

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

www.midlandphs.org.uk



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A 1910 registered cover from MOSLEY ST^T / BURTON-ON-TRENT to Germany shown at the September meeting (Mosley St., post office open 1902 to 1911)

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ANNOUNCEMENTS, a REVIEW etc,

14th March 2020 MEETING – The Chairman announced at the September 2019 meeting that **Derek Smeathers** had agreed to give a display of Northamptonshire Postal History at the March meeting – not to be missed.

Jan Gane (right) our member in Western Australia has been the website manager of the France and Colonies Philatelic Society (UK) site since 2016 (<http://www.fcps.org.uk/index.php>). According to the site she has now volunteered to take on the challenge of Journal Editor as well (Good luck with that, Jan!). From the beginning of 2020 she will be applying both her IT and editorial skills to their flagship publication.



Bryan Jones reports that there is a new Post Office opened in Shirley, Solihull in Martins Newsagents, Longmore Rd, Shirley, Solihull, on the corner of Longmore Rd and Blossomfield Rd. It opened on 8 February 2019. The only marking used by this office, situated in the rear corner of the shop, is the date stamp illustrated. It is interesting that there is no district or town included so if there were other roads with the same name elsewhere there could be some confusion. The majority of its business appears to be acting as a receiving house for the return of unwanted items purchased on line. There is no post office box in the vicinity.

A GUIDE TO PHILATELIC RESEARCH AT THE BRITISH LIBRARY – a review by John Calladine

David Beech, Head of Philatelic Collections at the British Library from 1991 until his retirement from the role in 2004, has published a new 50 page monograph with the above title. David has been a good friend of the Society and proposed a toast to it at the launch of the 'Midlands BCC' book in 2003. He has kindly donated a copy of his monograph to our library.

The monograph begins with a brief history of the British Library and a somewhat more comprehensive history of the Philatelic Collections, which began their existence in the Department of Printed Books of the British Museum in 1891 when the famous Tapling collection was donated to it. The Philatelic Collections were transferred to the British Library in 1973 and moved to the new St Pancras building in 1997. The Department is currently on the 3rd floor, just outside the Maps Department, and both an appointment and a Reader Pass, easily and quickly obtained, are needed to make a visit. (Take along your passport and recent proof of your address.)

The new monograph then lists, in alphabetical order, all the collections held there. Many are of international content and interest. Those of particular interest to postal historians include the Ewen Collection of Railway Letter Stamps and the Fletcher Collection, half of which is devoted to British and Irish postal history, but many others are of relevance. There is, for example, a collection of photographs largely provided by philatelic auction houses. This section is followed by a useful subject index, cross-referencing topics to the collections with relevant material, albeit acknowledging the practical impossibility of making it complete.

More useful information about making a visit to the Philatelic Collections Researcher's Room is followed by mention of other collections and departments of the British Library that could be of interest to philatelic researchers and a selected bibliography of 67 books we might find helpful.

Following the General Index is an Appendix giving David's own basic guide to philatelic research, full of vital tips as to how to conduct research, where to find the information you need and how to publish it. He even suggests how you might obtain grants to meet the costs. He repeats his golden rule that a book takes as long as it takes, not the time you happen to have available. "Set aside plenty of time and then some more!" It is unlikely our Coordinating Editor would challenge it.

There have been no submissions for the **SAVED FROM A GOAT** section this quarter, but see page 21.

If sending articles or accounts of displays at meetings to Midland Mail by email please use:

Microsoft WORD	I have opened all versions sent....so far!
Font	Times New Roman, Size 10
Margins	2.54cms (Top), 2.2cms (Right, Left, Bottom)
Scans	300dpi

THE 21st SEPTEMBER MEETING at the LADYBIRD, ASTON FIELDS, BROMSGROVE – despite the last minute change of venue, 15 members produced some stunning displays of *Registration & Express Mail*. The Chairman began by stating that Mel Matthews had resigned and on the Monday following the meeting an email came in to say Eric Grimshaw had resigned as well.

John Calladine began the afternoon with a display of registered mail from Stourbridge and its sub-offices. He began with registered letters of June 1843 and March 1855, the former endorsed to show the pre-payment in cash of an 1/- registration fee and the latter with the 6d registration fee paid by means of a 6d embossed stamp, as was permitted from 1 June 1850. There followed two letters addressed to Clent, one just before the new main post office opened on 21st December 1855 and the other after the new office opened. The M.O.O. stamp had, by then, been replaced by a dated oval 'registered' stamp. Several registered envelopes from 1910 & 1911 indicated, from the consecutive numbering of the registration labels, that the main office was handling fewer than nine registrations a week at the time. A sheet of twenty different Stourbridge registration labels was followed by letters of 1954 from the Longlands sub-office legally using Tangier and Morocco Agencies overprints to pay the registration fee.

Martin Scroggs' first display was registered marks used in the 1894 'Time in Asterisk Code' experiment with examples from all the English Provincial Towns known to have used them: Chester, Kingston-upon-Thames, Leamington Spa, Luton, Manchester, Oxford, Paignton, Redhill Station (piece), Retford (piece), Rochdale, Shipston-on-Stour, Torquay & West Hartlepool. He concluded by showing the four places in Ireland that used the marks: Belfast, Cork, Limerick & Waterford.



Fig 1, Oval REGISTERED / ROCHDALE showing code BK*P for Time in Asterisk code

Though not present **Guy Bridges** had produced a display of registered letters postal stationery envelopes (pse) posted at Shrewsbury sub-offices with emphasis on the numbers allocated to those offices. These included a No 1 (Abbey Foregate) on a 1925 pse to Copenhagen, No 2 (Belle Vue) 1938 to Nazareth, Palestine, No 4 (Kingsland) 1936 to Czechoslovakia and No 10 (Cherry Orchard) 1935 to Michigan, USA with the 1935 Jubilee set. The most interesting was a number 20 of the Infantry Records Office on a 1946 OHMS pse to Manchester uprated with a 3d stamp cancelled at Abbey Foregate, which was the nearest post office to the Records Office and through which office the mail was processed, it seems. Since Abbey Foregate was No 1, Guy surmised the Records Office was No 20.

Brian Atkins began with an 1830 Money letter from Bridgnorth to London, charged 2/6, triple the 10d rate of the 1812 Act. One shilling registration paid in cash was seen on three covers, a January 1843 from Wellington to Aberystwyth (1d red with maltese cross cancel), October 1844 Whitchurch to London (1d red cancelled 876) and February 1846 Shrewsbury to Audlem, Cheshire (1841 2d blue cancelled 708), this carried via Whitchurch and Nantwich. 6d registration paid in cash on a cover from London to Ludlow with two 1841 2d blues paying the 20z rate. A single 6d lilac, plate 3 paid both the 4d registration, introduced on 1st August 1862 and the 2d postage for 10z. Shrewsbury was known to have a REGISTERED hand stamp, that in black featured on an 1857 cover to Birmingham with 6d registration fee paid by 6d lilac, plate 1 and 1d red paying postage and an 1867 cover also to Birmingham with the 4d registration fee paid by the 4d dull vermilion, plate 8 and 1d red paying the postage



