

MIDLAND MAIL



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



President: Mr W.J. Calladine

Chairman:
Mike Young

Treasurer:
Trevor Clewley

Secretary:
Elizabeth Lewis

Number 78, January 1993

For over one hundred and fifty years there has been a strong link between the railways of this country and the Post Office. Now there is another connection - they are both faced with privatisation. For anyone not familiar with the meaning of this word, it is best summed up by the story of the burglar, who when arrested after selling the family silver back to the people from whom he had stolen it, claimed that he had got the idea from the latest privatisation programme. I could write at great length why I feel that both of these sell-offs are undesirable and unnecessary, but will have to restrict myself to a few lines.

What is the aim of privatisation? To provide a more efficiently run postal service? I have yet to notice any improvement, for the increased charges, from those utilities which have been already sold-off. Although we all complain about the Post Office at times, there can be no doubt a high quality service at a relatively low price is provided to all of the community. How long would it be before a private company decided that daily deliveries in rural areas were uneconomic? It is an insult to those running the post office to suppose that the private sector could do any better. It seems that ideology and dogma are all. I doubt if it has occurred to the Government that possibly the majority of people would prefer their Post Office (and railways) to remain as they are. But then those who govern long ago lost touch with the governed.

So far, I have received few nominations for the award of the Jon Baker trophy for the best article appearing in Midland Mail during 1992, so I would like to make one further appeal for them to be sent to me by the 13th March.

1993 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Carrs Lane Church Centre on 24th April, commencing at 1 p.m. It will be preceded by a committee meeting at 11a.m. Please make a note of the above dates and times in your diary now.

In April, John Calladine, our President and Elizabeth Lewis our Secretary, will have completed their three and five year terms of office respectively, and nominations for these positions are required prior to the AGM with, of course, the agreement of the member nominated.

ANNUAL AUCTION

Lots are needed for the auction which will follow the A.G.M. on 24th April. In order that catalogues can be sent to our overseas members in time for them to submit bids, it is necessary to have lots in by 13th March - the date of the meeting at Worcester. 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 also state the condition of each item based on "Poor", "Good", "Fine" or "Superb", and also indicate clearly the number of items in each lot.

For the past few years a number of members have given material to sell for Society funds and such gifts are as welcome as ever. Perhaps you would like to contribute in this way to help keep subscriptions as low as possible.

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

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on 6th February at Carrs Lane Church Centre starting promptly at 1.30 p.m. The afternoon will be devoted to our Annual Competitions. The three sections are for material largely from pre-1840, post-1840, post 1938.

On the 13th March our meeting will be held at the Guildhall, Worcester and will coincide with the annual fair organised by the Worcester Philatelic Society. Members are invited to bring along nine sheets on "Inspectors and Instructional Marks" or some other topic of their choice. The meeting will begin at 2 p.m.

THE DECEMBER MEETING

There was a good attendance at our annual meeting at the Bass Museum at Burton-on-Trent on 12th December. After an excellent lunch, we were entertained by Victor Short who was making his second visit to our Burton meeting. Victor began by showing an album which had been described in an auction catalogue as the "earliest known collection of stamps" but which contained mainly a collection of free-frank fronts - all carefully cut out and stuck to the pages. At the end of the album were a number of Mulreadies and Caricatures which had received the same treatment. The next items related to the 1899 Manchester Philatelic Exhibition, and consisted of an admission ticket and the dies for making the medals.

The main part of Victor's display consisted of material concerned with the Conscientious Objectors in WWI. It is not possible to give an adequate description of all the items we were shown in a short report so a brief outline must suffice. Although Victor started this part with ephemera relating to the Non-Conscription Fellowship, most of the items concerned a Sydney Turner who in 1916 was living in South London. The intervals were short between the sending of his call-up papers in March 1916, the rejection of his appeal, his first court-martial and subsequent imprisonment. He was eventually court-martialled four times. There then followed a run of correspondence, from him in the various prisons, some of which had been censored, and all of which were fascinating for their contents. Also of note was a drawing that Sydney Turner, who was an architect, made of his prison cell and somehow managed to smuggle out of prison.

The final part of Victor's display consisted of the artwork that Mr Turner had produced in connection with a large number of philatelic exhibitions.

When it is remembered that others who are interested in the subject of Conscientious Objectors probably have no more than a handful of items in their collections it is clear that we were privileged to see such a fascinating collection of social history.

Our thanks are due to Richard Farman for arranging the facilities for another very enjoyable day in Burton.

THE JANUARY MEETING

Our speaker at the January meeting was "Ches" who treated us to a display of general British postal history, beginning with an outline of the system in Tudor times. He then traced the development of the Bishopmark; the covers included one sent in 1669 from Yarmouth to London, and one of 1713 sent to Bosworth and endorsed "by Coventry bag". The next section was devoted to the marks used by the London Receivers.

Then it was onto the provincial handstamps. The impression of a two line Coventry was rather distorted, probably because the handstamp was made of wood and had been cracked. Various type of mileage mark were shown, from the first type of 1784 through to the mileage removed stamps.

There then followed a section on "Free" marks which contained examples of contraventions of the rules for franking as well as various examples of the "To Pay ld Only" which was used in free-franks in provincial penny posts. Examples of newspaper stamps led on to the handstamps of the Newspaper Branch which were covered in some detail. Notable in a number of registered covers were an example of the registered crown of London and a letter sent from Buckingham Palace in 1938. The first half ended with Late Fee Marks, including the circular "POSTED AFTER 7 P.M.", and provincial "PAID" marks.

After our tea and biscuits, "Ches" turned his attention to cancellations - the Maltese Cross, the various types of 1844 numeral handstamps, the experimental double stamps, Rideout, Pearson Hill and ending with the "squared circle".

Three covers were of particular interest in a section dealing with the local posts of London. One sent in 1830 to Kent was stamped five times with marks of the Twopenny and General Posts; the other sent in 1835 was marked six times; the third was a ride letter, that is handed to the letter carrier so not marked with any receiving house handstamp, but with the "RL" stamp.

Two letters from Hartshill to Oxford were sent by different routes as each contained the separate halves of a £10 note.

The last part the display was on Scottish Postal History. There were examples of all the route letters including the L of Leith; mileage removed marks and errors of route letters such as Longtown with an "E" instead of "C".

In thanking "Ches" for such a wide-ranging and entertaining afternoon, Mike Young said that it was indicative of the strength of the Society that members could provide such a display.

THE UNDATED CIRCULAR MARKS OF SOMERSET & DORSET

Those of our members who have a copy of the Society's UDC book may wish to know of a very similar book produced recently by the Somerset and Dorset Postal History Group. One can justifiably describe it as a "companion volume" for the format and layout is virtually identical. In the hope that we have set a trend and that similar works may yet appear from other local postal history societies, acquisition of the Somerset & Dorset UDC book is recommended. The cost is a modest £6 (plus £1.25 p&p) and orders may be sent to John Millener, 22 Overleigh, Street, Somerset BA16 0TL.

