

MIDLAND MAIL



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



President: Rev. C.M. Beaver

Chairman:
Roger Broomfield

Treasurer:
Elizabeth Lewis

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Eric Lewis

Number 94, March 1996

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

A joint meeting with the Shropshire Postal History Society will be held on 20th April at the Shrewsbury Hotel, Shrewsbury. A booking form is enclosed with this issue.

Our Annual General Meeting and Auction will be held on 27th April at Carrs Lane Church Centre. Details of times are included in the auction catalogue.

FRANK PEACH

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Frank Peach, a member for many years. It was a great shock to hear of Frank's death as only a week or so before he had been at the January meeting where he was full of enthusiasm. Although he had been unable to attend a meeting in Birmingham for some years, Frank was usually present at that in Burton. Frank was a member of a number of philatelic and postal history societies, being a founder member of the Derbyshire Postal History Society, and it is for his wide knowledge of matters pertaining to that county that we shall mainly remember him.

THE NEW EDITION OF THE UDC BOOK

As promised, the fourth edition of 'The Undated Circular Marks of the Midland Counties' - the Society's popular UDC book - will be available to members at the AGM on 27th April. The new edition will be 20% larger than its predecessor and, for the first time, boasts a full-colour cover.

Among the new features, pride of place will go to the county of Oxfordshire which joins our Midland counties for the first time. However all members and not just the Oxfordshire enthusiasts will find much else that is new. Around two hundred Midland sub-offices became Money Order Offices before 1860 and details of their establishment are included. The concurrent issue of a circular datestamp inevitably brought their use of a UDC to an abrupt end. There is a mass of original information on the Birmingham receivers, their occupations and premises, greatly amplifying and extending what was included in the Society's 'straight line' publication. Finally, but by no means of least significance, there are many hundreds of new additions to usage data in all the counties.

The price of the book will be announced at the AGM. It will be made available to members at near the production cost and at least 40% cheaper than it can be bought elsewhere. It is a publication not to be missed.

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

The speaker at our meeting in Worcester was Mel Matthews of Birmingham, and subject of his talk and display was 'The British Pillar Box'. Mel began by narrating how an original Victorian fluted pillar box, manufactured in 1857 and sited in Dogkennel Lane, Shirley, suddenly disappeared without warning in 1994 and was replaced by a modern box. This caused an outcry from local residents, supported in no small way by local councillors and the local press. Headlines such as "Post Box removed in First Class Blunder" quickly appeared when it came to light that the box had been removed in error. After much discussion with the Post Office the box was fully restored and returned to its correct location. Only four boxes of the type in question exist, the other three also being in the Midlands at Malvern.

Mel then traced the history of post boxes from the first boxes installed in Guernsey and Jersey and their subsequent introduction to the mainland in 1853. On view were pictures and models of the variety of types manufactured and installed over the first few years when the various surveyors were allowed to choose their own designs and makers. Sizes on the whole were much smaller than modern boxes but in contrast the first three boxes at Birmingham were some 240 cm. high because the architect commissioned to design the boxes misinterpreted the surveyors instructions and which, after manufacture by Smith and Hawkes of Broad Street, Birmingham, were found to have a most ornate top in the form of an enormous crown on a tassled cushion. Problems arose over the years with rain entering the posting apertures and Mel explained how these changed from vertical to horizontal, one type even being on top of the box which of course proved a calamity.

Three sizes of standard shape boxes eventually emerged but many minor variations are discernable to those who study their designs. No fewer than five versions of each size of the Victorian 'Penfold Box' are known, the original being designed by W.J. Penfold, an architect.

In 1874, the boxes in London were changed from green to red and this quickly caught on with boxes throughout the country being repainted in the new colour.

Mel then traced various improvements made in the 1890's up to the present day such as double width boxes to receive town and country mail separately; the positioning of the apertures in the door to prevent mail being left in the top of the box; stamp vending machines attached to or even incorporated into the box and the latest developments of fire extinguishers and lights within boxes with the battery for the light being recharged from the key each time the box is opened.

Altogether a most instructive talk and display interspersed with many comical tales of mishaps that had occurred throughout the period of British pillarboxes. There is no doubt that those who attended the meeting will now take an interest in any unusual pillar boxes they see on their travels throughout the country.

E.L.

THE MARCH MEETING

The judge at our annual competitions was an old friend of the Society, Don Keen. There were five entries in the competition for pre-1840 material. Chris Jackson's entry consisted of items from Worcestershire Penny Posts, including those of Bewdley, Dudley, Malvern and Shipston. The Great Cross Road from Exeter to Chester was Denis Salt's chosen theme and included a letter of 1709 sent from Bridgnorth to London. Marks from the 'horseshoe' of 1794 to the Penny Post handstamp used in 1839 were to be found in Guy Bridges' display of Cleobury Mortimer. Eric Lewis' entry, 'Mail Missent to Birmingham', started with manuscript marks and then traced the various handstamps used from 1805.

In the post-1840 section, the entry of Elizabeth Lewis - 'Birmingham Surcharge Handstamps' - contained material from the 2d charge mark of the Uniform Penny Post up to 1943 with Form P1120H used by postmen unable to collect postage due. 'The Spoon Cancellations of Worcestershire', the entry of Chris Jackson, contained material from Dudley, Kidderminster and Worcester, and showed the various recuts of the handstamps. Alan Godfrey produced the rubber datestamps of South Warwickshire on postcards and parcel post labels. The development of the squared circle handstamps used in Staffordshire was traced by Chris Beaver. Mail carried on the roads between Aberystwyth, Llanidloes and Rhayader was shown in Roger Broomfield's entry - 'The Aberystwyth Road'.

There were two entries of post-1940 material. Alan Godfrey's 'Unified Single Impressions of Coventry' which showed the machine marks used from 1933 through to the introduction of a CFC in 1992, and Elizabeth Lewis' 'Birmingham Small Triangular Inspectors' Handstamps'.

The winners were respectively: Eric Lewis, Roger Broomfield and Alan Godfrey.

HELP! HELP!! HELP!!! HELP!!!

