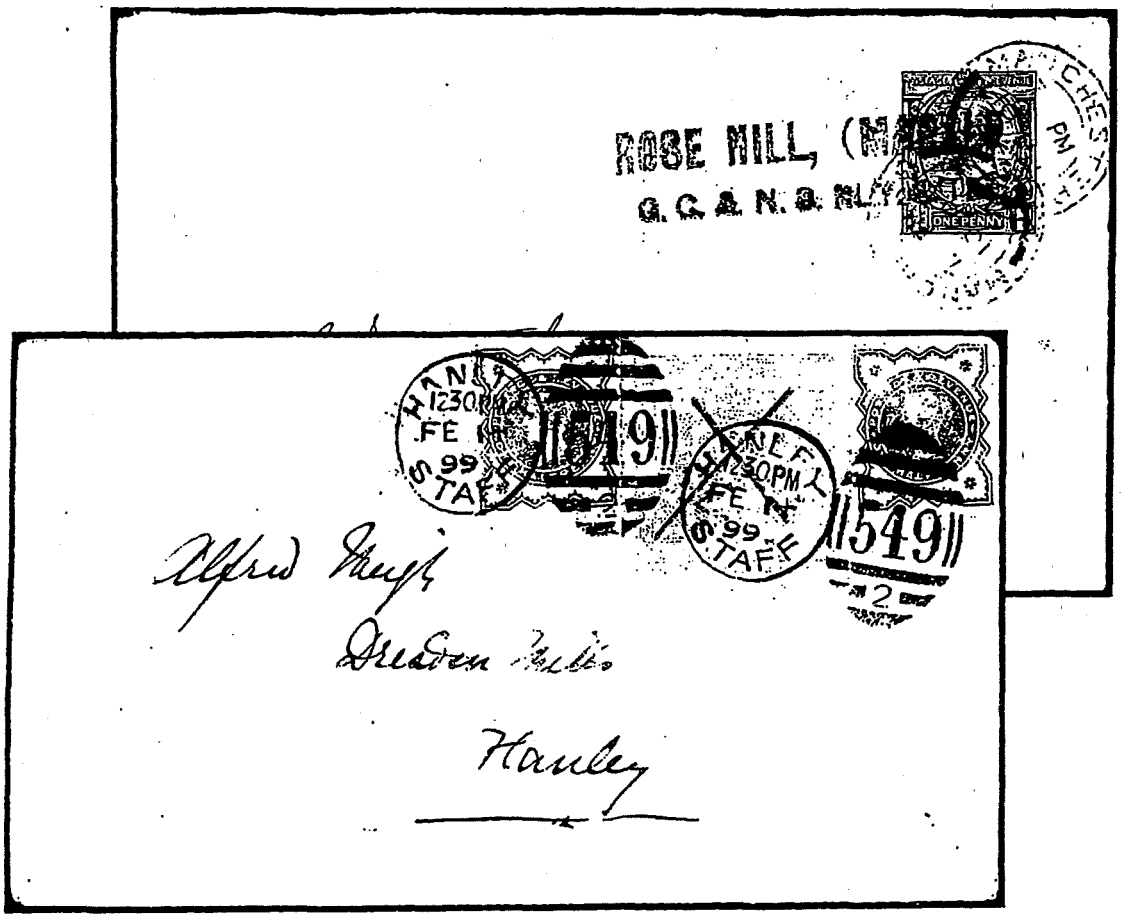
This correction has come to light during an intensive check now being made on the Impression Books prior to a complete revision of the Northants section of the UDC book for publication in *Midland Mail,* probably in the next two or three years. Already several other errors (mainly minor) have come to light and it is hoped all the corrections will be completed before publication. If anr readers have queries, suspected errors or more information on Northamptonshire UDCs, I should be very pleased to hear from them as soon as possible.



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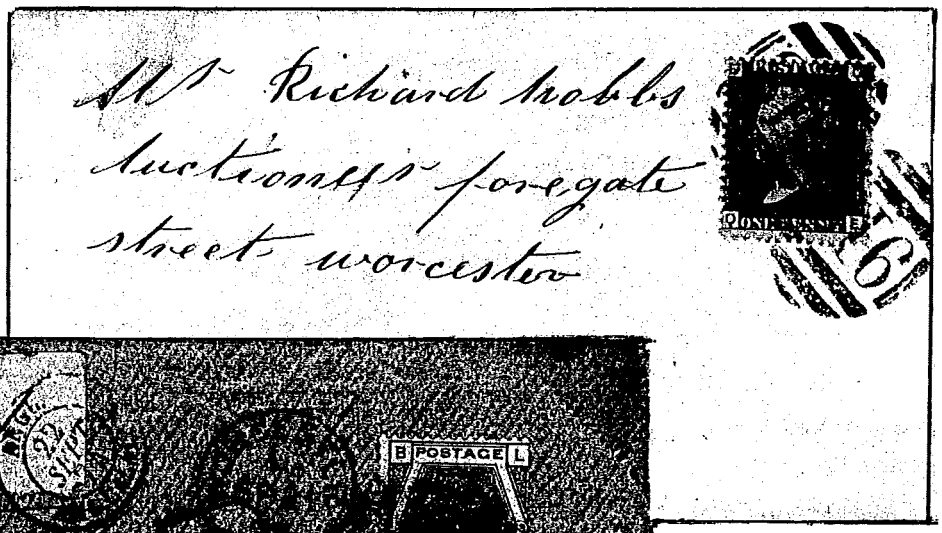
MORE ON THE VOS HANDSTAMPS

by Chris Jackson

The articles in MM135 and MM136 prompted me to look at the VOS handstamps in my collection of Worcestershire. Ian May altered his initial conclusion that the handstamps were issued to cancel registered mail as a result of the use at Nuneaton. Certainly the use at Worcester suggests that the VOS handstamps were not used solely for registered mail. I have three Worcester VOS marks, one on a registered cover and the other two on locally used items.

A 4VOS which was issued to Worcester on 15th December 1868 is not recorded as used in Parmenter's original book or subsequent updates. Later, on 18th June 1874, a 3VOS, which had a dot after the last numeral, was issued to Worcester. This has been recorded in use from 14th March 1881 to 10th March 1892.

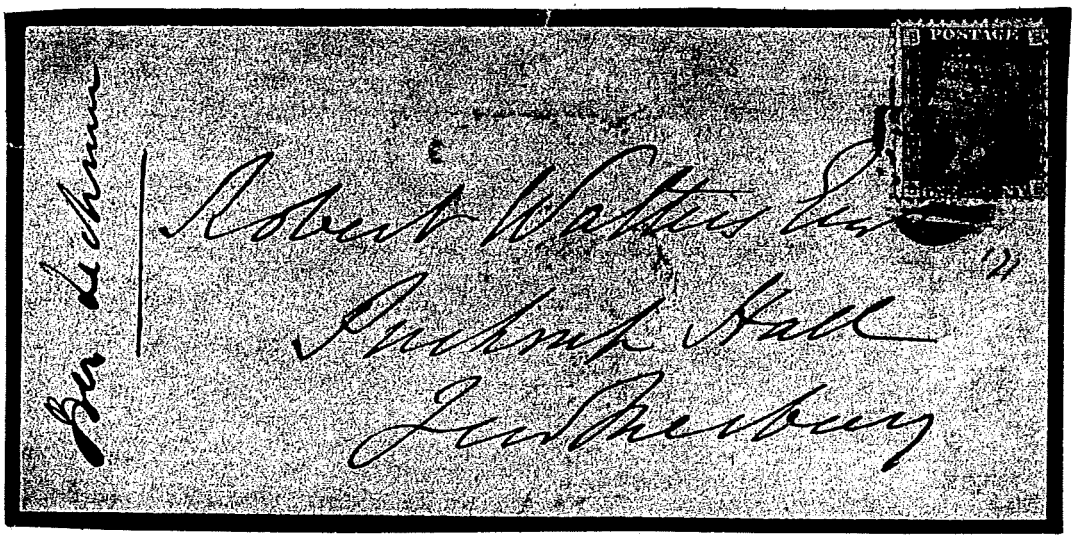
Two strikes of the 3VOS with a dot on a cover dated 28 Jan ??