SKYNET

by Harold Wilson

On 28th September 1992 the East Midlands Airport lost some of its importance, but still plays a major part, in the overnight airmail services. A new service began with eight "HUB" airports replacing the existing two - East Midlands and Speke. The others are Edinburgh, Belfast, Leeds/Bradford, Stansted, Bristol and Gatwick. These are fed by airports at Inverness, Aberdeen, Carlisle, Newcastle, Isle of Man, Norwich, Cardiff, Heathrow, Plymouth, Exeter, Bournemouth, Guernsey and Jersey.

Royal Mail is the leading night charter operation and its new SKYNET system provides thirty-one nightly flights serving twenty-one airports. The new service gives earlier arrival times and better connections; for the first time there is a direct connection from Scotland to Northern Ireland. It also means that the "HUBS" handle increased volumes of mail earlier in the night, which in turn means more letters being delivered by the first post. The mail inter-hub flights use larger aircraft with mechanical handling equipment. The mailbag labels are printed with the British Airways Authority (BAA) code of the final destination airport and wherever possible the brown, nylon airmail bags are used to reduce the overall weight.

The whole system is intended to carry more mail at the same cost, and the use of larger aircraft will allow for future anticipated growth. As at present the network connects with local road services as well as the TPOs.

The past and present services through East Midlands are:-

PAST NIGHT SERVICES

Norwich-EMA-Norwich
 Belfast-EMA-Belfast
 Gatwick-EMA-Gatwick
 Southampton-EMA-Bournemouth
 Glasgow-EMA-Glasgow
 Exeter-EMA-Exeter
 Edinburgh-EMA-Edinburgh
 Aberdeen-EMA-Edinburgh
 Plymouth-EMA-Exeter
 Newquay-Cardiff-EMA-Bristol-Exeter
 Southend-Stansted-EMA-Speke-Stansted-Southend
 Stansted-EMA-Speke
 Speke-EMA-Stansted
 Norwich-EMA-Speke
 Speke-EMA-Norwich
 Bournemouth-EMA-Speke-Bournemouth

SKYNET

Norwich-EMA-Liverpool-Norwich
 Belfast-EMA-Belfast
 Jersey-Gatwick-EMA-Gatwick-Jersey
 Bournemouth-EMA-Bournemouth
 Leeds/Bradford-EMA-Bristol
 Plymouth-Exeter-EMA-Exeter
 Aberdeen-Edinburgh-EMA-Edinburgh
 (Two flights)

Readers might like to compare the services which operated at the withdrawal of the two "HUB" system with the map of March 1990 shown opposite. In the intervening period the flights from Luton and Lydd had been withdrawn.

Mailbag labels from mail passing through EMA

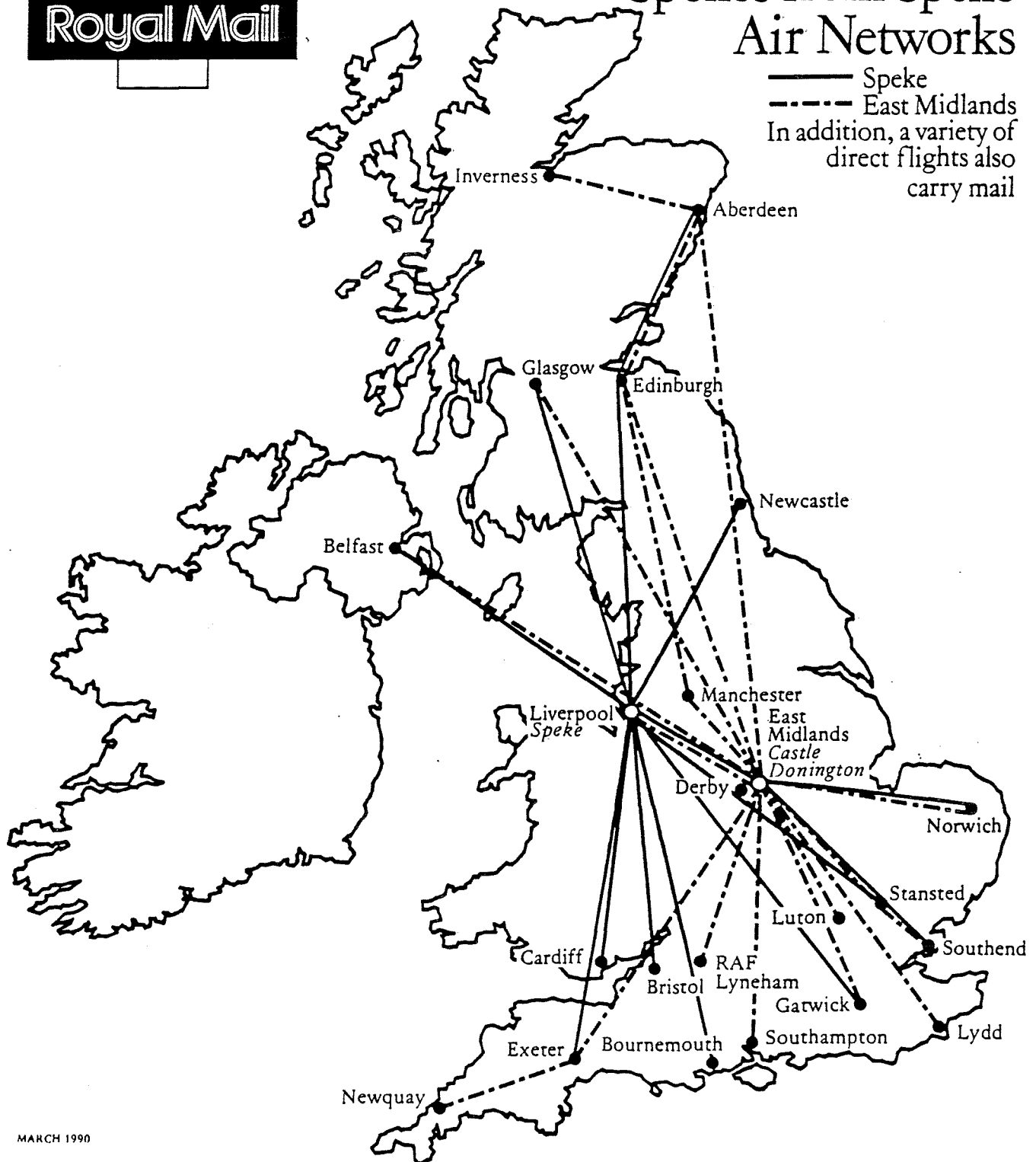
T ☐ N' CASTLE/TYNE COVENTRY VIA NEWCASTLE APT LIVERPOOL APT & E MID'S APT E ☐	SSUX 2150 E	T ☐ GLASGOW P ☐ RUGBY VIA GLASGOW A/ EMA DERBY STN COVENTRY STN E ☒	2040 S EMA P471C
P471CX		CON 132776/080 7/89 AS	



Royal Mail

East Midlands and Spokes from Speke Air Networks

— Speke
- - - East Midlands
In addition, a variety of
direct flights also
carry mail



MARCH 1990

~~Mr. Parsons~~
Mr. Lloyd
Manchester
England

By Caravan
Thomas Peckford
Manchester
In parcel per van

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CONFIDENTIAL

ALTERNATIVE USE

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

The advertisement below for the Bournemouth depot of the Sports Trading Co. Ltd. is from a local church magazine of 1903. It evokes visual images of many popular leisure activities in the Edwardian era. Cars were few, but motor cycling was in, and free-wheeling cheaper and more fun than a charabanc trip. The better off had a tennis court and a croquet lawn and a stable, not yet a garage.

