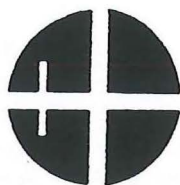


MIDLAND MAIL



THE BULLETIN OF THE MIDLAND (G.B.) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY



President: Elizabeth Lewis

Chairman:
Derek Smeathers

Treasurer:
Elizabeth Lewis

Secretary:
Eric Lewis

Number 124, March 2002

As the Post Office (I refuse to use that other awful meaningless name.) has proposed the withdrawal of the second class post, or should it be first class post?, it is possibly appropriate to show elsewhere in this issue the reaction of one of our late members to its introduction. As for the withdrawal of the second delivery and mail being delivered to homes at lunchtime, I suspect that many people will hardly notice the difference.

If I lived in a rural area, the ending of the Post Office's monopoly on the delivery of letters under £1 would concern me for, if commercial concerns take much of the profitable mail within the large conurbations, the price of sending a letter elsewhere is bound to rise. Surely, there is enough competition at present - e-mail and faxes. Given the general competence of those who purport to govern us, it is easy to predict the outcome if this is put into effect - a total mess.

My thanks are due again to Ken Smith for producing, as he has done in previous years, the list of post offices which closed/opened during last year. As there appears to be no central record kept of such events this will be a valuable reference source in the future. It would be very helpful if members could let Ken know of any closures etc. in their area.

So far, I have received very few votes for the best article appearing in Midland Mail during 2001. I find it difficult to believe that members feel that no article appearing last year is worthy of the Jon Baker trophy. It is still not too late to record your vote so drop me a line in the next few days.

This year we had both Stampex and Philatex on at the same time which in many ways is very convenient as it means only one Saturday is taken up. Yet, how much better it would be if these events were combined under one roof, and I have said before where that should be - the N.E.C. Then, at least I would be spared the misery of travelling in central London. (I will not bore readers with the details of my journey from one hall to the other.) But I did find one or two very interesting covers so the exercise was worthwhile.

2002 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Please note that The Annual General Meeting will now be held on **20th April** at the venue described in the enclosed letter and in the auction catalogue, and **NOT** at Carrs Lane, commencing at **12.45 p.m.** It will be preceded by a committee meeting at 10.45 a.m. Please note the above date and times in your diary now.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to Paul Bradshaw of Duston, Northampton who was awarded a year's membership of the Society in recognition of his display on 12th January.

Also, we extend an equally warm welcome to Bernard Ridley of Earswick, York who collects Daventry postal history.

ADDITION TO THE LIBRARY

Jan Young has kindly donated to the Society's library a video of the launch of the 'Local Posts' book. Members are welcome to borrow the video or any other books in the library by contacting Eric Lewis.

THE JANUARY MEETING

There was a good turn-out for our meeting on 12th January at which Paul Bradshaw and Derek Smeathers displayed material from *'The Small Towns of Northamptonshire'*.

Paul began by showing some early views of Northampton and a Moule of Northamptonshire and then treated us to an A to Z of the villages of the county, with a wide range of fascinating covers of which just a few are described below. From Boughton came a letter of September 1640 conveyed by a carrier. A letter from Great Creaton to Sydney which was redirected to New South Wales showed, besides the village UDC, Ship Letter marks of Liverpool and Sydney. Ecton was represented by a letter about farming sent to North Crawley in 1678. A penny black cover sent from Foster's Booth to Market Harborough carried a strike of the UDC of the former place. While Northampton can hardly be called a small town, let alone a village, Paul did produce two delightful illustrated envelopes sent from there. These are reproduced on the next page. Also of interest was a letter sent from Northampton to India, showing a variety of postmarks. From Oundle we saw mileage marks, the UDC and a Mulready. A letter of 1833 carried in the Daventry Penny Post showed the straight-line italic *'Weedon'*. A letter sent by wagon from Weldon to Market Harborough in 1843 arrived on the same day. Finally, from Welford came a twopenny Mulready sent to Lutterworth.

Paul then turned his attention to the towns of Brackley, Thrapstone and Towcester.

Letters of 1720 and 1723 sent to London from Brackley showed the town handstamp in use at those times. The mileage marks showed a distance of either 67 or 69 miles.

A free letter of 1748 carrying a 'THROP/STON' mark also showed the manuscript 'P' for 'privilege'. This was followed by the large handstamps used in 1778 and 1792. One cover carried three strikes of the town handstamp - surely a most unusual occurrence. Among a number of penny post items was a Mulready which showed the 'THRAPSTONE/PENNY POST' mark struck in blue which is known only for three months in 1840. This section ended with an example of the UPP paid mark - 'P1'.

Paul then took us south-east to Towcester and began with an example of the 'TOCE/STER' mark from 1722. This was followed by letters of 1748, 1755 and 1777 all showing the town handstamp of the particular year. A letter of 1825 had a manuscript 'Missent to' along with the boxed mileage mark.

After the tea-break it was the turn of Derek Smeathers who started in Bozeat which, Derek explained, was at the junction of the old roads between Northampton and Bedford and Wellingborough and Newport Pagnell. Of particular note were the straight-line mark of 1778, the boxed mileage (66) of 1803 and the concave mark of 1834. Among the Brackley material that Derek showed us were an albino mark of 1750, the first-type mileage mark and a 'BRACKLEY/4' skeleton. Corby was a small village up to about 1930 but we were shown two much earlier items - letters sent there from London in 1834 and 1851.

Daventry was represented by a cover with the 1742 'DAVEN/TRY', the first-type mileage mark and a number of penny post items. The 'HIGHAM/FERRIS' of 1743 which Derek showed is the earliest recorded handstamp of that town. Also of interest was a mileage mark in which the distance could possibly be read as 67; the distance shown in the more common boxed mileage mark is 83 miles.

The next town at which we called was Kettering. Again we saw the earliest recorded mark a 1720 'KETTA/RING' which was followed by a 1747 'KETTER/ING'. From August 1785 came a strike of the first-type mileage mark while the handstamp used in March 1789 was different from that used in October 1789.

Of particular note from Oundle was a straight-line mark of 1743; the boxed mileage mark used in 1801; and a cover of 1853 with four twopenny blues.

As Paul had done, Derek showed the first recorded mark of Towcester - 'TOCE/STER' but used in 1720. After that came the 'TOW/CESTER' of 1754. Another cover showed the boxed mileage mark used in 1815 in conjunction with a manuscript 'Missent to'. A penny black cover carried a manuscript '2' as it weighed over half an ounce. A few miles along the A5 from Towcester is Weedon from where we saw a skeleton 'WEEDON/5' used in 1849 and the 'Missent to/Weedon' struck in black in 1844.

