MIDLAND MAIL

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

President: Mr. W.J. Calladine

Chairman: Richard Farman

Treasurer: Trevor Clewley

Secretary: Elizabeth Lewis

NUMBER 68, JANUARY 1991

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Our annual competitions will be held at Carrs Lane Church Centre on 2nd February. Although the meeting begins formally at 1.30 p.m., members are asked to arrive at about 1.15 p.m. in order to facilitate the arrangements for the afternoon.

On 9th March two representatives of the B.P.F. will visit the Society. After a talk on the work of the Federation, John Sussex will show "Mail to Maderia", and Robert Seaman "Pre-stamp Essex".

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Carrs Lane Church Centre on 27th April commencing at 1.30 p.m. This will be preceded by a committee meeting at 11 a.m. In April Richard, our Chairman, will have completed his three year term of office and nominations for the position are required prior to the A.G.M. with of course the agreement of the member nominated.

AUCTION LOTS

Lots are requested for the Society's annual auction which will follow the A.G.M. on 27th April. In order that catalogues can be sent to our overseas members in good time for them to submit bids it is necessary to have the lots in by 9th March i.e. the date of our March meeting.

Please include brief but full descriptions together with estimated market values and your reserve prices or state "no reserve". If you wish the actual lots can be brought along to the auction but in this case please state the condition of the item based on 'Poor', 'Good', 'Fine', or 'Superb' and also clearly indicate the number of items in each lot.

Your committee, particularly the Treasurer, always appreciate the lots given by members to auction for Society funds prior to the auction proper. Perhaps you could find a lot or two for sale in this way.

Please hand lots to Mrs. E. Lewis or post them to her at:
27, Rathbone Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B67 5JG.

The Undated Straight Line & No'd Receiving House Marks of the Midlands

Erratum

The Derbyshire County Editor has advised that all references in Amendment List No. 1 (see MM 67/15-19) to a new Glossop mark (MSL 8) should be ignored. It has proved to be an incomplete strike of a 'Glossop Rd' handstamp of Sheffield.

THE DECEMBER MEETING

It is no exaggeration to say that a book could be written on the material shown at our annual gathering in Burton-on-Trent. Such was the quality and scope of Vivien Sussex's display "Valuables by Post". It is impossible in the space available to do justice to the material shown and what follows can be no more than an account of some of the items which caught the eye of your Editor.

Vivien began with two Corsini letters from the 1580's, one of which had contained a sample of the newly discovered ginger root which was valued at £30 per oz. The translation of an endorsement on this letter was "Into your hands with special care."

It was possible to register overseas mail between the British port and London fifty years or more before inland registration was introduced. We were shown examples of the various rates charged as well as an example of the 'F.O' circular handstamp. It is thought that this was used on registered mail from abroad which was going beyond London. Amongst the material on Money Orders were the earliest recorded actual order which was written to the postmaster of Nottingham in 1795, and a letter to Daventry commenting on the reduction of the poundage in 1840. A Money Letter was one which was declared to contain money or valuables. It was contained in a separate wrapper, and charged double. Such a wrapper sent to the postmaster of Derby aroused a little interest! A copy of the London Gazette containing the advice to cut bank notes in half before sending them through the post was supported by two letters in which the two halves of a note had been sent.

The section on inland registration began appropriately with a notice of December 1840 announcing the start of the new service, and a receipt for a registered letter dated 6 January 1840 - the first day of the service. These were followed by the earliest recorded use to date of the inland service, a letter dated 15 January 1841. A matching receipt and transatlantic letter sent from Cirencester (registered as far as Bristol) are worthy of a mention. The early period of registration saw the use of a number of distinctive handstamps; we were shown, amongst others, those from Chester, Yeovil, York as well as the 'Spoon' of Liverpool.

The green wrappers used up to 1856 are rarely seen, so we were doubly fortunate to see one signed by Florence Nightingale. Vivien dealt with the replacement of the wrappers by green silk ribbon, then string and finally blue lines. We were shown examples of where these had apparently been applied at Liverpool by a roller, and at St. Helens by a ruler. When the rate was reduced to 4d. in 1862, a fine of 8d. was introduced for not registering letters containing money etc. This was illustrated by a cover showing the handstamp used in London on such letters on its first day of use.

The introduction of postal orders was illustrated by one numbered Accrington 000001 and postmarked on 1 January 1881 - the first day of sale. Vivien continued with a number of miscellaneous items amongst which was an insufficiently addressed letter which passed through Bristol, Southwell, Derby, Sheffield, Oxford, Newark and Nottingham before finally being sent back to Newark. All this in four days for a registration fee of 4d. plus postage of 1d. The first half ended with a number of registered packets and boxes.

Vivien began the second half by looking at the introduction of registration labels. Apparently the Post Office were reluctant to use these but were eventually forced by the UPU to obey the rules. After showing some privately produced registration labels, Vivien put up an example of the new international style of label on the first day of use - 18 February 1907. However, awkward to the end, the Post Office, had produced a label with the 'R' on the right, not the left. Two letters from Usk showed incorrect and correct labels. Amongst the many interesting items we saw from the period up to 1945 were an example of the distinctive skeleton handstamp used at Leeds on registered letters; an envelope used to send diamonds to Amsterdam; registered letters marked with blue diagonals indicating that they were not to go through TPO apparatus. The several rate changes which took place in the period 1918-22, and the various combinations they lead to were dealt with thoroughly. The final items from this country were concerned with the COD and HVP services. The latter is used for sending high value parcels of banknotes between banks.

Amongst the items of foreign mail, but handled by the GPO, were a letter sent in 1847 from Reverto to Loughborough showing an early usage of the jagged edge 'RECOM' handstamp; an example of the boxed 'Registered' handstamp applied in 1866 at Bremen in conjunction with the Aachen TPO; and the earliest recorded use of the Falkland Islands registered crown. There were examples from British Post Offices Abroad, including Chile, Porto Rico, Constantinople and Shanghai. The Antipodes were represented by an 1845 registered letter from New Zealand and one sent in 1845 from Victoria to Locarno via London on which the payment of 1/- was denoted by a special registration stamp. The final item in an enthralling display had what must surely be the longest ever list of addressees. It was sent registered from Toronto to London and was addressed to fifty-three underwriters at Lloyds.

Chris Beaver spoke for all when he said we had seen what must surely be the definitive collection on the subject and that it was worthy of publication in some form.

Our thanks are again due to Richard Farman for arranging the facilities at the Bass Museum.

THE JANUARY MEETING

Sixteen members met on 12th January for the third meeting of the season devoted to Local Posts. Such is the remoteness of deepest Gloucestershire that John Calladine deemed it prudent to begin with a large map of that county showing all sixteen of its penny posts. John dealt with about half of these in some detail. The first penny post in the county was that of Dursley which was introduced in 1811 and ran to Berkeley. The first penny post under Minchinhampton was that to Nailsworth of which we saw an example of the No 1 handstamp. At that time the inhabitants of Chalford did not want a penny post but in 1836 Chalford became a post town (something to do with mail coaches), and

took over from Minchinhampton. Yet an Oxley type 2 handstamp was used when the type 4 was being issued at that time. A possible explanation is that in 1827 it was agreed to make Chalford a post town but for some reason this did not happen. It is possible that the type 2 stamp was issued at that time. We also saw material from Stroud; Moreton-in Marsh including the 'Moreton in Mush/Penny Post; Newent with its distinctive boxed 'Newent/No 3' handstamp; and Newnham dated 1830. There appears to be no documentary evidence for the starting of this. John ended with two covers from the same correspondence originating from the Lea area. The first had the boxed 'Lea' handstamp, but the other posted after Lea had been made a sub post town was marked with a 'Lea/ Penny Post' and charged one penny more.