Fig 2, Black REGISTERED on 1857 cover from Shrewsbury to Birmingham



Fig 3, 1909 Express cover from Bakewell to Brixton, London

Gordon Hardy produced Registered Mail from Derbyshire beginning with an 1852 Registered Letter from Ashbourne to Bakewell, the 1/- embossed cancelled with a 28. The period at this registration fee rate of 6d was 28 March 1848 to 31 July 1862. With a shilling stamp the postage letter rate must have been 6d so putting the letter in the weight range 2oz to 3oz, which applied from 10 January 1840 to 31 March 1865. An 1873 Registered Letter from Derby to Ashbourne had an oval REGISTERED / 30 JA 73 / DERBY. Registration fee from 1 August 1862 to 31 Dec 1877 was 4d. The letter rate was 2d for 2oz to 5oz which was in place from 5 October 1871 to 30 June 1885 total paid 6d. An 1878 Registered Letter receipt was cancelled with a single ring ASHBOURNE / B / MY 18 / 78. Gordon explained

that Express Mail was first set up in 1891. A 1909 Express Letter from Bakewell to Brixton (see above) posted and delivered the same day was not timed at Bakewell but was timed at London at 5.45pm and Brixton at 7pm. This letter is prepaid 4d made up of 1d for the normal letter rate and 3d for the express delivery charge. It is possible that the delivery charge might be larger than 3d as it is not always known what the additional mileage might be so additional charges were charged to the delivery address. Period at this rate, 1 January 1892 to 31 May 1919.

Malcolm Allinson displayed items from Cumberland beginning with an 1849 registered item paid in cash, followed by a similarly registered item but paid in stamps - which was allowed after June 1850. There followed a couple of **Certificates of Posting a Registered Letter**, one to Ind Coope at Burton in 1876, the other to the Carlisle Probate Office in 1899. He continued with **Post Office Registered Envelopes** to both inland and overseas destinations, all showing in detail various postage and registration rates, finishing with a run of Registered envelopes from the King George VI era illustrating the registration rate increases between 1948 and 1952, the postage remaining at 2½d throughout.



Fig 4, 1847 Registered Letter Sheet (?) Bewdley to Birmingham

Richard Farman displayed an 1800 Money Letter sent free from London to Exeter enclosing £1,100 in bank notes and bills and a 1939 Insured cover from Newton Road, Burton-on-Trent to Avignon had a 3d registration fee and 5½d postage and an extra 6d fee paid in cash to cover the £60 enclosed.

Chris Jackson began with a most unusual item – a 6th May 1847 Postal Stationery entire (a letter sheet?) sent from Bewdley to Birmingham (see left). A 21 September 1874 envelope sent from Worcester to Paris was franked with a 6d grey to pay registration and postage and an 11 December 1883 mourning cover from Malvern Link to Dusseldorf was franked with a 2d rose to pay the registration fee and a 2½d blue to pay the postage.

Brian Purcell put up an outstanding (even astounding!) display of 6 sheets with the first two items alone commanding particular attention. An 1859 cover from Sheffield to Macclesfield was franked with a single 10d embossed to pay the 6d registration and 4d 2oz postage rate and 1869 cover from London to Philadelphia had a single 10d red-brown (SG 112) to pay the 4d registration and 6d postage – two spectacular covers; there were others in the same vein, especially single uses of the 4½d green and carmine and 10d purple and carmine.

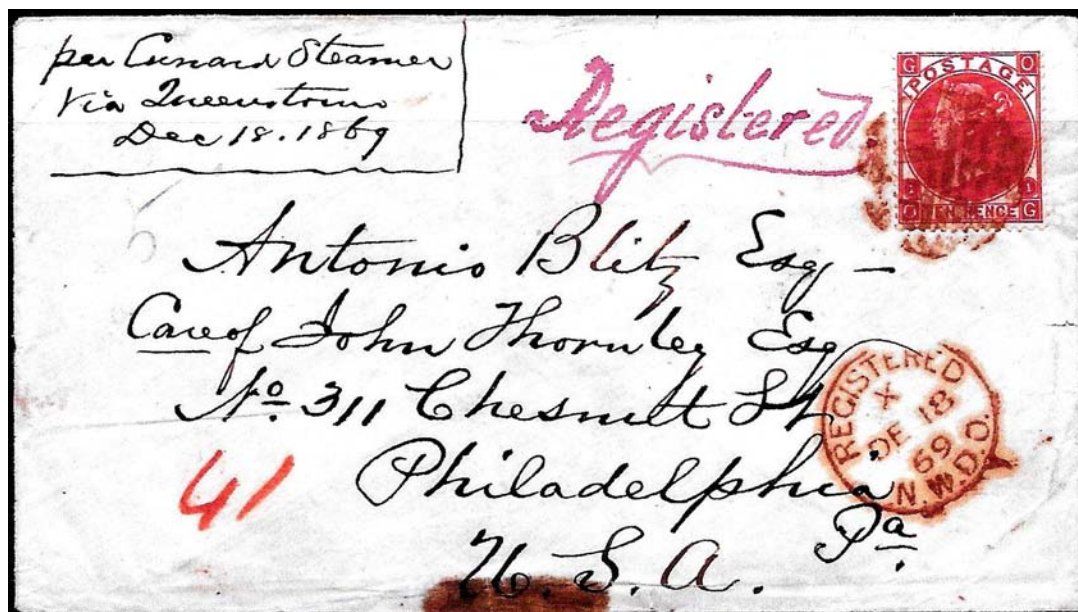


Fig 5, 1869 London to Philadelphia (Cunard *Nemesis*) with single 10d paying the 4d registration and 6d postage

Alan Spencer brought the first part to a conclusion by showing two Money letters. Also an 1846 cover with a hand stamp *Registered at Edinburgh* in red with 1/- fee paid in cash and an 1841 2d blue paying the 1oz postage. He also showed a Canadian cover which illustrated the unusual Canadian registration process, whereby a cover was re-registered at every office it passed through, along with new labels and numbers.

After suitable time for refreshment and viewing **Stuart Geddes** began the second half mostly showing Welsh related items, for example an 1834 money letter from Cerrig-y-Druidion to Oswestry, an 1836 money letter from Pwllheli to Bangor with a MONEY LETTER / BANGOR hand stamp and an 1852 registered letter from Rugby to Bangor with 6d registration fee paid by three 1841 2d blues and 1d red postage.

Derek Smeathers' contribution included a May 1846 registered by 1/- cash from Wellingborough, October 1858 from Northampton with 10 1d red stamps on an official registered letter to Daventry, a December 1884 cover had two 2½d stamps cancelled by the scarce 570 VOS and an 1892 cover from Northampton had a 'shield' unique local postmark. An April 1895 cover from Rushden was registered to South America. A spectacular March 1941 Express cover from Lima, Peru to Northampton via New York had also gained a KGVI 2½d blue and a 4d railway stamp from Euston station.

Brian Atkins' second display included an 1865 cover from Claverley, near Bridgnorth to Montreal with two 6d lilacs – registration was 4d with 8d supposedly paying the transit to Canada via the USA but the *Cunard Scotia* arrived in New York the day the cover was dated in Montreal, so it was carried by the Canadian Allan Line *Nova Scotian* via Portland, Maine at 6d, the cover being 2d overpaid. An 1876 cover to Bishops Castle was franked 4½d, 4d registration and ½d printed matter postage.

