

M I D L A N D
(G. B.) P O S T A L H I S T O R Y (1975)
S O C I E T Y

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B U L L E T I N N O . 1 5 N O V E M B E R 1 9 7 9

Editorial

A 'thin' Bulletin this time - mainly due to lack of items from members - so please complete the idea you had for a Bulletin contribution and let me have it in time for a 'bummer' Christmas issue. Dont forget your WANTS and ITEMS FOR SALE etc. - at least fellow members will know your current interests and can keep an eye open for you or even may have something you would like. There is no charge for publishing and it give an added interest to the Bulletin.

This issue of Bulletin will be sent to ALL known members whether they are fully paid up or not - after Christmas the Bulletin will only be sent to paid up members - if this means you please send your £1.50 Annual Subscription to Treasurer - his address is above. If in doubt whether you have paid send it anyway - Treasurer will always credit you for next year !!!!

Report on first meeting of 1979/80 Season

We were pleased to welcome some 16 members on 6th October to our first meeting which was held at Hinckley in a room kindly provided by the Hinckley & District Philatelic Society on the occasion of their Annual Stamp Fair & Exhibition.

Nine members entertained us with Displays of Postal History items commencing with Mr. C.Coles who brought a range of the earlier slogan machine cancellations of Birmingham from thie first type used towards the end of the first World War.

Mr. S.Stobbs followed with Shropshire T.P.O's on Victorian stamps and covers, including Railway Letters Stamps of the Shropshire & Montgomery Railways (seldom seen).

We were then shown an interesting selection of mail delayed in the Birmingham postal district by Peter Baxter, including examples of postal items which had been burnt in post-box fires and letters delayed due to the recent letter bomb scares in Birmingham. The latter having been sorted in a Temporary Sorting Office set up at the nearby Bingley Hall and bearing a temporary office machine cancellation.

After members had viewed these three displays Mr. W.S.Chester produced a summary of the results of his current studies into the Coventry Kragg Machine Marks with variations of size, spacing etc. clearly annotated.

From Coventry we travelled into Staffordshire viewing a selection of Postal History including horseshoes, undated village marks and an unusual 'LEEK' handstamp having the four letters of the town name spaced equally around a circle - shown to us by Mr.C.Beaver.

Mr. G.Parker then took us back to Warwickshire on a tour of various Villages with several illustrations of the appropriate Village Post Office to tie up with the postmarks displayed.

After a further break for viewing, the three final displays were by Richard Farman with his study of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Eric and Elizabeth Lewis who each brought slong a selection of Queen Victorian postal stationery which extended from Essays (original

NEXT SOCIETY MEETING

Will be held on: SATURDAY 17th NOVEMBER
At: SIBREE HALL, WARWICK ROW, COVENTRY
Time: 2 pm until 4pm
Members are requested to bring along up to nine sheets for display

Coventry Philatelic Society are also holding their STAMP FAIR in the Sibree Hall at the same time. Stamp Fair will be open from 10 am until 5-30 pm Admission 20p and will include the following

Displays of 'ANDORRA' and 'XMAS AROUND THE CORNER'
Post Office Kiosk, Dealers Stands and refreshments
will be available all day

So a good turn out of members is expected - make a day of it.

DECEMBER MEETING will be held on Saturday 8th at The Bass Museum in Burton
details will be published in the next Bulletin.

Answer to Editor's Quiz published in last issue (September)

Illustration of a cartoon or illustrated post card was published with request to members to determine the address.
It obviously proved to be a too difficult task for no answers or attempts were received.

The correct address by interpretation of the cartoon figures was:

To the
Prize Editor
The Golden Penny
195 Strand
London W C 2

Look up the September issue and have another go !

If any member has a similar item which would cause some brain searching we would be happy to set the problem.
Editor : Jon Baker 13 Station Road Hinckley Leicestershire.

The following illustrations are to be read inconjunction with the two art les published on pages 3 and 4.



Illustration No. 1

'Penny Black but Twopence Blue?' submitted by John Calladine



Illustration No. 2

Postmark of Penny Black submitted by the author

PENNY BLACK BUT TWOPENCE BLUE ?

See Illustration No.1. by John Calladine.

What price a green Maltese Cross ? What price indeed - perhaps £1,000 on a penny red-brown on cover. If only the postmaster with a coloured ink pad could see what he had done. More money changes hands than he earned in a lifetime.

Fortunately colour need not be costly as long as the postmark is kept away from the (adhesive) stamp. The blue, green or red double-arc circular date stamp, usually on the back of a letter of the 1840s and 1850s, scarcely raises the pulse rate or the price. In fact the very existence of the coloured C D S is ignored by most authors. Why was it thought necessary to use coloured ink ? Was the choice merely the whim of the duty clerk ? Did the colour signify morning or afternoon duty ? Are certain colours linked to certain years ? Whatever the reason, it seemed worthwhile to make a preliminary study. The only material available was (inevitably ?) from Stourbridge (Worcs) but at least there was sufficient to make a start.