I am presently gathering information on the usages of the undated placename postmarks of Wales for the period 1840 to 1860, this to include all types – straight line, circular, horseshoe and the receiving house numerals – which were in use after 1840. I am trying to include with this the pre-1840 usages of those marks which were in use after this date. This information will be collated and produced in book form in due course.

I am in need of records of use and would be grateful for any information which the readers of 'Midland Mail' may be able to provide.

I would like to learn the exact wording of the stamps as well as the date of use (often found from the Post Town circular date stamp or from the correspondence itself) and the colour of ink used as well as a description of the stamp. Below is a suggested format for returning the information to me.

If anyone would be willing for the marks listed below to be considered for reproduction in the book, the submission of a photocopy (preferably a laser copy as these reproduce better when copied for a second time, but better still, a colour copy if this is at all possible!) would be appreciated.

Thankyou for your help.

THE UNDATED POSTMARKS OF WALES

Reported by : Name

Date

Address

.....

Exact Wording of stamp	Stamp Type straight / circular : serif / sans serif etc	Ink Colour used	Date of Usage #

Please send information to – **Roger Broomfield**
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Worcs. WR14 3EG

Please show EXACT date wherever possible. Often available from Post Town stamp or correspondence itself.

I am also trying to find out dates of transfer of some Sub Offices from one Post Town to another. I would be grateful to learn if anyone has any information on this subject. Thankyou again.

NOTES ON THE POSTAL HISTORY OF WEM TO 1920

by Brian Atkins

Very little is known about the Postal History of Wem during the eighteenth century. It has been suggested that Wem may have been on the route of the Great Cross Post, but I doubt this. Ogilby's Britannia (1675) and Gardner's Road Map (1719) both show the route passing to the east of Wem, and Emanuel Bowen's map of Shropshire (1755) shows both a route through Wem and that to the east of the town with the latter having a double line, the index stating this is a "Principal Cross Road."

The Universal British Directory, compiled in 1789, gives William Deakin as postmaster, although he should, more correctly, have been called a receiver. Deakin would have handled the first letter known addressed to Wem, from Bala in 1792, although earlier ones must exist. In 1803, Deakin applied to be the postmaster at Wem, but Saverland, the surveyor, decided "there are not sufficient grounds for making Wem a regular post town." Deakin had to be content to remain the receiver and obtain his income from charging for the delivery of letters (1). When Deakin, who was also a saddler, died in 1812, aged 70, he was replaced by either his daughter or his wife, both of whom had the name Jane. Later references all mention Miss Jane Deakin, but in 1812 the daughter would have been only 14 years old and I doubt that she would have been considered old enough for such a responsible position (2).

Although it is not clear who took charge of the post office in Wem in 1812, it is quite clear that by 1827 the citizens of Wem were in uproar about the extra penny being charged. Jane Deakin had a Short Letter Account with Shrewsbury and continued to be paid from the delivery of the letters. Freeling considered both a Penny Post and a Fifth Clause Post but decided against both mainly because of the reduction in revenue. At that time, General Post letters between Shrewsbury and Wem were charged fourpence. In order to assuage the enraged citizenry Freeling decided to make Wem a sub-posttown (of Shrewsbury), provide a free delivery and pay Jane Deakin £20 a year.

Wemians were ecstatic. A letter from the James correspondence (January 1828) shows their joy. "Your Uncle Jonathan (Nickson, an attorney) has conferred a lasting benefit on this town by getting the additional penny taken off... The imposition ceased a day or so ago, to the grief of Miss Deakin and the joy of the public." (4). No doubt Jane Deakin was not amused by this event, but she suffered her grief for seven years until she felt that the volume of mail had increased to the point where she was really missing out, and so because the "revenue from this place amounts to upwards of £600 a year" she undoubtedly felt secure in complaining in 1834 that she was overworked and underpaid. The surveyor allowed her an extra £8 p.a. for the delivery service she was providing (5). Well, the strategy worked once, so why not try it again? By 1845, the "number of letters for Wem amount to more than 800 a week" and her allowance was increased to £10! (6).

By now Wem was well established as a sub-posttown and receiving its London correspondence through Shrewsbury, its Head Office, with the ride continuing on to Whitchurch with local mail, at the same time dropping a bag for Hawkstone Park, Lord Hill's seat near Wem. The Hill family were of such national and local importance that they had their own bag made up for them. Even their mail was treated differently. Letters from Wellington and Ludlow have been seen with the General Post rate charged to Shrewsbury and nothing beyond, and letters from Shrewsbury and Wem have the General Post handstamp and either no manuscript charges or a penny rate. It is likely that the Hill family was sent a separate account, probably from Shrewsbury.

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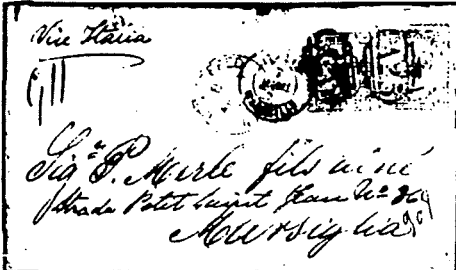
VISITORS VERY WELCOME BY APPOINTMENT AT BRIDGEFOOT HOUSE
BY THE OLD RIVER BRIDGE AT HUNTINGDON

In 1849, Col. Maberly on the recommendation of Mr Churchill, the surveyor, proposed sweeping changes to the postal arrangements of North Shropshire. Most of these changes are of no specific concern to this article; of interest is that he proposed stopping the mailcart from Shrewsbury to Whitchurch at Wem and opening a new ride from Wem to Ellesmere to serve that town. He further suggested a rural post be started from Wem to Weston "which will carry Lord Hill's private bag." (7). It is doubtful whether the cart to Whitchurch was discontinued at that time as Mr Griffiths, "the present foot messenger" applied to set up a ride on that route in January 1851 with three further tenders following up to 1856. The ride was finally discontinued in 1859 (8).

