

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Number 184, November 2014

Well, the first edition of Midland Mail went out under your new editor and, by and large, the feedback was favourable. A few members noticed, quite correctly, that there were a couple of glitches and were kind enough to comment on them; one I noticed myself after the printing, the others I did not. PLEASE feel free to make any and all comments and observations; you will not upset me if they are not glowing as I need to learn! I do need your articles, big and small; I found that waiting for articles to come in is the worst aspect of being editor. I would like to produce four issues a year of a minimum of 20 pages per issue and 24 pages if I have the material. The January issue will, in future, probably be only 20 pages since including the meetings programme with a 24-page Midland Mail, as I did, increased the weight above 100gms for posting with the envelopes I had ordered and I had to run around Wrexham looking for lighter envelopes, which JUST worked, I hope everyone's copy arrived in good order. Another aspect of the learning process!

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of **Norman Higson** and send condolences to his family.

THE ANNUAL AUCTION 2015

Please consider placing any spare items into our annual auction, we badly need more vendors. Items you wish to sell can be handed in at the December or January meetings or sent to Eric Lewis NO LATER THAN THE END OF JANUARY at 27, Rathbone Road, Smethwick, B67 5JG.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome two new members to the society, they are:

Robin Jarman, Studley, Warks who collects Croydon and District postal history and Chilean aerophilately.

Peter Martin, Singapore, who collects North East Derbyshire, east of Chesterfield postal history.

In the last issue I should have addressed our new member as **Mrs Marion Turner**, my apologies to her.

WEBSITES

Ken Smith has produced a website of *UK Post Office lists by County* with the lists having been compiled using the 'traditional' counties, e.g. Middlesex, Rutland, Huntingdonshire and the pre-1974 Welsh counties, although a couple of the 1974 new counties have been included, such as West Midlands and Cumbria. His aim is to give the opening year of each office and closure dates where appropriate. All known town and village offices are listed as well as town sub-offices. For the smaller offices, UDCs and rubber date stamps (19th century) and establishment of MO-SB and Telegraph facilities are given together with the changes for all offices. A main aim is to keep up with recent changes and closures, especially with all the changes going on at the present time, with offices becoming Post Office Locals and Mains and there is a terminology page, the address is <https://sites.google.com/site/ukpostofficesbycounty/>.

Websites seem to be in vogue since your editor has produced one for the Shropshire Postal History Society. It is a work in progress but members might like to browse the site and help us to get to the top of searches, if that can happen. It is also a Google based site <https://sites.google.com/site/shropshirepostalhistorysociety/>. Are there other dedicated sites of our Midland Counties? If so, please send the address and it will be published here.

Midland Philatelic Federation Spring 2014 Inter-Society Competition

The results from the above competition show that three of our members were very successful. **Clive Jones** obtained two Gold awards, one for *Antipodean Trials & Tribulations* (87 points) and one for *Insured Mail* (91 points and missing the overall best by only one point). **Alan Godfrey** gained Gold for his thematic *Seaweeds* (86 points) and **Stuart Geddes** obtained a Silver award for his entry *By Way of Waterford*. Congratulations to all three of them on their successful entries. Is there any enthusiasm in our membership to re-introduce the competition in our society?

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

8th November 2014, St Germain's Church Hall, Birmingham, B16 9TD, when Ian May will be talking on Warwickshire Postal History.

6th December 2014, the annual Christmas get-together at the National Brewing Centre, Burton-on-Trent, when the day will circle around Express Mail, with members displays and a talk by Julian Tweed.

10th January 2015, St Germain's Church Hall, Birmingham, B16 9TD, Members' One Board displays of Maps and Large Items – finding something to show should tax some of us to the limit!

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

The first meeting of the 2014/15 season took place on 6th September at a new venue, an upper room in The Ladybird Inn, Bromsgrove, a 200-yard walk from Bromsgrove station. There was ample parking, helpful staff and a good pub lunch available. The room was bright and airy and easily held the 20 members and one guest who attended. Chris Jackson, Alan Godfrey and Malcolm Allison of the Redditch Society gave their displays as follows:

Chris Jackson began the meeting showing his 'Needlemakers of the Arrow Valley', the 80-sheet competition entry that he put into Spring Stampex this year, plus sheets that were either unsuitable for a competitive display or recently obtained items. He started with an introduction to needle making, the origins of the trade and the Livery company including how Threadneedle Street, London got its name. He highlighted the way in which companies used their stationery and advertising material to demonstrate how reliable and substantial they were and to display the awards they had gained at the 1851 Great Exhibition and other trade fairs, notably the Paris Exhibition of 1855. Perhaps the most surprising thing was how many different aspects of GB postal history were shown, 18th century town marks, mileage marks, travellers, Penny Posts, Ship letters, to a variety of post-1839/1840 marks and covers into the 20th century, although as our secretary pointed out, no SDIs! Combined with the postal history there were postcards, advertising material and packets of needles all of which made for a colourful display which contained such a cross section of material that there was something for everyone.

The valley had supplied approximately 90% of the U.K. needle output in the early 1900's shown by the number of different countries that mail was sent to and received from. Europe was well represented with correspondence to Belgium, France (see Fig 1), Holland, Germany, Italy, and Spain (Fig 2) with many of the letters written in each country's language showing that the needle makers employed multilingual people even as far back as in the 1830's. Canada and the U.S.A. featured strongly with Russia Sweden and Switzerland all represented. Perhaps the most unusual was a letter to Morocco which had a local delivery stamp in addition to the UK postage.

There was a cross over between postal history and needle packets with William Allwoods of Alcester who produced needle packets in the form of miniature envelopes, one being a '*Postal Reform Envelope*' that had a facsimile of Roland Hill in place of the stamp. We learned that John English of Feckenham had sufficient post on his own to warrant the setting up of a Penny Post, firstly as the number one receiving house in Stratford Penny Post and later in the Bromsgrove Penny Post which was shown on a ship letter from America through Liverpool. Another ship letter from America travelled via Bristol and had been carried on the '*Great Western*', Brunel's famous steamship.

John James had originated from Long Crendon in Buckinghamshire and moved to Redditch to set up business in an old toll house. Ten years later he had very large premises and an imposing house which were shown in a superb steel engraving on his headed notepaper, postally used to Liverpool. Milward & Sons, the largest needle producer in the town, took one whole board. A postcard to Russia arrived before it was posted due to the difference in the calendars in 1906. Helen Terry, the actress and the Princes Albert Victor and George on the Royal yacht *Bacchante* were seen on two advertising cards. A photo of an enamel advert for calyx eyed needles was shown which had been found in a museum in Warnamboul, Australia.

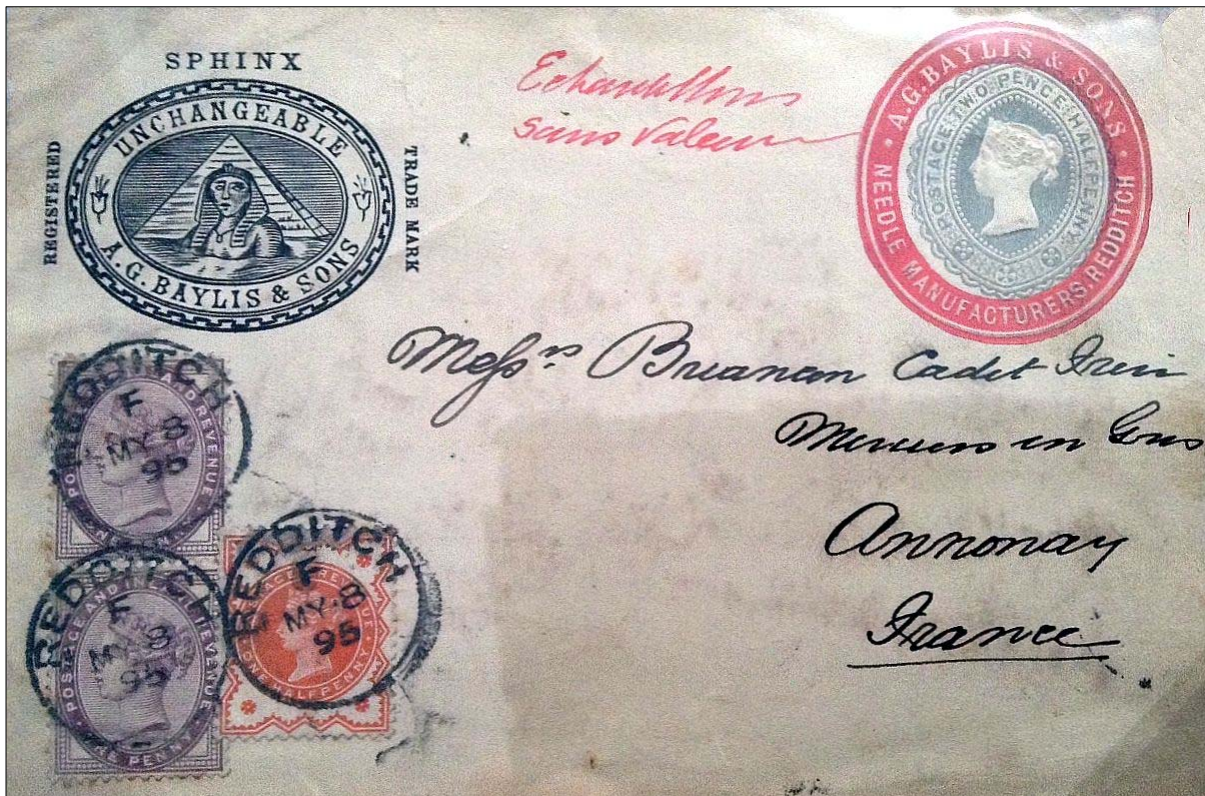


Fig 1, Postal stationery envelope from A. G. Baylis & Sons, to France, 8th May 1895, showing the Sphinx trademark and the security / advertising ring on a 2½d grey embossed stamp.