At this point Ches produced a front marked with the 'Barford/ Penny Post stamp used in 1845. I think he was trying to prove that good Warwickshire material is now scarcer than that from Hinckley.

Denis Salt showed material from the Shifnal Penny Post. This was established in 1806 with three receiving houses at Madeley Wood (Ironbridge), Broseley and Much Wenlock. We were shown examples of the named stamps used before 1811 (Wenlock used a boxed mileage mark), and then the numeral handstamps. Denis also showed the variations of spelling and colour used at Shifnal as well material from Ironbridge after it had become subordinate to Shrewsbury. Chris Beaver then produced the odd sheet or so on Staffordshire. These dealt mainly with the Potteries, starting with early, unofficial posts. The Uttoxeter Penny Post followed. Then we were shown what appeared to be every possible mark from the 5th Clause and Penny Posts of Newcastle.

After the break it was the turn of Harold Wilson with the Derby local posts which covered a 14 mile radius from Derby. There were examples of charges of 1d. and 2d. Although Belper had a 'No 2' handstamp, a different 'No 2' was used by the postmaster of Derby to show an unofficial charge of 2d., as we saw on examples from Cavendish Bridge. Letters from Duffield were marked with a 'No 1' in reddish purple but charged the General Post rate. Apparently it proved to be impossible to find a receiver at Duffield. The final items in Harold's display were letters to Loughborough, charged one penny and showing the mileage marks of Cavendish Bridge and Shardelow.

Our Chairman took us on a short tour of the Midlands. He started in Derby with 2d. post material; then went to Wirksworth whose penny post had receiving houses in Matlock Bath and Matlock; the next stop was Hathersage. Then we went into Staffordshire to Penkridge with mail going through the penny posts of Wolverhampton and Stafford. An abortive trip to Nottingham followed before we ended up in Broseley where an extra penny was charged on a letter from Bilston.

Guy Bridges too appeared to have wanderlust, starting in Worcestershire with the boxed 'No 3' of Ombersley before going to Kilsby in Northamptonshire. However most of his material came from Shropshire and included some of the receiving houses under Shrewsbury as well as the extensive system of local posts at Ludlow.

The three meetings have shown that the subject of Local Posts is anything but straightforward, and the material very varied. It now remains to get it all into print.

RAILWAY AIR SERVICES

I am most grateful to Harold Wilson for sending material in response to the request made by Mr Gardiner in the last issue.

Railway Air Services Ltd. was a company formed in 1934 by the main railway companies along with Imperial Airways for the operation of regular commercial airways within the U.K. The inauguration of the carriage of mail on 20 August 1934, was disrupted by severe gales. The morning flight from Birmingham to Cowes, which left from Castle Bromwich, reached Bristol where it was decided to go no further. The mail was sent on by surface mail. The afternoon flight was cancelled.

On arrival at Manchester, the Glasgow-London flight was abandoned and the mail for Birmingham and the south sent on by rail. A substitute aeroplane was used to carry mails for the north as far as Birmingham from where it was sent on by rail.

Only the Liverpool and Plymouth flights were completed successfully on 20 August but on the following day all three services operated as expected.

On 1 November 1934, Birmingham and Manchester were omitted from the main route in favour of Liverpool.

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BIRMINGHAM

INLAND AIR MAILS

Commencing on the 20th August, Air Mail Services with the object of affording acceleration to correspondence will be introduced between Birmingham and the various towns as shown below :—

A. London-Birmingham-Manchester-Isle of Man-Belfast-Glasgow.
B. Liverpool-Birmingham-Cardiff-Plymouth.
C. Birmingham-Bristol-Southampton-Cowes (Isle of Wight).

CHARGES

The charges will be 1½d. for the first 2 oz. and 1d. for each subsequent ounce, that is to say *there will be no increase in charge as compared with the ordinary services for letters not exceeding 2 oz. in weight.* The charge for postcards will be 1d. each.

POSTING

To secure maximum acceleration letters should be posted at the Head Post Office, Birmingham, or in one of the three special blue Air Mail Pillar Boxes situated :—

(1) Outside Head Post Office, Birmingham.
(2) Corner of Corporation Street and Martineau Street.
(3) Corner of Colmore Row and Church Street.

Air Mail correspondence may be posted at any Post Office or in any ordinary posting box in the Birmingham Central Area. A blue Air Mail label should be affixed at the top left-hand corner of the envelope, but a manuscript indication " By Air Mail " will be accepted.

G.B. COVERS

Do you see my lists of GB cover material? If you don't and are a member of The Midland (GB) Postal History Society, you should! They contain a wide selection of interesting and unusual items - county material, difficult values and rates- from 1840 to date. Send for a copy of my latest list today. All 'Wants Lists' for specific items or county material will receive my personal attention.

ROGER HUDSON

P.O. Box 172,
COVENTRY CV6 6NF

Phone: 0203 686613

PARTICULARS OF POSTING

(Correspondence posted in Birmingham)

Destination	Latest time of posting in Blue Air Mail Boxes (1)	Latest time of posting in Blue Air Mail Boxes (2) and (3)	Latest time of posting in Ordinary Boxes	Advantages of Blue Air Mail Box Service
London, E.C. ...	11.30 a.m.	11.15 a.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 10. 0 a.m.	45 minutes later posting for delivery at 3.30 p.m.
Manchester	3. 0 p.m.	2.45 p.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 1.30 p.m.	2 hrs. 25 mins. Acceleration for Express Service at Manchester
Douglas, Isle of Man	3. 0 p.m.	2.45 p.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 1.30 p.m.	*Delivery of Express Letters same day.* Arrive approx. 6.30 p.m.
Belfast	3. 0 p.m.	2.45 p.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 1.30 p.m.	*Delivery of Express Letters same day.* Arrive approx. 7.30 p.m.
Glasgow	3. 0 p.m.	2.45 p.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 1.30 p.m.	*Delivery of Express Letters same day.* Arrive approx. 8.30 p.m.
Bristol	8.30 a.m.	8.15 a.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 5. 0 a.m.	1 hr. acceleration for Express Service at Bristol
Southampton ...	8.30 a.m.	8.15 a.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 5. 0 a.m.	1¼ hr. later posting and 2¾ hrs. acceleration in delivery in central area. 3 hrs. acceleration for Express Service at Southampton
Cowes (I. of W.) ...	8.30 a.m.	8.15 a.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 5. 0 a.m.	1¼ hr. later posting and 4 hrs. acceleration for Express Service at Cowes. Afternoon delivery at the more important places in Isle of Wight
Bristol	1. 0 p.m.	12.45 p.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 10. 0 a.m.	2¼ hrs. later posting for delivery same day (Saturdays excepted)
Southampton ...	1. 0 p.m.	12.45 p.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 10. 0 a.m.	2 hrs. acceleration for Express Letters at Southampton
Cowes (I. of W.) ...	1. 0 p.m.	12.45 p.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 10. 0 a.m.	Delivery of Express Letters same day approximately 4.30 p.m.

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PARTICULARS OF POSTING

(Correspondence posted in Birmingham)

Destination	Latest time of posting in Blue Air Mail Boxes		Latest time of posting in Ordinary Boxes	Advantages of Blue Air Mail Box Service
Cardiff	8.30 a.m.	8.15 a.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 5. 0 a.m.	2 hrs. later posting for delivery in central area at Cardiff 12.15 p.m.
Plymouth	8.30 a.m.	8.15 a.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 5. 0 a.m.	2 hrs. later posting and acceleration of 2¼ hrs. for ordinary delivery at Plymouth. 1¼ hr. acceleration for Express service at Plymouth
Liverpool	5.45 p.m.	5.30 p.m.	Nearest Box tablet time to 5. 0 p.m.	1 hr. later posting for delivery of Express letters same day. Arrive approx. 8.15 p.m.