Meanwhile the plucky Jane Deakin having twice successfully applied for an increase in her allowance tried a third time, in February 1850, but this time to no avail. Her increase was "reserved" (9). Quite what happened to Miss Deakin at this point is not clear, but something did. I suspect that she was caught with "her finger in the till" in some way as she resigned in 1856 and the salary for the new deputy was reduced to £22 a year (10). Was she pushed or did she fall? We may never know, but the reduction in salary suggests that someone found out she was overpaid and underworked at this time!

Whilst the Deakin family had been in charge of the mails at Wem for 67 years, the Gough family was to run the office for the next 35 years with Roger, his wife Mary and their son Frederick in charge until 1891. The family saw the next great change in mail carriage, the use of the railways. The early morning mail was still brought on a mailcart from Shrewsbury, but Kelly's Directory of 1879 is the first (that I have found) to announce, "Letters on week days arrive ... at 3.15 p.m. by train." There is anecdotal evidence that this had occurred a few years previously. I was able to examine a run of 73 envelopes from 1863 to 1891 which had carried letters from Wem to Llangollen, by far the majority of them going through Shrewsbury. However on 8th July 1876 a letter went via Crewe with the adhesive cancelled by a 960 3VOS and a Wem backstamp with a curious code J. This code appears on three further letters in 1876, but this time with the adhesives cancelled by a Crewe Station duplex indicating carriage by train from Wem to Crewe. Is it too convenient to think that the code J was indicative of a collection to put mail on a train going north to Crewe?

During the tenure of the Gough's the post office had changed positions several times; it occupied 5, Chapel Street, and numbers 34, 56, 58 and 64 in the High Street before coming to rest in 1908 on the site of the old "Seven Stars" public house, also in the High Street. Quite appropriate really, exchanging one type of gathering place for another (11). In 1895, Joel Stinchcombe became sub-postmaster, so that for the preceding 106 years (that we know of) only two families and five people in all, had held the position of sub-postmaster/receiver at Wem. William John Stinchcombe took over in 1900 and held the post until about 1917 when Samuel Griffiths was appointed. He ran the office until the 1920's.

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WM1 (SH 735)

W E M

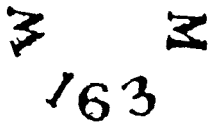
Size: 18x4mm.

Recorded Dates: 29 APR 1811 - 10 JAN 1825

Colours: Black, Red shades to Albino.

Several letters are known from Wem up to 1808; they are addressed to Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Market Drayton. As the receiver at Wem had a Short Letter Account the letters were put into the General Post at Shrewsbury and all of them have the Shrewsbury handstamp of the day. One curious thing about the first Wem postmark is that seven examples have turned up, struck in black, all in 1811, and from a variety of sources, then no more until the first one struck in red in September 1816, with red ink being used until 1825.

WM2 (SH 737)

E


Diameter: 25mm.

Recorded Dates: 24 FEB 1825 - 31 DEC 1828

Colour: Shades of Red to Albino.

WM3 (SH 739)

E


Mileage removed from WM2.

Recorded Dates: 1829 - 11 JAN 1834

Colour: Shades of Red to Albino.

WM4 (SH 741)



Diameter: 23mm.

Date of Issue: 9 SEP 1836 (SIB 2/157).

Recorded Dates: 23 JAN 1837 - 13 FEB 1849

Colours: Red and Black.

Some years ago this handstamp was reported used in blue. That has never been confirmed, but see WM5. Alcock and Holland report use of this handstamp cancelling adhesives, but this has not been confirmed either.

WM5



Size: 19x18½mm.

Date of Issue: APR/MAY 1844

Recorded Dates: 10 JUN 1844 - 1 OCT 1862

Colours: Black, Blue (on unrecorded piece).

WM6



Diameter: 25mm.

Date of Issue: 20 FEB 1849 (SIB 9/222)

Recorded Dates: 20 APR 1849 - 6 DEC 1861

Colours: Black, Grey, Blue & shades of Green.

Codes: B and -.

WM7



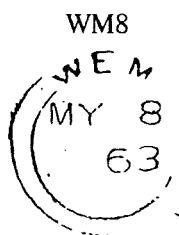
Diameter: 20mm.

Date of Issue: 24 JAN 1862 (SIB 21/87).

Recorded Dates: 2 SEP 1862 - 4 JAN 1863

Colour: Black.

Code: C.



Re-use of WM6.

Recorded Dates: 3 MAY 1863 - 8 MAY 1863

Colour: Black.

Codes: B and blank.

It was decided to include re-use of WM6 as a separate item, because the re-use is not incidental. It was used as a temporary replacement for WM7 which was lost or broken.



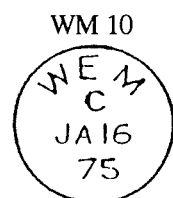
Diameter: 20mm.

Date of Issue: 9 JUN 1863 (SIB 21/254)

Recorded Dates: 22 JUN 1863 - 16 JAN 1875

Colour: Black.

Codes: A and C.



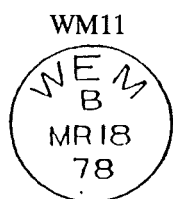
Diameter: 21mm.

Date of Issue: 18 JAN 1875 (SIB 34/103)

Recorded Dates: 30 JAN 1875 - 2 DEC 1877

Colour: Black.

Codes: A, A inv, B rev, C, C rev, J.



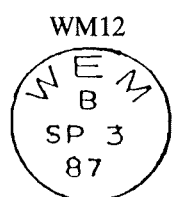
Diameter: 21mm.

Date of Issue: 19 MAR 1878 (SIB 37/9)

Recorded Dates: 8 FEB 1879 - 6 MAY 1884

Colour: Black.

Codes: A, C, C rev, C inv.



Diameter: 21mm

Date of Issue: 5 SEP 1887

Recorded Dates: 6 APR 1906 - 19 FEB 1915

Colour: Black.

Codes: Blank only.



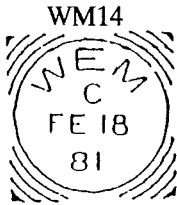
Diameter: 25mm.