Malcolm Allinson's second display included a 1942 cover Express from Mayport to Manchester showing the single vertical blue line and an extraordinary Moncton (Canada) date stamp before forwarding to Oklahoma ([see page 12](#))

Martin Scroggs' second display traced the cancels of Oxford registered postal stationery covers with the 4VOS cancel used in 1873 and 1879, 3VOS in the late 1870s (there are 12 3VOSs recorded in all, 10 on registered covers), circular parcel cancel on an 1892 cover to Kendal and the registered oval used on a cover to London in 1893

Alan Godfrey presented a 1901 Express cover from Nuneaton to Leicester with a 1d postage and 3d for the express. He followed with a Service 1 Express of 1906 from Alcester to Cambridge with 1d postage and 3d express and 4 ALCESTER skeleton cancels. 1931, 1935 and 1936 covers were examples of Service 2 express. For his second showing Alan produced registered items from Warwickshire including an 1848 with 6d paid in cash on a Stratford to Atherstone cover and an 1855 cover from Rugby to London with the 6d paid with three 1841 2d blues and an 1881 cover from Leamington to Pitlochry with 3 Leamington square circles and South Parade sub-office cancels. From 1938 Express was referred to as Special Delivery, exemplified by a 1965 cover with green label & CADEBY skeleton.

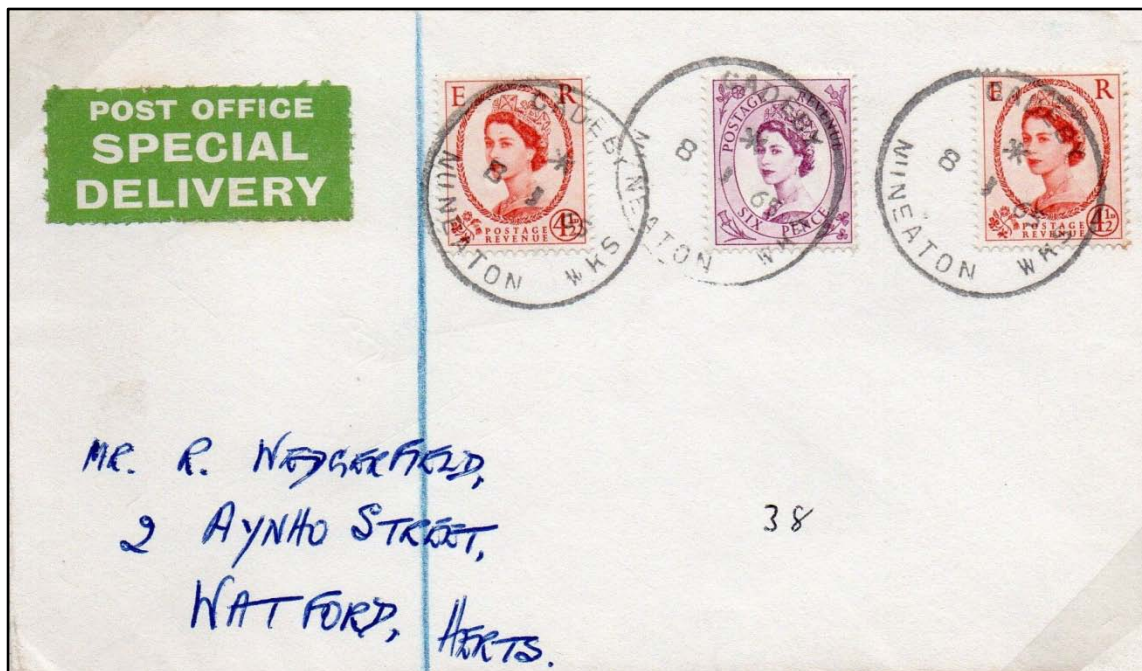


Fig 6, Green SPECIAL DELIVERY label on a 1965 cover from Cadeby, Nuneaton to Watford

Richard Farman brought proceedings to a close with a 1911 postal stationery envelope from Sudbury to Wirsworth showing an R2 label and an undated SUDBURY cancel and finally an 1859 Registered letter receipt dated 22 June in Lichfield with a No 1 on the top left corner – surely not the first use of such a receipt?

Gordon Hardy, our new Chairman, congratulated everyone on a sparkling meeting for our first gathering of the new postal history season; a well-chosen topic which allowed everyone to show some wonderful covers.

A description of all these covers doesn't do them justice. At the beginning of his talk at Burton in December 2015 Michael Lockton stated that '*Postal History is a visual art*' – how right he was!

THE 26th OCTOBER MEETING at the FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, COTTERIDGE, B30 1JB – From the editor – I must apologise for not making the meeting but that was the weekend of the deluge, if you recall. I can get to Birmingham by rail through Shrewsbury or Crewe. According to various websites on the day the only train likely to run, because of the floods, was the 10.04 from Whitchurch to Crewe but when that was cancelled I had no choice but to watch the second half of the rugby semi-final!! The theme of the day was *Mail by Coach, Rail, River or Canal*.

Chris Jackson reports that 15 or 16 members were present, a great number considering the dreadful weather. Chris showed 3 items with Midland Railway stamps, a 'Ewen's' envelope from Alvechurch *to be posted at Birmingham*, an Express item from Evesham to Redditch with two different express labels and a Worcester to Kidderminster letter where both the postage stamp and the railway stamp had been cancelled with the railway station violet rectangular hand stamp. A 10/- railway stamp on a box label from Redditch to Liverpool and two foreign items sent via the Trans Siberian Railway. The final three sheets were unmounted modern Worcester items.

John Calladine, commenting that mail carried by mail coach rarely displayed direct evidence of its carriage, showed ephemera from the coaching era. He began with an enlargement of the frontispiece map from Cary's 1st edition of 1798, clearly showing the mail coach routes between London and the Midlands at that time, and a reduced copy of a London & Gloucester timebill. A 1753 announcement of 'flying stage coaches' and an illustration of a 'flying machine' inn sign required explanation of the difference, as did the varied routes used by early wagons and coaches between London and Gloucester and the mail coaches. A receipt from Cruttwell's Waggon (sic) in Bath was accompanied by a free letter of 1815 from Shrewsbury to that same company, undoubtedly sent by mail coach not wagon! An Irish mail coach receipt of 1846 for use of the Waterford mail coach completed the display.

Alan Spencer's first showing was of **Scottish Additional ½d marks applied in England**. Following the passing of a Bill in March 1812 '*To Repeal the Exemption from Toll in respect of Carriages and Horses carrying the Mail*', Mail Coaches travelling over Scottish Turnpike Roads were charged. In order to recover this charge an additional ½d was added to each letter carried on the Mail Coaches. A hand stamp indicating the charge was applied in various English towns if the letter had to be carried over a Scottish Turnpike Road. Examples were shown from London, Carlisle, Manchester, Newcastle, Bristol, Exeter, Falmouth and Dublin with the latter cover mis-directed to Dublin from Workington, Cumberland. The hand stamp was applied in Dublin and the cover forwarded to the correct address in Scotland. The final sheet comprised a Post Office Return showing that in 1813 a surplus of £9,600 generated by this tax had become a loss of £5,400 by 1836.