TELEPHONE LETTERS

A letter may be telephoned to the Head Post Office, Birmingham (ask for "Telegrams") for inclusion in the Air Mail despatch.

The telephone letter service may prove extremely useful to persons residing outside the central posting area. The charge for writing down the message is 3d. for the first 30 words and 1d. for every 10 words or part thereof in excess of 30; plus postage.

RAILEX SERVICE

Under this service (see page 53 of the Post Office Guide) the Post Office undertakes the entire transmission of a Railway Letter for an inclusive charge of 2s. 6d. This service, which is confined to letters not exceeding 2 oz. in weight, may be used in conjunction with the Air Services mentioned above; the letters should be handed in at the Head Post Office Counter.

GPO

MILEAGES IN THE 1830s: AN ADDENDUM

by Rev Christopher Beaver

The list of offices extracted from the volume printed in 1830 (MM 65/9-10) omitted Andoversford (mileage to London 97 inserted in m/s), as one who does know Gloucestershire expected. These additional offices should be marked with a * to indicate italic script in the original; Abbots Bromley, Castle Bromwich, Chapel in Frith, and Henley-in-Arden.

Thanks to Derek Smeathers for his comment. Kimbolton, in Huntingdonshire, has a 65 mileage. The Thrapstonealteration from 85 to 74 must surely mean that in the early 30s the ride from Eaton Socon (not listed) to Kimbolton was extended to Thrapstone (cf the map on MM67/7)

Buxton was changed from 166 to 199 and back to 166. There cannot be much doubt the higher figure (involving an increase of postage to 11d) means its London mail was for a while routed through Stockport (180 miles), but it does seem odd if Chapel in Frith, at the end of a ride from Buxton, did not have its mail directed the same way. There was or had been also a ride over the moorlands between Buxton and Leek which operated only in the summer months, the spa season. Whether London mail was carried on that others may know, but it would make little difference to the usual mileage which was certainly calculated at 166 through Bakewell and Derby. The allusions to this ride so far observed are in the 1820s and it would be good to discover its purpose and when it began and ceased.

The reduction of Tideswell's mileage from 171 to 160 (and postage down to 10d) was perhaps due to the introduction of a direct ride from Bakewell in place of a walk from somewhere on the Bakewell-Buxton road. That is no more than a hunch to provoke the Derbyshire PHS members.

Painswick's alteration from 111 to 105 miles could be due to a change of status from a General Post sub-office to a penny post under Stroud, an unofficial one since it is not in Oxley's book? The Broomsgrove amendment from 124 to 115 is presumably because instead of travelling through Birmingham its London mail went through Stratford-on-Avon.

If nothing else these suggestions illustrate the fact that routes and rates were liable to be changed for a great variety of reasons. Every discovery raises yet more questions.

Since the previous article was written a similar book but printed in 1836 has been located in P.O. Archives. In that unfortunately no mileages were inserted in the column provided, but there must be hope of finding a copy used by one of the G.P.O. clerks who needed them. The 1830 volume in which Robert Partridge wrote was kindly loaned by Michael Scott-Archer who notes in his 'The Welsh Post Towns Before 1840' that the m/s figures all appear to him to have been written in 1830-32.

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BEWARE 14th FEBRUARY !

by John Calladine

Before the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage in 1840, it was normal practice (as we all know) not to pre-pay postage but to allow the recipient to meet the cost. that this practice also encompassed the increasingly popular Valentine - originally sent as a letter but later as a card - is confirmed by a surviving minute addressed to the Postmaster General on 16 February 1825. Francis Freeling complained that he had received, that very day, 8 or 10 applications from members of the public for the return of postage on Valentines they had accepted. It was not a new experience for him: he suggests the Post Office had received such claims from "time immemorial" and that they had always been rejected, with a few interesting exceptions.

Apparently a Valentine sent in an envelope (presumably a folded cover) was charged as a single letter and not the double rate, a concession probably ordered in the interests of modesty. However, the full postage was refunded if the Valentine was found to be of a gross or personally offensive nature. This was by no means unusual at that time as there was something of a vogue for sending anonymous insulting messages to one's enemies in the guise of Valentine's. Their contents would have been sufficiently distressing without the added burden of unwanted postage.

The general principle applied to all letters was that the recipient would be relieved of postage on a letter if it was subsequently discovered to be "evidently unnecessary". This encompassed letters sent for the wanton purpose of putting the recipient to expense, anonymous letters with no relation to the occupation of the recipient and letters "of a scurrilous and threatening nature". It was quite clear to Freeling that Valentines hardly came into this category but, alas he mused, "the public considers Revenue Laws and regulations less binding .... than it formerly did".

The matter of Valentines was so vexatious that eight years before (in 1817) it had been referred to the Law Department and the lawyer's succinct opinion neatly summarised the Post Office's position and added a timely warning.

"I doubt", it read, "the propriety of returning the postage for Valentine letters. Numerous persons are anxious to receive them and, after seeing them or reading the contents, are as anxious to have their money back.

It is of some importance as to the Revenue and I do not think the parties have a fair claim to a return of postage; they should be cautious of taking in letters at this particular season."

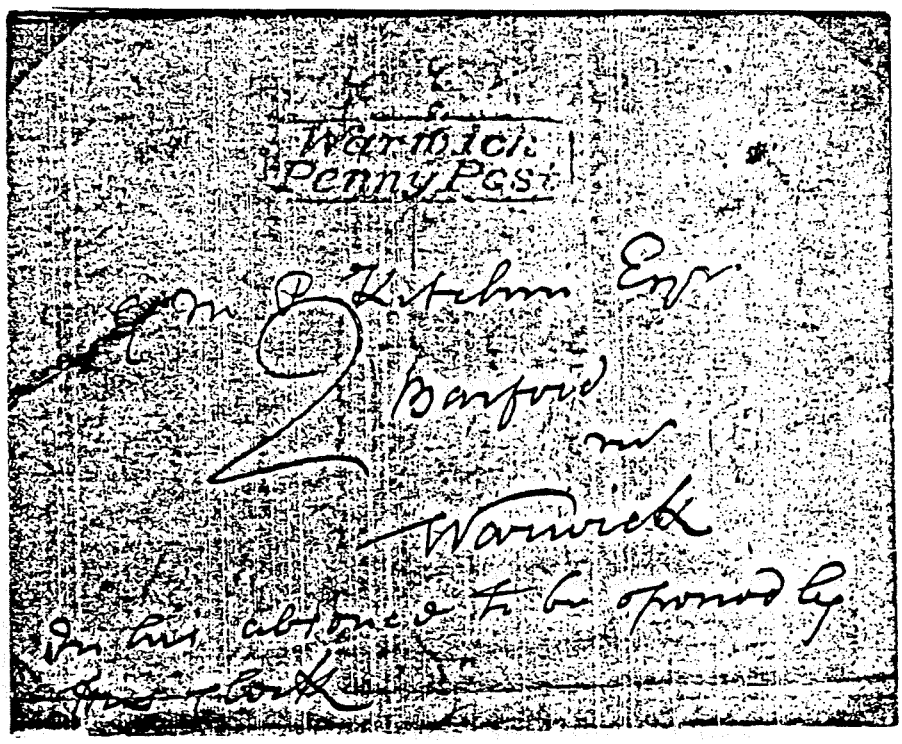
And so they should.