Fig 2, Wrapper of a packet of needles sent from Henry Milward & Sons to Spain on 30th December 1845 sent paid to the Spanish border under the 1843 Anglo-French Convention showing a British rate of 5d per ½oz and French rate of 5d per ¼oz, to be shown on the cover. Spanish postage from Bayonne was red 10R^s (reales), equivalent to 2/1d.

Abel Morral's section included a 1d black to Hathersage and a Bromsgrove traveller together with advertising cards for 'Bayonet Point Hatpins' one of which included an advert in the space for the stamp. Headed notepaper printed by Perkins Bacon and Petch (of 1d black fame) was on the first sheet of Shrimpton and Fletcher together with a surgical needle case carrying the instruction 'Keep greased after use', one hopes they were cleaned before re-use!

Railway enthusiasts were catered for with a 10/- commercially used Railway stamp on a box label from Redditch to shipping agents in Liverpool sent by Spencer & Son on a box containing hypodermic needles. Altogether a stunning display and well worthy of the high award it gained at Stampex.

Alan Godfrey followed with a display of Stratford upon Avon postal history starting with postcards of Stratford's post offices from the White Lion in Henley Street, to the Victorian building in Sheep Street and the ugly 1963 office in Bridge Street, before it moved to a shop-style office in Henley Street. A redirected cover of 1787 with a straight-line 95 STRATFORD ON AVON mileage received a 32 HIGH WICOMB mileage mark at Marlow before being redirected to Brighthelmstone (Brighton). It was addressed to William Clayton (an MP) and should have been sent free, so all charges were deleted and a "FREE J" cachet (the mark of James Stafford) was added. Later mileage mark covers showed the change from 97 (1801-1818) to 99 (1818-1823) and back to 97 miles (1823-1828) as the route to London changed; the wide range of different mileage handstamps in use were also illustrated.

In 1819 Stratford was given permission to establish a Penny Post, first with Feckenham (Worcestershire) and later Wellesbourne (1819), Bidford on Avon (1835) and Hockley Heath (1839). Seven different styles of Stratford on Avon Penny Post marks (in red), two sub-office numeral handstamps (Wellesbourne "No2" and Bidford "No3") and a sub-office village handstamp (Hockley Penny Post) were used. The introduction of the uniform penny post led to a short-lived oval Stratford/A/Penny Paid handstamp, in red and then in black. From 1844 adhesives were cancelled with a 754 barred numeral; Alan showed examples on the 1d red and 2d blue and later duplex cancellations.

No display of Stratford upon Avon would be complete without the Shakespeare "stamp" and Alan explained how this label had been first sold to tourists in 1899 at Holy Trinity Church (where Shakespeare is buried) as a souvenir to attach to postcards. The cost of 1/- included carriage of the cards to the nearest post office with the ½d or 1d postage stamp added. In 1908 the Post Office ruled that the labels could only be fixed to the picture side of cards. Despite this, the church continued to sell them until 1931 and raised a considerable amount towards its restoration. The display continued with three examples of the early circular skeleton marks dated 23rd and 24th April 1849. The handstamp was probably used to cope with the extra volume of mail from the visitors to Stratford for Shakespeare's birthday. Four large oval "MISSENT TO STRATFORD AVON" marks used between 1830 and 1851 in red, black and blue ink followed. Early aviation was represented with a picture post card of Henri Salmét in his 50 hp Bleriot monoplane which was carried on 24th July 1912 from Worcester to Stratford (with a stop at Evesham). It received the purple cachet of "CARRIED BY H SALMET DAILY MAIL AIRMAN" and was posted on arrival at Stratford.

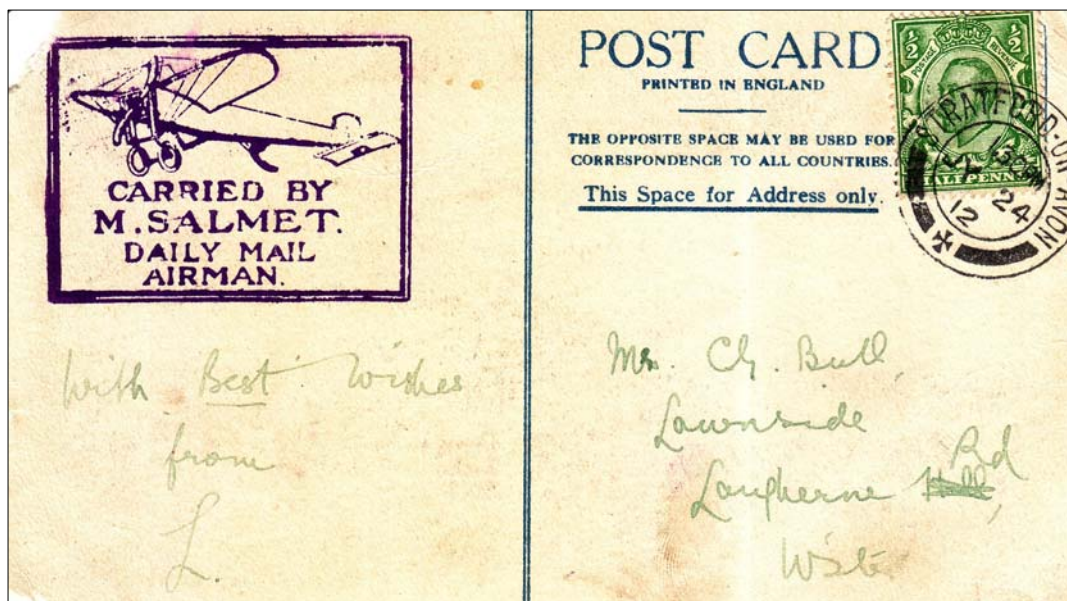


Fig 3, 1912 postcard mailed at Stratford showing the SALMET cachet in purple.

Malcolm Allison completed today's displays with a selection from his Line Engraved collection of Great Britain. He began with an introduction to the "invention" of postage stamps, from the ideas of among others Rowland Hill; through the transition in postage rates from mileage based to charge by weight and on to the stamps themselves. This was illustrated using photographs of the main players, as background material to the story.

The philatelic items on display began with an example of the 1839 Postage Act which set out the legal mechanism for implementing the reforms, followed by a rare copy of the Official Post Office Notice introducing Uniform Fourpenny Postage on 5th December 1839, examples of Uniform handstruck '4' marks and also examples of the Uniform 1d post, all precursors to the use of 1d Black stamps.

In the stamps Malcolm confines his collecting to the imperforate stamps **with just the corner letters MA**. As this would not create much of a collection or display (there being only 177 possible examples!), fortunately for us Malcolm has expanded his criteria to include the whole of the 'M' row for stamps from the first 11 printing Plates. So we saw many examples of beautiful 1d Black stamps both on and off cover, examples restricted solely by their corner lettering. Using the same criteria, we also saw what would be described as 'matched pairs' where 1d red stamps printed from the same printing Plates as the black stamps were shown, again some on cover.

Moving on to the remaining 'red' Plates, from Plate 12, Malcolm again confines his collecting to just stamps lettered 'MA' and we saw numerous examples of individually plated stamps, again both on and off cover, including a rare plate 175. We saw what is becoming very close to a complete set of 1d red stamps from each printing Plate.

Imperforate 2d blue stamps were not left out and we saw examples from all four imperforate plates, again just from the 'M' row. Stamps from Plates 1 and 2 are rarer than 1d Blacks. To complete his display Malcolm showed a "work in progress"; a reconstruction of a sheet of 2d Blue stamps from Plate 3 – not quite complete but again getting close.

The praise heaped on the presenters by John Calladine during his vote of thanks was well merited. Although John referred to the 'Redditch Mafia', there was no 'hit and run' here. All three of our presenters showed great presentation skills, a good delivery as well as competent computer skills in making their excellent display sheets.

A REVISED BOOK

Alan Godfrey has sent information of a book he has revised and updated, called **POSTMAN'S KNOCK - A Postal History of Alcester & District**, which, in 32 pages, explores the history of Alcester's post office from the early 1700s to the present day with notes on the places and people who have shaped its history. Also included are the histories of the sub-post offices in Alcester's villages: Ardens Grafton, Bidford on Avon, Broom, Coughton, Dunnington, Exhall, Great Alne & Haselor. The appendices include lists of postboxes, postmasters and some of the postmarks used in the area. The book is illustrated with photographs throughout. Price £3.

Alan states he can bring copies of the book to meetings or it can be sent by post - details can be obtained by emailing him at: alandgodfrey@hotmail.com

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THE OCTOBER MEETING

The October meeting, held on 11th October at the offices of the auctioneers Warwick and Warwick was given by **Colin Such** a Director of that company. He titled his power point display ~~Thirty~~ *Forty Years on the Rostrum*, and submitted an outline of his talk which can be found below.