Mick Gill opened with two notices for the Railex Service, one for the commencement of the service on 1 Jan 1934 in an 'old fashioned' style, the other from 1937 in the modern 'streamlined' style. Two Railex letters from Nottingham to London (1948, 1949) had 5d LMS parcel stamps and one in 1962 had a 1/- BR machine-printed parcel label. An 1892 railway letter to Nottingham was followed by a 1915 one to Huknall with a 2d Midland railway parcel stamp. A letter from Redmile to London endorsed 'By Rail' had a GNR paid parcel label and was carried Contrary to Regulations!

Part of **Alan Spencer's** second display concerned the **Sinking of the Empress of Ireland**. Four pages showed mail salvaged from the ship *Empress of Ireland* which sank off the coast of Canada in 1914, 2 years after the Titanic. The cachets shown were in green, purple or red which were applied to either the mail itself or the ambulance cover in which it had been forwarded. A cover salvaged from a ship during World War 1 was endorsed with a boxed handstamp *Damaged by immersion in water*. The display concluded with two Peninsular War covers to Scotland, one from a soldier who took part in the Battle of Salamanca and the other following the Defence at Torres Vedras, the latter sent at the soldier's concessionary rate of 1d illustrating that the Scottish Additional ½d tax was not applicable to concessionary mail.

Clive Jones showed a range of early items related to TPOs (designated Railway Post Office until 1867), an 1818 Act of Parliament re RPOs, an 1839 letter from Lord Stanley to the Chairman of the London & Manchester Railway, a March 1840 letter from Lord Lichfield re: mail apparatus, an 1844 Letter from Broseley to Sutton Coldfield with "MISSENT TO RAILWAY POST OFFICE", 2 x letters with 6d late fee for posting in bag outside sorting carriage (1846 / 1849) and Inland Office marks for routing mail 1845. Grand Northern Railway circular E / NR mark in black ink for evening duty and red ink for morning duty (scarcer)

Gordon Hardy exhibited 1831 Carrier mail (Pickford's) to Ashbourne, letter re: Cromford Canal with a claim for "drawback", 1669 Letter that crossed river by ferry, Chesterfield Station postmark on 1d pink envelope and PPC of the parcels cart at Ambergate.

Richard Farman produced a document showing a rural postman's delivery round from Rugeley to Gentleshaw (and return), 1942 Certificates of posting for registered letters being returned, an 1837 Parcels Delivery Co. (London)

large 4d label signed by Alfred R Haley on parcel wrapper to Samuel Bros (tailors), a Private parcel delivery firm (C P Co) large for display in window to request collection. Continental Parcels (to overseas) letter from Ramsgate and wrapper with CP cachet, and a 1913 very large parcel wrapper sent from Streatham to USA redirected to Canada and bearing 48c in Canadian stamps returned to Mount Pleasant and then to Streatham charged 6d.

Alan Godfrey brought Rugby Railway Station Post Office – examples of 3VOD duplex 959 from 1894 and 1895, twin circle date stamp on PPC used 1am 1/1/11 & squared circle on PPC 1912. Railway Sub-Offices (RSOs) in Warwickshire, though few such hand stamps are recorded for Warwickshire: Alcester (and sub-offices) and Coughton. Included were Alcester RSO on dumb parcel cancels, Ardens Grafton (Alcester RSO) rubber cancel 1906, Great Alne (Alcester RSO) rubber cancel 1904, Coughton RSO single circle cancel 1904, 1908 and PPC of the post office 1905 and 5 picture postcards with RSO in the address: Alcester, Coughton, Dunnington, Haselor, Bidford.

Mick Gill's second display comprised railway letters from Hathern station to Newport, Fife in 1930 with a 3d LMS parcel stamp; from Nottingham to London in 1933 with a 3d LNER parcel stamp and from Llandudno to West Bridgford, Nottingham with a 3d LMS parcel stamp (1938). An envelope addressed in pencil to the Rev. Graham at Kirton, Notts, posted at Derby in March 1906 with a 2d North Staffordshire railway letter stamp could have been a genuine rather than philatelic item. Examples of the latter to the Rev. Graham in 1906 with 2d railway letter stamps followed – from Gollanfield (Highland Railway), from Ruislip and Ickenham (GWR overprinted GW & GC Joint) and from an unidentified station (Metropolitan & GC Joint). Envelopes to the Rev. Graham at Stoke-on-Trent and to L'Estrange Ewen in London in 1906, from Langwith Junction both had 2d Lancashire, Derbyshire & East Coast railway letter stamps. Finally Mick questioned why the subject for the afternoon had not included *Mail by Bicycle* given that much was delivered that way in towns and rural areas until quite recently. To remedy matters he produced a 1957 GPO booklet with *Instructions for Cyclists and Inspecting Officers*!

Alan Godfrey provided various railway companies parcel stamps beginning with the LMS in Warwickshire: used at: Coventry, Nuneaton (Trent Valley), Stratford on Avon, Warwick (Milverton), Leamington Spa, Alcester, Bedworth. Also covers: Kenilworth to Birmingham with 3d LMS parcel stamp and 2½d in postage 1932 (see next page) and Birmingham to London (Euston Station / to be called for) with 9d LMS parcel stamp from The Chad Valley Co. Ltd. A PPC of the Welcombe Hotel, Stratford upon Avon (owned by LMS) sent by the Secretary's Office of the LMS to Penrith (1935). The LNWR in Warwickshire: railway parcel stamps used at: Coventry, Rugby, Warwick (Milverton), Leamington Avenue, Nuneaton, Leamington Spa. Also a 1900 cover from Rugby to Cambridge University with 2 x 2d LNWR parcel stamps. The GWR in Warwickshire; railway parcel stamps from Leamington Spa and Henley in Arden. A cover from Danzey Station with a 2d railway letter stamp to Birmingham, forwarded to London with postage 1d. Finally two Weighing machine tickets for coal from Henley in Arden Station.