Post 40/111/1825

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PENNY POST MATTERS

The cover below has been sent by Ches who comments that it could be an example of a 2d charge. Unfortunately it is undated so Ches asks that if anyone has a similar Warwick/Penny Post, 40x11 mm., could they send him information giving colour, date and from where sent etc. Replies to: W.S. Chester 86, Clifton Way, Hinckley, Leics LE10 0UZ or telephone 0455 618084.



G.B. POSTAL HISTORY

ALSO: Some Foreign, Ephemera, Post Boxes - etc.

Wants Lists - for specific items or for general interests - will receive my personal attention

JIM HAMMOND

5 Staverton Rd, Daventry
Northants. NN11 4HL.
Tel. Daventry (0327) 71842

Reproduced below is part of Slater's Northamptonshire directory for 1850. Is the mention of Penny Posts due to a failure to correct a pre-1840 issue of the directory? Or were they unofficial posts? I had assumed that all official penny posts were incorporated into the General Post in 1840.

POST OFFICE—Continued.

From LONDON (*day mail*) OUNDLE, THRAPSTONE, HIGHAM FERRERS, WELLINGBOROUGH, NORTHAMPTON, and various places on the line of railway, and from the WEST OF ENGLAND, every afternoon at a quarter before three.

From almost all parts of LINCOLNSHIRE, and from HULL, YORKSHIRE, and the NORTH, every night at twelve minutes before eleven; and from MARKET DEEPING, BOURNE, FALKINGHAM, SLEAFORD, at ten at night; and from STAMFORD and WANSFORD, at a quarter past ten.

Penny Posts, from ALWALTON, CASTOR, EYE, STANGROUND, and WERRINGTON, at seven in the evening; and from WHITTLESEA, THORNEY, and CROWLAND, at half-past seven.

Despatch of the Mails.

To LONDON and various places between and beyond, also OUNDLE, THRAPSTONE, HIGHAM FERRERS, WELLINGBOROUGH, and NORTHAMPTON, also (bags from *Woolverton Station*) for the NORTH and WEST OF ENGLAND, IRELAND, and SCOTLAND, at six in the morning.

To LONDON (*night mail*) and various places beyond and others in the counties of ESSEX, CAMBRIDGE, NORFOLK, and SUFFOLK, at eleven at night.

To STILTON, HUNTINGDON, ST. IVES, BIGGLESWADE, CHATTERIS, BURY ST. EDMUNDS, IPSWICH, and NEWMARKET, every evening at a quarter past eight.

To most parts of LINCOLNSHIRE and to HULL and other places in YORKSHIRE and the NORTH, every morning at seventeen minutes before two; to MARKET DEEPING, BOURNE, FALKINGHAM, and SLEAFORD, at half-past two; and to STAMFORD and WANSFORD, at twenty-five minutes before three.

Penns Posts, to WHITTLESEA, THORNEY, and CROWLAND, at six in the morning; and to ALWALTON, CASTOR, EYE, STANGROUND, and WERRINGTON, at seven.

The *box closes* generally about half an hour before the despatch of the mails; but letters are received until five minutes before, upon an extra stamp being attached to each.

The *office is open* for the delivery of letters at seven in the morning, from April to October, and at eight the remainder of the year, and closes with the despatch of the last mail.

On *Sundays*, there is no day mail despatched or received, and the office is closed morning and afternoon, during the hours of divine service.

FOR POSTAL HISTORY

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BY THE OLD RIVER BRIDGE AT HUNTINGDON

REGISTRATION RATES 1841-1971

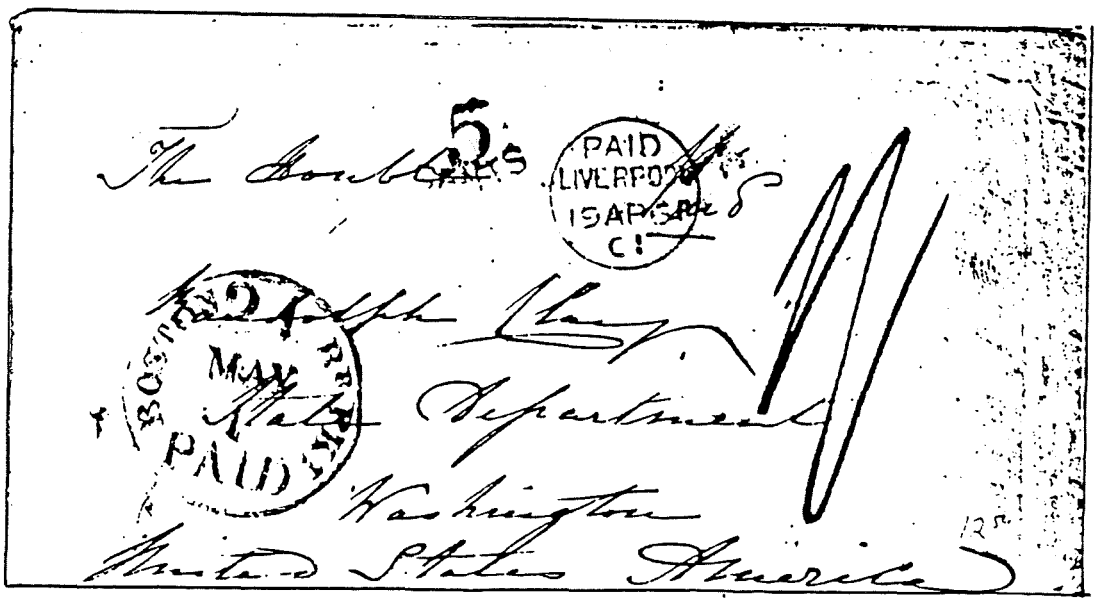
For the meeting in October, I prepared sheets showing as many as possible of the combinations of the basic rates of registration and postage up to 1971. Unfortunately I was unable to attend the meeting but so as not to waste all the work, I am showing these rates below.

Dates	Registration	Postage
1.1.1841 - .3.1848	1/-	1d
.3.1848 - 31.7.1862	6d	1d
1.8.1862 - 31.12.1871	4d	1d
1.8.1878 - 2.6.1918	2d	1d
3.6.1918 - 31.5.1920	2d	1½d
1.6.1920 - 11.6.1921	2d	2d
12.6.1921 - 28.5.1922	3d	2d
29.5.1922 - 30.4.1940	3d	1½d
1.5.1940 - 30.4 1949	3d	2½d
1.5.1949 - 30.4.1952	4d	2½d
1.5.1952 - 31.5.1956	6d	2½d
1.6.1956 - 30.9.1957	1/-	2½d
1.10.1957 - 31.1.1961	1/-	3d
1.2.1961 - 28.4.1963	1/6	3d
29.4.1963 - 16.5.1965	1/9	3d
17.5.1965 - 2.10.1966	1/9	4d
3.10.1966 - 15.9.1968	3/-	4d
16.9.1968 - 14.2.1971	3/-	5d 1st class

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LIVERPOOL PAID

Peter Thompson would appreciate any information that members can give about the use of the circular paid mark of Liverpool shown on the cover below.