A postcard is defined as a card sent through the post, without an envelope, at a reduced rate of postage compared to a letter. The first category of postcard was postal stationery with Austria introducing the first in 1869, Great Britain followed a year later. Illustrations were permitted on British postal stationery cards, as long as they were not sold to the public. Warwick and Warwick sold a card with a wonderful advertisement for Derry & Toms' ladies' dresses used on October 18th 1870 (Fig 1). It realised £488 and may well be the first illustrated postcard recorded in this country. The "Beer and Backy" card of Victoria, Australia was withdrawn after it was boycotted by the offended population. The postal authorities cancelled the remaining stock and sold them in bulk below face to stamp dealers!



Fig 1, The Derry and Toms card postally used on 18th October 1870, printed here in black and white, though in reality it has a slight yellowy pink look to it.

Cartes de visite cards became popular their images applied to stiff card that could be mailed to friends. The public started to collect cards of personalities and royalty and soon the publishers produced topographical versions. A further stimulus to the production of picture postcards was the illustrated letterheads and envelopes commonly used to advertise commerce, such as those produced by hotels, railways and shipping lines. In this country there was a demand for pictorial postcards similar to those permitted on the continent and the Post Office relented and allowed the private production of picture postcards on September 1st 1894 with one side of the card reserved for the address while the image had to share the other side with the message. Vignettes were produced either in monochrome or in chromo-lithography, many of the latter type being manufactured in Bavaria.

The manufacturers wanted a larger area for the illustration, but not at the expense of the area for the message. The problem was resolved in 1902 when the British Post Office invented the divided back postcard. As long as the card was mailed inland the address could share the same side as the message and the whole of the front of the card could be devoted to the image. This led to an explosion in the manufacture and use of the picture postcard. Soon postcard collecting became as popular as stamp collecting and most families had an album in which they would save postcards mailed to them by friends and family. My talk illustrates a number of typical topographical cards from this period.

Social history and topographical real photographic cards, strong on detail with early motor omnibuses, trams and delivery vehicles are always valuable and much in demand. Railway stations are well collected and my talk includes an interior view of South Cerney station in Gloucestershire, closed by the Beeching axe in the 1960s.

Suffragette cards are well collected and Warwick and Warwick hold the record for the highest realisation for a Suffragette card sold in this country. The card depicts the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies' Carlisle to London pilgrimage, at Penrith and realised the impressive sum of £1,092 with the pre-sale estimate at £250; the amount realised reflected the rarity of the card. In a later auction, several cards of the 1913 funeral cortege of Emily Davison, the Suffragette killed at the Epsom Derby sold for around £95 each. The vendor of the old postcard album containing the cards which he brought in to our Warwick office for valuation, was pleasantly surprised by the result.

It is important for a dealer to tell the difference between images of the *Titanic* and its sister ship the *Olympic* as there is a substantial difference in value and often images of the latter are captioned *Titanic*. The main difference is in the superstructure and two cards are displayed which demonstrate the difference. The most valuable postcard I have ever sold was a *Titanic* card (see Fig 2). It was a breakfast menu card for 2nd class passengers dated April 11th 1912, four days before the vessel sank. Normally these menu cards realise around £300 each. However this particular card realised £8,912 when we offered it in 2002. The reason for this enormous result is understood as the reverse of the card bears the postmark of Queenstown, in Ireland, of April 11th and was written on board the ship and posted at its last port of call. The sender was Jacob Gibbons, a member of the crew. He was selected as one of the sailors to row the lifeboats and survived the disaster. He not only survived the sinking of the "Titanic", but also survived his enlistment in the First World War and died in old age in Dorset. Interestingly this very card has recently been re-offered in auction. The enormous growth in the market, especially in America, resulted in a realisation of **£87,000!**

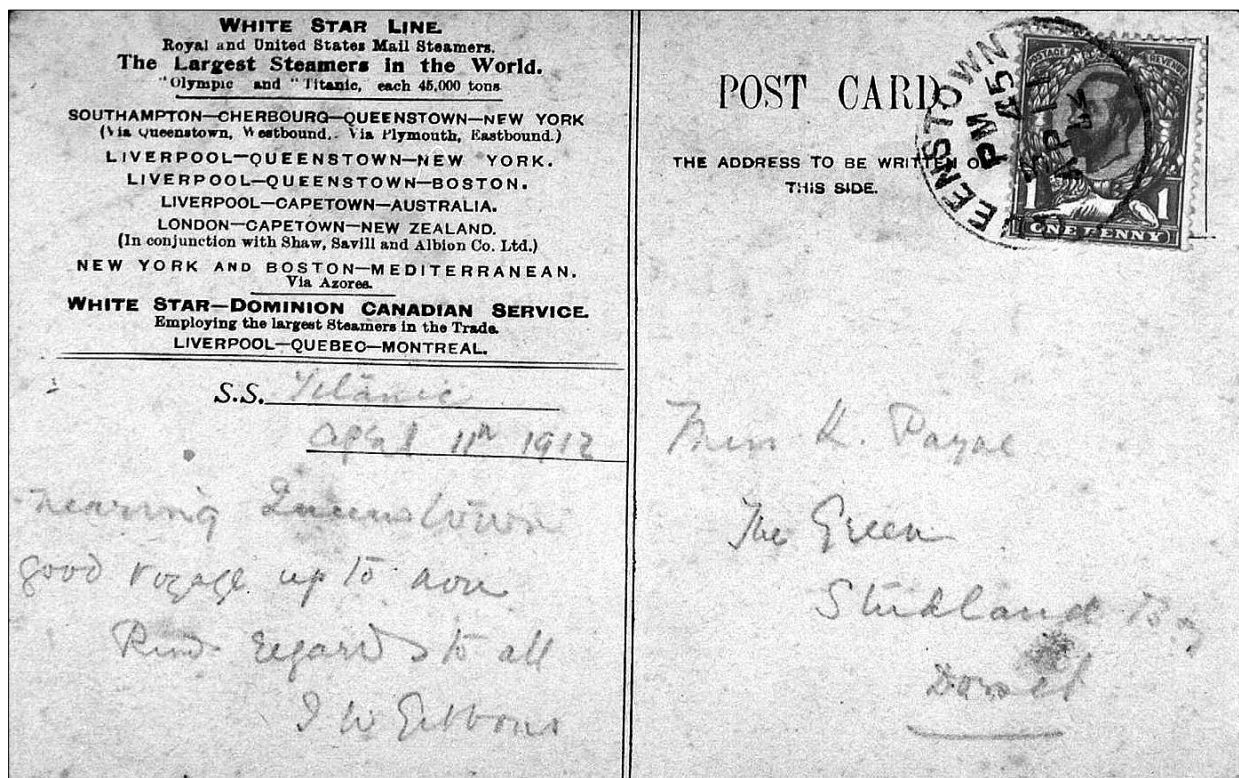


Fig 2, The reverse of the 'Titanic card' put into the mails at Queenstown 11th April 1912

To celebrate the coronation of Edward VII in August 1902, a balloon flight was organised at Beckenham in Kent. Three bundles of 100 postcards were flown and I believe only two have survived. Then, a month later, a balloon flight was planned to raise funds for the Lifeboat Service. The public were invited to purchase specially printed postcards depicting a hot air balloon bearing the banner *Lifeboat Saturday*. 4,000 such cards were sold for the flight from Manchester Botanical Gardens but it would seem that again only two have survived. One sold in auction in 1983 for £1,675. The flight had been a good fundraiser and it was decided to repeat the exercise a year later, on August 29th 1903. This time the printed card, which cost 3d, had a similar image of the balloon, but the landscape

beneath was given a rather inappropriate Arctic setting (see Fig 3). However at the take off the balloon was damaged and the flight had to be aborted. It was decided to try again and on September 5th the balloon took off successfully from Alexandra Palace in north London and landed at Ongar in Essex, from where the postcards were forwarded to their addressees. In 2010 Warwick and Warwick sold two of these flown postcards at £920 each.

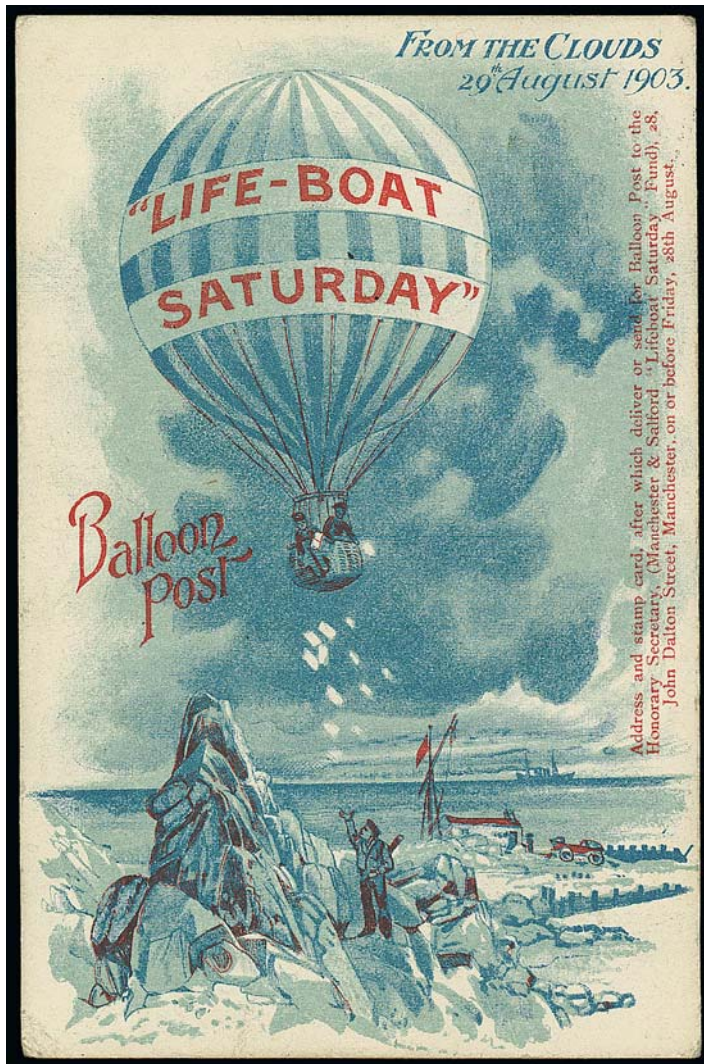


Fig 4, An Inverted Jenny.