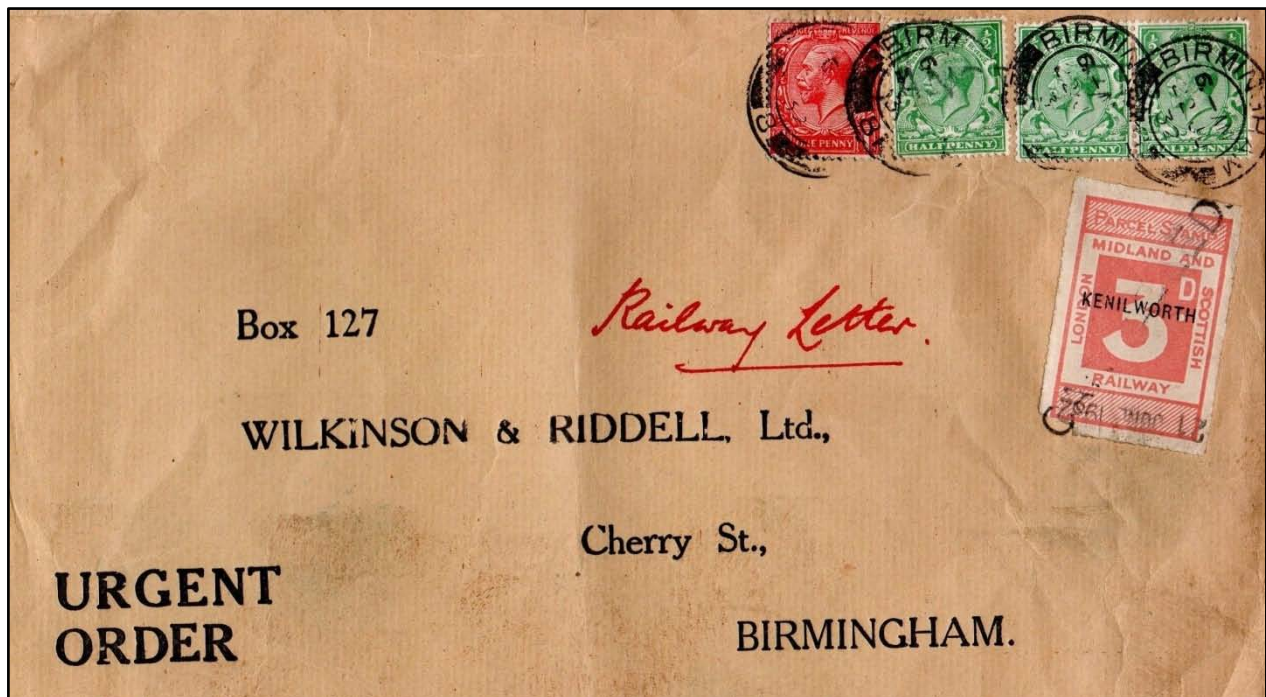


The 1911 cover from Danzey station to Birmingham forwarded in the mail to Covent Garden

Brian Purcell showed an 1842 letter Leicester to Derby with 2d blue railway letter stamp, an 1882 very scarce **Derby squared circle** on letter to Butterton, Leek, an RSO postmark: Wootton under Edge, Thornbury, PPC Salford Priors with Coughton RSO, Cannock via Lichfield to Yorkshire, Loughborough to Cannock with 109 mileage mark, 1834 Walsall Penny Post on Free letter and 1838 London to Cannock

For his second display **Clive Jones** regaled us with Railway Missents: Pre-UPU Earliest Day Mail mark in red 1839, 1840s Guernsey from Coventry – sent northbound and not south, Bradford (Yorks) Missent to Bradford, Wilts. (E / NR), letter from India & letter from Alexandria (with day mail missent marks), letter from North West Sorting Tender (NORTH WESTERN / DIST SOR CAR mark), a Missort “star” mark on cover and London & Carlisle Railway registered cover from Coutts 6d late fee

Richard Farman Road Borne Parcel Post – carried by horse drawn carts, Road Borne stickers – white or blue, and hand stamp COACH ROAD-BORNE, Photo WW1 van powered by gas with gasbag on roof, Registered parcel redirected by Express mail, Returned Letter Office: Docket “A” for return of undelivered parcels form and Docket “Z” superseded the X-list to account for postage on road borne parcels



June 1932, Kenilworth to Birmingham with 3d LMS parcel stamp and 2½d in postage (Alan Godfrey)

Derek Smeathers showed a number of covers including Weedon 25 April 1838 letter by coach and the new London – Birmingham Railway, also from Weedon a 14 September 1838 letter from London, returned *Not Called For* in new railway and a third Weedon cover dated 2 April 1920 showing the canal portcullis inside Weedon barracks. From Daventry 9 January 1811 entire with a black mileage 69 marked *Turn at Stratford* and also from Daventry a 5 September 1840 Mulready with maltese cross in the ‘new’ ink. From Towcester, a 26 June 1800 letter concerning the sale of land for the building of a new canal. A 22 August 1984 special cover from Blisworth celebrated the re-opening of the canal tunnel. A cover from Higham Ferrers dated 2 May 1811 had a red mileage mark 83 on a letter carried by the Leeds mailcoach. Finally three covers from Northampton, 19 January 1801 sent by Manchester mailcoach in a snow drift, 28 March 1809 from Atherstone to Daventry ‘*by Northampton*’ and finally 14 December 1814 a letter from paper makers Rush Mills to the Royal Bank of Scotland, Edinburgh about supplying new watermarked paper to them

From the editor - I am indebted to the individual members who took time to send accounts of their displays, to John Calladine for his outline of the day and to Alan Godfrey, who sent a detailed account of the other displays not sent by individuals. Either of these two gentlemen could well be in line to become editors themselves one day, they obviously know a thing or two about deadlines!

DATING A LOUGHBOROUGH SKELETON

by Marion Turner

A recent purchase encouraged me to take a close look at the other travellers/skeletons in my collection. In the Midland County Catalogue (MCC) and John Soer's book of Leicestershire and Rutland two types of skeleton for Loughborough are catalogued. The difference between the two is easily recognised as the first has a shorter version of the town's name and in the second it is written out in full. This short article concerns only type one MCC LC100b. The dates of use noted in blue are the same in both books, 31 Oct 1847 – 03 Nov 1847. Since the publication of the MCC in 2013 a later date of 04 Nov 1847 is now known. However the MCC also records a still later date of 06 Nov 1847 used in black. Before making further comments about colour let us first take a look at the new item.