The 3VOS with a dot on a registered cover from Worcester sent in 1874.



An over-inked strike of the 4VOS? on a cover sent from Worcester in 1875. (Certainly it is not the 3VOS with dot.)



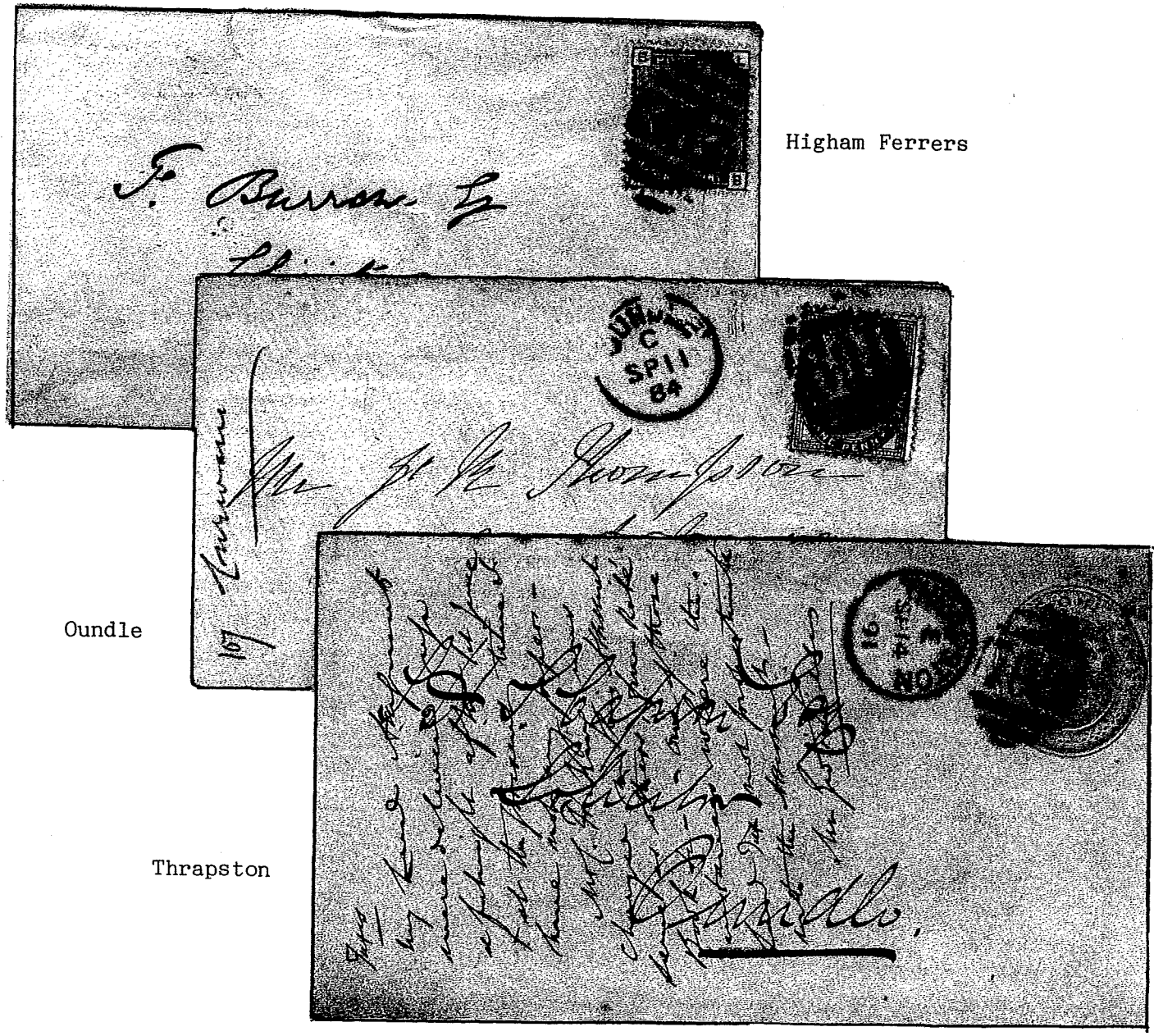
EVEN MORE ON VOS HANDSTAMPS

by Derek Smeathers

If our editor will allow me a second bite of the cherry, I would just comment that the illustrations in my original article are the only examples of Northampton's VOS that I possess, but I feel it is pure coincidence that both are on registered envelopes.

Ian May's decision that the VOS was intended only for registered items was a reluctant one, I feel. As I stated originally, the smaller towns of Northamptonshire used the VOS quite freely. I show three examples here - from Higham Ferrers, Oundle and Thrapstone; I could also show Towcester and Weedon - all on non-registered material. Of Oundle and Thrapstone, I have literally dozens of covers, and quite a few of the other towns.

I believe the VOS was designed for general use to replace the long running 1844 type which were really worn out! Postal staff probably did not like having to apply a datestamp as well as the VOS - and the duplex was born! Perhaps the idea for the duplex handstamps came to someone when they saw covers like that from Thrapston below - it even looks like a real duplex, doesn't it?



Higham Ferrers

Oundle

Thrapston

ANOTHER STEP IN THE VOS SAGA

by Sadie Cole

I know that my collecting area is outside the Midlands, but only just! I have four covers with 3VOS handstamps from Radnorshire which are illustrated below.

Figure 1 is a registered cover sent to Switzerland in November 1890. It appears to have been cancelled initially with the Rhayder duplex and the 3VOS afterwards, maybe because of the registered status. Figure 2 shows a much clearer strike of the 3VOS of Rhayder which, according to Parmenter, was sent from the GPO in July 1882 and has not been recorded in use.