Did you know the US Post Office has reissued the Inverted Jenny as a \$2 stamp? The example below was sent to me on a soggy parcel from the US, hence the ink run (Ed).



Fig 3, Postcard with the Arctic setting carried on the 23rd August 1903 balloon flight from Alexandra Palace.

My talk has been confined to British picture postcards, but it is important to realise that practically every country in the world has produced picture postcards and those from some of the countries less developed at the beginning of the 20th century are very rare and desirable.

Warwick and Warwick also sold a Cigarette card from a previously unknown set from Rutherfords Cigarettes for £1840 including premium. I would like to say how difficult it is to be precise over postcard valuations. No catalogue can ever be published with values for every postcard, as cards previously unseen are discovered in collections on a daily basis. This is how my interest in them has been maintained over 40 years on the rostrum. You never know what will turn up tomorrow!

As for stamps we come to the Inverted Jenny (see Fig 4) first issued in the United States in May 1918 in which the image of the Curtiss JN-4 airplane in the centre of the design appears upside-down. The buyer of the original sheet was immediately offered \$500 from a dealer, which he declined, and then sold it within a few days to Eugene Klein for £15,000, who sold it immediately to Col. Edward Greene for \$20,000. The stamps in the sheet were then numbered on the reverse, in pencil, and the sheet was broken up by Greene and Klein and marketed. By 1940 a single was selling for \$4,000. An Inverted Jenny was sold by Warwick & Warwick for £184,000, including premium, in March 2008. It is probably the only copy in this country.

Chris Jackson gave a hearty vote of thanks on behalf of those present, for a superb, illustrated talk.

A JOURNEY THROUGH MONTGOMERYSHIRE & SHROPSHIRE TO WORCESTER in 1805

by Guy Bridges

I have acquired two letters that were part of a correspondence addressed to Clapton, Hackney, London. They are numbered 27 and 28 and give an account of the travels of a party from Aberystwyth to Worcester in August 1805. I have transcribed both letters as I think members may find them of interest as they mention towns and give the times of the mails for some of the towns. Both letters are illustrated, the first posted at Ludlow on 18th August 1805, with the mileage stamp **SH248** and charged 9d, the rate for 120 to 170 miles under the 1805 Act, which came into force on 12th March of that year. This letter is also of interest as it must have been on the bottom of a bundle for London as they marked on the reverse a manuscript **L** to indicate the bundle was for London and the total charge was 5/3 being seven times the 9d single sheet rate.

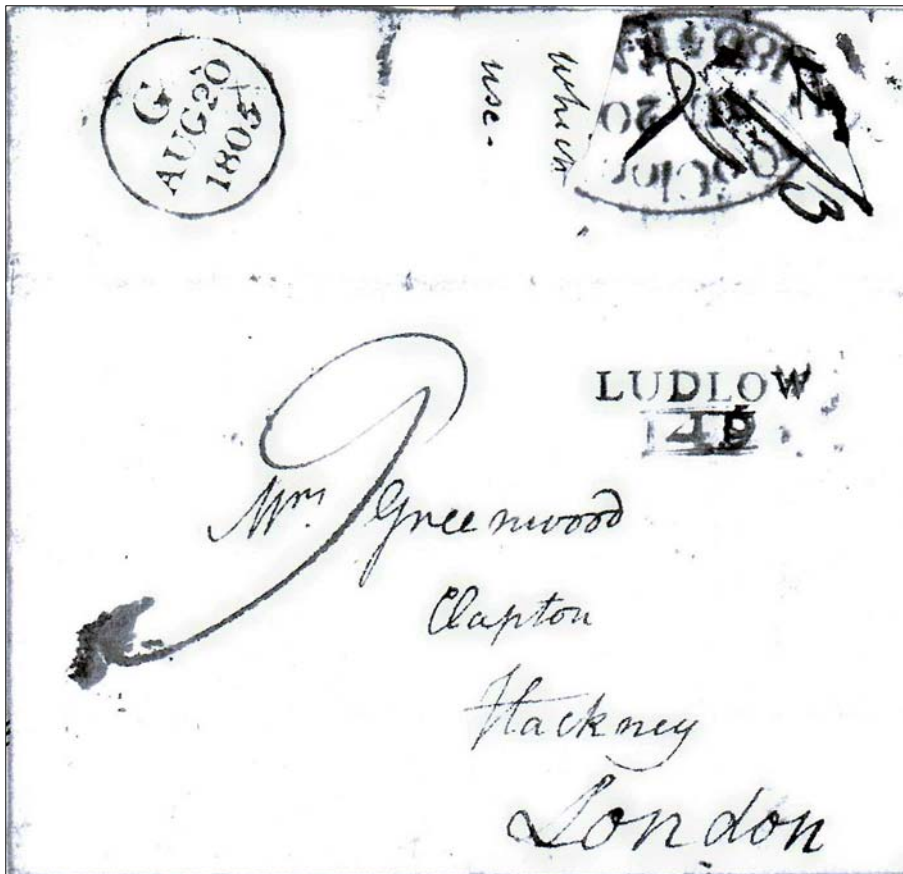


Fig 1, Single sheet letter from Ludlow to London dated 18th Aug 1805, arriving on 20th Aug.

Transcription of the first letter:

27

Devils Bridge Friday 16th 1805
7 o'clock

My Dear F & M,

Contrary to our intention we did not get to this enchanted spot till this morning, we set out about 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon to sleep at this place but we had not got ½ a mile when we met a Post Boy who had driven us the day before and knew where we were going, who told us it would be impossible to get Beds here for he had just come from thence & the house was completely full & there is only this house in the place (which is called the Havod Arms) therefore as we were neither inclined to sleep in the carriage or the road, we very wisely turned back and slept at Aberystwyth, which place we are non of us enchanted with and we were not at all sorry to leave it this morning at 6 o'clock, or perhaps if I said 7 it would be more accurate, we were ready but the horses were not. We breakfasted here, about 12 miles it is called, but it is not quite so much. We engaged beds for tonight and horses to take us to Col. Johnes which is 5 miles from hence & where we have been so much pleased with it, we are not able to express what we think of it. We have seen his House & Grounds which are enchanting indeed, we walked 5 miles round the Grounds, which change their appearance every five minutes, a number of fine waterfalls surprise you – Rocks on each side with fine Wood Scenery, in short I cannot describe it, so I will leave you to suppose

everything that is grand and beautiful & you shall read the account in Evans, a book we have now with us, published about two years ago, entitled a *Tour through South Wales* – which we have really found entertaining & of some use. We only wished to have one day there, instead of 4 hours – it is called Hafod or Havod – the situation of the house we are now in is very fine, the window looks immediately on the fall of the Rhydol, the fall of the Mynach is very near, why such a beautiful place should have such a name is surprising – Devils Bridge. I find this cannot be put into the Post until tomorrow.

It is near 10 o'clock. All of us well, but faint and wearily the way worn! Travellin! We have had a vast deal of walking and we are to start tomorrow early for Llanydloes – Company just come from Aberistwith now, People are all mad this year for travelling – we are now really on our road home & unless several Plinlimmons come in our way, I suppose we shall not be very long out now, we think of seeing Ludlow – so good night.

Llanydloes in Montgomeryshire – ½ past 12 o'clock Saturday.

We left the Devil at 7 o'clock this morning, not without regret as it was so beautiful a place. We have travelled 20 miles since, excellent road & fine mountains & hills on each side. I was in hopes of catching some Post at this place, but there is not any such thing, so we must trust to the next place, which is Newtown 13 miles further. We ? our favourite, the Wye, soon after we entered Montgomeryshire, it rises in this county – what a different place we are in now, all hurry and bustle being Market Day & the sound of voices instead of waterfalls – we were too far from Plinlimmon to visit it, our Botanist longed to ascend it.

¼ past 4 o'clock Newtown, changed Horses & enquired about the Post, it went out at 12 o'clock – we proceeded on to this place Bishops Castle 16 miles further where we arrived at ½ past 8 o'clock. Post gone from this place at 5 o'clock, so I am unlucky in every way, therefore I must trust till tomorrow at Ludlow, where I suppose we shall be. Love to all. Yours sincerely M.J. Foster

Sunday Ludlow ½ past 12 o'clock arrived here from Bishops Castle. Post goes at 6 o'clock. We have been unfortunate in regard to the Post in several Towns we have passed through. Most likely we shall sleep at Worcester tomorrow night – Wednesday or Thursday will bring us home.