And among the requisites this sports depot has mail carts for sale. Moreover, for those on holiday presumably, there are also "first-grade mail carts for hire". Surplus to Post Office requirements? I doubt it. More likely purpose-built with seats, to take the whole family into the country for picnics, there to try out the new camera, the results to be displayed on the mantelpiece later. Or what think you? I hope they weren't used for races on the beach!

The public needed no explanation at the time. Somewhere there must be picture postcards illustrating the proper, popular purpose for possessing a mailcart. There is not one in my collection - what about yours?



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right
Firm
and
save
your
Discounts.

Motor Cycles, Cycles, Mail Carts, Cricket, Tennis, and Croquet Requisites.

Cameras and Accessories of all description.

FREE WHEEL CYCLES AND FIRST-GRADE MAIL CARTS FOR HIRE.

Repairs promptly and well executed by our own skilled workmen on the premises.

The best reputation in the Trade for Enamelling and Plating.

TYRES OF ALL MAKES AND SIZES KEPT IN STOCK.

AGENTS FOR TRIUMPH, ELSWICK, R. & P., "SWIFT" AND "ARIEL" CYCLES AND MOTOR CYCLES.

Our
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are
second to
none for
variety
and
value of
Goods.



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4, Dalkeith Buildings,

OLD CHRISTCHURCH ROAD,

. . BOURNEMOUTH.

Telephone
345.

Telegrams
"Oriel."

RUGBY AND THE UP SPECIAL TPO

by David Hardwick

On 1st November 1973, the town of Rugby lost its status as a post town and became a sub-office under Coventry. From then on most of the mail to and from the town has been routed through Coventry. In fact the only exception (other than a small amount of local mail) is the mail which comes on and off the TPOs which call at Rugby. Of these the Up Special is of most significance to the town.

Modern mail cancelling systems make it difficult to illustrate mail routes using traditional postal history covers. Mailbag labels, however, are much more helpful and often contain a wealth of information. This article will use labels to illustrate the importance of the Up Special TPO to the town of Rugby.

The Up Special departs from Glasgow Central at 19.30, having taken on mail from Glasgow, both sorted and unsorted. Fig. 1 shows the label used for mail sorted in Glasgow being sent direct to Rugby using the Up Special. Fig. 2 is an unusual label which was used to send empty mail bags to the TPO. There are only limited sorting facilities on the Glasgow to Carstairs section and Rugby does not normally receive enough mail to make up its own bag except on rare occasions during the pre-Christmas rush when a written label is used (Fig. 3). After leaving Glasgow, the Up Special calls at Motherwell where it picks up mail from Livingstone for Rugby (Fig. 4).

Meanwhile the Edinburgh - Carstairs Bag Duty leaves Edinburgh at 19.14 and combines at Carstairs with the Glasgow Section to form the Up Special TPO. Fig. 5 shows a label for Edinburgh mail travelling on this TPO to Carstairs and on to Rugby.

Sorting on the Up Special is heavy and mail for Rugby and for the counties of Bedford, Buckingham, Cambridge, Leicester and Northampton is all bagged for off-loading at Rugby. Fig. 6 is for mail sorted on the TPO for Rugby and Figs. 7, 8 and 9 for mail for Peterborough, March and Chatteris.

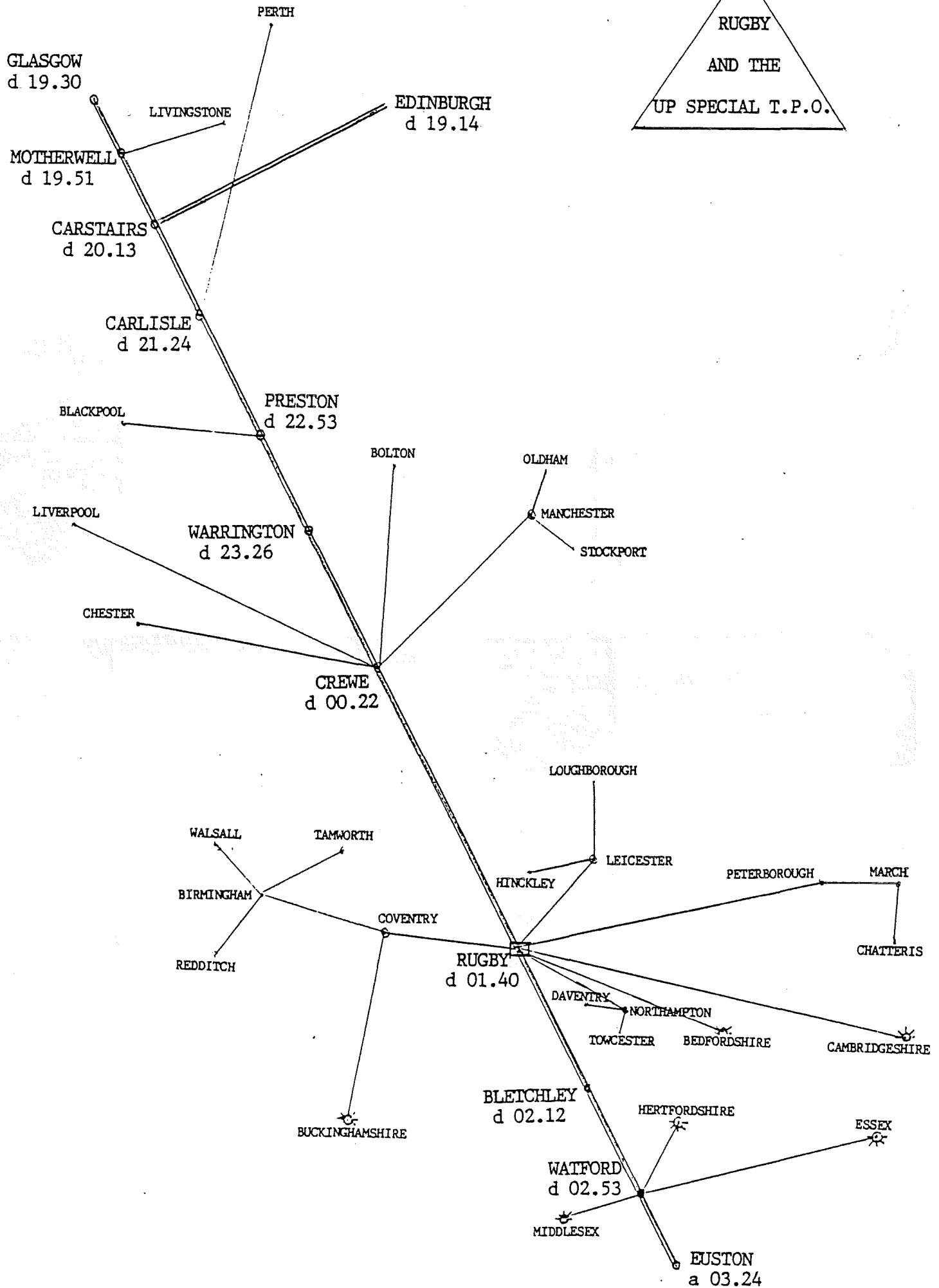
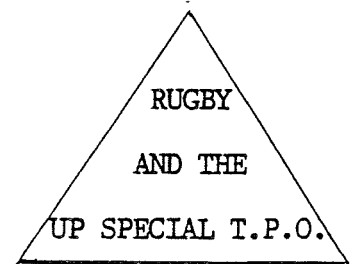
The first really important stop for the Up Special is Carlisle where it picks up Carlisle mail for Rugby, Loughborough (Fig. 10), Kettering (Fig. 11) and many other surrounding towns. Partially sorted mail is also picked up for further sorting en route. To assist the sorting staff, these bag labels are white with a distinctive red border and the mail is divided into divisions so that bags can be sorted in the correct order. Mail to be put off at Rugby is designated as Division 4 and Figs. 12 and 13 illustrate labels for mail from Perth (in at Carlisle) and Carlisle itself.