Fig. 1

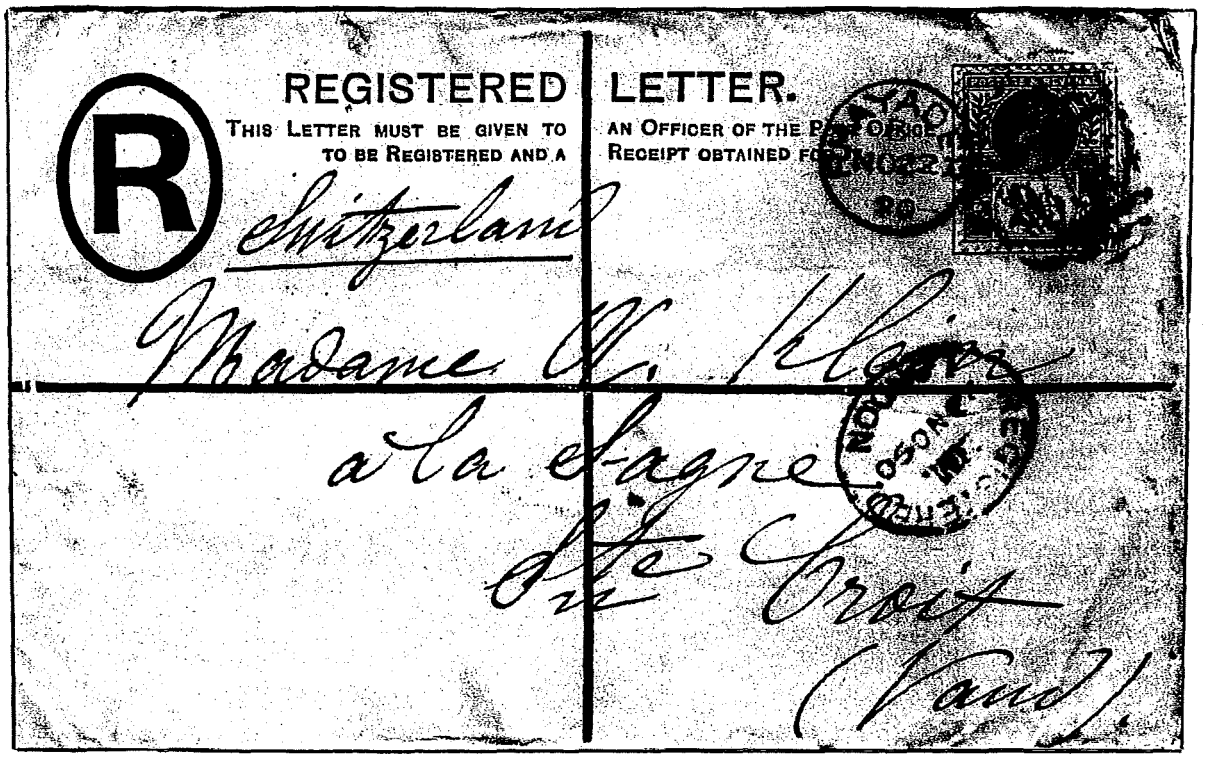


Fig. 2

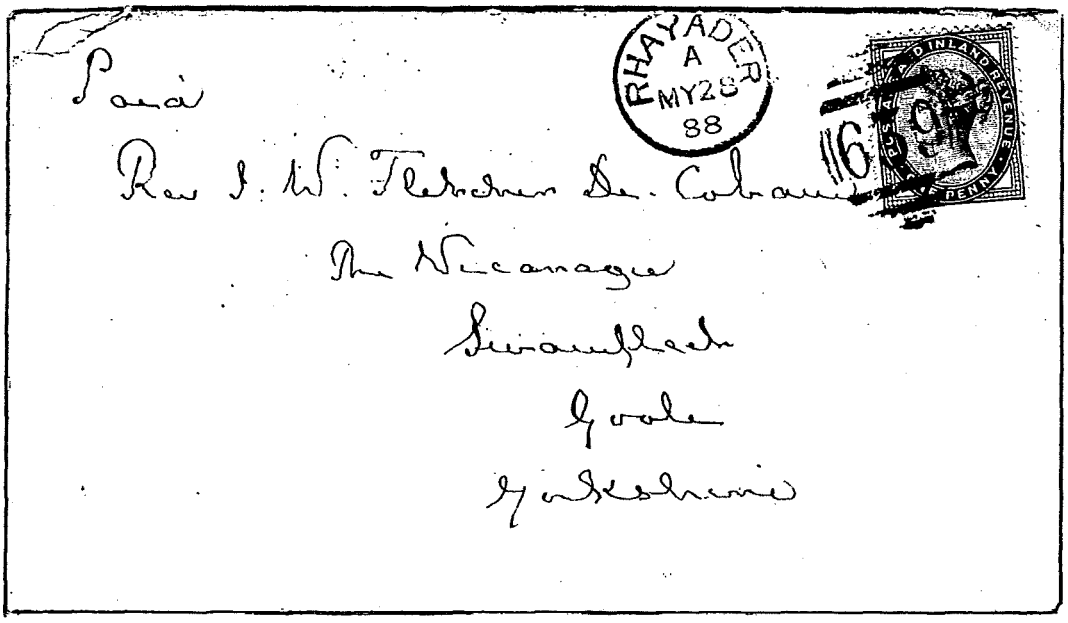


Figure 3 shows the 627 of Presteigne used on 5th August 1878 but unrecorded in use by Parmenter while Figure 4 shows the 480 of Knighton used on 30th January 1885.

My theory is that in Radnorshire, at least, this handstamp was used on any letters handed in over the counter which would have included registered mail..