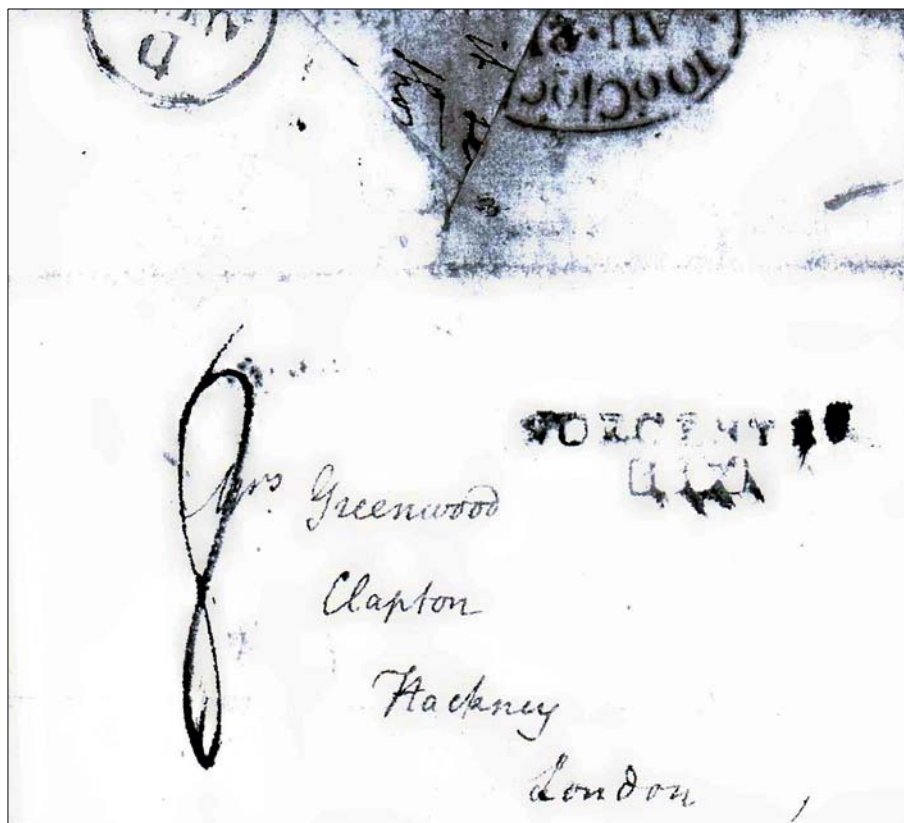


Fig 2, The second letter, number **28**, to the same address. It was posted at Worcester where it received the boxed mileage **WO863**. Charged 8d for 80 to 120 miles, it arrived in London on 21st August 1805.

Transcription of the second letter:

28

Ludlow Sunday 18th August 1805

My Dear F & M,

On my arrival here today, the first object was to enquire for Letters & put a Letter in, one from you & so we were glad to receive it. I hope you will receive this on Wednesday Evening, unless anything unforeseen should prevent it. We shall sleep at Worcester tomorrow night. We are much pleased with Ludlow, it is a very handsome town and a Castle which is a great ornament to it stands uncommonly well. We have been walking there since Tea. Our plan for this afternoon was after dinner to have gone to Church, then add horses to our Carriage and gone to Downton Castle (about 6 miles) where there are fine Grounds and the Castle which is inhabited to be seen but the rain came on about 2 o'clock and continued so violent that we gave up our intention, so we only went to Church. If it is fine tomorrow we intend going – we have had a short walk since Tea. Just now an alarm in the Town of fire, the volunteers are out & everybody running as you know is always the case. It was at the stables belonging to this Inn, tho' at some distance from the house, the Mail Coach horses are kept there – the horses were all got out & the fire is now out & all is quiet – Ed has been calling on a brother banker, Mr Welling.

Monday 19th August 2 o'clock – I write a line or two in this from Tenbury, where we stop to change horses and eat, it is 10 miles from Ludlow. We have been at Downton the residence of Mr Knight, the house is built quite Castle like – the grounds are 3 miles round cut out of the Rock, the River Teme runs at the bottom. We none too delighted with (it) as we have seen Hafod which exceeds it in every respect. I hope we shall be in time in Worcester to put this in the Post - otherwise I must be the bearer of it myself. We are all quite well & so I finish for the present.

Worcester – arrived here between 7 & 8 o'clock – it seems a very capitol place indeed, handsome Shops & Houses. We are at the Crown an immense large Inn. We have just done Tea, which to be sure was in a superior style to what we have had for a long time past & we are returning to our Wax Candles again, we had them at the first setting of our journey, as far as Monmouth, but not since. We have been obliged to write out letters by candles not longer than a farthing rush-light. I understand the Post goes every day at 3 o'clock from hence – so shall put this in tomorrow before we leave Worcester. We fancy ourselves in London again, Shops lighted up & the Streets equally bustling – after seeing the Cathedral & what else is to be seen & then proceed on our journey. Wednesday evening we intend being at home, what hour I cannot tell – we shall meet I hope all well on Thursday morning – ray remember us to all.