Date of Issue: 17 SEP 1904 (RIB 12/345)

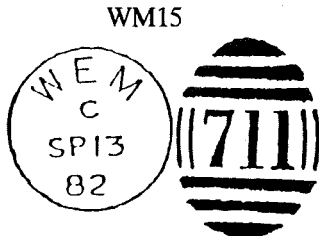
Recorded Date: 26 DEC 1906

Colour: Black.

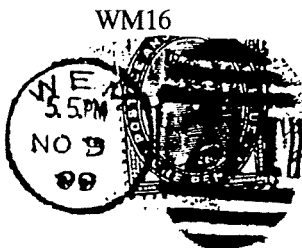
After 1855 Wem ceased to use its oval obliterator to cancel adhesives, though some local exceptions are known. WM6 to WM11 were used as identifying stamps struck on the reverse of most outgoing and incoming mail. WM12 and WM13 have only been recorded used on Parcel Post labels. WM14 to WM24 have all been recorded cancelling adhesives. From 1855 to 1881 the adhesives were cancelled by the Shrewsbury handstamp in use at the time, usually a "spoon" or duplex.



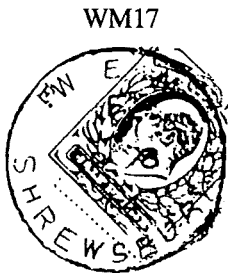
Size: 21x21mm.
Date of Issue: 18 FEB 1881 (SIB 40/47)
Recorded Dates: 9 MAR 1881 - 3 AUG 1893
Colour: Black.
Codes: A,B,C and D.



Size: 21½mm diam; 26x19mm.
Date of Issue: 14 SEP 1882 (SIB 41/158)
Recorded Dates: 3 OCT 1882 - 25 MAR 1895
Colour: Black.
Codes: A, A inv, B, B rev, E (possible damaged B).



Size: 19mm diam; 28x19mm.
Date of Issue: Not known.
Recorded Dates: 8 JAN 1897 - 25 JUL 1904
Colour: Black.
Times: 11.30am, 5.5pm, 6.45pm, 9.45pm.



Diameter: 29mm.
Date of Issue: Not known.
Recorded Dates: 5 AUG 1904 - 21 SEP 1904
Colour: Black.
Codes: A, B, C, D, D rev, E, F.



Size: 19mm diam; 27½x19mm.
Date of Issue: Not known.
Recorded Dates: 10 OCT 1904 - 13 DEC 1907
Colour: Black.
Times: 9.30am, 9.45am, 11.30am, 5pm, 6.45pm, 7.45pm, 8.45pm, 9.45pm.

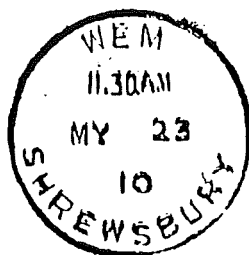


Diameter: 28mm.
Date of Issue: Not known.
Recorded Dates: 17 JAN 1908 - 14 FEB 1908
Colour: Black.
Codes: D,E,F.



Diameter: 26mm.
Date of Issue: Not known.
Recorded Dates: 29 MAY 1908 - 1 MAY 1910
Colour: Black.
Times: 5pm, 6pm, 6.45pm, 7.45pm, 9pm.

WM21



Diameter: 32mm.

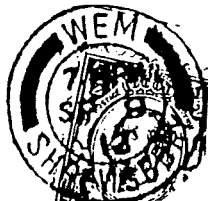
Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded Dates: 23 MAY 1910 - 19 JUN 1910

Colour: Black.

Times: 11.30am, 6.45pm, 7.45pm, 9.45pm.

WM22



Diameter: 26mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded Dates: 12 AUG 1910 - 1 APR 1914

Colour: Black.

Times: 6pm, 6.45pm, 7.45pm, 9.45pm, 10pm.

WM23



Diameter: 28mm.

Date Of Issue: Not known.

Recorded Dates: 5 SEP 1914 - 13 OCT 1914

Colour: Black.

Times: 11.30am, 5.15pm, 6.45pm, 7.45pm.

WM24



Diameter: 26mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded Dates: 30 OCT 1914 - 20 MAY 1919

Colour: Black

Times: 6.30pm, 6.45pm, 7pm, 10pm.

WM20 and WM22 have features which make them distinct from one another. WM24 is very similar to WM20. During the period of use of WM22 no handstamp similar to WM20 or WM24 has been seen. One example of a 28mm skeleton has been reported used on 29 AUG 1920 but no example is available for illustration.

References:

1. Post 42/55/216
2. Wem Parish Registers Vols I and II, Shropshire Parish Register Society, 1908.
3. Post 42/1117/728
4. Shropshire Post 39/9
5. Post 42/134/214
6. Post 35/82/459
7. Post 35/117/30
8. Post 35/201/277
9. Post 35/117/534
10. Post 35/166/353
11. The Story Of Wem, Iris Woodward (1952)

All postmarks pre-1836 are from actual examples and post-1836 courtesy of P.O. Archives. Details of any examples which would extend the information herein would be gratefully received.



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THE SURVEYORS' JOURNALS (Part 20)

Augustus Godby spent the first four days of 1811 investigating unspecified complaints made by a number of people living in the Potteries. Another investigation into a complaint made against the postmistress of Tamworth took up four days in the middle of February. On 10th March, Mr Godby left his home at Oswestry for Coventry to enquire about the penny post between Hinckley and Nuneaton, and to establish a penny post between Coventry and Nuneaton.

The only journey on official business that Mr Godby made in April and May was for three days in early April to Birmingham where he met Mr Woodcock to discuss complaints made about the Aberystwyth mail. In June, his only trip in the Midlands was to Newport and Shifnal to enquire about a letter addressed to the postmistress at the latter place which had passed free of charge. Yet another complaint, this time against the deputy at Bridgenorth, took Mr Godby away from home in mid-July. While in Bridgnorth, he took the opportunity to instruct the deputy about the charging of letters to Ireland. From there he went on to Warwick to look into the possibility of introducing a penny post from Warwick to Leamington. He was called away from Warwick for about a week to install a new deputy at Stone. Mr Godby returned to Warwick on 6th August to establish a penny post to Leamington. He remained on this business until the 21st when, "having seen the Letter Carrier out and in four days and Instructed the Receiver I returned to Oswestry."