Fig. 3

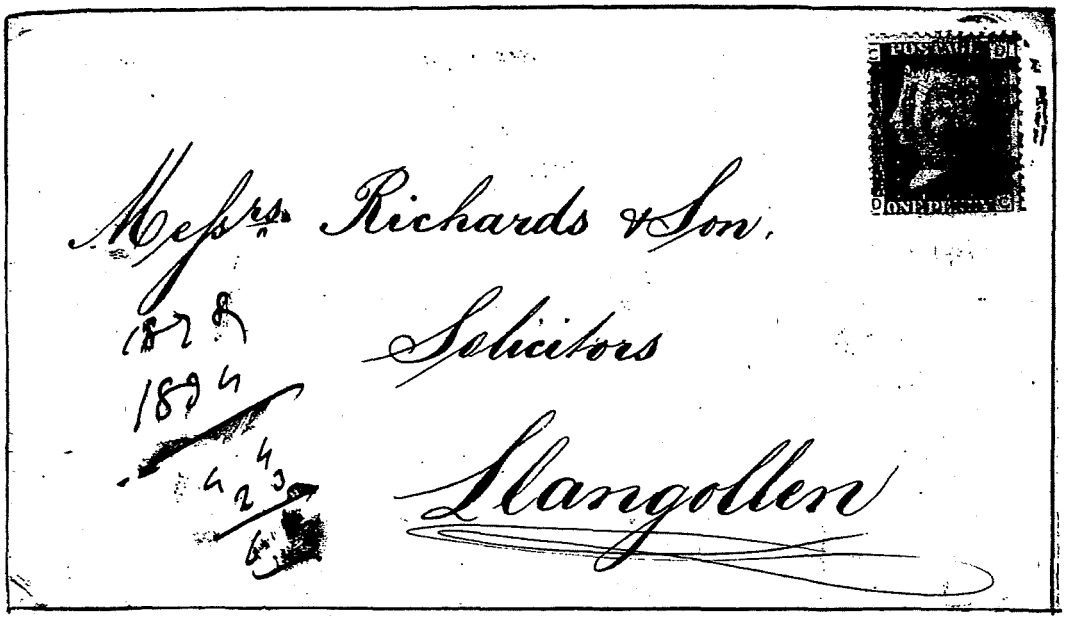
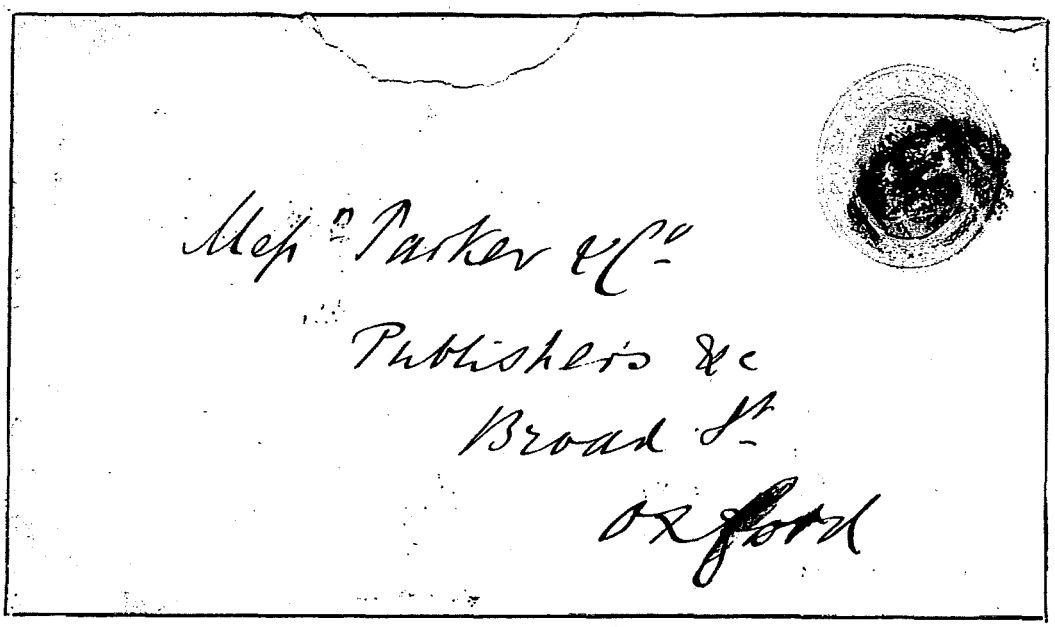


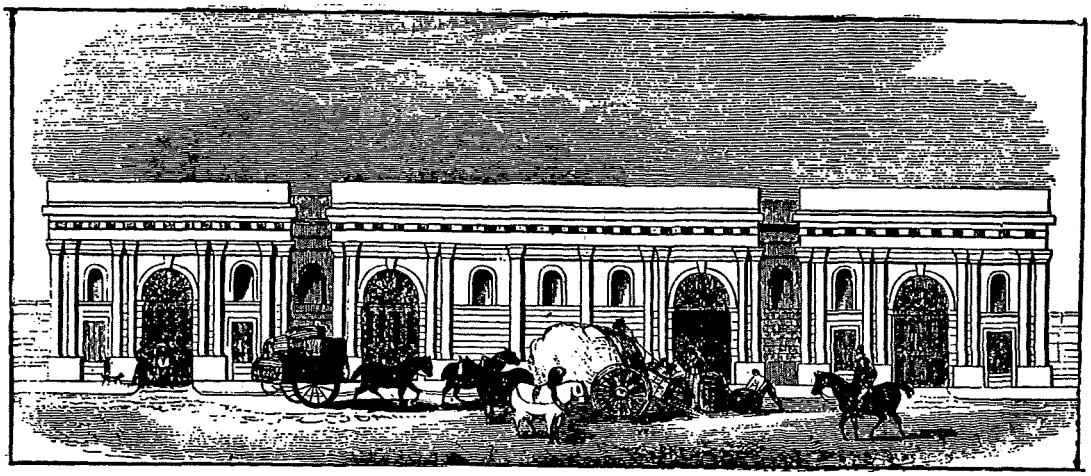
Fig.4



MAIL BY RAIL IN THE MIDLANDS (Part 4)

As I stated in the first of this series of articles (MM121/2ff.) the reason that I have not followed a chronological order is that in order to produce full editions of Midland Mail I did not have the luxury, as one would when writing a book, of waiting for all the research on every area to be completed to one's satisfaction. Earlier articles have dealt with the carriage of mail by the constituents of the Midland Railway, and the Great Western Railway in the period up to about 1850. This article starts a coverage of the lines in the Midlands that eventually formed the London North Western Railway.

On 6th May 1833 authorisation was given for the building of both the Grand Junction Railway (GJR) and the London and Birmingham Railway (L&B). The Grand Junction Railway which opened in its entirety on 4th July 1837 ran from Birmingham to Warrington and then on to a junction with the Liverpool and Manchester Railway at Newton. The original terminus was a temporary facility at Vauxhall but within a short time a station in Curzon Street had opened. From the terminus in Birmingham the line ran through Aston, Perry Barr, Bescot, Wednesfield Heath, Penkridge, Stafford, Norton Bridge and Whitmore. The railway skirted the centre of Wolverhampton, the station at Wednesfield Heath being over a mile from the centre of the town. However, timetables and time-bills both refer to the station as Wolverhampton.



The Curzon Street terminus of the GJR

From the day of its opening the Post Office used the line to carry mail. In a letter dated 14th June(1) Mr Louis recommended working the new mails out of London for the first time on the night of Wednesday, 5th July so that the bye letter operations could commence on the 6th, the first day of the following quarter. However he added that one mail should be dispatched from London on the 3rd July to fall in with the railway dispatch from Birmingham on the 4th. This mail was to carry the London bags for Manchester and Liverpool only. This was to be repeated on the 4th - "*the usual mails being kept up and performing their respective operations.*" On the 5th the three new mails were to be sent out. Maberly supported Mr Louis writing, "*I think it advisable to get the guards and postmasters into practice of trying the railroad one or two days on a small scale before the general opening. I submit that Mr Louis' proposition may be adopted and the Liverpool, Manchester, Warrington and Stafford bags should be forwarded on the 3rd and 4th and the general arrangement shall commence by the mails leaving London on the 5th so as to begin the new quarter on the 6th.*"

This trial night mail reached Birmingham by coach on the morning of 4th July at 6.38 a.m. and left by railway at 7 a.m., reaching Warrington at 10.41. Arrival in both Manchester and Liverpool was at 12.30 p.m., one hour behind schedule.(2)

Mr Karstadt wrote to Maberly from Manchester on 4th July stating that the London bag had arrived there at 12.30 p.m. Also, although the bag to London had been dispatched as usual that morning by the mailcoach, he intended to send by railway such letters as were in the office at 2.30 p.m., and proposed to do the same on the following day.(2)

Mr Louis travelled with the mail to Liverpool on the 3rd/4th July and wrote to Maberly on arrival.(2) The letter was obviously written in a hurry and it is difficult to make out some of the words but is still worth reproducing in full for the sense of excitement it conveys.

"*Dear Sir,*

We reached this place precisely at ½ past 12 exactly one hour behind our time. The loss arose out of various little contretemps which a little practice will set right.