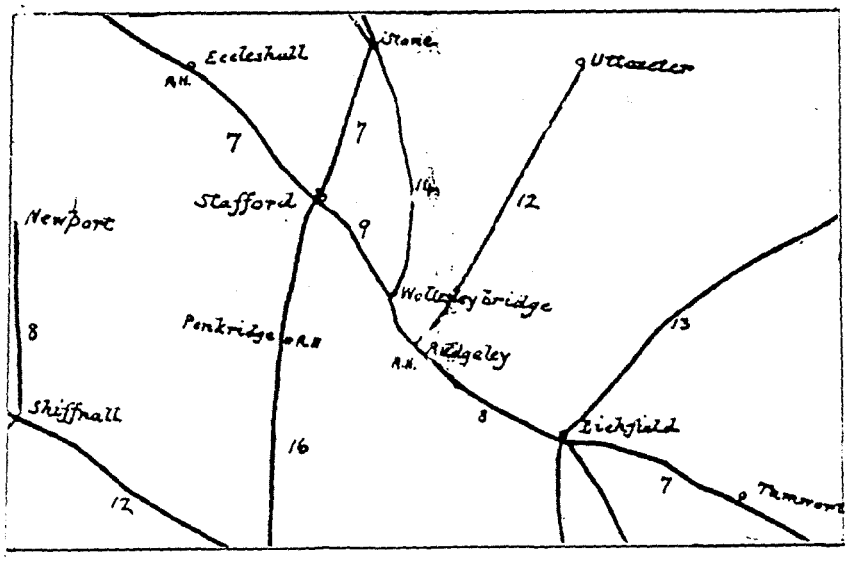
WHAT WAS A STAGE?

Some clarification as to what constituted a post stage is to be found in a report of 1796 (Post 40/70I/1796). Freeling had found that letters from Birmingham to Stratford-on-Avon were only charged as one stage, though the distance was 22 miles and the mail coach changed horses at Hockley a small village on that road. He sought the opinion of the Solicitor as to whether or not the Post Office was justified by law in considering it as two stages.

The opinion was that a mail coach changing horses once or twice between two post towns, whatever the distance, could not be considered more than one stage and the Post Office could not charge more than 2d. However if there was a receiving house, recognised by the Postmaster General, on the road then the space could be regarded as two stages and the letters charged accordingly.

Freeling reported that there was an official sub-office between Birmingham and Stratford at Henley-in-Arden. Accordingly the letters from Birmingham to Stratford were to be charged 3d, and to Warwick and Shipstone 4d.

However the above opinion would not allow, as Freeling wished, the letters from Lichfield to Stone to be charged 3d although the distance was 22 miles and the mail coach changed horses at Wolsley Bridge, as it also did between Lichfield and Stafford. On the other hand there was an official receiving house (Woore?) between Stafford and Nantwich, a distance of 28 miles in which the mail coach changed horses twice. The letters had been charged 3d which would have been correct for two stages, though Freeling had supposed they might be charged 4d.



Freeling went on to report that between Lichfield and Stone, and Lichfield and Stafford there were two receiving houses, at Rugeley and Wolseley Bridge where bags were already made up. He recommended that each of the receivers should be paid a salary of 20/- p.a. since the Post Office would then be entitled to treat each of the above journies as two stages. He added that a letter which was carried 20 miles ought to be charged 3d because "that is the general postage for such a distance all over the Kingdom". Also during the time of Allen, the Postmaster General had thought it fit to establish a sub-office at Frodsham so as to divide the stage of 20 miles from Chester to Warrington.

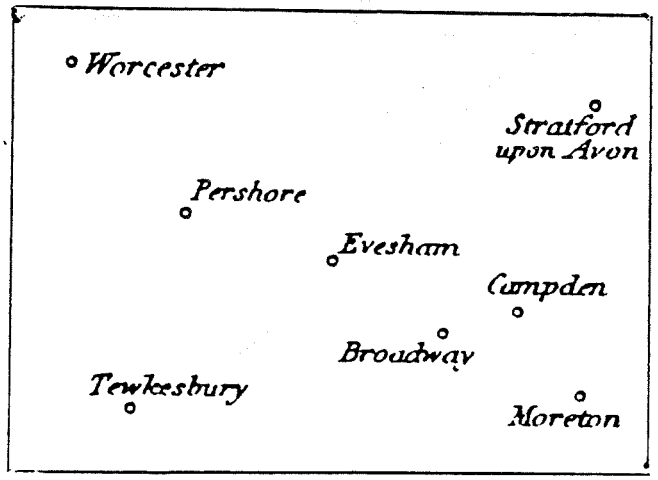
He further suggested that consideration should be given to establishing similar offices wherever there was a stage of twenty miles or so. But within eleven months all of this was irrelevant as from 5th January 1797, letters in England and Wales were charged on the number of miles without reference to the number of stages.

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VARYING ROUTES AND RATES

Chris Beaver has correctly, in my opinion, shown that the route taken by a letter and the consequent charge may depend on the day of posting (See MM67/6 and MM66/7). I have now acquired a letter sent from Leicester to Daventry similar to that shown on MM66/7 which was rated at 3d. Presumably it was posted on a day when the quicker route was via Northampton. To add to the confusion it appears from what follows that the time of posting could also determine the route by which a letter was sent.

In September 1835, the inhabitants of Pershore complained that letters from Worcester, posted after 5 p.m. were sent by a circuitous route. The surveyor confirmed that letters posted up to 5 p.m. were sent by the London Mail and reached Pershore the same evening, the rate of postage being 4d. Letters put in between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. were sent via Tewkesbury and Evesham and arrived at 7.20 a.m. the next day, at a cost of 7d, the distance being thirty-six miles. The P.M.G. refused to withdraw the facility of sending letters by the more circuitous route and ordered that a notice be put up at the post office to the effect that those people who put in letters after 5 p.m. and did not wish them to be sent via Tewkesbury, should mark them "by direct mail".



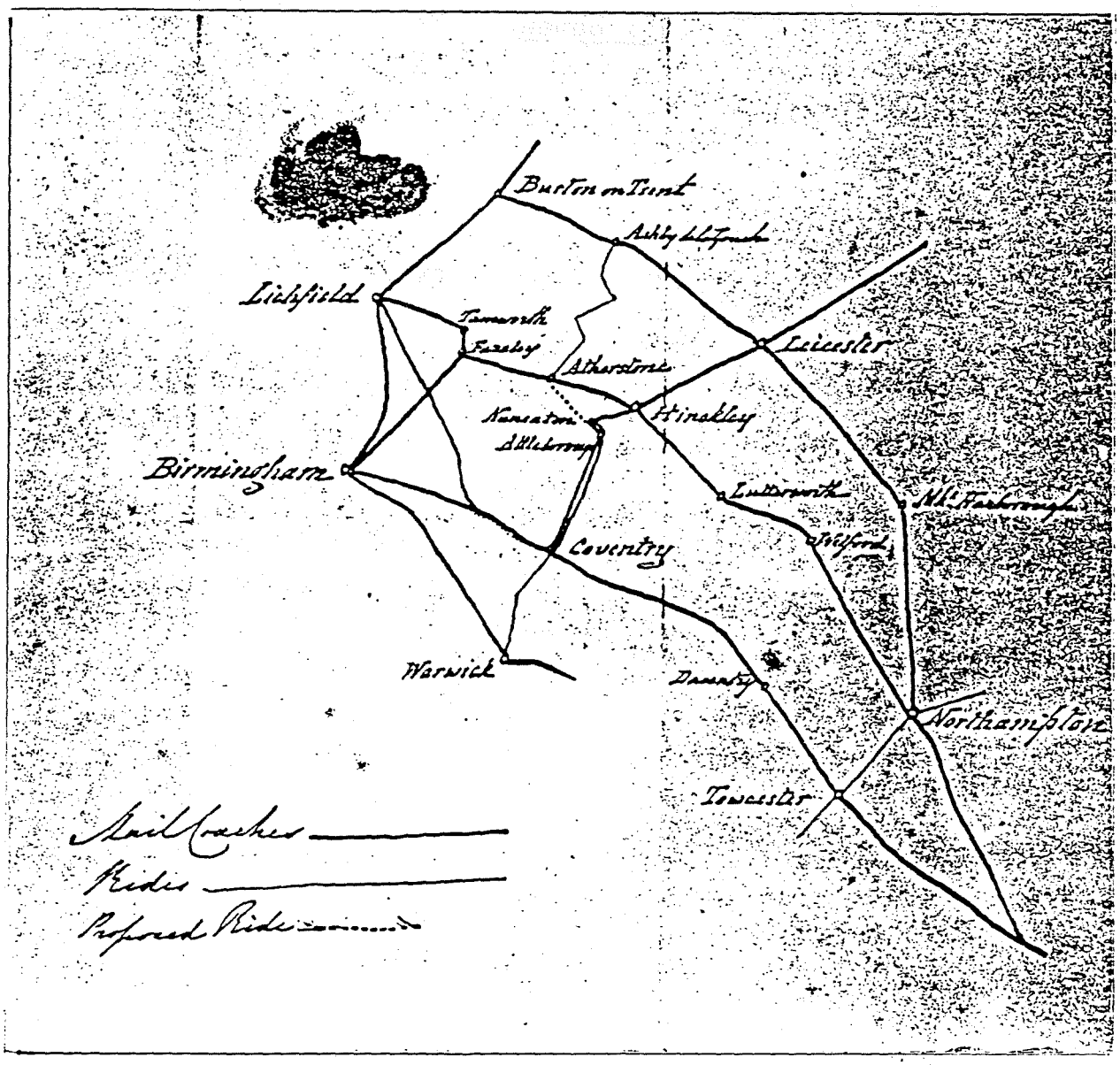
It was earlier in the same year that a complaint was made by a firm of solicitors in Coventry about the cost of a letter from Atherstone being 9d as the direct distance was only thirteen miles, and about twenty via Hinckley.