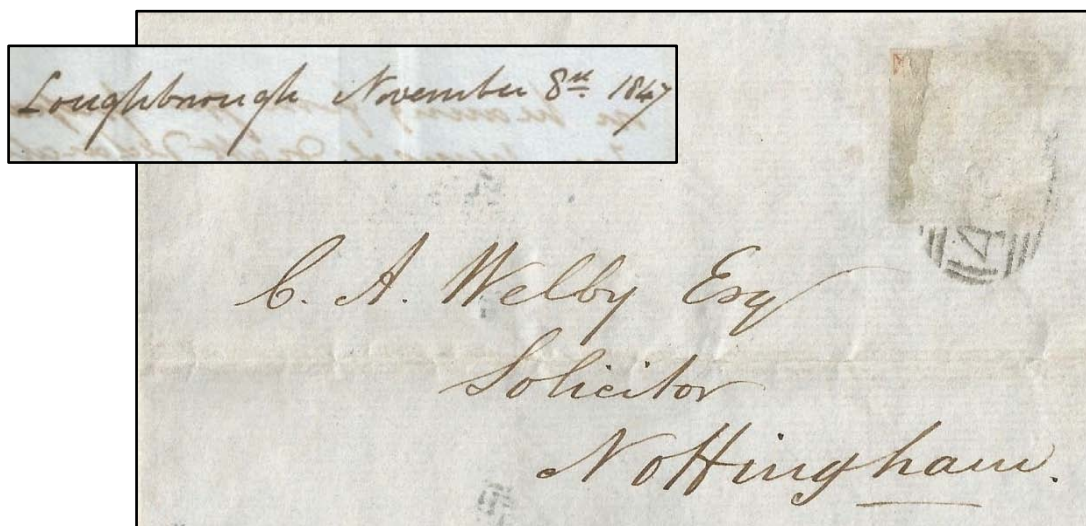


Fig 1, 8 November 1847 entire from Loughborough to Nottingham – stamp removed

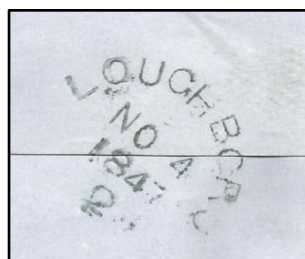
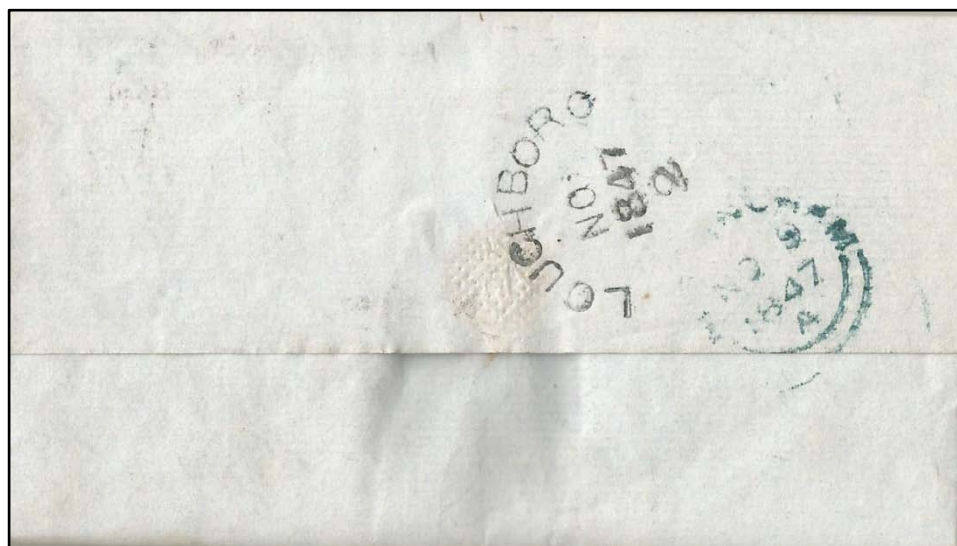


Fig 2, Reverse of cover at Fig 1 and two other LOUGHBORO traveller / skeletons for 3 & 4 Nov 1847

It is an entire in fairly good condition sent from Loughborough to Nottingham in 1847. Nevertheless, this is not a cover that at first glance one would immediately wish to own as the stamp is missing, never an attractive idea. On the reverse is an almost perfect strike of the first type of skeleton (MCC LC100b); almost being the key word due to the fact that most frustratingly the digits of the date are not readable. Luckily in this case all is not lost. A double arc Nottingham date stamp shows that it arrived there on 09 Nov 1847. The writer from Cradock & Woolley, well known solicitors in Loughborough, had dated his correspondence clearly, so there is no doubt as to when he put pen to paper. It appears that the imperforate penny red postage stamp has been very crudely torn off, damaging it in the process and leaving behind a ragged piece of paper on which a tiny fraction of the NW star can still be seen. Also one can note that the strike of the 475 barred number allocated to Loughborough has not been centrally placed. This resulted in leaving the 4 on the paper after the adhesive was removed. Real proof that the cover entered the post on Nov 8 and thus extending the period of use of type one.

Returning now to the question of colour and that MCC entry in black. My first skeleton was the example dated 04 Nov 1847 in a very dark blue. When the next one (03 Nov 1847) came along, again in dark blue I began to question whether two different colours had been used. The new item is without doubt black, on a grey tint paper. By comparing the three examples one can now see that although the difference is quite small they are indeed two separate colours.

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### CHARGING by TOTAL MILEAGE from REDDITCH to LINCOLNSHIRE IN 1799

by Chris Jackson

Ian May's article in Midland Mail 198 page 8 '*Postal Rates charged on country letters, 1784-1801*' caused me to check through the letters that I have from that period. I was surprised to find that without exception, whenever a letter went through London it was charged by combining the rates, not the mileage. By far the majority of letters in that period were addressed to London.

I was delighted to obtain only the second example of the first mark of Redditch in the society auction. On coming to mount it I realised that this was the first example that I have found from Worcestershire, of charging by combining the mileages rather than the rates.

The illustration shows an entire letter sent from Redditch to Boston in Lincolnshire 17<sup>th</sup> May 1799. Charged 7d for the 100 to 150 mile rate to London, (Redditch was 111 miles), crossed out and 8d charged for the over 150 mile rate from Redditch to Boston.



Fig 1, 17 May 1799 entire from Redditch to Boston, Lincs charged at 8d rate showing London transit mark

# AN 1865 SHROPSHIRE COVER TO WISCONSIN AFFECTED BY CHOLERA (Asiatic or English?)

by Brian Atkins

Asiatic cholera has been known and reported for centuries but it did not arrive in Britain until 1831 with over 1,330 cases and 801 deaths in the north east by the summer of 1832. An outbreak of 1853 / 54 caused a reported 20,097 deaths in England and Wales in 1854 alone. It is quite an irony that the opening of the Egyptian route via the Red Sea and Aden to India, pioneered by Lt. Waghorn, was said to be one of the causes of the rapid spread of cholera from Asia into Europe in the mid-1850s and later. Waghorn had realised that a part-overland route from Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt to Suez would save time on the journey between England and India, a long trip previously undertaken via the Cape of Good Hope. I say England because early sailings were from Falmouth and later Southampton and it is Southampton in which we are ultimately interested.

By 1863 a fourth Cholera pandemic began to spread from the Bay of Bengal and by 1864 it had arrived in Aden from where it swiftly spread north to Egypt via the Red Sea and westwards by land, reaching Mecca in April 1865, where an estimated 15,000 Muslim pilgrims died. With pilgrims returning home and many ships reaching Suez, there was cholera there by May 1865 and in much of the eastern Mediterranean by June of that year. Similar devastation was later reported in Naples and Valencia in Spain and in Gibraltar on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1865. On 27<sup>th</sup> September 1865 in a report of an outbreak in Southampton, *The Times* went on to point out that Southampton was only 4 days sailing from Gibraltar (see below taken from 'The Cholera' 27 Sept. 1865, p. 10. *The Times Digital Archive*), *The Times* clearly concerned about the spread of the disease.

*We are informed on most unquestionable authority that a decided and undoubted case of Asiatic cholera, with a fatal result, has occurred in Southampton. The victim was a man named Rose, about 30 years of age, residing in Brewhouse-court, Brewhouse-lane, who died on Sunday, about 36 hours from his first attack, the symptoms at every stage being those of the most virulent form of this dreadful disease ... the town of Southampton is in direct communication, by means of the mail steamers, with the Mediterranean, and only four days from Gibraltar, where the cholera now prevails, and at which port these steamers call, every possible sanitary precaution should at once be taken to guard the health, not only of the inhabitants of Southampton, but of the country at large.*

According to the General Register Office, the population of Southampton, at the time, was just over 53,000. *The Times* reported on 1 November 1865 that between the initial outbreak and Saturday 27 October there were 34 fatalities from cholera and further reported on 6 November 1866 that 98 deaths had been registered.

So, what's all this to do with a Shropshire cover addressed to the United States?