Finally, Derek took us to Wellingborough. Particularly interesting was a letter sent in 1709 showing the 'WEL.N.BOROUGH' handstamp. A letter sent in 1719 from London was endorsed 'ye Wellingborow Bagg'. Another example of unusual spelling was shown in the handstamp used in 1736 - 'WELLING/BUROUGH'.

While it is not possible to describe every cover displayed I hope that the above will give some indication of the fact that we enjoyed an entertaining afternoon that had shown what a wide range of fascinating material can be found from an English county. At the end of his vote of thanks Chris Jackson presented Paul with a year's membership of the Society.

My thanks are due to Paul Bradshaw for allowing me to reproduce below copies of two hand-illustrated envelope which he displayed at the January meeting. Even without the colours, it can be seen they are superb cartoons.



THE FEBRUARY MEETING

There was another good attendance for the meeting on 9th February which was devoted to members' displays of 'Illustrated Envelopes or Letter Sheets'. Chris Beaver began with envelopes illustrated with a mailcoach. These commemorated events such as the 1954 Postal History Society meeting at Brighton, the bicentennial mailcoach run of 1984, and the run from London to Norwich celebrating the last mailcoach to run from London in 1846. Tom Poynton started with covers from the Scout Jamboree at Sutton Coldfield, went on to covers illustrating a number of airmail routes and finished with a range of advertising covers from various countries. A hand illustrated envelope sent from Malta in 1871 was the first sheet in Guy Bridges' display. Guy then produced a number of superb illustrated envelopes from the early 1900s, one of which is illustrated below. Eric Grimshaw started with Mulreadies, including an advertising sheet, before going on to the caricatures such as Southgate and Forres. He finished with a number of propaganda envelopes such as Ocean Penny Postage, Antislavery and Temperance. Among the items shown by Paul Bradshaw were an advertising sheet from Birdsall & Son, a Northampton bookbinder and publisher and an envelope decorated with smoke. It had been caught in an arson attack at Preston in 1993. The explanatory letter was upside-down on the official notepaper and carried no signature.

At these supposed 'one board' displays, I always await with anticipation Eric Lewis' contribution. I am never disappointed. Those who subscribe to Cavendish catalogues will have seen in the latest Cavendish Chronicle a superb registered wrapper sent to Amsterdam. Eric's first sheet was of a similar item - sent to Amsterdam in 1917. Among the other items shown by Eric were three mechanical Victorian letter sheets, one of which had a lady on a swing while another showed a man sewing up the mouth of his wife; a bill from the Oak & Unicorn Inn, Leominster on which the man's supper cost 1/- while hay and corn for his horse cost 2/7! Letter sheets and advertising envelopes illustrating the industries of Worcestershire formed Chris Jackson's display. These included the needlemakers of Redditch, the Droitwich salt works and the Royal Worcester Porcelain works. John Calladine began with Mulready letter sheets, followed by Daedermaker's reprints of the caricatures Southgate No 6 and Fores's No 12 - Christmas. John also showed Ocean Penny Post Propaganda envelopes as well as the so called 'Lord Holland Forgery of 1890. Derek Smeathers produced headed notepaper of Waterlows followed by a variety of items connected with Bassett-Lowkes. A pre-1840 letter sheet about hare-coursing started Richard Farman's display. Two 'free' letters consisted of a large political cartoons folded up to the usual size of a letter. Also shown by Richard were sheets of illustrated notepaper representing various Staffordshire entries and a letter sheet with a superb drawing of a brewery.

I am indebted to Guy Bridges for allowing me to reproduce this handpainted envelope depicting Wokingham Market Place and the change Free Trade brought about by 1909.



TWO NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PARCEL POST LABELS

by Derek Smeathers

At the meeting on 12th January, mention was made of a parcel post label from Finedon which was discovered by Bill Toye to be of a particularly scarce type - a type of which Bill had previously seen only three examples, all from London. It was totally unexpected that one would appear from the provinces, but Bill hopes that others will turn up. If you have not yet supplied him with copies of your label collection you may be missing out on a real find!! There are two things to look out for in this rare type - firstly the Royal Coat of Arms and secondly the printed circle under 'DATE STAMP' In the Coat of Arms horizontal fern-like ornaments cover the lion and the unicorn. Other labels which show this type of Coat of Arms have the words 'DATE STAMP' inside the printed circle rather than above it, as here.

PARCEL POST.  Finedon (FCH) (under Wellingborough)		X LIST Letter and Number.	POSTAGE.	
			S.	D.
		Insurance, Registration or Express Fee.		
FOR POSTAGE STAMPS.			DATE STAMP.	
				

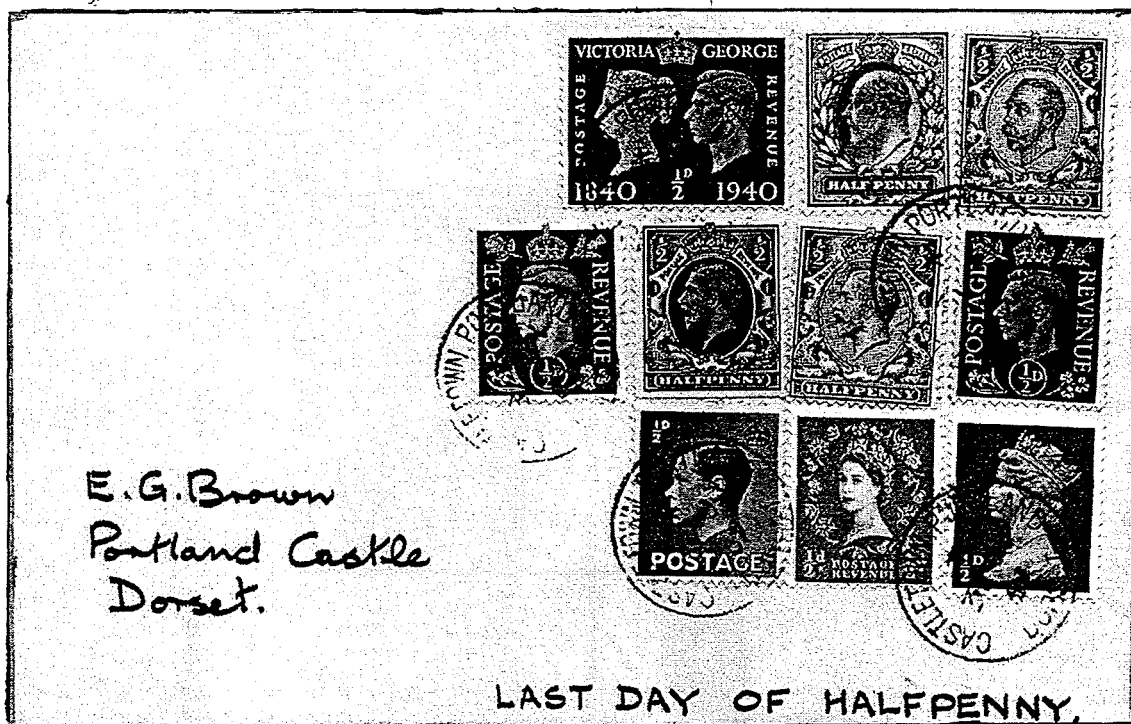
The other label (shown below) is one printed for HIGHAM FERRERS R.S.O., although the handstamp shown on it is the normal Higham Ferrers c.d.s. The town was at the end of the short branch line of the Midland Railway from Wellingborough through Irchester Junction and Rushden that opened in 1894. Rushden is in the Post Office list of Railway Sub Offices and had several R.S.O. handstamps, but Higham Ferrers is not in the list and neither handstamps nor other documentation are known giving it R.S.O. status. Anyone with one or more items showing Higham Ferrers R.S.O. is urged to send details to the Editor for inclusion in the next *Midland Mail*. The first three will all receive the Chairman's thanks.