Five days were spent in early September preparing a report on the charging of letters for Dublin passing through the Shrewsbury office. Later in the month, Mr Godby set out for Daventry to open a penny post to Braunston. This took until 10th October when he went to Warwick and Leamington to open a letter box and to instruct the deputy and the receiver in "the Penny Post New Regulations." For the same purpose he then went on to Coventry, Kenilworth, Nuneaton, Hinckley, Shifnal, Much Wenlock, Ironbridge and Broseley. He concluded his October journal: "The letter boxes being completed were opened for the reception of Letters on the 31st, the Deputys & Receivers having their Instructions and the whole proceeding with regularity..."

The only other matter in the Midlands that took Mr Godby away from home in 1811 was the need to go to Coventry and Rugby to investigate the loss of a banknote taken out of a letter sent from Derby to Rugby.

Gratian Hart had no business in the Midlands until 28th February when he arrived in Derby where he spent five days inspecting the office before returning to his base in Leicester. Two weeks later, he was back in Derby to survey the new road to Sheffield through Belper and the Peacock Inn, and through Alfreton. Towards the end of April, Mr Hart spent five days in Buxton but he did not give a reason. On his way home, he called at Derby to look into the possibility of opening a penny post to Duffield and Belper.

The middle of May found Mr Hart in Doncaster preparing a report on how the arrival of the Edinburgh and Glasgow mailcoaches affected the ride to Worksop and Ollerton. [Does this mean that a mailcoach was not diverted in 1810 to run on the road through Worksop and Ollerton? See MM93/11.] From Doncaster he went to Wirksworth where he examined the returns of letters for Matlock, Darley and Winstanley with a view towards establishing a penny post.

Mr Hart was in Derby for the whole of the first week in June establishing a penny post to Duffield and Belper. Later in the month, he spent a day at Melton Mowbray inspecting the alterations made to the office, the public having expressed "some little disapprobation of the same."

In July, Mr Hart went first to Sheffield to make the necessary alterations on the withdrawal of the mailcoach to Huddersfield and Halifax, and then to Buxton as the contractor had said that he was unable to perform the terms of his contract because of the poor state of the road from Buxton to Leek. He arranged for repairs to be carried out before going on to Derby to superintend the penny post to Duffield and Belper; to make out the accounts; and to investigate a complaint made about the delivery by the postmen. In mid-August, Mr Hart was back in Derby and then Duffield to find a suitable person to act as sub-deputy, the inhabitants having complained about the situation of the office.

On 7th September, Mr Hart arrived in Bawtry to report upon a petition from the inhabitants of Tickhill for a daily communication with Doncaster and Worksop. The second half of the month was spent at Wirksworth establishing a penny post to Matlock Bath and Old Matlock. The opening of a penny post to Tickhill took Mr Hart to Worksop in mid-October but he was then called upon to take charge of the office in Grimsby where he spent the rest of the year.

From 12th to 18th February, Samuel Woodcock was at Dursley, Uley, Kingscote, Cirencester, Cricklade, Hampton and Stroud, on "various missions - particularly to enquire into the improper surcharge of a letter at Dursley, to expedite the Post between Kingscote, Wotton & Dursley - and also between Cirencester & Kingscote." His official duties then took him into South Wales until mid-March when he was at Newnham "settling the Sub Office there." On 25th March, Mr Woodcock set out on a survey, which took a month, of offices in Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Herefordshire.

Three days in mid-May were spent at Dursley, Wotton and Cambridge Inn investigating the loss of a letter posted at Dursley and said to have contained property, but Mr Woodcock could find no trace of it. Then, from 27th May to 5th June, Mr Woodcock was in charge of the office at Ross, the postmaster having been suspended for non-payment of his arrears. Mr Woodcock was in South Wales for the whole of June and most of July.

Messrs Woodcock and Godby met in Warwick for five days in August to discuss the Welsh Posts. Then, Mr Woodcock spent most of September in Dursley and its neighbourhood, first of all to establish an office there, "the new arrangement" commencing on 6th September, and then to look into the possibility of opening a penny post between Dursley and Berkeley. After he had spent sometime in October visiting offices in Wiltshire, Mr Woodcock returned to Dursley on 4th November to prepare for the establishment of a penny post. His preparations were interrupted on the 13th for three days by the need to go to Wotton under Edge where the postmaster had failed to make proper returns to the Dead Letter Office. He found the postmaster in such poor health as to be unequal to the duties of the office. After reporting upon that, Mr Woodcock returned to Dursley, Berkeley and Newport to finish making the arrangements for the management of the penny post.

On 26th November, Mr Woodcock was obliged to go to Bewdley to "provide" for the ride between there and Stourbridge. He went on to Kidderminster and Stourbridge, and then Birmingham where he arrived on 2nd December. His purpose in visiting Birmingham was to survey the boundary of the free delivery, and note where it should end and the penny post delivery begin.

ADDENDA

PENNY POST LETTER BOXES

On 7th August 1811, Freeling wrote to the Postmasters General:

"I have the honor to propose to your Lordships that all the Penny Post Receivers in the Country be ordered to keep open Letter Boxes, into which the public, may if they please, deposit their Letters without paying the penny rate. The penny when not paid, to be added to the General or Bye Charge on the Letter.

At Bath and other Towns, where the Letter Boxes are thus open, it has been found most agreeable to the Inhabitants & on a General scale is likely to be most productive to the Revenue, for experience does shew that the payment of any Charge on putting a Letter into an Office operates as somerestraint. I am therefore of opinion that as there is no official advantage in taking the penny at the time the Letter is put in, it is very advisable that your Lordships should order it to be discontinued everywhere.