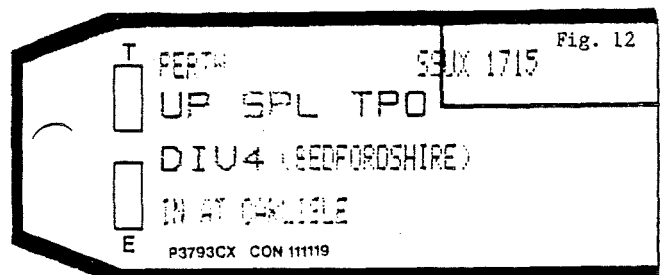
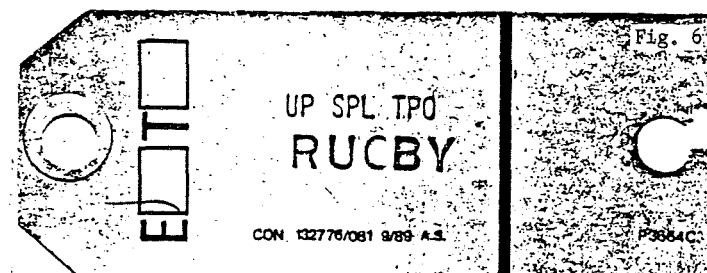
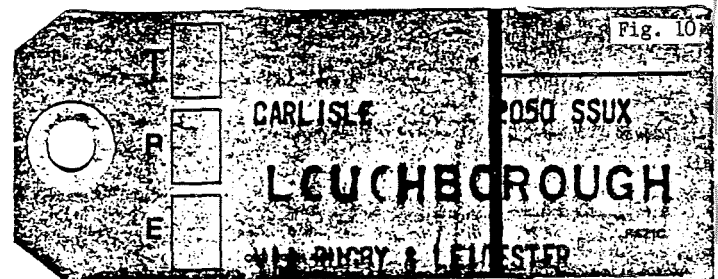
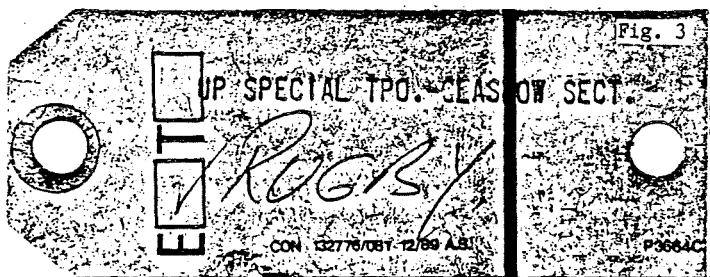
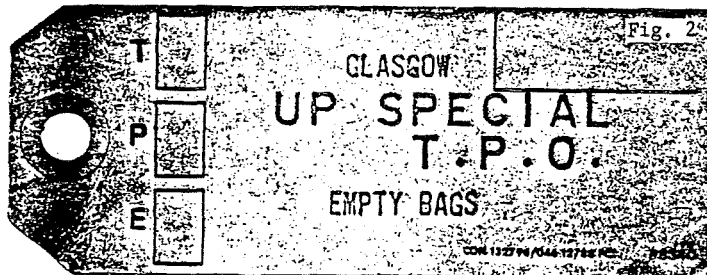
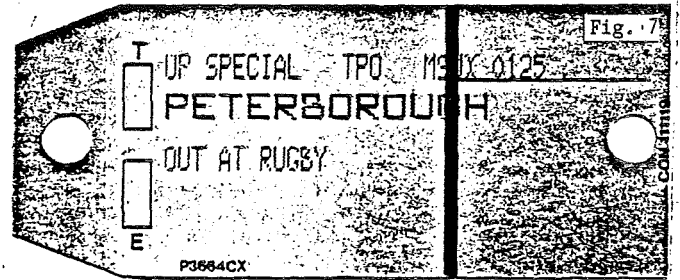
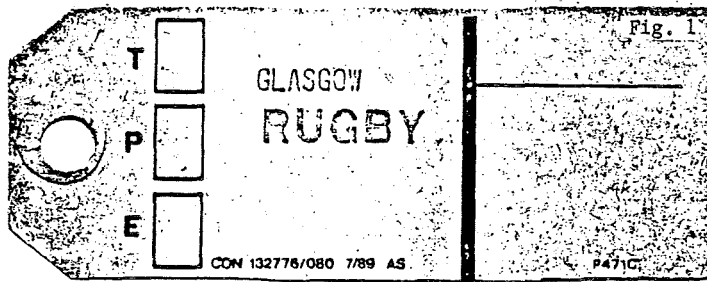
The next stop is at Preston where mail from Blackpool and Preston for Rugby, Northampton, Daventry and Peterborough is picked up. The stop at Warrington is only for dropping off mail and so of no significance to Rugby.

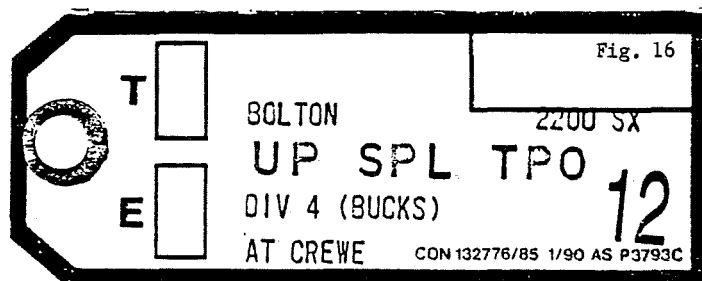
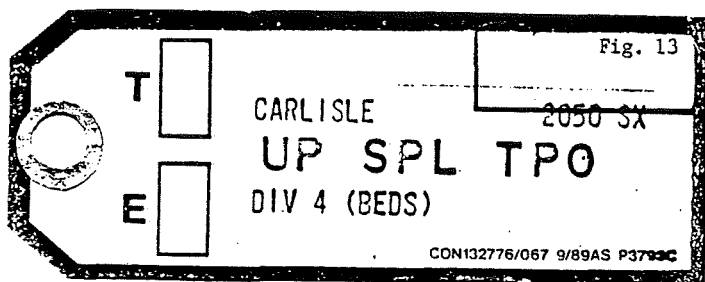
Which brings us to Crewe, the last stop before Rugby and possibly the busiest of all. Rugby mail joins the TPO here from: Stockport and Oldham (via Manchester Piccadilly); Bolton and Chester; and Crewe itself. The label from Oldham (Fig. 14) illustrates the Royal Mail Special Delivery service. Mail for Daventry joins here from Liverpool (Fig. 15), Manchester, Stockport and Crewe as well as for Towcester and Hinckley from Liverpool, all being put out at Rugby. Finally, partially sorted mail from Bolton and Stockport for Division 4 also joins at Crewe (Fig. 16).