The surveyor reported that the charge was correct. There were two routes from Atherstone to Coventry. The first left Atherstone at 7.51 a.m. by way of Lichfield and Birmingham, giving a distance of 50 miles and a postage of 8d. The letters arrived in Coventry at 9.46 p.m. but were not delivered until the following morning along with those arriving by the second route which left Atherstone at 6.52 p.m. by way of Northampton and Towcester and reached Coventry at 5.18 the

next morning. The distance by this route was 82 miles and the postage 9d. He felt that the latter route provided a much better service, and indeed most letters were sent that way.

So far matters are relatively simple. However in the opposite direction there were three possible routes available. The first left Coventry at 5.18 a.m. by Lichfield reaching Atherstone at 6.52 p.m. The distance was 43 miles and the postage 7d. The second via Hinckley left at 10 a.m., reaching Atherstone at 7.51 a.m. the next day. The distance was 21 miles for which 6d was charged. The third was at 9.46 p.m. by way of Northampton. This too arrived at 7.51 the next morning. Although the charge was 9d, it was the route by which most letters were sent.

The surveyor went on to point out that there was already a ride covering eight of the thirteen miles - the penny post ride to Nuneaton from Coventry - and that it seemed to be desirable to extend this ride to Atherstone. By this direct post the postage would be 4d, and a letter leaving Coventry in the morning would be in Atherstone within two hours. It appears this service started in October 1835. So within 1835, it could be possible to find letters sent between Coventry and Atherstone charged 4d, 6d, 7d, 8d, or 9d.



There are probably many other examples throughout the country of alternative routes being available. For in 1829 Freeling had stated that the principle to be followed was that the quickest even if it was the most expensive route was to be used. He added "Persons to whom time is not so much an object as the expense, can easily regulate the putting in of letters." This arose from a complaint that letters from Wellingborough to Oakham were often charged 8d having been sent via Northampton and Leicester, a distance of 68 miles. Whereas the direct route through Kettering involved a charge of 6d, the distance being 28 miles. However the letters had to remain for over twenty hours in the Kettering office with the result that it was quicker to send letters posted between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. via Leicester.

I am not sure that this is an appropriate place for what follows but it seems as good as anywhere since I cannot think where else to put it. When I came across a minute of August 1835 concerning a caution being given to an officer in the Inland Office for taxing mail to Lutterworth 10d instead of 9d, it hardly seemed worthwhile going to the trouble of getting out the appropriate microfilm and finding the relevant report. Yet it did reveal a little about the way of working in the Inland Office, for at one point we read:

"..there can be no excuse for this, because both the rate and the distance is printed in the front of every box & is perfectly legible on the Lutterworth Box at this moment. This precaution was taken to prevent any chance of letters going down with a wrong rate."

Unfortunately there is no indication as to how long it had been the practice to mark the boxes.

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A BIRMINGHAM RIOT IN 1816

by Elizabeth and Eric Lewis

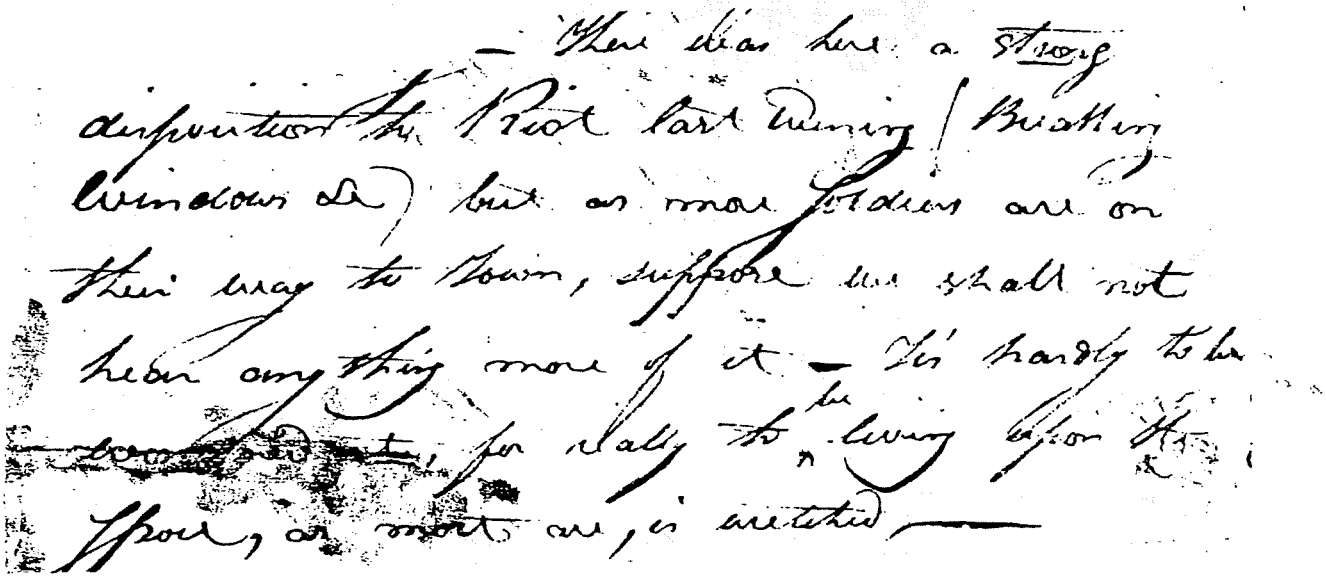
From a recently examined bundle of old letters Eric noticed a reference to 'a riot'. The letter was written in Birmingham, and Elizabeth soon dug out details from a reference book as follows:-

On the 28th October 1816, Mr. Jabet, the printer of 'The Commercial Herald' exhibited in his Moor Street printers window a 'patriotic address' to the working classes, in which he stated 9/- per week was sufficient for a man, his wife and six children to live on.

In consequence of this a large crowd gathered and Mr Jabet's premises were in danger of being destroyed. The 15th Light Dragoons were called to quell the riot. Next morning the Dragoons, Yeomanry and special constables were called out, the Riot Act read and the following notice was posted on walls around the town.