19th August

Yours sincerely M.J. Foster

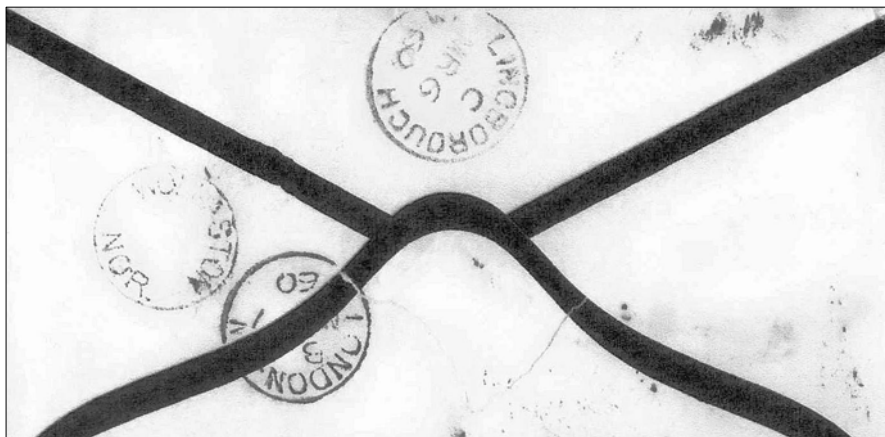
I wonder if other Society members have any of the other letters relating to the correspondence written during this journey in 1805

~~~~~

### Undated WOLLASTON / NOR.

by Derek Smeathers

Derek reports that he has found only the second type-D2 undated circle issued to Northamptonshire, used at Wollaston on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1860. It was issued as WOLLASTON / NOR. on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1859 (Vol 18 page 24 of the impression books). Derek's example, illustrated below, is in blue, whereas the other example of February 1860 is in black. The other issued D2 udc was MILTON / NORTHAMPTON, on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1859 (Vol 16, page 171), unrecorded so far. A MILTON / NORTHAMPTONSHIRE issued on 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 1859 was "not sent" for some reason.



## WHERE IS SHERBOURNE?

by Alan Godfrey

This envelope was sent by the Birmingham company Goodwin & Co., a well-known firm of brass founders based in Fleet Street. Sent out in late June 1900, it was addressed to "Messrs. Gordon & Co., Sherbourne".

The post office tried hard to find out to where it should be delivered, trying six places named Sherbourne or a variant of this name in the space of a week from Durham in the north to Dorset in the south, before giving up and returning the letter to its sender. In the process the letter received eighteen handstamps and numerous manuscript markings. Can anyone discover the true destination of the letter?



Cover opened out to show all the markings

On the following page 13 there is a table showing, as accurately as possible, a list of all the markings to be found on the cover, from when it was put into the mails in Birmingham, when the 1d lilac was cancelled 20<sup>th</sup> June 1900, 6.15pm to a WARWICK mark dated almost exactly one week later on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1900, 5pm.

## Markings on June 1900 much forwarded cover

| Description                                                                                       | County  | Date             | Time / Code | Type of mark |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| BIRMINGHAM 96                                                                                     | Warks   | 20/06/1900       | 6.15pm      | twin circle  |
| SHERBORNE                                                                                         | Dorset  | 21/06/1900       | 6.15am      | cds          |
| SHERBORNE                                                                                         | Dorset  | 21/06/1900       | 8.15am      | sq circle    |
| ...ERBO....                                                                                       |         |                  |             | cds          |
| DURHAM                                                                                            | Durham  | 22/06/1900       | 11.45am     | cds          |
| SHERBURN DURHAM                                                                                   | Durham  | 22/06/1900       | B           | cds          |
| DURHAM                                                                                            | Durham  | 22/06/1900       | 6.45pm      | twin circle  |
| SHERBURN YORK                                                                                     | E Yorks | 23/06/1900       |             | cds          |
| SOUTH.MILFORD                                                                                     | N Yorks | 24/06/1900       | A           | cds          |
| SHERBURN IN ELMET                                                                                 | N Yorks | 24/06/1900       | A           | cds          |
| SHERBURN IN ELMET                                                                                 | N Yorks | 24/06/1900       | A           | cds          |
| SOUTH.MILFORD                                                                                     | N Yorks | 24/06/1900       | A           | cds          |
| SHERBORNE GLOS                                                                                    | Glos    | 25/06/1900       |             | cds          |
| WARWICK                                                                                           | Warks   | 26/06/1900       | 12.30am     | cds          |
| WARWICK                                                                                           | Warks   | 26/06/1900       | 12pm        | twin circle  |
| WARWICK                                                                                           | Warks   | 27/06/1900       | 5pm         | twin circle  |
| <i>Undelivered for Reason Stated</i><br>To be returned to sender at the<br>address shewn on cover |         | X 2 Box (Purple) |             |              |

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ANOTHER NEW TAX FROM THE POST OFFICE?

by Bryan Jones



The postmark illustrated appeared on a normal second class letter which I received in late July. As can be seen it is a Birmingham postmark with the added data “OFFICIAL – VAGUES DUTY”. I could not help but wonder if this was yet another charge that the Post Office was trying to sneak through.

Can anyone provide an explanation? (Excuse my ignorance, but what on earth is a VAGUES DUTY, one you’re not sure about – Ed?)

WICKWAR'S MAIL, 1856

by John Soer

Wickwar is a village in Gloucestershire about four miles to the southwest of Wotton-under-Edge. The railway station, on the Birmingham – Bristol line, opened to the public on the 8th July 1844 and closed on 4th January 1965.

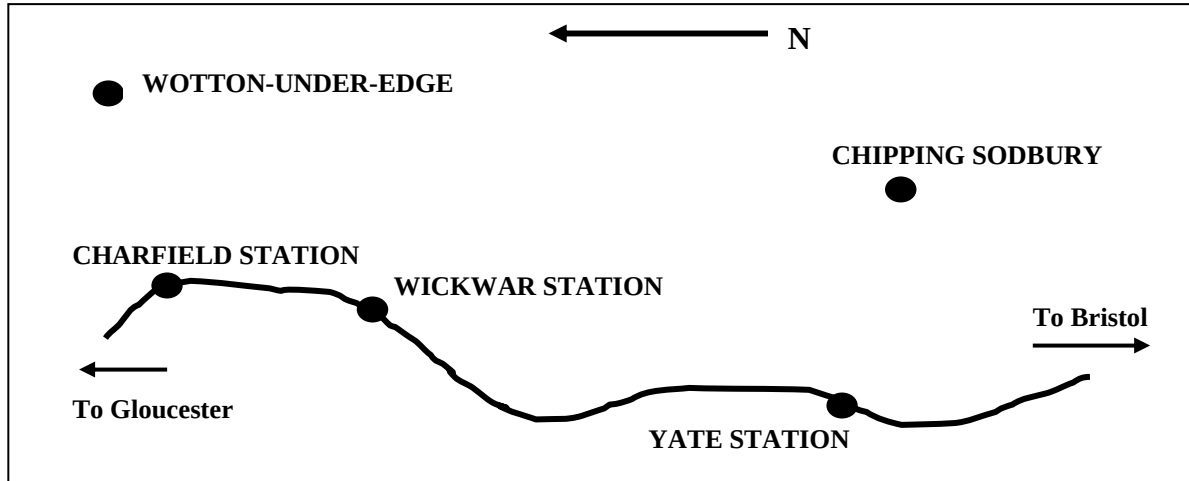


Fig 1, Sketch map of the railway system around Wickwar (not to scale)

On 7th March 1856 the Rector of Wickwar, Charles Oakley, wrote to the Postmaster General saying that although the inhabitants of the village wished that the family of the late postmaster should be allowed to continue the business, something that they had done for some time on account of the postmaster being paralysed, they asked that any such appointment, 'on the old footing', be held back until a petition about the postal services in the district could be drawn up and forwarded. The letter had a rather intriguing postscript, "My wife (late Lady E. Moreton) begs me to enclose a note for Lady Emma Campbell." The living at Wickwar must have been most desirable.

A week later, the rector sent the petition along with a covering note. The petition reads:

"Statement of facts connected with the delivery of Mails from the North of England at Wickwar and Chipping Sodbury.

The letters are left by the Mail-train on the Midland-line at the Charfield Station 2 miles from Wotton-under-Edge at 5.15 A.M: from thence they are taken by a man to the Wotton-under-Edge Post Office, and a man on foot is despatched with the Bags for Wickwar, a distance of 4 miles, where he arrives at 8.45, and thence proceeds on foot to Chipping Sodbury 4 miles from Wickwar, where he arrives about 10.30: the same man leaves Chipping Sodbury on his return at 3.30 P.M. arriving at Wickwar about 5.0 and at Wotton-under-Edge about 6.30 from whence the Bags are sent to Charfield Station to meet the North Mail at about 7.42.

There being a Station at Wickwar ¼m only from the town by which Station all the Mails must necessarily pass. The Inhabitants of Wickwar respectfully suggest that the bags for Wickwar and Chipping Sodbury should be left at the Wickwar Station and that the bag for the Town of Chipping Sodbury should be forwarded by the Post-master of Wickwar, by this arrangement the Inhabitants of Chipping Sodbury would have their North letters 2½ hrs earlier, and could dispatch them 2½ hrs later than by the present arrangement.

At present if a letter is posted at Wickwar for Chipping Sodbury, it is taken by the Messenger to Wotton-under-Edge in the evening, and on the following morning is brought back through Wickwar and from thence proceeds to its destination: the same anomaly takes place with a Chipping Sodbury letter for Wickwar.

By the arrangement suggested the Inhabitants of Wickwar would receive all their letters 2hrs earlier and have 2hrs later for posting, besides the benefit of 2 deliveries.

The Inhabitants of Wickwar are also afraid to send Money orders or Money letters under the present system, as they consider such a mode of conveyance of property unsafe.

The alteration suggested will also be of very great importance to the neighbouring Villages as the Inhabitants will thereby be enabled to receive their letters on the second day instead of the third day after posting.

The Messenger from Wotton-under-Edge is also much detained in delivering letters on the road between that place and Wickwar so as to make him sometimes an hour later than his fixed time viz 8.45."

In his covering letter Rev. Oakley said that the prominence given to Wotton-under-Edge dated from the time when it had been a thriving manufacturing town, which it no longer was, and when the more prosperous towns were merely its dependent villages. He added that some business men frequently sent parcels of letters to Bristol and Gloucester by private means rather than trust the footpost in the 'wild open country between Wickwar and Wotton-under-Edge.'

The surveyor reported that although the petition had described accurately the posts in the area, to serve Wickwar from the railway would mean making it a posttown which would involve Wickwar vouching with the up and down mail trains, London and all the towns between Birmingham and Bristol. As there were only 240 letters a week for Wickwar, such an expense could not be justified. Rowland Hill and the Postmaster General concurred.



Fig 2, Letter showing the Undated Circle of Wickwar (blue). Courtesy of John Calladine.

Reference: POST 14/170 Bristol and Birmingham Railway to serve Wickwar.



Bill Pipe

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PERU TO NORTHAMPTON IN WARTIME USING AIR, ROAD, RAIL AND SEA

by Derek Smeathers

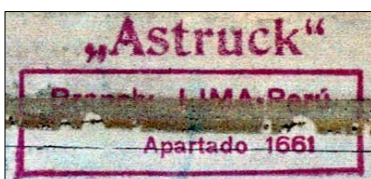
This cover (there are no contents) was posted in Lima to Paul Astruck at the Piccadilly Hotel in London on or about 20th March 1941. The appropriate adhesive stamps were affixed to provide for registration and also possibly air mail carriage, though there is no air mail etiquette. It certainly went by air to the United States as there is a double-circle registration mark of the U.S. Post Office 2 days after posting and another of the foreign department in New York on 24th March. At this date the U.S.A. was still neutral.

To get to England mail could go by air or sea but the air service operated via Lisbon and was subject to wartime delays. The first British marking that shows a date is 5th April, so a reasonable sea crossing could have delivered the letter to England. It was opened, examined by the censor EXAMINER 2210 and resealed using gummed brown paper and the official examination tape. There is no English post office mark to confirm the date but the letter was redirected from the hotel to Mr Astruck at 52, Bailiff Street, Northampton and a 2½d stamp was affixed to pay ordinary postage. There may have been second thoughts about this and possible telephone contact had been made with Mr Astruck and the letter was considered urgent enough to warrant sending by the quickest possible method, by rail.