And so to Rugby, nearly six hours after leaving Glasgow, when all the above bags are taken off the TPO. However, the story is not quite complete as partially sorted bags of mail from Coventry, Walsall, Redditch and Tamworth are now taken up to be sorted for Divisions 5, 6 and 7 - Middlesex, Hertfordshire and Essex respectively.

All of which goes to show what can be achieved with some of the Post Office's rubbish and the considerable assistance of some very helpful sorting office and Customer Care staff around the country.







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THE THREE BISHOPS

by Derek Smeathers

The letter illustrated opposite was written at Northall on 24th September 1785, addressed to the village of Deen(e) "near Rockingham". Many letters to Deene are known specifically addressed via Rockingham, five miles away. Yet most outgoing letters from Deene show "Deene, Wansford" and were clearly sent that way for the North Road mails, although it was almost ten miles further to Wansford. A possible reason for this is that the mailcoach for London left Wansford after 8 p.m. whereas the horsepost from Rockingham departed at breakfast-time.

There are three Bishopmarks struck on this letter: Saturday 24th, Monday 26th and Tuesday 27th. Why?

Firstly, where is Northall? The writer was the Archdeacon of Middlesex; was Northall what we now call Northolt? Identification of this place may have a bearing on the three Bishopmarks - the letter may have arrived at the G.P.O. in London after the mails had gone on Saturday evening. It would have been stamped and then held until Tuesday as the road through Kettering, Rockingham etc was only served by a post from London on the evenings of Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. But would it then be stamped again before dispatch, and if so why was it stamped on the Monday.?

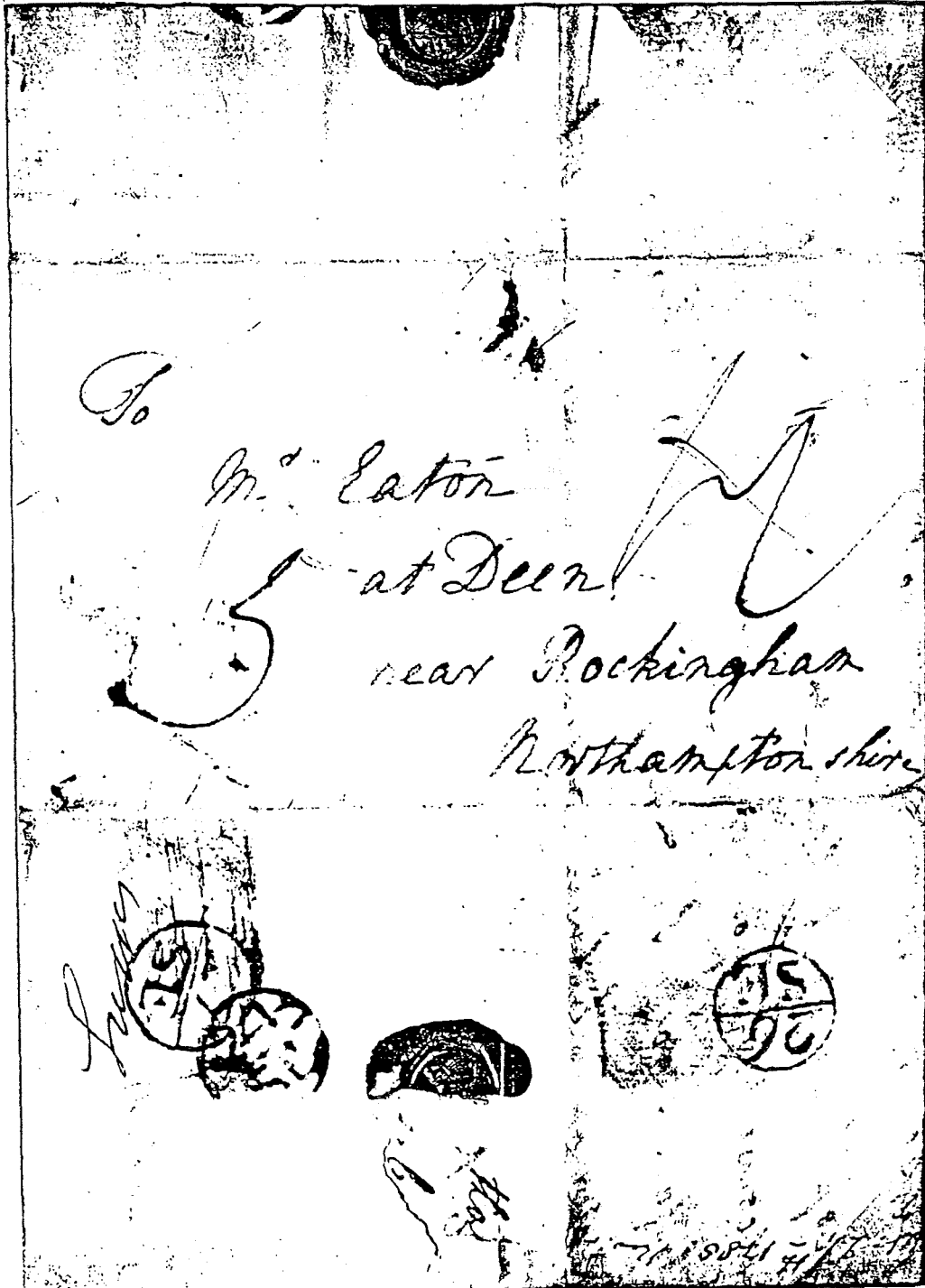
Another possibility is that the letter WAS sent from London on the Saturday, but at Rockingham the following morning it was left in the bag during the rush to get the London letters away. There was a very short time, barely two hours, between the arrival of the mail from London and the departure in the opposite direction, so perhaps there is a slight excuse. The letter would have arrived in London, early on Monday, on a mailcoach from Northampton. Was it then stamped on arrival and again on dispatch on the Tuesday?

This was about the time when the first "Missent" handstamps were appearing. There is a manuscript "squiggle" at upper right of the address - could this be "M" for Missent?

All suggestions (of a polite nature) will be gratefully received.