This is the first time in Europe so long a journey was performed in so short a time and if some very few years ago it had been said a letter would be answered by return of post from London the idea would have been treated as chimerical and yet at 8 last evening was I in London and this letter will reach there tomorrow morning, the proceeding of this operation occupying a period of 34¼ hours only out of which a rest of three hours is to be taken thus performing a distance of 412 miles in 31¼ hours!

Our mail coach was before its time full 15 minutes notwithstanding at one place we could not find horses except [posters?] and at another when [posters] were found there was no coachman. Luckily there was [one] on the mail looking for a place with which we suited him. Tonight doubtless all will go right. Some dispute among the [.....] contractors I believe to be the cause. I need hardly observe I have adopted proper measures.

I have the honour to be ..."

Christopher Beaver showed that, on the opening of the GJR, the mail was carried between London and Birmingham on three separate mailcoaches - 'Birmingham, Carlisle', 'Birmingham, Liverpool' and 'Birmingham, Manchester' [3]. The coaches left the GPO in London at 8 p.m. and were scheduled to arrive in Birmingham so that the mails could go forward on the 7 a.m. train from Birmingham. On arrival at Warrington the trains were divided, half being taken on to Liverpool, half to Manchester. As a result, the London to Liverpool mailcoach became redundant, and the London to Manchester coach ran only as far as Derby [4]. Unaffected for the time being were coaches from London to Holyhead (via Coventry, Birmingham and Shrewsbury), Birmingham (via Banbury and Warwick) and Chester and Woodside (via Northampton, Atherstone and Stafford). It had been intended that the latter should only go as far as Lichfield[1] but in the event it was decided not to alter the route [5]. The Birmingham to Liverpool mailcoach was withdrawn as was that between Bristol and Manchester north of Birmingham[6].

In a new contract with the GJR drawn up in December 1837[7] the Post Office agreed to pay £19.10.0 for the use of eight trains each day. They were:

from Birmingham	"7 to 7.15 a.m.	11.30 a.m.	2.30 p.m.	"7 to 7.15 p.m."
from L'pool & Manc'ter	6.30 a.m.	11.30 a.m.	2.30 p.m.	6.30 p.m.

The amount paid for each train varied - the "7 to 7.15 p.m.", which was marked "Irish Express Mail" and the 6.30 p.m. "London Mail" were the most expensive at £5 per day. The "7 to 7.15 a.m. cost £2.10.0 and the others £1.2.6.

The contract also stated that if the mailcoaches had not reached Birmingham before the departure of the railway train, a special steam engine should be provided "to convey Her Majesty's Mail Bags" and should this special engine overtake the regular train before Whitmore, the Post Office were to pay £5. Furthermore, if it were necessary to send the special engine beyond Whitmore, the Post Office were to pay £10. I wonder what the Health & Safety Executive, had it existed then, would have thought of the practice of an engine chasing a preceding train. I assume that the mailbags would have been stored in a carriage attached to the engine and not carried on the footplate! A footnote stated that it would be necessary to draw up a fresh contract when the L&B were prepared to run trains at night.

That all did not always go as planned with this new method of carrying the mails can be seen from a report by the guard on the 6.15 p.m. train from Liverpool on 24th August 1837.[17]

"*...between Whitmore and Stafford, about four miles from Whitmore, at about 9 p.m. the axle tree of the Engine broke - was obliged to wait on the line until another engine arrived from Birmingham which engine did not arrive until 7 am next morning. After starting it was found that something was the matter with this Engine and that it could proceed no further than Stafford from whence I took a Chaise and four to Birmingham arriving there at 11.13 am, twelve hours beyond my proper time.*"

We will now consider the changes necessary in riding work etc. made necessary by the use of the GJR, starting with Mr Rideout's District[1]. The ride between Northampton and Weedon took on added importance as the Manchester mailcoach through Northampton was to go no further than Derby. {Despite the reservations I expressed in MM119/12 para. 5 it is clear that this ride did come into being.] This ride was to take bags for Northampton from the up Holyhead mailcoach and to return with mail for the down 'Birmingham and Carlisle' coach. Mr Rideout said that there would be an interval of two hours for the ride to travel the sixteen miles to Northampton and back, and that he had given strict orders to the Northampton office that the bags should be made up ready so as to avoid any possible delay.

The ride between Oxford and Towcester had to leave Oxford at 7.45 instead of 8 p.m. in order to be at Towcester by 12.15 a.m.with the letters from Oxford, Banbury, Brackley and Bicester. The arrival times of the rides and coaches at Towcester were:

Oxford ride	12.15 a.m.
'Carlisle & Birmingham' up	12.31 a.m. (with bags from Manchester, Lancaster, Liverpool, Coventry, Daventry and Dunchurch)
Holyhead up	12.49 a.m. (with bags from Birmingham)
'Carlisle & Birmingham' down	1.58 a.m. (taking bags for Lancaster, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham)
Holyhead down	2.15 a.m. (taking bags to Coventry, Dunchurch and Daventry)
Oxford ride returns	2.20 a.m.
Buckingham ride leaves	5.30 a.m.

All of this meant that the clerk had to be up nearly all night so his salary was increased from £30 to £50 p.a.

It can be seen that the 'Carlisle and Birmingham' mailcoach made more stops on its journey up to London than it did on the down when the imperative was to be in Birmingham in time for the train. I cannot find any mention of stops of the down coach other than those at Towcester and Weedon, though of course it would have been necessary to change the horses.

Two other alterations were reported by Mr Rideout. The first was in the times of the ride between Wolverhampton and Stourport. This had left Wolverhampton at 6 a.m. after the mail coach from Liverpool to Birmingham, reaching Stourport at 9.30. The return had left Stourport at 5 p.m. and had arrived in Wolverhampton at 8.30 p.m. in time for the Birmingham to Liverpool coach. Mr Rideout proposed that the ride should leave Wolverhampton at 4 a.m., taking mail from the last train the previous night, giving an arrival in Stourport at 7.30 a.m. The return from Stourport was to be at 2.45 p.m., giving an arrival in Wolverhampton at 6.15 p.m. in time for the last train to Manchester and Liverpool.

Secondly, it was necessary to send out the ride from Worcester to Stourbridge at 3.15 a.m. instead of 2.40 a.m. As the Bristol and Manchester mail coach was terminate its journey at Birmingham, at 5.08 a.m., all the forward sorting which had been carried out at Wolverhampton was thrown back on the Birmingham office. As it was necessary to send out the Sheffield mailcoach at 5.30 a.m., in order to relieve the pressure at Birmingham more sorting was to be carried out at Worcester.

A minute dated 19th July 1837[8] lists the changes that were made in Mr Churchill's district. It begins with a *"List of Horse Posts, Foot Messengers etc abolished on the opening of the Railway Communication between Birmingham & Liverpool."*

Horse Posts	Foot Messengers	Miscellaneous
Newcastle & Stafford	Coleshill & Stonebridge	Penkridge receiver
Newcastle & The Potteries	Market Drayton & Loggerheads	Penkridge letter carrier
Penkridge & Walsall	Shirleywich & Wolsey Bridge	
Wolverhampton & Lichfield	Walsall & Wednesbury	

The minute then lists the horse posts etc. that had been established. [I have shown the stations in bold type.]