PARCEL POST.  HIGHAM FERRERS R.S.O. (HIN) (Under Wellingborough)		X LIST Letter and Number.	S. D.	
		Insurance, Registration or Express Fee.		
FOR POSTAGE STAMPS.			OFFICE STAMP.	
				

THE LAST DAY OF THE HALFPENNY

In response to my plea in the last issue of *Midland Mail* concerning the demonetisation of Edward VII stamps, Malcolm Allinson has sent a copy of a cover (shown below) dated 31st July 1969 and which carries one of each of the then permissible halfpenny stamps, including an Edward VII ½d to make up the first class postage of 5d.

Malcolm adds that he believes that all £sd stamps after those of Queen Victoria were demonetised at the same time on 29th February 1972 as a consequence of the introduction of decimal coinage on 15th February 1971. Malcolm also believes that the stamps of Queen Victoria were demonetised relatively quickly - sometime in the early part of the twentieth century.



SHAW'S BUNTINGFORD AUCTION

G.B. & WORLD POSTAL HISTORY

**Maritime & Naval, T.P.O., Railways, Air Mail,
Postal Stationery, Military & Censored,
Mechanised Mail, Cinderella, etc.**

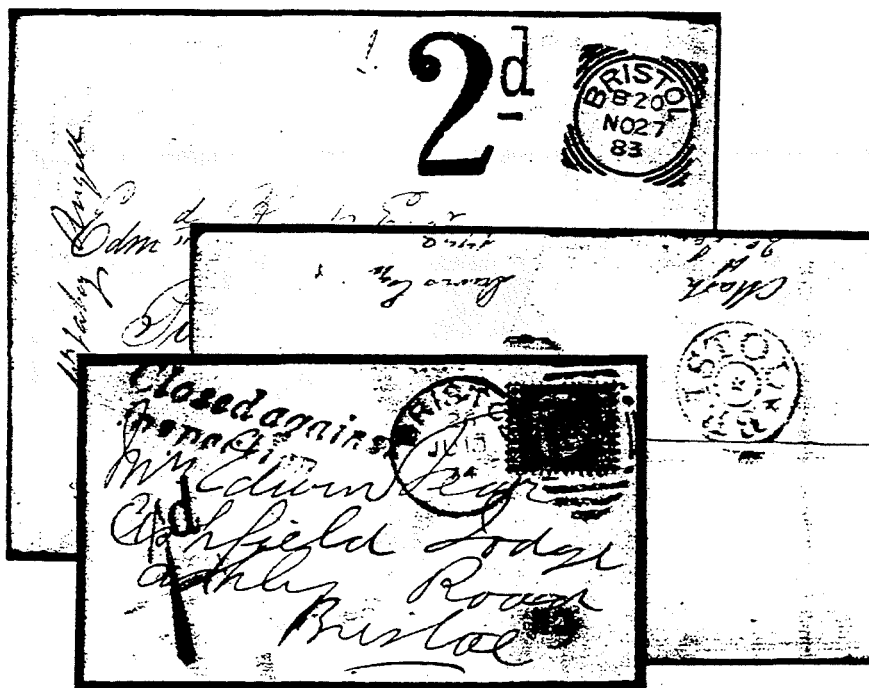
Complimentary Catalogue for next Auction:
H.Shaw, P.O.Box 835, London. N20 8RD
(or Telephone/Fax: 020 8445 9178)

1952 – Our Golden Jubilee – 2002

The Ivan Green Collection of Bristol Postal History, 1670-1900.

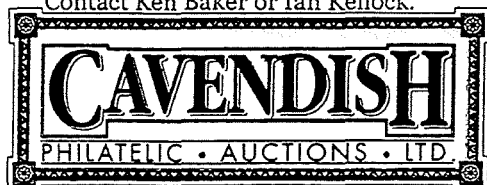
(24th May, 2002)

This superb collection includes 3 dated 'B' marks, a 1708 'BRISTOL' cover & a full range of pre-stamp marks inc. a rare Bristol 'bullseye' (1773), a very good group of Ship Letters inc. 'INDIA SOLDIERS &c/3/BRISTOL' and red AVONMOUTH Ship Letter. Also 5th Clause Posts, Missent marks, a study of the Penny Posts, 1d Blacks, 2d Mulready letter-sheet with red MC, sub-offices, railway & TPO mail, postage due, instructional marks, overseas destinations etc. etc.



Postal History is one of our specialities: can we help you
build – or sell – your collection?

Contact Ken Baker or Ian Kellock.



CAVENDISH HOUSE,
153-157, LONDON ROAD,
DERBY DE1 2SY, ENGLAND
Tel: 01332 250970 (4 lines; 24hrs.)
Fax: 01332 294440 -Fax

E-mail: stamps@cavendishphilauc.demon.co.uk
www.Cavendish-Auctions.com

PROTEST COVERS, 1968

I had intended to show three of the protest covers produced by Jon Baker, a former editor of Midland Mail, at the February meeting but, being convinced that other members would do the same, I decided to leave them at home. So to rectify matters and as a small tribute to Jon, I am going to show them here. The notes that follow are taken from those issued by Jon at a Society meeting shortly before his death.