Fig 1, March 1941 cover from Lima, Peru to London

The letter was taken to Euston station with manuscript *Express* and the endorsed instruction *To be called for at Northampton Station*. The fee of 4d was charged by the LMS RAILWAY Co. for the carriage of the letter and a 4d red parcel stamp was partially attached above the address. A straight-line violet hand stamp is dated 5th April. Presumably the letter was collected by Mr Astruck or someone on his behalf from Northampton Castle station.



Paul Astruck was obviously a man of some importance; the reverse of the envelope has a pink "Astruck" and below it a boxed Branch LIMA Perú / Apartado 1661 in the same colour (see left). 52, Bailiff St was not a large property but a retail corner shop occupied by William Edward Coulter, a fruiterer, with residential accommodation of two or three bedrooms. The property was demolished in 1970 to make way for a small industrial estate.



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MAIL ON THE MIDLAND RAILWAY AND ITS CONSTITUENTS, 1840-1875

PART 4

by John Soer

It was reported in March 1856 that the stage coach that carried bags between Sheffield, Chesterfield, Mansfield and Nottingham was about to cease running between Mansfield and Nottingham. The line between the last two towns, which had opened as early as October 1849, was then used to give a London day mail to both Mansfield and Worksop by means of a train leaving Mansfield at noon and one leaving Nottingham at 1.50 p.m.

An unusual minute of November 1856 records a payment of £1 p.a. to a watchmaker in Bath for '*regulating the timepieces of mail guards on the Midland line.*'

In November 1856, an order was given that mail from towns on the Midland line (presumably those north of Derby) by the up day mail for Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bristol and Worcester which had circulated through London, arriving the next day, were to be sent by the 7.40 a.m. train from Derby and the 10.25 a.m. from Birmingham.

Rowland Hill reported in May 1857 that the Midland Railway had provided a means of communication between a T.P.O. and the tender which contained the mail bags, enabling the guard to pass between them while the train was moving. This was the first time that post office staff had been able to move between the carriages, and Hill added, '*...great advantage will result from the facilities thus afforded for obtaining greater space for sorting etc during the progress of the Train.*'

Delays to their traffic, particularly coal trains, on the L.N.W.R line between Rugby and London led the Midland to seek another route to London. An Act of 1853 allowed the Midland railway to construct a line from Wigston North Junction near Leicester, on the Leicester to Rugby line, through Market Harborough, Kettering, Wellingborough and Bedford to Hitchin, where it joined the Great Northern Railway line to Kings Cross. The formal opening of the line between Leicester and Hitchin took place on 7th May 1857. This line was not immediately used to carry mail as we shall see in the next instalment.

The first mail to be carried on the Leicester & Hitchin Extension was a London day mail for Kettering, estimated at about 530 letters per week. The Post Office offered £20 p.a. for a train in both directions between Kettering and Wellingborough. (The day mail arrived at Wellingborough by means of the LNWR.) In response, the Midland asked for £30 p.a. which was turned down. However, the Company agreed to the bags being sent on weekdays only at the parcel rate of one shilling a day which amounted to a little under £16 p.a.

The importance of the line between Bristol and Birmingham is shown in a minute of December 1857 which states that the night mail from towns served by the G.W.R. for all towns served by the L.N.W.R. passed through London, and reached its destination by the down day mail on the following day. The use of a luggage train on the Midland Railway enabled the mail to reach Worcester and Birmingham much earlier. The arrival at Worcester was at 5.05 a.m., in time for the first delivery. The use of this train and passenger trains on the L.N.W.R. gave a much earlier arrival of this mail in Manchester and Liverpool.

In March 1857 the Midland built two new carriages so as to accelerate the arrangement for the London District Sorting Carriage. Through subsequent alterations '*in the details of the measures*' these carriages became unsuitable. The Post Office agreed to bear the expense of converting these two sorting vans into ordinary carriages at a cost of £35 each. The final total cost was £80. The Midland was asked to prepare three new carriages '*...as large and as commodious as possible as it is practicable to make them for the work in question.*' Harold Wilson states that the Midland District Sorting Carriage ran from 22nd February 1859 to September 1869.

After complaints had been made in April 1858 about the time taken for mail to pass from villages near Loughborough to villages near Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the surveyor routed Loughborough's night mails through Rugby instead of Derby. The mail left Loughborough on the 9.21 p.m. train, but in the opposite direction, it was necessary to use a goods train leaving Rugby at 2.25 a.m. This train did not stop at Loughborough but the surveyor wrote, '*As the bag will not be large it is thought there will be no difficulty in throwing it on the platform as the train passes.*' This measure was short-lived for after an acceleration of mails on the L.N.W.R. on 1st February 1859, trains to and from Derby were used to connect Leicester and Loughborough with towns in the north-west.

Arbitration of 1858^{24, 25}

Although the mail train between Bristol and Gloucester had been introduced in 1854, and that between Derby and Tamworth in 1855, it was not until March 1856 that Mr Allport submitted a claim of about 2/- a mile for the former service. This was rejected by Rowland Hill and the payment for the two services was referred to arbitration. Although a Mr Hawkshaw was appointed as the arbitrator on 4th November 1856, it was not until 10th April 1858 that a meeting was held at the General Post Office in St Martin's-le-Grand between officers of the Midland and officials of the Post Office. Two rather voluminous files contain details of this as well as three other meetings there, along with the results of meetings held in Birmingham and Derby. Much of the material in these two voluminous files probably has no place in a postal history journal so I have tried to select that which will give some idea of the problems encountered in putting on a mail train and in coming to a fair estimate of the cost of doing so.

Since, in my copy of *Midland Mail 182/19* the bottom lines of the boxes which show the times of the trains seem to have been removed by the 'gremlins', I will insert them again at this point. The times from 31st August 1854 are shown in the left hand box, while those from 30 September which actually came into effect on 1st February 1855 are in the right hand box.

Gloucester d	11.15 p.m.
Berkley Road	11.48 p.m.
Bristol a	12.35 a.m.
Bristol d.	11.55 p.m.
Berkley Road	12.42 a.m.
Gloucester a	1.15 a.m.

Gloucester d	11.05 p.m.
Stonehouse	11.25 p.m.
Bristol a	12.20 a.m.
Bristol d.	12.45 a.m.
Stonehouse	1.40 a.m.
Gloucester a	2.0 a.m.

An order dated 2nd February 1855 in Post 14 stated that on and from the evening of 2nd February 1855, the *Cirencester and Stroud Sack* was to be withdrawn and replaced by a '*Bristol and Gloucester Sack*' which was to contain the bags for Dursley, Wotton-under-Edge, Stonehouse, Stroud and Berkeley. This suggests that the change of times did not take place until February 1855, and that the G.W.R. line between Swindon and Gloucester was no longer being used to carry the London night mail for the above five towns. More research is needed.

Returning to the arbitration, we find that Mr Allport's original claim was made up as follows:

Maintenance of P. Way	4.13d/mile
Locomotive Power	13.58d/mile
Carriages	2.00d/mile
Interest on Capital	2.00d/mile
Stores and Gas	2.00d/mile
Total	22.71d/mile

To these items were added the weekly wage of porters at Bristol, Berkley, and Charfield as well as a guard which came to 72/- a week. However, at the meeting on 10th April the Midland demanded 34.57d per mile for the service between Bristol and Gloucester. The details of this demand are shown in Appendix F, perusal of which suggests the Midland were overstating their case. It was decided to deal with the Bristol-Gloucester service first of all, but a similar calculation resulted in a demand for 24.83d per mile for the mail train between Derby and Tamworth.

With a Mr Watkin, whose exact position was not specified though he claimed to be a director of the Oxford, Worcester & Wolverhampton Railway, taking on the role of counsel for the Midland, various officers of the Company gave evidence to the arbitrator. These included Messrs Beale, the Chairman; Newcombe, General Manager; Crossley, Engineer; Swarbrick, Company Accountant, and Markham, in charge of working the mail trains.

The approach of the Midland was to include in their demand, in addition to the specific costs of running these trains such as the wages of the driver, expenses such as interest and maintenance of the track. A figure for these items was obtained by taking from the 1857 accounts the sum spent on a particular item and dividing by the total mileage travelled by the trains of the Midland.

Watkin and Hill clashed over the meaning of '*true cost*' in clause 20 of the 1853 contract. The former contended that the cost should be taken as it was in ordinary business transactions. Hill said that it should be '*bare additional cost*' as the costs such as management would not be altered by running an extra train so the extra business would increase the profits. He felt that as the notice the Midland were required to provide only a compartment of a second class coach, then the Post Office should only pay for an engine pulling one coach.

When Rowland Hill questioned the accuracy of some of the statements made by the officers of the Midland, particularly the need to have an additional passenger engine for use exclusively on the mail train between Gloucester and Bristol, Mr Watkin suggested that the arbitrator, or a representative, should go to interview the locomotive foreman at Bristol. When the arbitrator said that he did not have the time to do so, Hill put forward the name of a Charles Gregory, an engineer, who had represented the Post Office before.

On 1st May, Mr Gregory met with Mr Markham, on behalf of the Company, and a Mr Maclean, representing the Post Office, at Birmingham. In order to show that the introduction of the mail train had involved the use of more engines, the locomotive foreman at Birmingham, a Mr Walker, produced tables, showing the working of the five drivers and their engines over two weeks as well as the timetables of the three passenger trains. These are shown below.

Driver	Engine	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
John Fox	129	7.30 p.m.	Rest	7.05 a.m.	Shed	10 a.m.	7.30 p.m.	