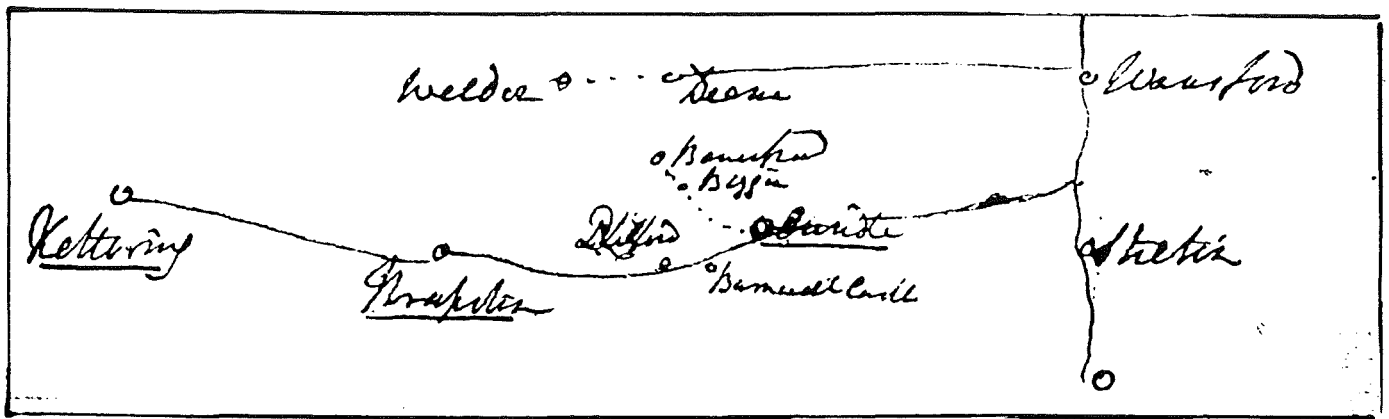
The modern Acts of Parliament relating to the Twopenny post in this Metropolis and its vicinity have purposely left the option with the Writer."

Reference: Post 42/172/1811

SOME NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POSTS

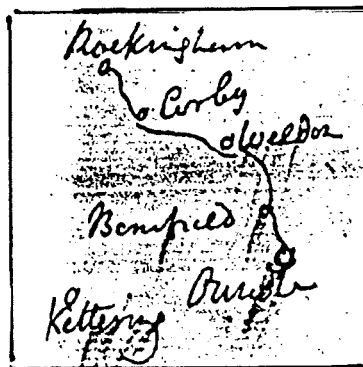
In September 1811, a Mr Oddie wrote from Barnwell Castle to the Earl of Sandwich complaining about the post to places between Oundle and Thrapstone. He said that until about three years before all his letters had come through Oundle and were delivered at about 10 a.m. by the postboy on his way to Thrapstone, and who had returned at about 2 p.m., giving adequate time for a reply to be written. Now, the postboy came from Thrapstone with the London letters at 11 a.m. on his way to Oundle but did not return from there until about 5 p.m. with such letters as came that way, with the result that although it was possible to answer on the same day letters received through Thrapstone, a reply could not be sent to those received through Oundle until the following morning. Also he was at a loss to know to which of the two posttowns he should send letters for his neighbours.

Three months later, Mr Western reported on the posts from Weldon to Oundle and from Oundle to Thrapstone and Kettering. He said that the inconvenience described by Mr Oddie originated in the measures introduced on the introduction of the mailcoach through Bedford to Leeds in 1807. The mail now went from Kettering through Thrapstone to Oundle which was reached by 11 a.m. The return from Oundle was at 1.30 p.m. with letters which had arrived there at 9 a.m. from Stilton and the North and the East and did not reach Thrapstone until the evening. He proposed a new arrangement in which the rider would leave Kettering as at present but stop at Thrapstone. A rider would be sent from Oundle at 9 a.m. and reach Thrapstone by 10.30 a.m., giving that town all its letters in one delivery, and by returning at 2.30 p.m. allowing places between Thrapstone and Oundle to reply on the same day.



Mr Western went on to say that the post from Oundle to Weldon had long been complained of. Mr Bartlett had proposed 14/- a week for a daily footpost but as no one could be found to do it, the postmistress of Oundle had agreed to go three times a week with a man and horse for that sum. This she had done for nearly three years to her loss. He proposed therefore to allow the deputy at Weldon £15 a year to fetch the letters from Deane which was served daily from Wansford.

The posts in this area had been the subject of complaints in 1806 when Sir Richard de Capel Brooke wrote that formerly the post went from Kettering to Uppingham and Oakham through Rockingham which road was near his house. However, the Postmaster General had changed the route, serving Rutland through Stamford, making Weldon a posttown and sending the letters for Rockingham round through Thrapston, Oundle and Weldon. The postboy was able to stop for only half-an-hour at Rockingham, giving no time to reply by return of post. He went on to suggest that Rockingham should again be served directly from Kettering instead of through Oundle.



Mr Western stated that the post from Kettering to Rockingham had been taken off in September 1795, mainly at the request of the Earl of Cardigan to be served by a post from Oundle through Weldon to Deane. However, this post had not met his Lordship's expectations, and he had since joined other gentlemen in a post from Wansford to Deane. In a joint report Messrs Western and Bartlett recommended that the request for the direct post from Kettering to Rockingham be refused. The postage for letters to Rockingham came to £51 compared with £42 for villages on the road from Oundle. They had been asked for £74 p.a. for a ride from Kettering to Rockingham but the ride from Oundle cost about £60 p.a. The reason for the difference was that the direct road from Kettering was nearly uninhabited whereas the rider from Oundle had the advantage of letters and parcels for the villages on the road.

However, in the following year, the introduction of the Leeds mailcoach did provide a direct link between Kettering and Rockingham (MM90/12) but we do not know if this made Sir Richard any happier.

References: Post 40/283/1811 Post 40/52B/1806

GENERAL POST-OFFICE,

March 1811.

OATH OF OFFICE.

1. EVERY Postmaster is required to keep a distinct Office or Apartment for the Performance of his Public Duty, to which no Person shall have Access who has not taken the OFFICIAL OATH.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

2. Postmasters are not to quit their Towns without Leave first obtained from the Surveyor of the District.

HOURS OF DELIVERY.

3. The Office to be opened for the Delivery of Letters and Newspapers, at 7 A. M. from the 5th April to the 5th October, and at 8 A. M. for the other Six Months.