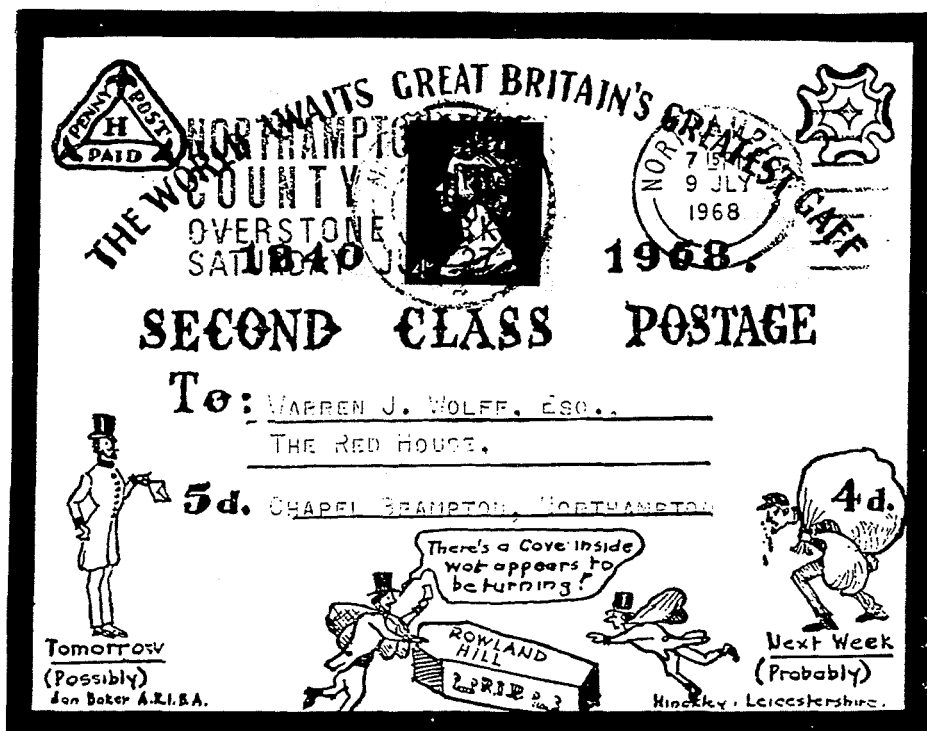
From 1847 considerable agitation took place on both sides of the Atlantic for an Ocean Penny Post, Elihu Burritt, an American, being the prime mover. As part of the campaign by Burritt a number of illustrated envelopes were produced, advocating an Ocean Penny Postage.

Thirty years later, a similar movement was taken up by J. Henniker Heaton M.P. and in 1898 Imperial Penny Postage was introduced to some parts of the Empire. Full Ocean Penny Postage between the United Kingdom and the United States was not granted until 1908.

Towards the end of 1967, the Prices & Income Board approved new Post Office charges and a two tier post in place of the single class post which had been in operation since 1840. These changes came into operation on 16th September 1968.

As a protest against the introduction of the two tier post, Jon assisted by Frank Staff produced a number of protest covers, of which there are five different designs, between May and December 1968.

Design One was based on: the caricature of the 1890 Postal Jubilee Envelope produced by Harry Furness; 'Flying Postmen' from a caricature by J. Leech of the Mulready; and an Ocean Penny Postage envelope drawn by the artist Henry Anelay and published by Charles Gilpin. Six thousand of these envelopes (from six different printings) plus two thousand postcards were produced.



Design One.

Design Two, of which 2,100 were produced from four different printings, was based on: the Ocean Penny Post envelope, state five, published by J. Valentine, an Ocean Penny Post envelope published by E. Myers & Co.; and a sketch of Rowland Hill taken from a correspondence card which was issued with the 1890 Postal Jubilee envelope.

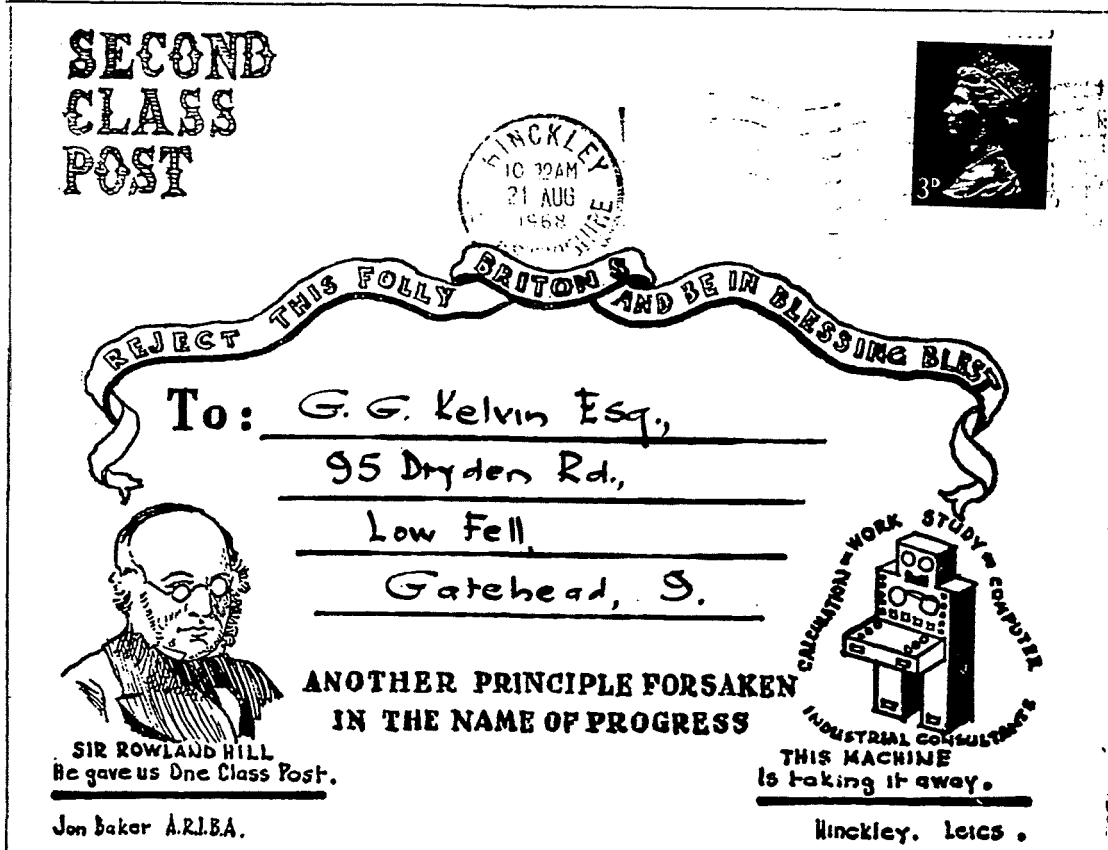
However, these designs contravened Post Office regulations relating to 'embarrassing packets' which were defined as:

"a packet on which printing is not confined to the left-hand side of the address side, the right-hand half being reserved exclusively for the postage stamp and the address"; "a packet bearing on its address side an adhesive stamp or printed design resembling a postage stamp in shape or size"; "a packet having a postage stamp affixed elsewhere than in the right-hand top corner of the address side".