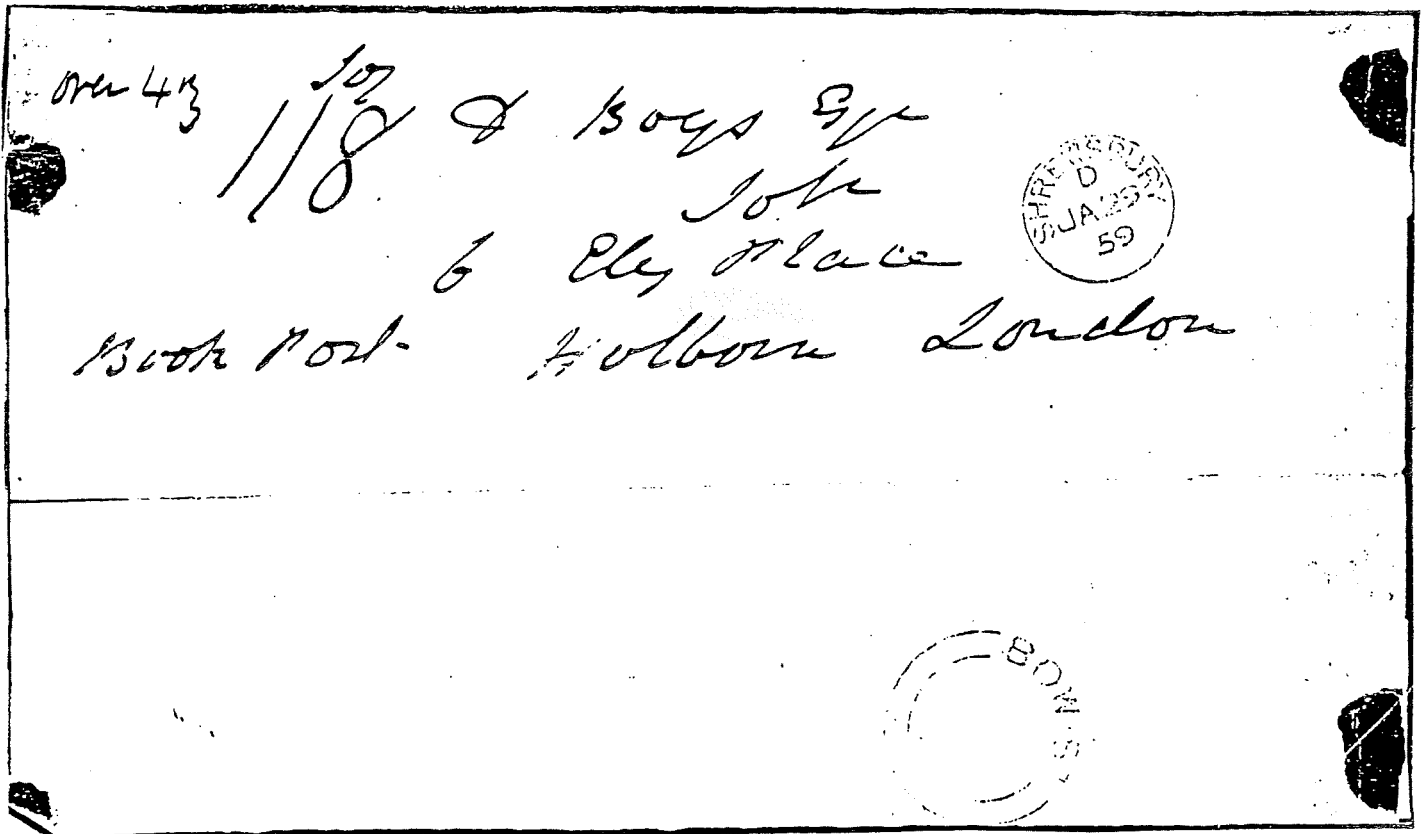
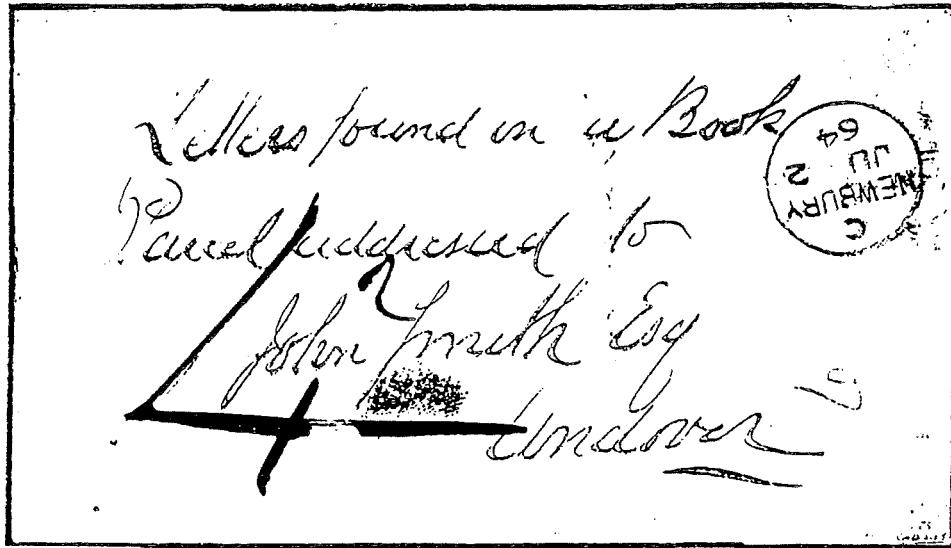
WE ARE DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE THAT WE HAVE PURCHASED
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LEGAL AND ILLEGAL BOOK PARCELS

Illustrated below are copies kindly sent by Vivien Sussex. The first shows a letter which had been concealed in a book sent at a cheaper rate and then discovered. The other shows a bookpost item charged 1/8d as over 4 ounces. Steph Stobbs would have appreciated the combination of the Shrewsbury and Bow Street postmarks.



THE SURVEYOR'S JOURNALS (Part 4)

Mr Woodcock spent most of the first half of January 1795 in Berkshire, setting up a circulation for towns between Hungerford and Reading with Witney, Burford, Northleach and Cheltenham through Maidenhead. He then spent two days in Ross investigating the character of Mr T. Hardwick who had been recommended as a successor to Mr Wall the postmaster. A week later, on the 29th, he went to Ross in order to take charge of the office there should Mr Wall quit. As he found that Mr Wall was about to leave Ross, he took over immediately. The first fortnight of February was spent in instructing the new postmaster. The journal goes on:

"On the 17th a very high and sudden flood came on, which as the new Post Office is situated in the lower part of the town, laid it under water and obliged me to do the business at my Quarters for three or four days - during this time the Postmaster could not get out of his house. And the waters round the Country were so high & rapid it was with the greatest difficulty - and by the greatest exertions that by the help of Boats etc. I was able to get the mails on at any rates - however I had the satisfaction to find nothing was lost and that things came regular again sooner than could be expected."

It was with some difficulty that Mr Woodcock returned to Gloucester. He wrote to all the postmasters in his district that they were to use every possible means in their power to forward the mails, and promised they would be allowed any extra expenses they incurred. By the end of the month he was able to report that matters were generally, but not entirely, in order. The journal ends:

"On the whole, so dreadful a Month for the posts to travel, in any shape, was I believe, never remembered."

His troubles were not at an end for in early March another heavy fall of snow again impeded the mails. He made a brief visit to Bromsgrove before setting out, on the 23rd, on a survey in South Wales. Everything was in order when he called at Ross. At Hereford he found a few dead letters which had "the stamp of January on them." [This is the first reference I have come across to dead letters being marked with the month. Does anyone have an example in their collections?] The postmaster at Hay, "an Old Officer - and a well meaning, honest man", was reprimanded for allowing his rider to and from Hereford to be "irregular and negligent".