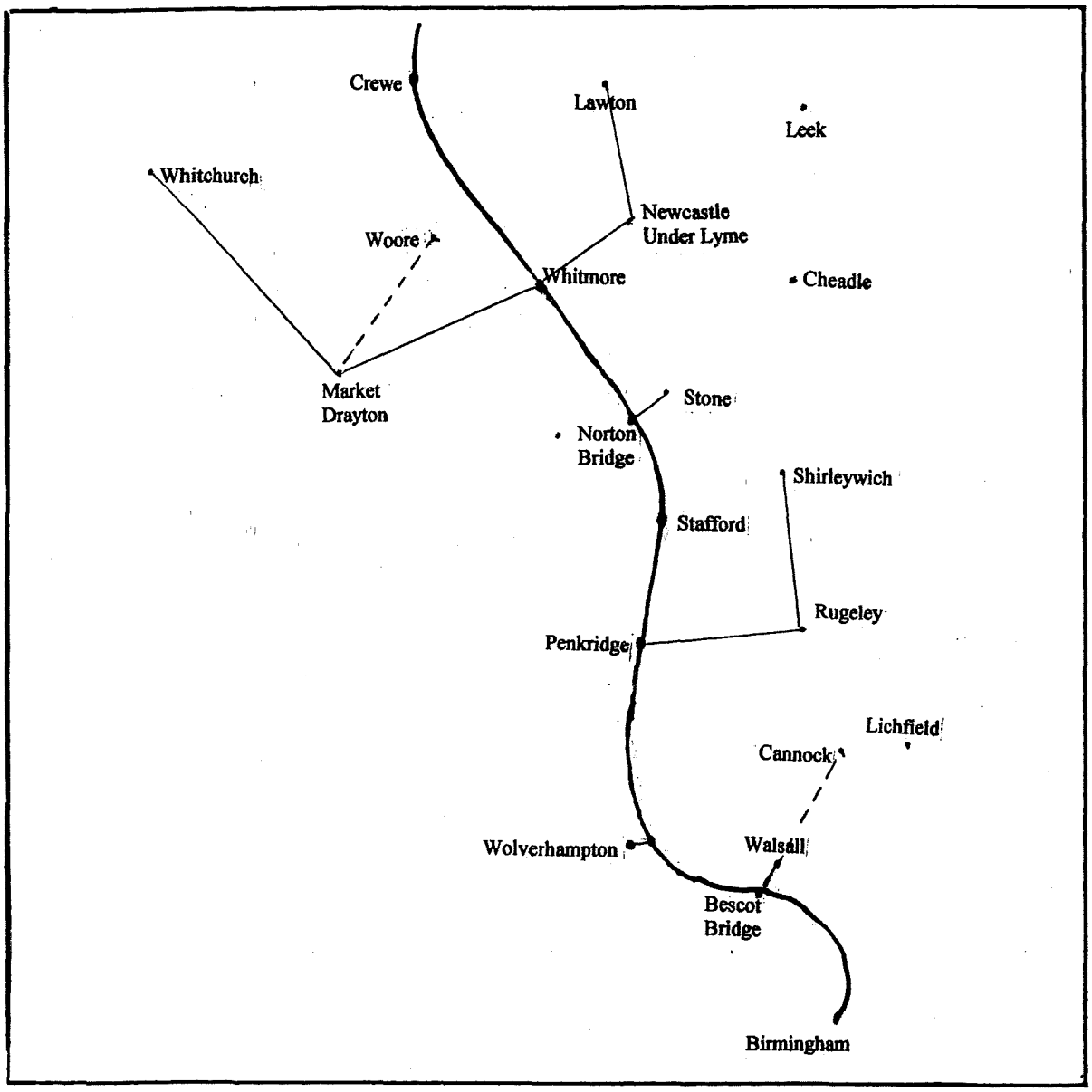
Horse Posts	Foot Messengers	Miscellaneous
Walsall & **Bescot Bridge**	Eccleshall & **Norton Bridge**	Norton Bridge receiver
Newcastle & **Whitmore**	Market Drayton & Woore	Penkridge deputy
Newcastle & Lawton	Stafford & the **railway station**	Penkridge letter carrier -
Newcastle & The Potteries	Walsall & Cannock	allowance for exchanging bags
Penkridge & Rugeley		at the station
Rugeley & Shirleywich		
Stone & **Norton Bridge**		
Stonebridge & Lichfield (This puzzles me. Was this the Stonebridge near Coventry?)		
Whitmore & Market Drayton		
Market Drayton & Whitchurch		
Wolverhampton & the **railway station**		

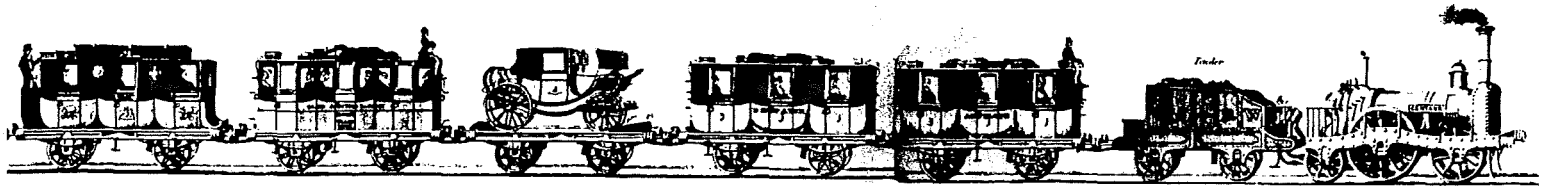
Authority for Penkridge, along with Winsford and Preston Brook, to be post towns is contained in a minute of June 1837[9]. (See MM108/13.) The minute states that a day or two before the opening of the railway an officer from the Inland Department was to be stationed at each of these offices to guard against the possibility of any serious mistakes.

One consequence of these changes was that the distances from London to a number of the towns were increased. Details of these can be found in MM108/10. A minute of August 1837[13] mentions that there would be five increases in rate in Mr Churchill's District but it was hardly worth applying to the Treasury for their permission to keep the existing rates. However, a minute in November[14] states that the old rates should be applied to letters whose rates had been affected by being carried on the railway. No reason for the decision was given.

In January 1838, it was decided that Rugeley should receive its letters through Stafford instead of Penkridge[10].

I cannot find a report or minute which gives details of all the changes needed in Mr Karstadt's district, but some details can be gleaned from a few minutes. The bag for Leek was to be sent to Whitmore, and that for Ashbourne was to go to Derby[11] from where the letters were to be carried by a ride[12].





In August 1837, the mercantile classes of Leek complained about the withdrawal of the mailcoach between Derby and Manchester, which ran through Leek, on the opening of the GJR[15]. They complained that they had been deprived of a direct post to both Manchester and London, the mail now being brought seventeen miles by a mail cart from Whitmore station. The letters for Manchester, Derby, Nottingham etc had to be posted about three hours earlier but reached their destinations no earlier, and they were taken to Buxton by a boy on horseback to meet the Nottingham and Manchester mail. [Surely, they meant the Derby to Manchester mail coach which started on 6th December 1834. (See MM117/13.)] They proposed the introduction of a mailcoach between Leicester and Manchester which would leave Leicester after the arrival of the down Halifax mailcoach and run through Loughborough, Derby and then on the route of the withdrawn coach - Ashbourne, Leek and Macclesfield.