The results are tabulated at the annex, and, perhaps not surprisingly, a pattern emerges. Not a single coloured Stourbridge C D S was found amongst 45 examples dating from 1837 to the end of 1848. Whether they were on the front or back of the cover - and many were struck on the front by the delivery office during this period - the ink at Stourbridge was invariably black. On the other hand, amongst 19 examples with dates between October 1849 and December 1855, there was a range of glorious colour but not one black strike. It seems probable that coloured ink ruled the roost until some time in 1857 when, perhaps reluctantly, black (in the form of a distinctive grey-black) re-appeared.

By a piece of good fortune, a 'returned letter' of early 1858 bears both a black double-arc Stourbridge C D S dated 20 February on the back and the new single circle Stourbridge datestamp of 24 February on the front, also in black. It probably marks the end of the road for the old-style C D S and makes a convenient last date for this little exercise.

What happened during the "colourful years" ? In October 1849 the C D S was dark green, in December perhaps more of a blue-green, in early 1850 it was a grey-blue but not the clear blue found elsewhere and the only example from late 1850 might be described as alive. All examples seen from 1851 and 1852 are a clear green but the six strikes from 1853 and 1854 are an attractive orange. The three examples from 1855 are a clear red and a C D S of 21 January 1857 is the same colour. Inevitably there is a gap in one's material and it has not been confirmed that the C D S remained red during 1856. The chances are that it did.

The only tentative conclusion is that a particular colour was probably used exclusively over a period of a year or more at a time. It would be useful to know whether this was the case in other Midland towns. Certainly the chosen colours do not correspond with those in use at Stourbridge. Birmingham was using orange ink when the double-arc C D S was introduced in 1829 and Bilston used it in the early 1840s. Nottingham used blue ink in 1848 and Northampton in 1850. However bright red does seem to have been a popular Midland colour in 1855 : Worcester, Evesham, Broadway, Malvern, Ledbury and Hereford were amongst those using it. Derby preferred green.

If any long suffering member has covers bearing a Stourbridge C D S of the period 1849 to 1857 inclusive, I would be most grateful to hear of the date and colour. If anyone can spare a few minutes from measuring duplex cancels to comment on the use of coloured inks elsewhere, I promise them both a reply and a 10p stamp. And if any older (?) and wiser member can tell me that it has all been looked at before, I welcome enlightenment.

Annex

YEAR	No. of EXAMPLES SEEN	COLOUR	COMMENT
Pre 1840	1	BLACK	1837
1840	2	BLACK	
1841	5	BLACK	
1842	18	BLACK	
1843	3	BLACK	
1844	3	BLACK	
1845	2	BLACK	
1846	1	BLACK	
1847	4	BLACK	
1848	6	BLACK	Latest date 17 Nov
1849	2	DARK GREEN	Earliest date 19 Oct
1850	3	GREY-BLUE	Later Olive ?
1851	1	GREEN	
1852	4	GREEN	Latest date 13 Jun
1853	4	ORANGE	Earliest date 8 Jun
1854	2	ORANGE	Latest date 11 Jul
1855	3	RED	Earliest date 7 May
1856	NONE	RED ?	
1857	4	RED/BLACK	1 in Jan - Red 3 in Nov - grey-black
1858	1	BLACK	Single circle in use.

The following information gleaned from British Postmarks by A. & H. has been submitted by Jim Bell. This is a direct result from a display of Coventry material shown by W.S. Chester at the last Society Meeting.
Postmarks of the Parcel Post

"The agreement with the railway companies did not exclude the Post Office from running its own Parcel Services. On the 1st June, 1887, an experiment was made with horse-drawn coaches between the London Bridge Parcel Office and Brighton. Soon similar coaches began to run on other routes where the cost of conveyance in this way could be less than that by rail. By the close of the century motor vans began to supersede the horse-drawn coaches, and their greater speed enabled larger distances to be covered. To distinguish the parcels carried by the Post Office coaches, on which no fee was due to the railways, special marks were soon introduced with the wording "Coach Road-Borne". There are London varieties with "G.P.O." and the District initials. We have also seen an unframed straight-line type with the "Road-Borne" only. Marks were also introduced for the cases where it was necessary to distinguish parcels carried by rail. There were again varieties. The "Road-Borne" and Coach Borne" marks were sometimes employed as cancellations, but more often normal cancellations were used, and these marks appear elsewhere on the front of the parcel. We ourselves have seen none of these marks on parcels, since the Christmas period of 1938".

See Illustration No.2