HOURS OF SHUTTING BOXES.

4. Are regulated by the Surveyor of the District according to local Circumstances.

LETTER CARRIERS.

5. To be duly sworn, and not to be allowed to sort the Letters, or to assist in any Part of the Business, until the Bags have been opened and the Letters told by the Deputy or Clerk.

LETTERS NOT TO BE RETURNED.

6. Letters immediately after being put into an Official Receiving-Box, become the Property of the Persons to whom addressed, and therefore on no Application, however urgent, must a Postmaster return Letters to the Writers, or to any Persons for them. They can only be returned from the Dead Letter Office in London, in the Event of not being properly directed, or it being impossible from any other Cause to deliver them. Writers of Letters wishing to rectify Mistakes, must do it by writing other Letters.

FRANCIS FREELING,
SECRETARY.

EXTRA CHARGES

The lists on this and the following page were published in April 1830 and are taken from Post 71/15. A footnote reads: "The Extra Charge on each Letter on delivery varies from one halfpenny to one penny; in no instance exceeding the latter sum. The authority for such charge is custom, from time immemorial; and the payment is not compulsory if the parties choose to object."

I have included the information for Scotland as I know that some members are interested in the postal history of that country. It seems that the Scots were slower than the English to object to the extra charges.

2

POSTAGE:—EXTRA CHARGES AND RATES COLLECTED

The NAME of each Post Town where an Extra Charge beyond the Rate of Postage is made for the delivery of Letters in England.

Alfreton.	Ferrybridge.	Minchinhampton.	Tring.
Amphill.	Fairford.	Moreton in Marsh.	Tunbridge Wells.
Amesbury.	Fowey.	Market Drayton.	Taxford.
Bromley.	Godstone.	Newark.	Thetford.
Buckingham.	Garstang.	Penryn.	Thrapstone.
Bakewell.	Glastonbury.	Reigate.	Uxbridge.
Barton on Humber.	Horndean.	Ripley.	Watford.
Bawtry.	Hounslow.	Rye.	Wallingford.
Boston.	Hatfield.	Retford.	Wenlock.
Buxton.	Higham Ferrers.	Stoney Stratford.	Wingham.
Broadway.	Heytesbury.	Southall.	Wheatley.
Bodmin.	Ingatestone.	Scarborough.	Wetherby.
Cobham.	Leatherhead.	St. Asaph.	Whitby.
Dursley.	Lynnhurst.	Shepton Mallet.	Wantage.
Dartmouth.	Lowestoft.	Thame.	Woodstock.
Enstone.			Welwyn.

The NAME of each Post Town where an Extra Charge beyond the Rate of Postage is made for the Delivery of Letters in Scotland.

Aberbrothwick.	Culien.	Gatehouse.	Moffat.
Abercrombie.	Cummock.	Girvan.	Montrose.
Airdrie.	Currie.	Haddington.	Muirhead.
Alloa.	Dalry.	Hamilton.	Muirkirk.
Annan.	Denny.	Hawick.	Nairn.
Anstruther.	Dingwall.	Helensburgh.	Newburgh.
Auchtermuchty.	Douglas.	Holytown.	Newton Stewart.
Auchtermuchty.	Dumbarton.	Huntly.	Old Meldrum.
Ayton.	Dumfermline.	Inverkeithing.	Peebles.
Banchory.	Dumfries.	Inverness.	Pennycuik.
Banff.	Dunbar.	Jedburgh.	Peterhead.
Bathgate.	Dunblane.	Keith.	Pitlochrie.
Beith.	Dunkeld.	Kilmarnock.	Pittenween.
Bervie.	Dunning.	Kincairdine.	Port Glasgow.
Biggar.	Dunoon.	Kinghorn.	Portsoy.
Blairgowrie.	Dunse.	Kinross.	Renfrew.
Borrowstonness.	Eaglesham.	Kirkintulloch.	Rothsay.
Brechin.	Earlstone.	Kirriemuir.	
Buckie.	Ecclefechan.	Lanark.	Salcoats.
Burntisland.	Elgin.	Langholme.	Selkirk.
Callander.	Errol.	Largs.	Skateford.
Campbeltown.	Falkirk.	Lauder.	S. Queensferry.
Canowath.	Falkland.	Laurencekirk.	Stewarton.
Castle Douglas.	Fochabers.	Lesmahago.	Stonehaven.
Coldstream.	Ford.	Leven.	Stranraer.
Colinsburgh.	Forfar.	Lindlithgow.	Tain.
Colinton.	Forres.	Lochalsh.	Tarbet.
Coupar Angus.	Fraserburgh.	Locherbie.	Thurso.
Crail.	Fort George.	Longtown.	Turriff.
Creetown.	Fortrose.	Maybole.	Wigton.
Crieff.	Galashiels.	Melrose.	Whitburn.
Cromarty.			

AN ACCOUNT of the Dates on which the Towns of Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, and other Towns in England, have been relieved from such Extra Charges within the past Three Years.