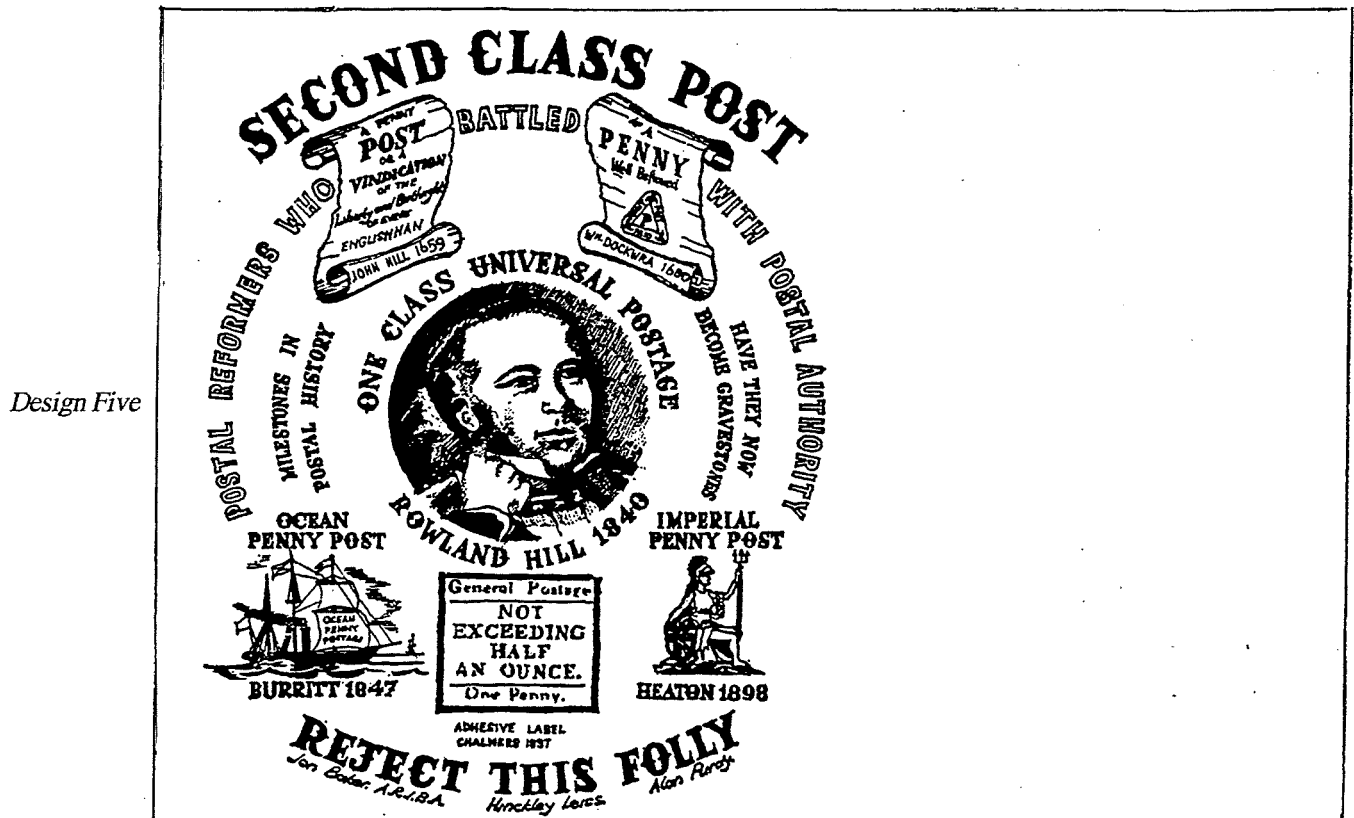
Design Three, of which five thousand were produced in four printings, was an amendment of *Design Two* in that: the design resembling a postage stamp was removed; the lettering 'Second Class Post' was reduced in size and moved to the left-hand side to allow more room for the postage stamps and address.

Design Four consisted of an amended copy of a cartoon which was published in 'The Band of Hope Review' in March 1853 supporting Ocean Penny Postage. A total of 2,750 were produced in three printings.

Design Five (5000 produced in two printings) was taken from the following: a portrait of Rowland Hill c.1840; a pamphlet produced by John Hill in 1659 protesting against the suppression of 'private undertakers of postal services' by the Government of the day; a copy of William Dockwra's first broadsheet in 1680; and an adhesive label designed by James Chalmers.



Design Three



Design Five

MIDLAND POST OFFICES OPENED OR CLOSED DURING 2001

by Ken Smith

BIRMINGHAM

378, Dudley Road, 18

reopened 11/1/2001; (t.c. 9/2/2000)

DERBYSHIRE

Ashford-in-the-Water, Bakewell

t.c. 25/7/2001; reopened 10/1/2002 (village hall)

Elton, Matlock

closed 8/5/2001; reopened c. November 2001.

Hartington, Buxton

t.c. 26/9/2001; reopened 3/10/2001

Heanor Road, Ilkeston replaced by Shipley View, Ilkeston on 29/3/2001 (datestamp not changed immediately)

Kirk Ireton, Derby

t.c. 8/8/2001; reopened 15/11/2001 (Barley Mow)

Lower Pilsley, Chesterfield

reopened 8/1/2001; (t.c. 30/11/2000)

Over Haddon, Bakewell

Scarliffe, Chesterfield

Stretton, Alfreton

closed 19/4/2001

Turnditch, Belper

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Acton Turville, Badminton

reopened 15/2/2001

Beachley, Chepstow

closed 15/6/2001

Birdlip, Gloucester

closed 27/11/2001

Coberley, Cheltenham

Notgrove, Cheltenham

closed 24/1/2001

Quenington, Cirencester

closed 8/3/2001

Southrop, Lechlade

reopened 3/1/2001 (village hall, Wed a.m.); (t.c. 4/10/2000)

Temple Guiting, Cheltenham

reopened 22/2/2001; (t.c. 8/2/2000)

Tuffley (TSO), Gloucester

t.c. 21/12/2001

HEREFORDSHIRE

Acton Beauchamp, Worcester

closed 13/2/2001

Eastnor, Ledbury

closed 29/6/2001

Gladestry (Radnorshire), Kington

closed 31/10/2001

The Oval (TSO), Hereford

closed 15/6/2001 (fire); reopened 13/7/2001

Pencraig, Ross-on-Wye

closed 30/3/2001

Swainshill, Hereford

closed 30/3/2001

LEICESTERSHIRE

Ab Kettleby, Melton Mowbray

closed 30/1/2001 (also 'closed 4/3/1999' so reopened?)