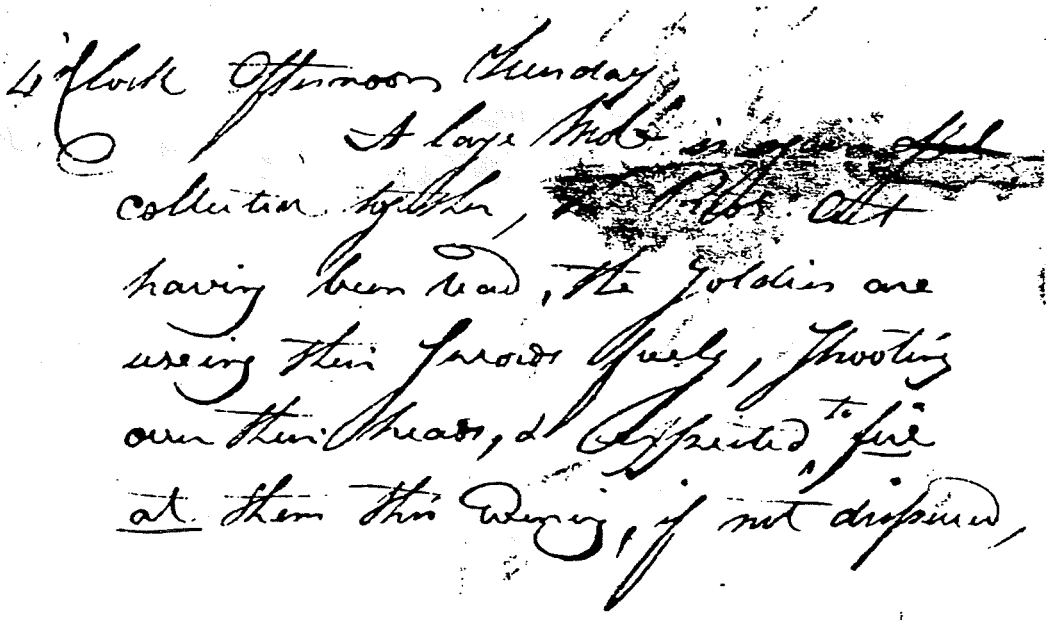
RIOT ACT
The Riot Act has been read!
Military Aid has been called in!
The public peace has been preserved!
BEWARE!

The paragraph concerning these riots in the letter which is dated and postmarked 29 October 1816 reads:-



— There was here a strong disposition to Riot last Evening / Breaking Windows &c) but as most Soldiers are on their way to Town, suppose we shall not hear any thing more of it — It's hardly to be [illegible] for daily to be living upon the Spoil, as most are, is wretched —

And the writer added a postscript as follows:-



4 o'clock Afternoon Sunday
A large Mob is [illegible]
collection together, [illegible] last
having been read, the Soldiers are
using their Sabres freely, shooting
over their Heads, & expected to fire
at them this Evening, if not dispersed,

You will recall that correspondence on the 1839 Birmingham riots appeared in Midland Mail Nos 55 and 56. Can any member produce letters on other Birmingham riots.

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STRATFORD-WARWICK WAYBILL

Several of these way bills, one of which is reproduced by permission of P.O. Archives on the next page, are to be found in a report concerning late arrival of the letters at Warwick. The delay was found to be due to their late arrival at Stratford, and not a poor performance of this ride.

Stratford on Avon and Warwick (through Wellsborne)

WAY BILL.

Contractor's Name.	No. of Miles.	Time allow'd
Mrs. Irwin.	12	2.0
Mrs. Irwin.	12	2.0

Dispatched from the Post-Office, *Stratford*, the 11 of Decbr
1792 at 10 Min Past 11 in the Morning.
A. Irwin

Received at *Warwick*,
at 30 Minutes past 12. N. S. Baly

Returned from *Warwick*,
at 10 Min past 3 N. S. Baly
Afternoon.

Received at *Stratford*,
at 25 Min Past 4
A. Irwin

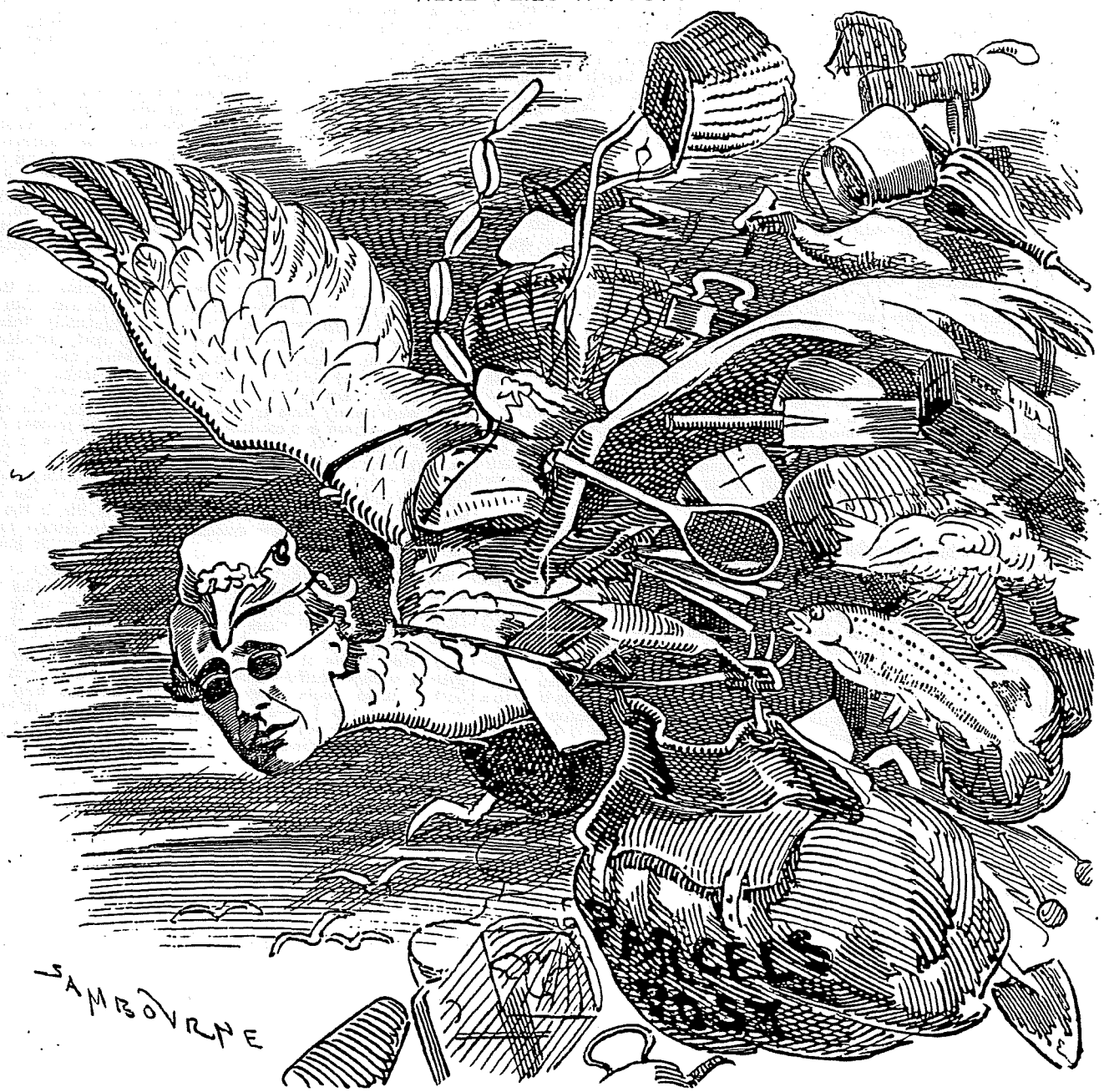
Send these Way Bills Weekly, to

SAMUEL WOODCOCK, Surveyor, *Glocester.*

THE PARCEL POST

The two following items, contributed by David Hardwick, are taken from two editions of Punch dated 11 August and 29 September 1883. The Parcel Post was introduced in 1883.