In response the Post Office stated that the coach had not been discontinued from any wish on their part but because the contractors had demanded an exorbitant price - eighteen pence a double mile as against the usual cost of three pence. Also, the mailcoach system was dependent on passengers and new methods of communication had sprung up. However, Mr Louis was directed to look into the practicability of reintroducing the mailcoach between Derby and Manchester via Leek, but he could not find anyone prepared to do it on "appropriate terms". He also commented that within a few months upward of 71 miles of the London and Birmingham Railway would be open, bringing Manchester "upwards of three hours in point of time nearer London."

The extent to which the railway had hit the coaching trade is shown in a correspondence from Mr Chaplin the proprietor of the Swan With Two Necks in Lad Lane and a prominent mail coach contractor[16]. He said that the success of the mailcoach from London to Derby was doubtful and went on "*It is a serious loss to the contractors and that instead of improving, it is getting progressively worse, as our accts will testify, in consequence of the increasing confidence of the public in Railway travelling.*"

Mr Wedderburn examined the accounts of Mr Chaplin and found that the receipts had dropped to a half of what they had been "tho' the time of the year was that most favourable to the coach trade. The receipts per mile in a series of twenty-eight day periods were as follows:

London - Manchester	25th March	£6.4.10
London - Manchester	22nd April	£6.5.3¼
London - Manchester	20th May	£6.11.4¼
London - Derby	29th July	£3.0.8
London - Derby	26th August	£3.12.1¼
London - Derby	23rd September	£1.17.7¼

Maberly said that it was estimated that a mailcoach ought to produce about £4 per mile per month to be profitable. Yet, Mr Chaplin's chief clerk said on 28th October 1837 that the receipts were dropping daily. The Post Office had no alternative but to apply to the Treasury for the contractors of the Derby mailcoach to be paid sixpence per mile, an increase of four pence, so as to prevent the considerable inconvenience that would have been caused by the contractors giving notice.

Although, as stated at the beginning of this article, the building of both the Grand Junction Railway and the London & Birmingham were authorised on the same day, it was not until 1838 that enough of the latter had been completed for it to be used to carry mails. A description of that will appear in the next part.

REFERENCES

1. Post 11/57 2. Post 11/58 3. MM40/5
4. The London Mailcoaches by Christopher Beaver, The GB Journal, Vol 41 No2, March/April 2003.
5. Post 10/67 6. MM101/4ff. 7. Post 10/87 8. Post 35/304Y/1837
9. Post 35/55Y/1837 10. Post 35/594Z/1838 11. Post 35/127Y/1837 12. Post 35/144Y/1837
13. Post 35/511Y/1837 14. Post 35/246Z/1835 15 Post 10/73 16. Post 10/76
17. Post 10/66

STAFFORDSHIRE SUB-POST OFFICES IN THE 1890's : STOKE-ON-TRENT

by Bob Ricketts

Cavendish recently offered a battered 'ledger' which , on purchase , comprised the local establishment records for the Head Post Office at Stoke-on-Trent and the sub-offices under its control for c.1895-1900 . In addition to the establishment details for the Head Office , it provides a rich source of information about sub-post offices : sub-postmasters , salaries and allowances , etc. which might be of interest to aficionados of late-Victorian 'Stoke'.

A loose sheet in the ledger summarises the location and ownership of the Head Office and three Branch Offices :

- *Stoke-on-Trent* : Station Road ; rent £265 p.a. ; lease expires in 1909 ; proprietor N. S . Railway Co., Head Office Stoke-on-Trent
- *Burslem B.O.* : 28 Market Street ; rent £60 ; yearly tenancy ; proprietor Mrs. Baker , Endon Hall , Stoke-on-Trent
- *Hanley B.O.* : Percy Street ; Crown Office
- *Longton B.O.* : Commerce Street ; rent £100 (crossed-out and increased to £125); yearly tenancy (crossed-out and changed to '7 year's lease from 1899'); proprietor Mr. A. C. Woolley , Post Office , Longton

Amongst the allowances listed against the Head Office , there are several which may be of interest :

- Train fares to Etruria and Fenton 4 postmen at 6d each 2/- p.w. ceased 31/07/1896
- 2 Railway Season Tickets between Stoke & Etruria for use of Postmen on duty' £2/2/- each from 1/08/1896
- 1 Railway Season Ticket between Stoke & Fenton for use of Postmen on duty' £2/2/- from 1/08/1896
- Tram ticket for Town Postmen between Stoke and East Fenton' £3 p.a. w.e.f. 1/01/1897
- Second class season tickets for the Clerk at Burslem B.O. (1/10/1894 £4/8/11d) and Longton B.O. (1/09/1895 £3/15/5d)
- 'Cauldon Lowe and Ramshorn delivery 4 days a week' allowance of 5/- p.w. to the Postmaster w.e.f. 3/09/1893 ; ceased 3/04/1897 when delivery transferred to the Frognall sub-postmaster
- Payment to Quartermaster for cleaning Drill Hall after Tel. Messrs.'drills' w.e.f. 1/03/1896 £1 p.a.
- For conveyance of Newcastle bag and two London bags on Sunday mornings' w.e.f. 1/03/1896 1/- p.w.
- Conveyance of mails to Hanley & Burslem Offices by cart on Sunday mornings' w.e.f. 9/2/1896 £10 p.a. ; ceased 30/06/1898
- Allowance for Rural Delivery - Bagnall to Lark Hall' 3/- p.w. w.e.f. 18/07/1898
- Conveyance of Bucknall S.O. bag to Hanley B.O. ' 3/- p.w. w.e.f. 9/07/1899

There follows a section for rural sub-postmaster allowances . These can be used to trace and date the opening of sub-offices , the development of rural delivery services , significant changes in establishment (e.g. the conversion of sub-postmaster delivery allowances into Rural Auxiliaries , establishment of Telegraph Offices , spread of rural pillar/wall post boxes, etc).

ALSAGER :
Sarah Barrett appointed 28/06/1890

- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 3/11/1892 £38/10/- p.a. plus w.e.f. 1/04/1883 7/6d p.w. for indoor telegraph work and 1d per message for delivering telegrams
- Rural Auxiliary w.e.f. 13/01/1895 14/- p.w.
- Auxiliary w.e.f. 22/06/1896 14/- p.w.
- Auxiliary w.e.f. 22/06/1896 5/- p.w.
- Assistance first delivery w.e.f. 21/02/1892 5/- p.w.

ALTON :
Henry Sheldon appointed 30/08/1881
Sarah Alice Sheldon appointed 07/03/1898

- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 1/08/1886 £23 p.a. plus w.e.f. 1/04/1883 7/6d p.w. for indoor telegraph work and 1d per message for delivering telegrams plus £2/12/6d p.a. for 'Lord Shrewsbury's private wire'
- Rural Auxiliary w.e.f. 16/07/1893 8/- p.w.
- No. 1 delivery w.e.f. 6/5/1888 4/6d p.w.
- Delivery w.e.f. 12/07/1893 1/- p.w.
- Station service w.e.f. 6/05/1888 1/- p.w.