Asfordby Hill, Melton Mowbray

closed 30/3/2001

Blackbird Road (TSO), Leicester

closed 21/2/2001

Burrough-on-the-Hill, Melton Mowbray

closed 14/11/2001

Burton-on-the-Wolds, Loughborough

closed 7/3/2001

Buckminster, Grantham

reopened; (t.c. 15/8/1999)

Croxtton Kerrial, Grantham

reopened; (t.c. 13/10/2000)

Goadby Marwood, Melton Mowbray

closed 3/1/2001

Heather, Coalville

closed 22/6/2001; reopened 16/8/2001

Hose, Melton Mowbray

reopened 25/1/2001; (t.c. 25/6/1997)

Lockington, Derby

closed 4/5/2001

Northampton Road (TSO), Market Harborough replaced by Western Avenue 17/1/2001

Normanton-le-Heath, Coalville closed 28/2/2001; planned to reopen 18/10/2001 but seems not to have done so.

Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake, Leicester

closed 10/4/2001

Shawell, Lutterworth

closed 29/3/2001

Sutton Cheney, Nuneaton

closed by December 2001 (still existed in February 2001)

Swinford, Lutterworth

closed 29/5/2001

Thornton, Coalville

closed 30/6/2001

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Aldwinckle, Kettering	closed 14/3/2001
Great Houghton, Northampton	closed 3/12/2001
Podington (Beds), Wellingborough	closed 5/6/2001
Stoke Albany, Market Harborough	reopened 27/9/2001
Warkton, Kettering	reopened 30/10/2001 (after temp. closure - date unknown)

The following offices in Northants were not listed on the internet by Nov 2001 so may have closed in 2001 or earlier

Ashton, Northampton
 Bradden, Towcester
 Farthinghoe, Brackley
 Laxton, Corby
 Maidford, Towcester
 Northend, Higham Ferrers
 Old, Northampton
 Rushton, Kettering
 Warkton, Kettering

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Claypole, Newark (in Lincs)	closed 10/4/2001
Everton, Doncaster	closed 30/3/2001
Gamston, Nottingham	closed 7/7/2001; (had opened 21/6/1999)
Holbeck, Worksop	reopened by November 2001; (t.c. 10/9/1999)
Laneham, Retford	closed 1/8/2001
Misson, Doncaster	closed 27/4/2001
Thorneywood Rise (TSO), Nottingham	reopened 25/10/2001; (t.c. 13/6/2000)
Nuthall, Nottingham	reopened 22/2/2001; (t.c. 7/9/2000)
Oldcotes, Worksop	closed 22/2/2001
Shelford, Nottingham	closed 8/1/2001
South Scarle, Newark	closed 14/3/2001
Thorney, Newark	closed 3/5/2001
Thurgarton, Nottingham	closed 21/7/2001
Thrumpton, Nottingham	closed 25/1/2001
Tudor Square, W. Bridgford, Nottingham renamed 'West Bridgford'	30/11/2001
Upper Broughton, Melton Mowbray	closed 21/3/2001
Woodbeck, Retford	closed 28/3/2001

OXFORDSHIRE

Warwick Road (TSO), Banbury	closed 27/6/2001
Benson, Wallingford	reopened mid-January 2001; (t.c. 6/11/2000 - robbery)
Blewbury, Didcot	reopened 18/10/2001; (t.c. 8/8/2000)
East Hendred, Wantage	t.c. 5/7/2001; reopened 1/11/2001
Finstock, Chiping Norton	closed 23/5/2001
Frieth, Henley-on-Thames (Bucks)	closed 29/8/2001
Shenington, Banbury	closed 14/2/2001

RUTLAND

Belton-in-Rutland, Oakham	closed 28/4/2001
Whissendine, Oakham	closed 25/4/2001

SHROPSHIRE

Hengoed, Oswestry	closed 1/2/2001
Ightfield, Whitchurch	t.c. 22/11/2001; to reopen 28/2/2002
Leebotwood, Church Stretton	reopened 23/7/2001; relocated to village hall 7/12/2001
Norton, Shifnal	relocated to village hall 13/9/2001
Pulverbach, Shrewsbury	closed 16/1/2001 (at White Horse Inn)
Stanton Lacy, Ludlow	closed 19/3/2001
Whittington, Oswestry	removed from internet list c. November 2001

STAFFORDSHIRE

Acton Trussell, Stafford	closed 30/3/2001
Alstonefield, Ashbourne	closed 30/9/2001
Bednall, Stafford	closed 21/3/2001
Bradley, Stafford	closed 22/3/2001
Cotes Heath, Stafford	closed 28/11/2001
Coton, Stafford	closed 27/6/2001; reopened 23/7/2001
Fulford, Stoke-on-Trent	closed 6/1/2001
Hill Ridware, Rugeley	closed 26/7/2001
Ladderedge (TSO) LEEK	closed 28/2/2001
Stanton, Ashbourne	closed 10/1/2001
Swindon, Dudley	closed 21/3/2001; reopened 27/9/2001

WARWICKSHIRE

Arley, Coventry	closed 23/4/2001; reopened 30/8/2001
Avon Dassett, Southam	reopened 2/1/2001 (in village hall)
Bearley, Stratford-on-Avon	closed closed 4/4/2001
Berkswell, Coventry	closed May 2001
Birchmoor, Tamworth	closed 10/4/2001
Chadwick End, Solihull	closed 20/2/2001; reopened 14/6/2001
Great Wolford, Shipston-on-Stour	closed 23/4/2001
Fieldgate (TSO) Kenilworth	reopened 5/4/2001; (t.c. 3/10/2000)
Long Marston, Stratford-on-Avon	reopened 26/7/2001; (t.c. 13/4/1999)
Middleton, Tamworth	closed by June 2001
Shilton, Coventry	relocated to village hall January 2001
Warton, Tamworth	closed 29/8/2001; reopened 1/11/2001
West Street (TSO) Stratford-on-Avon	closed 31/10/2001

WEST MIDLANDS

Birmingham Road (TSO) Sutton Coldfield	replaced by Wylde Green 1/9/2001
Chadwick End, Solihull	closed 20/2/2001; reopened 14/6/2001 (both in village hall)
Eve Hill (TSO) Dudley	closed 6/1/2001
Longford (TSO) Coventry	closed 11/1/2001
Longlands (TSO) Stourbridge	closed 28/11/2001

WORCESTERSHIRE

Badsey, Evesham	reopened 9/1/2001; (t.c. 31/12/2000)
Clent, Stourbridge	closed 31/7/2001; reopened 10/9/2001; closed 26/9/2001
Crothorne, Pershore	closed 26/9/2001
Elmley Castle, Pershore	opened 26/7/2001 in village hall; previously closed
30/11/1984	
Leigh Sinton, Malvern	closed c. December 2000; reopened 3/1/2001
Marlbrook, Bromsgrove	closed 28/11/2001
North Littleton, Evesham	closed 17/10/2001
Norton, Evesham	closed 30/5/2001
Spetchley, Worcester	closed 28/3/2001
West Malvern, Malvern	closed 29/10/2001

t.c. - temporary closure

Any further information, please, to:

Ken Smith, 3 St Agatha's Close, PERSHORE WR10 1DQ

IMPROVEMENTS IN LOCAL POSTS 1836-39

by Bob Ricketts

Cavendish's September 1998 auction included a range of items from Martin Willcocks' reference collection. Lot 2238 was described as "c. 1840 13-page manuscript list of 'Improvements in Local posts from Jany. 1836' comprising a very long list of towns/villages whose services by the P.O. were improved during this period, inc. the Isle of Man and almost every area of the country that one can think of (produced for a Parliamentary Report?)". Intrigued, I purchased the lot, but have only recently had time to transcribe it.