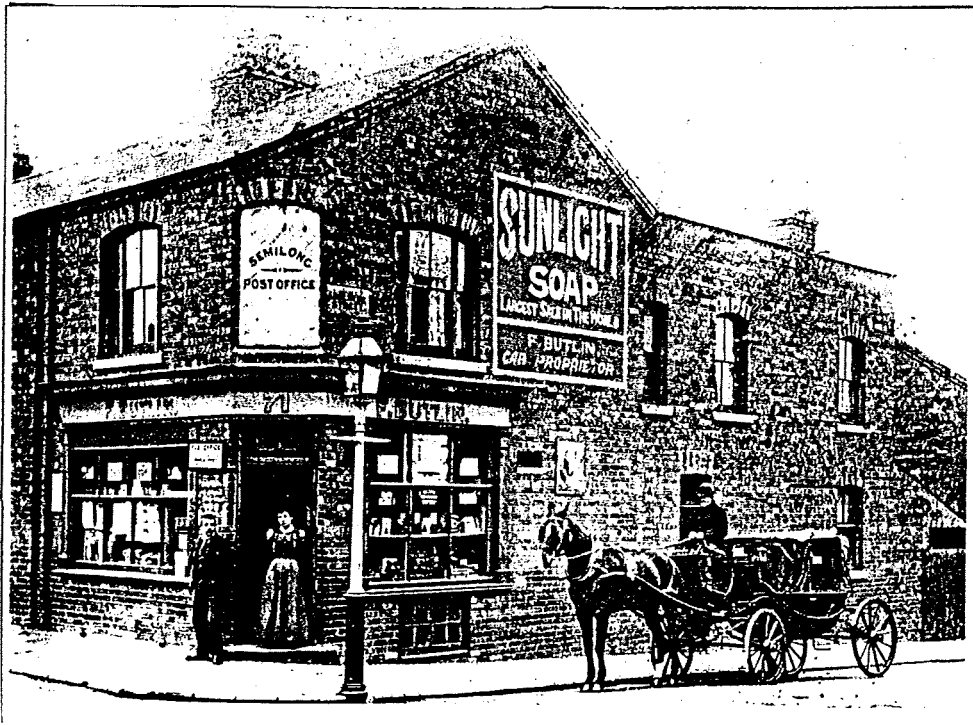
Name of Town.	Date of Relief.	Name of Town.	Date of Relief.
Atherstone - - -	January 1828	Llanelly - - -	December 1828
Baldock - - -	January 1828	Lechlade - - -	April - 1829
Bungay - - -	October 1827	Leighton Buzzard - -	January - 1830
Brentwood - - -	May - 1828	Loughborough - - -	April - 1828
Barnet - - -	April - 1829	Market Street - - -	October - 1828
Brandon - - -	January 1829	Marlborough - - -	January - 1829
Bilstone - - -	August 1829	Middlewich - - -	February 1829
Burton, Westmorland -	July - 1829	Newport, Salop - - -	January - 1827
Beaconsfield - - -	January 1830	Newport, Monmouth - -	January - 1828
Bradford, Yorkshire -	January 1830	Newport Pagnel - - -	January 1828
Brigg - - -	February 1830	Northwich - - -	February 1829
Chipping Norton - - -	April - 1827	Overton - - -	April - 1828
Chesterfield - - -	Sept. - 1827	Prescot - - -	September 1827
Catterick - - -	July - 1827	Pontefract - - -	December 1827
Cranbrook - - -	Dec. - 1827	Penzance - - -	October - 1829
Colnbrook - - -	July - 1828	Ryde, I. W. - - -	July - - 1828
Cuckfield - - -	April - 1829	Rochdale - - -	March - 1829
Coleshill - - -	January 1829	Rugeley - - -	January - 1830
Crawley - - -	July - 1829	Sevenoaks - - -	April - 1827
Driffield - - -	Nov. - 1827	Swaffham - - -	January - 1827
Dunstable - - -	April - 1828	Saint Neots - - -	June - - 1828
Doncaster - - -	April - 1828	Spalding - - -	May - 1828
Dewsbury - - -	Sept. - 1827	Sittingbourne - - -	October - 1828
Dartford - - -	July - 1829	Stockbridge - - -	October - 1829
Dorking - - -	January 1830	Staines - - -	October - 1829
Eggsware - - -	April - 1829	Saint Anstell - - -	October - 1829
Folkingham - - -	June - 1827	Swindon - - -	November 1829
Fenny Stratford - - -	April - 1828	Selby - - -	January - 1820
Falmouth - - -	October 1829	Tunbridge - - -	January - 1829
Fordingbridge - - -	April - 1828	Tarporley - - -	January - 1829
Gainsborough - - -	January 1830	Wymondham - - -	January - 1827
Harrowgate - - -	Dec. - 1827	Whitechurch, Hants. -	May - - 1827
Hartfordbridge - - -	April - 1828	Woburn - - -	April - - 1828
Haslemere - - -	April - 1828	Wellington, Somt. - -	July - - 1829
Hemel Hempstead - - -	April - 1829	Wimborn - - -	January - 1829
Huddesdon - - -	January 1829	Welford - - -	January - 1830
Harleston - - -	Dec. - 1829		
Knutsford - - -	October 1827		

AN ACCOUNT of the Dates on which the Towns in Scotland have been Relieved from such Extra Charges, within the past Three Years.

Name of Town.	Date of Relief.	Name of Town.	Date of Relief.
Aberdeen - - -	Dec. - 1829	Kelso - - -	November 1829
Ayr - - -	March - 1830	Kilsyth - - -	December 1829
Cupar, Fife - - -	October 1829	Kirkcudbright - - -	February 1830
Dundee - - -	Nov. - 1829	Paisley - - -	December 1829
Greenock - - -	January 1830	Perth - - -	December 1829
Irvine - - -	January 1830	Saint Andrew's - - -	January - 1830
Kirkcaldy - - -	April - 1830	Stirling - - -	November 1829
		Wigton - - -	November 1829

SEMILONG POST OFFICE

Derek Smeathers has kindly sent a copy of a photograph taken in about 1900. The sub-postmaster at the time was Frederick Butlin who also operated horse-cabs from the building at the corner of Semilong Road and Adelaide Street.



PARCEL POST.  Northampton Semilong		X LIST Letter and Number.		POSTAGE.	
				8.	D
Insurance, registration or Express Fee.					
FOR POSTAGE STAMPS.			DATE STAMP.		
					

HELP WANTED WITH SKELETONS

Colin Peachey when sending me a copy of the Second Edition of 'Skeleton Postmarks of England and Wales' commented that he is not convinced he has achieved the "in depth" expertise in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire that he has in other areas. If anyone has details of skeletons from those counties could they contact Colin at 19 Moorland Road, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1NH.

AN ARTICLE ON TPOs

Members might like to know that the April edition of 'Traction' contains an article which gives details of all the mail movements at the London termini.

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

It is hoped that this will appear at the start of June. It will contain a report of the AGM and more from the Surveyors' Journals with extra information about rides. As for the rest all articles should be sent to:

John Soer 51d Barkham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 2RG.