It was not until 5th May that Mr Woodcock returned from South Wales to Gloucester where he remained for the rest of the month. The first part of June was spent in Berkshire and Oxfordshire. At Banbury he found that Nottingham sent letters to there through the crosspost which was contrary to the regulations. An inspection of the office at Stratford revealed nothing worthy of mention in his journal. The same was true of the offices at Alcester, Evesham and Tewkesbury which he visited on his way home.

From the 6th to the 16th July, Mr Woodcock was at Cirencester transferring the office to Mr R. Thompson. In the course of managing the office, he noticed that there was a great number of short letters to and from the various "Sub Towns under this Office", amounting to 5/- to 6/- per day which came in small sums and at various times of the day. He instructed the postmaster to keep an accurate account of these letters, by which means he thought the amount of the Cirencester short voucher would be increased. [i.e. he thought that the previous postmaster had pocketed most of this money.]

The journal for August contains nothing of interest.

Mr Woodcock spent five days in early September inspecting the offices at Tewkesbury, Evesham and Pershore. The postmaster at Evesham reported that he had reason to believe that the "Evesham Gardeners" who attended the Birmingham markets carried a

large number of letters. Mr Woodcock gave him some printed cautions to circulate and asked him to watch closely the suspects. A similar offence was brought to his attention during a survey in Herefordshire which he made later in the month:

"The Deputy of Hereford reported to me that a Carrier of the name of Daniel Northwood made a common practice of collecting and delivering letters between Hereford and Leominster - and that he did this in defiance of repeated cautions given him by the Postmaster who has often warned him of the consequence; as this man's Offence is attended with such Insolence & aggravating circumstances, I cannot help wishing he may be made an Example of, which really seems to become necessary - I therefore have directed the Post-masters of Hereford & Leominster to have him observed and to procure Evidence sufficiently strong to found a prosecution against him - ".

From Hereford he went to Worcester to inspect the bags from the various branches based on that town.

There is little of direct relevance to the Midlands in Mr Woodcock's journals for the rest of the year as all his time away from home was spent in Wiltshire, Berkshire and London. He did comment in the October journal that the circulation of letters through the bye and cross roads appeared to be more correct and the taxing more exact than it had been.

Mr Western spent the first week of 1795 in Bakewell instructing the postmaster in the management of a London bag and keeping accounts with the the General Office from 6th January. He spent the last part of the month, after he had been to Lincolnshire, on the same task at Wirksworth. The London bag there was introduced on 1st February. In his report on the riding work Mr Western stated that on the 17th and 20th the road near Buxton had been blocked by snow so that the letters from Sheffield for Birmingham had been sent by way of Nottingham.

On 11th February, he was forced to leave Wirksworth and return to Derby as the snow had melted so quickly so as "to occasion larger floods than had ever been remembered." The next few days were spent arranging the best possible conveyance of the mails as the Nottingham, Burton, Lichfield and Loughborough roads had all been "stopt by the waters & broken bridges." He gave more detail in the report on the riding work for the month:

"On the 9th of this month a Thaw began & so rapid as to occasion such floods as completely stopt the correspondence throughout the whole of my district particularly on the days of the 11th, 12th & 13th of February. On the 11th the waters being five foot deep in the street at Derby I got the Mail over in a boat with two men & horses who were just able to get along at Cavendish-bridge but the waters rose so rapidly that they could not get back again so that all communication was stopt till the 13th when the mails again began to be regular. During this time I was constantly on the road at Loughboro, Nottingham, Burton & Lichfield taking every precaution I could to get the mails forwarded with the least loss of time. Being able to get the road open by Cavendish-bridge sooner than that by Nottingham to Loughborough, I got two days mails from Leeds over [from Nottingham] to Derby and sent them up by the Manchester coach. About the 15th the posts had got regular & [illegible] very much relaxed, I sent notice to all the performers of riding work that as the impediments were removed the Postmaster General expected the mail to be conveyed at the usual rate, and that the reason of every delay must be assigned in order to be reported on to their Lordships. I am happy to say that the rides returned to their usual dispatch & that I had not occasion during the whole of the stoppage to observe any want of alacrity - but on the contrary I found the greatest readiness in all the deputies to do everything that could be done for the Service."

Mr Western was able to return to Wirksworth on the 19th. When he had finished his business there, he went on to Manchester where he remained until 5th March.

After he had spent five days at home, Mr Western left for Uppingham, Kettering, Wellingborough and Northampton to investigate "the almost constant detention" at Uppingham of bags from Kettering and Northampton for Stamford. Some time was spent in Lincolnshire and London before he went, on the last day of March, to Sheffield where the postmaster was insolvent. He remarked that he had been obliged to apply to the Commissioners to repair the bridges at Whichenor, near Burton, which had been "thrown down" in the floods, as the mails were delayed by their not having been repaired.

The greater part of April was spent at Hatfield and Staines. The deputy at the former place had absconded; at the latter place he had become bankrupt.

The journal for the May is missing. At the start of June we find Mr Western in charge of the office at Leicester where he remained until the 15th when a new deputy had been installed. He then went on to Newark, Southwell and Mansfield to report on the possibility of introducing a post from Newark to Mansfield through Southwell. On the 23rd he went to Sheffield "respecting the submission of William Walton, Distributor of the Sheffield Courant, under prosecution for illegally conveying letters."

On the 26th he set out for Rutland and Northamptonshire in order to: prepare matters for the introduction of London bags at Thrapstone and Oundle; introduce a ride from Kettering to Thrapstone and to abolish that from Uppingham to Rockingham; to open vouchers between Thrapstone, Oundle and Stilton on the one hand and Kettering and Northampton on the other. All of this was to start on the 6th July. On that day, Mr Western was at Kettering; on the 8th, he was at Thrapston instructing the deputy in the management of a London bag and the new circulation through Northampton; a week later he was performing a similar task at Oundle. A few days were spent at Stilton in consultation with Mr Wilkinson about various posts in Lincolnshire before he returned to Northamptonshire to see that the new posts were operating satisfactorily and to make out new tables of the rates of postage at Oundle, Thrapstone, Stilton and Uppingham as well as to correct those at Stamford, Kettering and Northampton.

The only part of August in which Mr Western was in the Midlands was from the 6th to the 13th, during which time he was in the Newark area preparing for the introduction, on the 10th, of a daily post from Newark to Southwell and installing a deputy at the latter place.

On 4th September he went to Bakewell to give directions for the opening of a post from there to Stoney Middleton, and the keeping of vouchers from Bakewell to Buxton and Sheffield and a Short Letter account with Tideswell. Another visit to Northamptonshire was made, two weeks later, to establish a daily ride between Oundle and Rockingham, and to abolish that from Kettering to Rockingham.. From Oundle he went on to survey a number of offices on the Great North Road.