Facsimile of the CHICAGO American Packet exchange office stamp

Illustrated on the previous page, the cover originated at Wellington, on 27 November 1865, addressed to Waukeshaw, Wisconsin, North America (now Waukesha and 20 miles due west of Milwaukee on Lake Michigan). The 1849 treaty rate is paid by the 1/- green, plate 4 with a 21CENTS hand stamp accounting for 16 cents (packet) and 5 cents (inland postage) due to the United States. The CHICAGO / AM. PKT. PAID stamp shows that the cover arrived in Chicago on 18 December (1865) and it confirms that it was carried by an American packet (AM.PKT). Chicago had become an Exchange Office in December 1859, exchanging mail with, at first, the Irish cities of Dublin, Cork and Galway and from 1861 with UK mainland offices such as Liverpool, London and Southampton.

There were two possible sailings of American contracted packets, the *Teutonia* of the HAPAG (Hamburg-America) Line sailing from Hamburg to New York via Southampton, where she was to pick up UK mail bags for the United States and the *City of Boston* of the Inman Line from Liverpool. With the onset of the Civil War, the Federal Government in America removed all American-owned steamers from the Atlantic routes and contracted the German owned HAPAG Line (from May 1861) and the British Inman Line (from 1862) to carry mails.

The *Teutonia* left Hamburg on 26 November but no date is given in Hubbard & Winter for calling at Southampton; she arrived at New York on 12 December. The *New York Times* reported on 13 December 1865 that '*The steamship Teutonia has just arrived. She left Hamburg on the 25<sup>th</sup>* (clearly stated as the 26<sup>th</sup> by Hubbard & Winter) *and her purser states the steamer did not touch at Southampton on this trip owing to prevalence of cholera at the latter port*'.

The cover was, therefore, carried by the Inman Line *City of Boston*, which left Liverpool on 29 November and arrived at New York on 13 December 1865, though there is no Liverpool mark on the reverse. Most likely the cover was part of a closed bag rushed to Liverpool, for the next sailing, on the discovery that the *Teutonia* would not or did not call at Southampton.

However that's not quite the end of the cholera story for on 11 June 1866, the following announcement appeared in *The Times* regarding a steamer which had arrived in Southampton with mail and passengers:

*The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company's steamer Poonah has arrived here with 108 passengers ... In consequence of a case of cholera having occurred on board ... yesterday morning which terminated fatally in nine hours, Dr. Wiblin ... communicated with the local authorities in accordance with the Order of Council ... the surgeon of the ship, Dr. Chapman, [said] that the case was one of English cholera, and that the passengers and crew were all in good health.*

English cholera, what on earth is that? In fact, the *Poonah* had brought Asiatic cholera as many of the crew did not report they had begun symptoms and clearly not wanting to be quarantined on board they had 'jumped ship'! It was discovered that the *Poonah* had taken on 'dirty water' at Gibraltar, some firemen had drunk from the water, an epidemic began and at least 37 deaths were subsequently recorded in the town.

But English cholera? Well, **The Lancet** had reported on 30 Sept 1865 (page 390) during the outbreak which caused the *Teutonia* to bypass Southampton as follows – notice The **ALLEGED** Case...:

#### THE ALLEGED CASE OF CHOLERA AT SOUTHAMPTON.

It would be premature to deduce the existence of Asiatic cholera in this country from the reported case at Southampton. From the information forwarded to us concerning the case we are justified in stating that it is exceedingly doubtful that it was other than a severe case of English cholera.

By English cholera, they presumably mean good old diarrhoea / dysentery and not a *Vibrio cholerae* bacterial infection. Whatever the type of cholera, the *Teutonia* did not call and the *City of Boston* carried the cover!

References:

Cholera: The Victorian Plague, Amanda Thomas, Pen & Sword Books, Barnsley, 2015 (extracts from *The Times*)  
North Atlantic Mail Sailings, Hubbard & Winter, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc. 1988

# A 1942 EXPRESS COVER FROM MARYPORT TO MANCHESTER, ENDING UP IN OKLAHOMA

by Malcolm Allinson

Just occasionally collecting postal history throws up a delight; in this case a cover that I acquired recently for not a lot of pocket money. In preparing it for display at the recent meeting for members to show *Registration and Express Mail*, I began at a total loss as to how to put the page together, and more importantly – what to write.



Fig 1, 1942 Express cover from Maryport, Cumberland to Oklahoma (eventually)

The cover is an Express Mail item from Maryport in Cumberland addressed RAF Heaton Park, Manchester in 1942. It has all the requisite elements – postage 2½d; Express fee 6d; Express label and a blue crayon vertical line to signify Express. So far nothing extra ordinary but the letter had been forwarded, written in pencil capitals, to **GBFIS** **PONCA CITY OKLA**. Other marks on the letter are **31PD** in red/orange and **ATTS** in manuscript blue crayon.



Fig 2, the reverse of Fig 1

The back of the envelope has a circular date stamp for **MONCTON.M.P.O.705** and a very ordinary **OCT1- 1942** mark in violet as if stamped in some office correspondence.

What intrigued me first was 'Where is Moncton?'. A quick search in the encyclopaedia shows it is a town in New Brunswick, Canada. The confusion is now intensified, as the frontal forwarding address clearly says OKLA which I took as Oklahoma in the USA. The postmarks of 25<sup>th</sup> August 1942 indicate WWII period, so a roundabout route by ship for mail across the Atlantic is highly likely, plus America hadn't joined in the fighting until December 1942.

Several leads presented themselves from the pages of the Internet. Reading one in particular, I felt that I had hit the jackpot. As part of the BBC archives for WWII there is a collection of people's war stories. I was thus presented with an article entitled '*The British Flying Training Schools in the USA 1941-1944*'.

It began, '*In late August 1942 the writer..... left the Air Crew Despatch Centre at Heaton Park Manchester for Gourock*'. Immediately eyes stand to attention and reading on becomes imperative. The article continues to describe the journey across the Atlantic to New York and then to '*....Moncton in New Brunswick. After a couple of weeks at No. 31 Personnel Depot.....*'. By now your scribe feels like the Holy Grail has been rediscovered as the following paragraph began, '*For 50 of us the destination was No. 6 British Flying Training School at Ponca City Oklahoma becoming Course No. 10*'.

The postal history of this cover is thus solved, and all in a single article as far away from philately as you could possibly get.

The **31PD** mark is the forwarding address from Heaton Park. When the letter eventually arrives in Moncton on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1942, the recipient has already left for Ponca City, Oklahoma, so it is further redirected in pencil to the Flight Training School there, where the recipient has signed the back. So, our letter eventually reached its intended destination, albeit somewhat late.

The Flight Training Schools were set up to train pilots for war duties. Obviously with America 'neutral' this was done using civilian staff (American) and a few RAF personnel. Courses were about 28 weeks long with new courses starting every 7 weeks. It is now clear that the group departing from Heaton Park in late August 1942 included Cpl. Coulthard as the dates fit so well with the letter. The next group would not travel until the middle to end of October.

There were seven Flight Training Schools in America, set up under the Franklin D Roosevelt Lend Lease Programme. At the time, the Royal Air Force had every existing air base geared for actual war time activities – thus the need for a safe place to train its new recruits. No. 6 Ponca City, began in August 1941 operated on behalf of the RAF by the President of Braniff Airlines, Harold Darr, and ran until April 1944. During that time over 1100 RAF and 125 USAF pilots underwent training there. Fig 3, right, shows a BT-13 Valiant at No.6 FTS Ponca City. Fuselage Code B (for British).