BARLASTON :
Elizah Kent appointed 18/02/1882
John Henry Kent appointed 22/01/1898
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 8/12/1892 £14/19/- p.a.
- Delivery w.e.f. 23/10/1887 10/- p.w. total (made up of two original allowances of 4/6d and 5/6d)

BLYTHE BRIDGE :
Mary Ann Hazlehurst appointed 6/01/1881
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 29/08/1893 £35/13/- p.a.
- Rural Auxiliary Post woman 'B Bridge to Meir Lane' w.e.f. 5/08/1894 9/- p.w.
- 'Unestablished R[ural] P[ostman] to Taverley Green' w.e.f. 2/08/1891 16/- p.w.
- As above for Sunday Substitute fortnightly w.e.f. 5/07/1885 1/6d
- To sub-postmaster for delivery to Forsbrook w.e.f. 5/08/1894 3/6d p.w.

BROWN EDGE :
Joseph Bratt appointed 2/12/1870
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 1/05/1886 £7/5/- p.a.
- To sub-postmaster for delivery w.e.f. 4/12/1892 4/6d p.w.

BUCKNALL :
John Perrins appointed 28/04/1872
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 13/06/1892 £12/5/- p.a. plus w.e.f. 26/02/1892 4/- p.w. for indoor telegraph work and 1d per message for delivering telegrams
- To sub-postmaster for delivery w.e.f. 1/06/1891 9/11d p.w.

CAVERSWELL :
Ralph Mosley appointed 1/03/1895 (resigned)
Rupert Hawkins appointed 28/07/1896
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 1/03/1895 £6/10/- p.a.
- To sub-postmaster for delivery w.e.f. 1/02/1885 6/- p.w.

CHEADLE :
Mary Louisa Salt appointed 18/11/1893 (suspended and office placed in charge in April 1899 ; post declared vacant)
John Albert Fox appointed 10/12/1899
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 19/09/1893 £80/19/- p.a. plus w.e.f. 14/08/1883 7/6d p.w. for indoor telegraph work and w.e.f. 1/07/1890 1d & 2d per message for delivering telegrams
- Rural Auxiliary w.e.f. 15/10/1893 15/- p.w.
- Rural Auxiliary w.e.f. 28/05/1893 11/6d p.w.
- Rural Auxiliary Postwoman w.e.f. 28/05/1893 9/- p.w.
- No. 2 Auxiliary w.e.f. 21/07/1895 6/- p.w.
- No. 1 Auxiliary w.e.f. 22/10/1893 13/- p.w.
- Broadhay delivery w.e.f. 15/12/1889 6/- p.w.
- Rakeway top delivery w.e.f. 15/10/1893 5/- p.w.
- Allowance for clearing High Street W[all]B[ox] w.e.f. 27/11/1894 1/- p.w. (ceased w.e.f. 20/07/1895)
- Alt. Allowance Sunday sub. For Aux. w.e.f. 5/11/1893 1/6d (ceased w.e.f. 20/07/1895)

DILHORNE :
James Bagnall apointed 4/12/1883 (office declared vacant 12/12/1897)
Jessie Alexandra Hubbard appointed 13/12/1897
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 21/04/1894 £6/10/- p.a.
- To sub-postmaster for delivery w.e.f. 2/10/1887 2/- p.w.

DRAYCOTT :
Henry Ridge appointed 12/11/1892
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 16/06/1887 £5 p.a.

ENDON :
Noah Baddeley appointed 23/04/1869
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 20/06/1892 £18/14/- p.a.
- Rural Auxiliary from Endon to Treble Locks w.e.f. 1/07/1894 10/6d p.w.
- Rural Auxiliary w.e.f. 28/05/1893 8/6d p.w.
- Meeting Mail Cart 1/2d [undated] p.w.

FORSBROOK :
William Owen appointed 19/05/1893
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 19/05/1893 £5 p.a.

FROGHALL :
William Harris appointed 19/05/1886
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 19/05/1886 £8 p.a.
- Rural Auxiliary w.e.f. 28/05/1883 10/-p.w.
- For delivery w.e.f. 4/11/1890 4/- p.w.

FULFORD :
William Jenkinson appointed 16/12/1897
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 16/12/1897 £5 p.a.
- Rural delivery w.e.f. 22/08/1898 2/6d p.w.

GOLDENHILL :
James Lewis appointed 17/12/1884
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 20/06/1892 £20/15/- p.a. plus w.e.f. 27/07/1894 4/- p.w. for indoor telegraph work and 1d per message delivered .
- For delivery w.e.f. 8/01/1888 4/6d and 3/- p.w.
- For Day Mail delivery & station service w.e.f. 13/01/1895 5/6d p.w.

GREAT CHELL :
Samuel Riley appointed 10/05/1883
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 17/02/1890 £9/14/- p.a.
- Rural Auxiliary w.e.f. 3/06/1888 12/- p.w.

HANFORD :
***Elizabeth Jane Miller* appointed 16/10/1893**
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 16/10/1893 £9/19/- p.a.
- For delivery w.e.f. 6/07/1892 3/6d and 2/4d p.w.

HARRISEAHEAD :
John Taylor appointed 21/09/1873
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 13/06/1892 £9/1/- p.a.
- For delivery [undated] 4/6d p.w.
- For clearing Rookery box w.e.f. 19/10/1885 1/6d p.w.

IPSTONES :
John Clowes appointed 27/03/1877
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 1/05/1886 £9/14/- p.a.
- For delivery [undated] 5/- p.w.
- For delivery w.e.f. 9/04/1891 5/- p.w.

KIDSGROVE :
Thomas Wardle appointed 25/09/1872
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 13/06/1892 £46/9/- p.a.
- Rural Auxiliary w.e.f. 25/09/1892 8/6d p.w.
- Auxiliary w.e.f. 3/01/1892 14/- p.w.
- Delivery to Moss Cottages w.e.f. 24/05/1891 3/6d p.w.
- Auxiliary w.e.f. 11/11/1888 7/- p.w.
- Collection from Lawton P.B. and station service w.e.f. 13/01/1895 3/- p.w.

KINGSLEY :
Henry Sutton appointed 21/11/1878
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 30/05/1892 £8/7/- p.a.

LONGSDON :
John Brown appointed 1/04/1886 (died 2/10/1900)
James Brown appointed 17/11/1900
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 20/06/1892 £11/16/- p.a.
- Rural Auxiliary w.e.f. 25/03/1895 10/- p.w.

LEIGH :
John Alcock appointed 2/09/1182
- Sub-postmaster's salary w.e.f. 13/06/1892 £10/11/- p.a.
- Rural Auxiliary w.e.f. 22/04/1894 8/- p.w.
- Delivery w.e.f. 11/12/1892 5/- p.w.

[N.B. : Entries are not dated after Leigh]

LONGPORT :
Edward W. Holdercroft appointed 1/02/1882
- Sub-postmaster's salary £52/5/- p.a. plus 1d per telegram message to be claimed monthly
- 3 Sub-office Postmen on scale 17/- 1/- 26/- and 2 telegraph messengers at 5/- p.w.
- For delivery 10/- p.w.
- Auxiliary 8/- p.w.
- For Sunday relief of Postman fortnightly 3/6d a fortnight
- Allowance for Sunday evening collections 1/- p.w.

Pencil entry (late-1890s) 'Now a T.S.O.'

(To be concluded in the next issue)

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