G.B. POSTAL HISTORY

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

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Most of October and the first week of November were spent in Yorkshire and Lancashire. After eight days at home Mr Western went to Leicester "to alter the departure of the post to Melton and to correct the postage & make a fresh circulation for Melton in consequence of the Mail being despatched from Leicester without waiting for the Northampton and Derby coaches." [I am puzzled by the reference to the Northampton coach for at the time Leicester was on the route of the Manchester and Leeds coaches, both of which passed through Northampton.] A meeting was held with Mr Saverland at Lichfield to arrange a new circulation of letters from their districts to Scotland so as to send the letters mostly by mailcoach. It was then necessary to send tables of the rates of postage to Scotland to every office in their districts.

During the first half of December, Mr Western made several visits to Nottingham in an attempt to improve the performance of the ride between that place and Derby.

Mr Saverland left home on 11th January 1795 for Atherstone as he had been informed that the postmaster there was "somewhat deranged in his head." After he had reported on that matter he went on to Lichfield to stop the detention of the down coaches by their waiting for the post from Birmingham. He directed that the coaches were not to wait for the rider from Birmingham for more than one hour, which time was to include that allowed for the passengers to dine and for office business. Then he went on to Birmingham where he ordered that the Lichfield rider was not to wait later than 10 a.m. for the coach from Bristol and that if "the Mail was ready & the Rider not at the Door he was to be called & his master acquainted with his neglect." Also, since the penny post receiving offices within Birmingham had not answered the purpose for which they had been opened, he directed that they were to close on 5th April.

Mr Saverland was also troubled by the weather in the February for he wrote:

"From the rapidity of the thaw, and the great quantity of Snow & Ice still upon the ground, supposing the Waters would be very much out, I thought it proper to go to Northampton to give all the assistance in my power to prevent delays & expedite the Mails - found the Waters increasing & it was with some difficulty I got to Northampton the evening Feby 9th. None of the coaches except the Chester got into Northampton that Night. Finding there was no passing Newport Pagnel Bridge, I tried on the 10th to see if the Road was sufficiently open to Stoney Stratford, but was obliged to return on account of the Waters. The 11th the Waters having abated proceeded to Stoney Stratford; where finding the Liverpool Up Coach which should have been there the day before was not arrived, & the Road between Stoney Stratford & London being open, I dispatched at ten oclock that Night the Stoney Stratford, Brackley & Buckingham bags of that & the proceeding day by Express to Dunstable with directions to the Postmr of that Place to forward them by the first Coach to London. On the 13th proceeded down the Road to Coventry, when finding the Water had subsided returned home on the 14th."

GREAT BRITAIN 1580-1901

Elizabethan to Victorian

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There was no time to rest for, almost immediately, he received an order from Freeling to go to Yarmouth to instruct a Mr Warmington who had been appointed the Post Office agent on the removal of the packets from Harwich and Dover to that port. Mr Saverland had been in Yarmouth a month when he received a letter from Freeling that he was wanted in London to go to Hemel Hempstead to install a new postmaster. Whilst in London he attended with Mr Godby the Secretary of State's Office with regard to "Emigrant & other Passengers receiving [free?] Passports to embark on board His Majesty's Packet Boats."

On 7th April he left Hemel Hempstead for Daventry where the postmaster had ordered the ride to Southam to be done only three times a week. However since Sir George Shuckburgh said that the neighbourhood of Southam "would satisfy the Deputy for the performance of the Ride four additional times a Week" it was decided to continue the ride as before.

There is little to interest us in the journal for May since most of the time was spent in dealing with posts in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire though he did meet Mr Western at Leicester to discuss the effect of these posts on the circulation in the latter's district. He returned to Leicester in the middle of June to discuss with Mr Western which parts of his district should correspond with Peterborough, Thrapstone and Oundle by means of the post to be opened on 6th July between Kettering and Thrapstone. It was agreed that the towns between Knutsford and Towcester, and between Chester and Northampton should do so, as such letters would take one day less than before. Towards the end of June, Mr Saverland went to Holyhead to investigate the accounts of the packet agent.

The only item of note in the July journal is that, when at Lichfield, he noticed how much the sorting of the mail carried by the down coaches would be speeded up if the Irish letters were sorted at Birmingham. The appropriate instructions were issued to the postmaster at Birmingham.

Much of August was spent in Lancashire. The only incident of note during a survey in Staffordshire and Shropshire was at Whitchurch where he found the rider "so much in liquor" that he was unable to proceed with the mail to Shrewsbury. So Mr Saverland "sent a steady Person with the Mail and acquainted the Deputy of Shrewsbury that he must dismiss the Rider & procure a steady sober Person in his room."

Messrs Saverland and Western met at Lichfield in November for reasons mentioned above. Mr Saverland left Lichfield on 1st December to embark on a survey through Birmingham, Stourbridge, Kidderminster, Bewdley, Bridgnorth, Shifnal, Wolverhampton, Walsall and Coventry - "nothing particular occurring." The last part of the year was spent in Ashby and Atherstone trying to find, without success, a replacement for the contractor for the ride between those places. Eventually an increased rate was agreed with the contractor.

(to be continued)

G.B. COVERS

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ROGER HUDSON

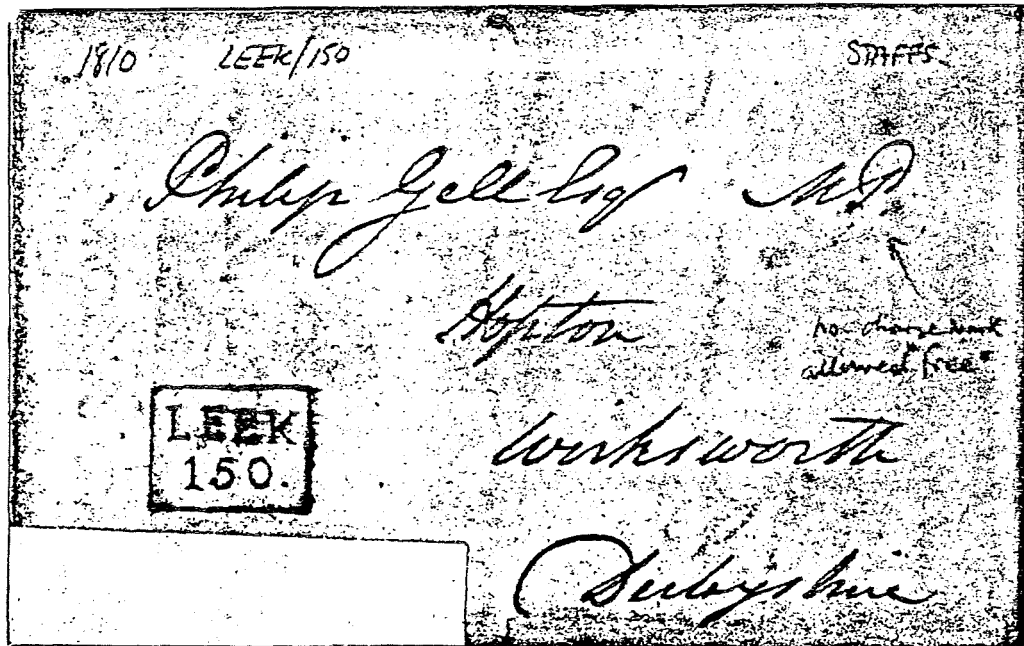


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