E. Cheshire	128	Shed	7.05 a.m.	Shed	10 a.m.	7.30 p.m.	Rest	
T. Rigby	127	7.05 a.m.	Shed	10 a.m.	7.30 p.m.	Rest	7.05 a.m.	5 p.m.
R. Fairclough	125	Rest	10 a.m.	7.30 p.m.	Rest	7.05 a.m.	Shed	6.45
T. Freeman	126	10 a.m.	7.30 p.m.	Rest	7.05 a.m.	Shed	10 a.m.	
John Fox	129	Shed	7.05 a.m.	Shed	10 a.m.	7.30 p.m.	Rest	
E. Cheshire	128	7.05 a.m.	Shed	10 a.m.	7.30 p.m.	Rest	7.05 a.m.	5 p.m.
T. Rigby	127	Rest	10 a.m.	7.30 p.m.	Rest	7.05 a.m.	Shed	6.45
R. Fairclough	125	10 a.m.	7.30 p.m.	Rest	7.05 a.m.	Shed	10 a.m.	
T. Freeman	126	7.30 p.m.	Rest	7.05 a.m.	Shed	10 a.m.	7.30 p.m.	

Note: The entries shown as 'Rest' are not entirely accurate for the men did not arrive back in Birmingham until 9.30 a.m.
The actual table showed 10.20 a.m. instead of 10 a.m. This was corrected from the working timetable by Mr Gregory.

Birmingham d	7.30 p.m.	7.05 a.m.	10 a.m.
Gloucester a	10.25 p.m.		
d	11.05 p.m.		
Bristol a	12.20 a.m.	12.05 p.m.	2.15 p.m.
d	12.45 a.m.	3 p.m.	4.15 p.m.
Gloucester a	2 a.m.		
d	6.30 a.m.		
Birmingham a	9.30 a.m.	7.00 p.m.	9.05 p.m.

Note: The figures in bold show the times of the mail train.

Mr Walker said that before the introduction of the mail train the 7.30 p.m. train from Birmingham arrived in Gloucester at 10.30 p.m. and returned from there at 6.45 a.m. the next day, arriving in Birmingham at 9.30 a.m. He added that one driver was able to do this regularly as he was able to sleep at Gloucester. If the mail train were dropped, he would run this train as far as Gloucester, as before. In addition there would be two trains daily working through to Bristol at 7 a.m. and 10.30 a.m., returning to Birmingham by 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. respectively. These two trains would be worked by three engines and three drivers (and firemen presumably).

Mr Dyer, the locomotive foreman at Bristol, produced charts showing the trains worked by Bristol engines. These showed trains leaving Bristol for Birmingham at 7 a.m., 8.30 a.m., 11.10 a.m. and 6.55 p.m. Mr Dyer added that these four trains were worked by six engines and enginemen, and that prior to the present working, there were three trains out of Bristol worked by five engines and enginemen. Also, two engines were used at Bristol to assist passenger trains and goods trains, when needed, up an incline two miles in length. The mail train made necessary the use of a pilot engine as there was not sufficient time for the driver to take the train into the station and do 'all that is necessary' before returning to Gloucester. An engine was needed to push the train into the station while the engine was turning and taking water. Mr Markham said that although two engines had been employed before the introduction of the mail train, if that train were not running he would dispense with one of them.

On 3rd July a meeting involving Messrs Gregory, Maclean, Markham, Swarbrick, Kirtley, Crossley and Needham was held in Derby. For the sake of continuity, I will consider the points raised about the cost of the service between Bristol and Gloucester, though these came at the end of the meeting.

In their original account, the Midland had claimed for the wages of a guard at 23/- a week, but it transpired that when the mail train started in 1854, a guard worked the mail one way, with a porter working it the other way as the trains passed one another. From February 1855, the man who acted as a guard was one of the Gloucester porters on 17/- a week with 4/- a week extra for acting as a guard. Besides attending to the mail, this man assisted in other work at the station so as to make up his hours to a worthwhile amount, coming on at 7 p.m. and leaving at about 5 a.m.

The discussion then moved to the question of the need for the extra porters. Before the introduction of the mail train the staff at Charfield consisted of a stationmaster, a policeman and a porter. A goods train which left Bristol at 8.30 p.m. had to be shunted at Charfield and needed to cross the down line to reach a siding. As no other train had been likely to pass Charfield at about that time, the engine driver and stoker had been required to '*signal the line and to set the points themselves.*' When the mail train was established it was feared that the goods train might be in the way of the mail so an additional porter was employed to attend to the signals and the points.

Until February 1855, the '*midnight mail*' stopped at Berkeley and during that time an extra man was employed for Post Office purposes, to signal and watch the train, and to keep the station open. At Bristol an extra porter was employed at 16/- a week, later increased to 18/-, when the mail train was established. He acted as a '*sort of night inspector*' and had been instructed in telegraph duties so that he might '*telegraph for the night mail*'.

Mr Needham added that if the night mail train were withdrawn, he would dispense with the extra man at Bristol, but those at Charfield and Berkeley Road would still be employed.

The main purpose of the meeting at Derby was to consider the cost of running the mail train. The main points which emerged in response to Mr Gregory's questions are summarised below.

Although Mr Kirtley was not able immediately to give an estimate of the cost of locomotive power, under the separate headings of Goods and Passengers, he promised to submit such data as soon as possible.

The Midland had a number of different types of brake vans, some of which were open throughout and some were divided into two or three compartments. Of these, the guard's compartment was the only one which had a seat; the others had neither windows nor doors capable of being opened from the inside, making them unsuitable for carrying the mail guard and the bags. [In the documents the term 'break' was used throughout rather than the 'brake' commonly used today.]

The carriage provided for the use of the Post Office was a second class carriage, without a brake, in which two of the compartments had been converted into one. This larger compartment carried the mail guard and the bags. Second class passengers could, and did, travel in the other compartment.

The mail train from Derby to Tamworth consisted of an engine, tender, a guard's van with a brake, a composite carriage (1st and 2nd class), the Post Office carriage and an additional vehicle to serve as a 'dummy' on the return journey, where the train ran in reverse order. Mr Needham stated that on main lines the Midland invariably ran a brake van or dummy (an empty vehicle) next to the engine, while on branch lines a composite, part brake van and part third class ran next to the engine. He added that he considered that to run the mail train properly required three vehicles: - the mail van, a brake van and a dummy. However, the Midland did not propose to charge the Post Office for more than one van.

As there was not room to erect a turntable at Tamworth, on the return journey the engine ran tender first as far as Burton where the engine was turned. [It can have been far from pleasant for those on the footplate on a cold night in winter, the engines of that period providing little shelter.] The time allowed to run from Derby to Tamworth was 46 minutes, while 71 minutes was the time allowed for the return journey. To compensate for running tender first, Tamworth to Burton took 35 minutes compared with usual 26 minutes for a fast train. The time taken to turn the engine at Burton accounted for the remainder of the difference between the two times.

The time between the arrival of the train at Tamworth and its return was a little over two hours. As there were two through crossings from the up to the down line at Tamworth as well as a siding, both Mr Kirtley and Mr Needham agreed that the brake van could be shunted to the other end of the train for the return journey. However, they both felt that this was undesirable, notwithstanding the cost of an extra vehicle, and Mr Kirtley added that he thought it would be dangerous as the main line would be occupied during shunting.

On the arrival of the train at Derby from Lincoln some vehicles destined for London were taken off, and on the return vehicles from London were added to the train. This possibly accounts for the circumstances described on pages 16 & 17 of the previous issue.

Further evidence was produced about a number of issues including the number of passengers carried by the mail trains and the revenue produced; the amount spent on maintenance and renewal of the permanent way, the cost of repairs to and replacement of engines.

Rowland Hill countered the claim of the Midland of 34.57d per miles by producing two estimates of the costs of running the two mail trains: - 9.56 and 12.73d per miles. The arbitrator awarded 20½d per mile for the Bristol-Gloucester service and 19½d per mile for that between Derby and Tamworth. Unfortunately, he did not give his reasons for making these awards.

Appendix E, The Midland claim of the cost of working the extra mail train between Bristol and Gloucester.

Gloucester and Bristol Mail – distance 75 miles							
RUNNING EXPENCES	£	s	d	£	s	d	Cost/pence per mile
Wage of engineman per week	2	2	0				
Wage of fireman per week	1	1	0				
Wages of two cleaners per week	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>	4	10	0	2.05
Coke – per ton at Normanton ^a		17	0				
Carriage to Gloucester		4	0				
Interest and repairs of wagons	<u>2</u>	<u>7½</u>		1	3	7½	3.26
Salaries (Average 12 months)							0.13
Oil, Tallow and Waste					13	6	0.36
Water							0.16
Repairs							4.82
							<u>10.78</u>
INTEREST AND REPLACEMENT							
Two engines (one in work, one in shed) ^b	£5000 at 8%			£400			3.50
Sheds for two engines	£600 at 6%			£36			
Shops and tools for two engines	£1000 at 7%			<u>£70</u>			
				£106			<u>0.93</u>
							<u>15.21</u>
Pilot at Bristol							
Wages as before				2.05			
Coke – 7 cwt @ ???				1.16			
Salaries as before				0.13			
Oil and tallow				0.36			
Water				<u>0.16</u>		3.84	
Repairs						2.41	
Interest and Replacement						3.50	
Sheds, Shops and Tools						<u>0.93</u>	
							<u>10.68</u>
							25.89
One Van							<u>1.00</u>
							<u>26.89</u>
Wages of porters at Bristol, Berkley and Charfield p.a.				127	8	0	
Wage of one guard p.a.				59	16	0	
Cost of clothing for above men plus oil for lamps				<u>20</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	
				207	4	0	1.80
Average cost of gas on Midland Railway							0.23
General charges and management							1.03
Repairs, renewals and maintenance of permanent way							<u>4.62</u>
							<u>7.68</u>
							<u>34.57</u>

Notes

- a In his evidence to the arbitrator Mr Newcombe stated that the passenger engines on the Midland used on average 25 lbs of coke per mile. After this figure had been disputed by Mr Gregory who said that narrow gauge engines used 17-18 lbs per miles, Mr Kirtley produced data showing that the coke used by passenger engines at Birmingham and Lincoln amounted to 26.1 and 24.9 lbs per mile respectively.
- b Mr Newcombe said that the company had 203 passenger engines to run 82 trains i.e 2.4 engines per train, and that it was usual to have one spare engine.

REFERENCES 24 POST 30/122 Midland Railway, Arbitration (Part I)
 25 POST 30/122 Midland Railway, Arbitration (Part II)

(to be continued)

All articles, great and small to Brian Atkins, 1, Mount Pleasant, Ruabon, Wrexham, LL14 6DT