The list was almost certainly produced as working notes by a Post Office official, collating entries from reports from Surveyors (the first five pages) and Treasury Minutes, and covers improvements (mainly in England, but with some errant entries for Scotland and Wales) from January 1836 to Spring 1839 (Penny Posts approved in North Bedfordshire in July 1839 are not listed). Although much of the information contained in the list is available from other sources, it provides a salutary reminder of the scale of change (there are over 500 entries) in the years immediately prior to Universal Penny postage. I thought the entries for the Midland counties might be of interest to members, even if only as an aide-memoire.

England

Improvements in Local Posts from January 1836

Reports

Churchill [Bristol or Oxon?] free delivery established.
 Dursley [Glos] to Cambridge Inn PP established.
 Fillongley [Warks], Arley, Astley &c PP established.
 Tewkesbury [Glos], Bredon, Kimmerton [Kemerton], Twining &c PP established.
 Wolverhampton, Brewood &c PP established.
 Birmingham, Smethwick and Oldbury from a foot to a horse post and extended to Dudley. [pencil addition 'PP']
 Cheltenham situation of P.O. changed.
 Daventry & Weedon PP established.
 Knowle [Warks] & Solihull PP established.
 Longdon [Staffs or Glos?] PP established.
 Stroud, Painswick and Chalford Messenger established. [pencil note 'PP']
 Sutton [in] Ashfield PP established.
 Shirleywich [Staffs], Great Heywood & Wolseley Post established. [pencil note 'PP']
 West Haddon [Northants] PP established.
 Birmingham free delivery extended.
 Birmingham, Kings Norton, Northfield & Great Barr, Curdworth & Beckenhill PP established.
 Cheltenham additional L[etter] Carriers apptd. & walks rearranged.
 Eardisland [Hereford.], Pembridge & Cholstrey Gate PP established.
 Hathersich [Hathersage, Derbyshire ?] PP established.
 Northampton delivery extended.
 Stroud, Cainscross, Dudbridge, Ebley, Stonehouse, Eastington, Frampton, Kings Stanley, Leonard Stanley &c PP established.
 Tunstall [Staffs?] made a PP
 Worksop & Tickhill PP established.
 Wickwar [Glos] PP made daily. [Listed neither in Oxley 1973 nor in Midland (GB) Postal History Society 1993.]

Minutes

Cheltenham free delivery established and later extended.
 Evesham PO removed.
 Stroud [Glos] Office removed. [Subsequently deleted in pencil.]
 Coleford [Glos] & Newland Messenger to go twice daily. [pencil note 'PP'].
 Eccleshall & Newton [Norton?] Bridge Messenger established. [pencil note 'PP'].
 Bridstow [Hereford] PP established.
 Great Barr footpost established. [pencil note 'PP'].
 Hereford free delivery extended.
 Kilsby & Daventry PP established.
 Kingswinford [Worcs] PP to be made a horse post.
 Lichfield, Barton & Alrewas PP to be made permanent. [Subsequently deleted in pencil.]
 Minchinhampton & Nailsworth PP established.
 Madeley [Salop] PP established.
 Micheldean [Glos] Receiving House established.

Market Drayton & Wem messenger appointed. [pencil note 'PP'].
 Oldbury [Birmingham] delivery extended.
 Stroud [Glos] free delivery extended.
 Stratford on Avon free delivery extended.
 Bilston & Wolverhampton PP established.
 Birmingham - 2 additional Clerks & 2 L[etter] Carriers appointed.
 Bewdley boundary [of free delivery?] extended.
 Bromsgrove free delivery extended.
 Broadway [Worcs?] free delivery extended.
 Cheltenham delivery improved.
 Eccleshall & Norton Bridge foot messenger established.
 Great Barr free delivery extended.
 Peterchurch [Hereford] PP established experimentally.
 Lutterworth PP established to Ashby Magna, Ashby Parva, Bitteswell, Broughton Astley, Claybrooke, Dunton Bassett, Frowlesworth, Highcross, Leire, Ullesthorpe & Wibtoft.
 Ludlow free delivery extended.
 Market Drayton & Woore foot messenger established. [pencil note 'PP'].
 Stafford & Railway Station foot messenger established.
 Upper Gornal [Worcs] PP established.
 Walsall & Cannock foot messenger established. [pencil note 'GnPP'].
 Worcester additional Clerk allowed.
 Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sedgley, Up. Gornal PP established.
 Forsbrook (Stone) PP established.
 Kinver [Staffs] PP established.
 Nottingham allowance for a Clerk.
 Stourbridge free delivery extended.
 Stonebridge, Prestwood, Staunton Castle, Iverton, Kinver & Whittington PP established.
 Wednesbury & Wolverhampton Messenger established. [pencil note 'GnPP'].
 Wednesbury & Birmingham messenger established. [pencil note 'GnPP'].

Note: some of the entries have subsequent pencil notes against them, usually
 'Gn' [General Post ?] or 'PP' [Penny Post ?]

If any members would like a photocopy of the originals, or transcriptions for other counties, please let me know.

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BIRMINGHAM POST OFFICE, 1840-56

This article is based on the details found in Post 9/133 and 135. The former covers the years 1840-46 though it does contain entries which must have been made after 1846, while the latter then covers the period up to 1856.

In 1840, in addition to his salary of £500 p.a. the postmaster received a number of allowances: £20 for coal and candles; £75 for stationery (twine, wax, books etc); £12 for an office servant; £9 for cleaning the windows and £1.1.0 for winding and regulating the clocks. The rent of the office, the cost of gas and unspecified taxes were paid by warrant.

Twenty-eight clerks were employed in the office. The first clerk received £220 p.a., the second £180, the third £150 and the fourth and fifth £120. The remainder received salaries ranging from £60 to £100. Seven stampers, four of whom received 22/- a week and three 20/-, completed the indoor staff.

An Inspector of Letter Carriers on 30/- a week supervised the activities of the letter carriers one of whom received 22/- a week, fifteen 20/-, and fourteen 18/-. In addition there were three junior letter carriers on 16/- a week and eight auxiliaries on 10/6.