HERE FLIES A POST!



SPLENDID SPECIMEN OF A "CARRIER."

HERE *flies* a Post!
  Marvel of the day.
Better bird than most,
  Match him if you may!
Wondrous strength of wing!
  Wondrous breadth of back!
Pelion you may fling
  On him, *he*'ll not slack.
Carrier-pigeon swift,
  Does his mile a minute.
Then his power of *lift!*
  Mercury not in it!

What would LESBIA say?
  Ah! her dove-borne letter
Quite eclipsed to-day!
  She would own this better.
Far beyond *her* dreams!
  She might vent her passion
Now in quires or reams,
  (Were that still the fashion)
Send not only things,
  Feather-light and tiny,
Kisses, blossoms, rings,
  Tresses small and shiny;

She could send her slippers,
  Nay, all minor luggage,
Such as tourist-trippers,
  In this trunk-and-rug age,
Comfort-marring, cram
  Into railway carriages.
World is not *all* "jam,"
  Billets-doux and marriages;
So our flying post
  Not alone Dan Cupid
Serves, but all the host
  Of Interests grave and stupid.

Merchant and his bales,
  Youngster hoop that trundles,
Tradesman hot on sales,
  Old dame sweet on bundles.
Here's the flier's health!
  Business well may boast,
Love, Law, Wisdom, Wealth,—
  "Here flies a Post!"

A CHIMNEY-SWEEPER's life has its "Sporting" side. He is deeply interested in Sweep's takes!

OUR PARCELS.

(Further Correspondence.)

SIR,—I have also, like your Correspondent, "A CONFIDING LUNATIC," some reason to complain of the working of the new Parcels Post. Here is my own experience. I have, from time to time, been in the habit of despatching from this place eighteen-pennyworth of jam-tartlets to a clerical friend in the Scilly Isles. This pastry I have invariably packed with great care in a cardboard case, left open at the ends to keep it fresh, and, for greater security, have myself delivered it at our village Office, where a highly intelligent youth takes sole charge of the Parcels Department. Though I have in the course of the last five weeks despatched no less than twenty-three of my little cases, I have heard from my chagrined and mortified friend that everyone of them has reached him perfectly empty! Need I say that this has astonished me?

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant, A PUZZLED VICTIM.

SIR,—The most fragile articles can, as far as my experience goes, be conveyed by Parcels Post, not only with thorough safety, but with the greatest facility. BACCHUS has only to encase his new-laid egg in cotton wool, envelope it in paper shavings, then add two pounds of sifted Arabian sawdust, finally sealing-up the whole, labelled "*Dynamite, with care,*" in a hammered steel oblong chest—(he can pick up one of these anywhere second-hand for about five-and-thirty shillings)—and he can despatch it as soon as he likes to his invalid friend in Warwickshire with absolute confidence. Only the other day I sent a dozen specimens of the common Stable Moth (*Bandellarius teutonicus*), each done up separately in this fashion, as a surprise to an entomological uncle at Slough, and though, after having the cases opened in the hall by a couple of local blacksmiths, who brought their blast furnace, bellows, and a forge hammer or two with them for the purpose, he was a little annoyed to find, that, owing to the sawdust having got loose, the whole dozen had arrived without their heads, antennæ, and wings. Still he appreciated fully the novelty of the Parcels Post, and I have not heard from him since.

Yours, &c., A CAUTIOUS PACKER.

SIR,—I have been fishing in Scotland for several months, and on Tuesday fortnight last, under favourable conditions, succeeded in landing my first take—a magnificent seven-pound salmon. Having promised a hamper or two during my season's sport, I at once despatched my fish by Parcels Post to one of my London friends, a noted epicure, but by some mischance he declined to receive it, and it was returned to me addressed to Stirling. Following me about for a week, I at last came once more into possession of it at York. The Hotel Proprietor, however, declining to let it stay for even a few hours, with my luggage in the hall, I again sent it off, this time to a country friend in Cornwall. Imagine, therefore, my astonishment, when arriving at my residence at Camberwell yesterday, I found that owing to the refusal of the Postal Authorities at Exeter to transmit it any further, it had been returned to me by night-luggage service, accompanied from the Station by the Local Sanitary Inspector, who has threatened me with proceedings on the part of the Parish Authorities. I have now, apparently, no course open to me but to have it kippered. Comment is superfluous.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant, PISCATOR.

SIR,—I do not consider the prompt delivery of game by Parcels Post an unmixed good. I received this morning a brace of grouse, both fine three-year-old birds, that were shot at post-time yesterday evening in the North, and despatched to me forthwith. Having some aged relatives staying with me, I had the game cooked for breakfast at once, but with most disappointing results. So terribly tough was the flesh, from mere freshness, that an uncle of mine instantly broke a set of false teeth to pieces in an effort to get through it; while my wife's grandfather, a hitherto hale old *gourmet*, whom we had persuaded to try a mouthful off the breast, had ultimately to be taken out of the room, choking and in a fit. This, and one of the legs, has upset my wife; while I, who somewhat foolishly finished the rest of the birds, am, as I pen this, suffering acutely from cerebral indigestion. Your dissatisfied Correspondents, therefore, may take warning from one who wishes the Parcels Post at the bottom of the Red Sea, and has determined next time he gets a consignment of game to be in

NO HURRY.

SIR,—I had the other day to despatch to a friend in the country a small tea service of Dresden china, a valuable satin fan belonging to MARIE ANTOINETTE, and a rare and exquisitely finished ivory miniature of my great-grandfather. These costly articles I packed up neatly, but roughly, in a few deal shavings, and took the opportunity of sending along with them a bottle of anchovy sauce, a flask of Lucca oil, a hearth-stone or two, and a coal-hammer. Though the whole were loosely done up in a bit of newspaper, with all possible care, they arrived in a condition that showed the grossest carelessness in the carriage. The fan was saturated and limp as a sponge, the tea service in fragments, while owing to the escape of the oil and anchovy sauce, nothing was left of my great-grandfather, but his right eye and his shoe-buckles. I have written to the Postmaster General, but I am told I have no case. Such, Sir, is the treatment meted out under this new system to one who always hitherto has signed himself,

A CIRCUMSPECT ECONOMIST.

SIR,—I don't think that it's them Correspondents of yours who keep sending their rubbishing things through the Office that has a right to grumble. Look at me. Here only yesterday I did my twenty-two mile with three brace of black cock, a haunch of venison, fourteen pound of tea, half-a-dozen bottles of cough mixture and other stuff (some of 'em leaking), a coffee-kettle, two barrels of oysters, enough stuff for dresses to clothe half the county, no end of butter, ladies' boots, clotted cream, and a wasps' nest as had got loose among the lot,—and all this without an extra blessed halfpenny. So, please, Sir, I think it 's time you might have a line about these here Parcels from

THE COUNTRY POSTMAN.

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

This should appear in late March - early April. Nothing as yet is certain but there may be full details of a mail coach accident; what a letter carrier had to do; more from the Peover Papers. There will still be plenty of room for articles however large or small which should be sent to:

John Soer 51d, Barkham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 2RG.

POSTSCRIPT

I have read that all mail trains have ceased to run, and have been replaced by road services. Whilst I was waiting at the level crossing here in Barkham Road at about 10 p.m. one evening last week, a train came through containing about three coaches emblazoned with "Royal Mail Letters". I know that in the past mail has been moved from Gatwick to Reading on this line. Can anyone tell me if mail trains still run?