The postmaster was also responsible for seven rural messengers:

Minworth via Castle Bromwich who received 18/- a week (first payment 5th April 1840);	
Kings Norton, 18/-, 6th February 1841;	Elmdon, 15/-, 16th December 1850;
Moseley, 10/-, 6th September 1840;	Handsworth, 18/-, 31st December 1847;
Sutton Coldfield, 18/-, (no date given);	Great Barr, 14/-, (no date given).

Details are also given of the salaries at twenty-eight rural sub-offices and ten town sub-offices.

On 1st October all the allowances, apart from that of 15/- a week for an office servant, were consolidated into an increased salary of £700 p.a. There were now only twenty-one clerks: four first class, eight second class; 9 supplementary and one temporary.

The second volume does not list any stampers but does mention ninety-four sorters: 9 at 31/- at week; 11 at 30/-; 14 at 26/-; 20 at 22/- and 40 at 18/-.

In addition to the rural messengers to Kings Norton, Great Barr, Elmdon and Moseley the second volume lists:

Headley Heath, 15/-, 29th April 1856;	Aston, 18/- (no date given);
Saltley, 18/-, 4th May 1856;	Small Heath, 18/-, 4th May 1856;
Sutton Coldfield & Little Aston 4th May 1856;	Henley & Great Alne, 12/-, 3rd June 1855;
Hockley & Ullenhall, 11/-, 3rd June 1855;	Hockley & Old Berrow, 13/-, 30th March 1856;
Halesowen (mounted) 26/-.	

NOTTINGHAM POST OFFICE, 1843-53

The salary of the Nottingham postmaster was £200 p.a. with no extra allowances. In the office there were five clerks with annual salaries ranging from £50 to £90. The delivery of the letters was carried out by six letter carriers and three auxiliaries. Of the letter carriers, one received 20/- a week, one 18/-, two 16/- and two 14/-. The auxiliaries were paid 7/- but from January 1852 one also acted as a stamper at 14/-. The postmaster was also responsible in 1846-47 for the sub-deputies at Bingham, Ilkeston and Stapleford as well as twenty-six receivers. By 1853, the number of sub-offices had reached forty-three, no distinction being made between rural and town offices. At the same time about twenty rural posts existed (thirteen by 1846-47):

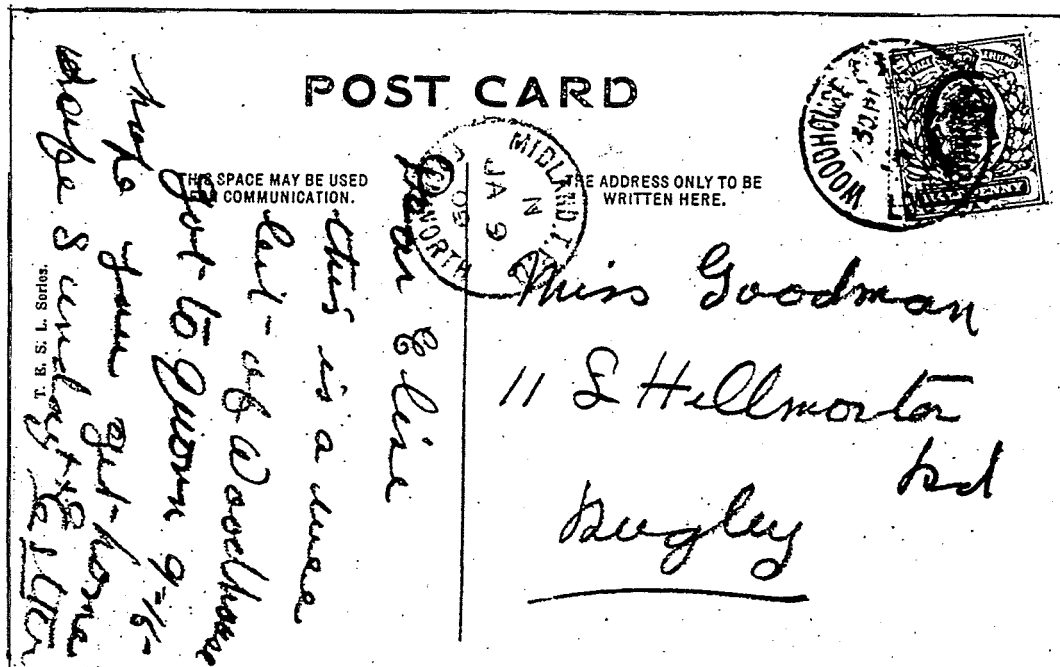
Ilkeston, 14/-, 16th August 1841;	Basford, Bulwell, Hucknall, 10/6, 13th May 1844;
Lenton, Chilwell, 12/- 12th December 1844;	Basford, Nuthall, Eastwood, 14/-, 19th March 1848;
Granby, 12/-, 6th October 1848;	Ruddington, Bunney, 12/-, 15th July 1844;
Colwick, Carlton, Bulcote, 12/-, 13 Aug 1844	Carrington, Arnold, 10/6, 14th December 1844;
Normanton, 12/- 25th February 1846;	Bingham, Cropwell, Colston, 14/-, 26th May 1845;
Cotgrave, 14/-, 29th November 1847;	Bingham, Bottesford, 14/-, 1st October 1848;
Lowdham, 12/-, 4th September 1848;	Clifton, Barton, 12/-, 14th May 1849;
Bingham, Bridgeford, Kneeton, 14/-, 19th May 1851	
Bingham, Scarrington, Thoroton, Orston, 11/-, 25th June 1850; but	
Bingham, Colston, Scarrington, Whatton, Orston, 12/-, 24th May 1851;	
Kimberley, 11/-, 17th May 1851;	Orston, Flawboro, Stanton, 11/-, 6th October 1852;
Widmerpool & Wysall, 6/-, 14th July 1851.	

Readers might like to compare this with the list of Nottingham rural posts in MM50/18ff.

[References: Post 9/134 and 9/136]

A T.P.O. ITEM

Shown below is a postcard sent from Woodhouse Eaves to Rugby which shows the single circle handstamp "MIDLAND. T.P.O. FROM NORTH" as well as the dated circle of Woodhouse Eaves. I assume that this combination of marks arose because at the time Woodhouse Eaves had a late evening collection at 7.30 p.m. in addition to one at 5.30 p.m. At Loughborough the card was put into the bag made up there for the Midland T.P.O. Does anyone else have a better explanation?



THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

I hope that this will appear by the middle of June. It will contain a report of the A.G.M. and a list of auction realisations plus, I hope, more on mail carried by the railways. However there will be plenty of room for other articles, short or long, which should be sent to:

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