The fascination of this cover is that it is a living item that dovetails with the article I found and explains why Cpl. Coulthard was a) in Manchester and b) why and how he got to America. So for the price of a reasonably decent bottle of wine I have some postal history that I have enjoyed researching and understand a lot more about; and unlike the wine (now consumed) I can bring it out again and again, to either add further knowledge or simply admire.



Fig 3

#### References:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/17/a7189617.shtml>  
<http://www.kaycounty.info/ncoha/darrschool.html>

The Royal Air Force in American Skies: The Seven British Flight Schools in the United States during World War II. TOM KILLEBREW 2015 Texas University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1574416152

## MORE ON COVENTRY'S COURIERS

by Alan D Godfrey

Further to Ian May's excellent article in *Midland Mail* (203/20), I can throw more light on the operation of the Coventry Courier Services in the 1980s. The company was being run by former policeman Tom Corbett from a base in Quinton Road, Cheylesmore, Coventry. He claimed that his business was above board as his basic charge for next day delivery was £1, but that his firm offered discounts for prompt payment of bills (reducing the cost of a letter to as little as 10p). The company offered deliveries to Coventry, Warwick, Leamington Spa and Kenilworth and employed nineteen people. The firm came to the notice of Coventry South-East Labour MP, Dave Nellist, who told the House of Commons on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1987 that the city's Health Authority, Warwick University and other businesses were 'breaking the law' in using the service.

When asked for comment by the Coventry Evening Telegraph, the Post Office confirmed it believed Coventry Couriers was breaking the [Post Office] monopoly. But a spokesman admitted '*it would take a lawyer to leaf through every word in the Act to finally decide the matter*'. Mr Nellist called on the leader of the House, John Wakeham, to get the Industry Secretary to make an official statement about the letter monopoly and its '*lack of enforcement*' in Coventry. The reply from John Wakeham was that Mr Nellist should follow up his complaint through the normal channels. Tom Corbett still insisted '*I am doing nothing wrong*' and claimed the law made room for firms like Coventry Couriers. He stated there was a big demand for the company's services and he would like to expand.

These are three more covers showing earlier cancellations used by Coventry Courier Services. Note each shows a different phone number (and also different to Ian May's examples in MM 203/20)!



Fig 1, Unaddressed window envelope dated 20/08/87 with "26-27" on reverse



Fig 2, Hand addressed cover to Eastern Green Coventry dated 9/12/87

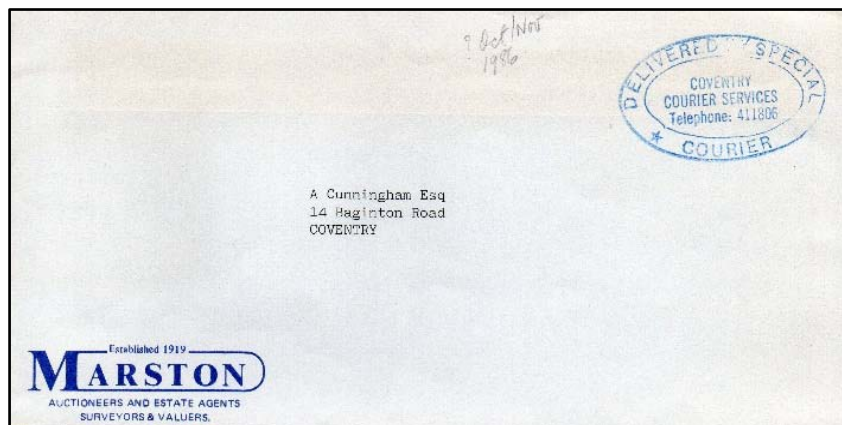
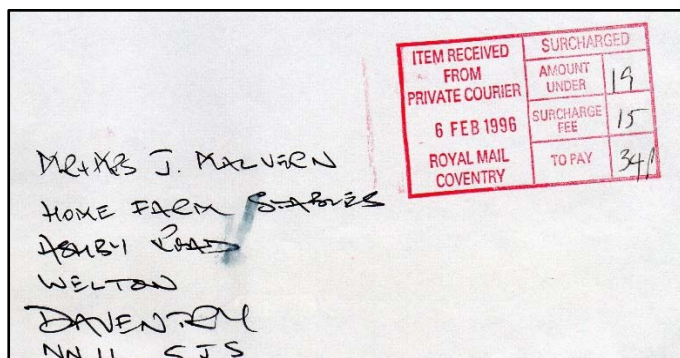


Fig 3, Estate agent's letter to Baginton Road, Coventry, dated Oct/Nov 1986 in manuscript



Courier services continued in Coventry, even after Coventry Courier Services closed. This cover must have been handed in to a private courier, who in turn passed it to Royal Mail for delivery (with a surcharge of 34p to pay) presumably as it fell outside their delivery area.

Fig 4, Cover received in error by a private courier and passed to Royal Mail Coventry for delivery.

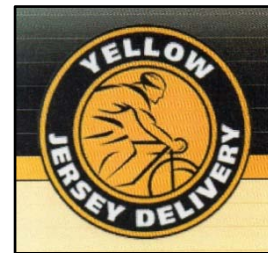
## YELLOW JERSEY DELIVERY

After the Postal Services Act of 2000 de-regulated postal services in UK, many small businesses registered with Postcomm (and later changed by the Postal Services Act 2011 to Ofcom) to operate postal services. One of those who took advantage of this was Yellow Jersey Delivery Ltd of Coventry. It offered a bicycle-based urban delivery service operating in Coventry city (postcode areas CV1 to CV6). The business used trailers and special Dutch cargo bikes to distribute a huge variety of envelopes, parcels, boxes and other items (up to 80kg per bicycle). In addition, it offered a daily postal delivery service, as well as a mobile advertising service.

The postal delivery service charged 23p (+ VAT) for a small letter and 32p (+ VAT) for a large letter using standard delivery (within 3 working days). Premium delivery (next day) cost 32p (+ VAT) for a small letter and 43p (+ VAT) for a large letter. These were for a maximum weight of 250g. Small was defined as smaller than A4 and large was any size over A4.

Over that weight and up to 750g packets cost 80p for standard delivery or 95p for premium delivery (both +VAT). From 751g to 1.5kg deliveries cost £1.99 (standard) and £2.99 (premium), both + VAT. Any item heavier than 1.5kg commanded the normal courier charge of £4.25 + VAT. These prices offered a considerable saving over Royal Mail stamped mail prices and a smaller saving over franked mail prices.

Unlike other private mail operators, Yellow Jersey did not use Royal Mail's downstream access service for the final delivery stage, but provided start to finish delivery. Yellow Jersey first registered with Postcomm on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2009 and was issued with code identifier "CL130". It continued in business until 2015, later the Company went into liquidation and was finally dissolved on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2018.



This example of the Yellow Jersey handstamp was on a large letter sent by Voluntary Action Coventry to Coventry Reading Service for the Blind and Partially Sighted in 2011.

### REFERENCES:

*Coventry Evening Telegraph* – 11<sup>th</sup> December 1987 Page 5

*Postal Services Act 2000*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postal\\_Services\\_Act\\_2000](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postal_Services_Act_2000)

*Postal Services Act 2011*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postal\\_Services\\_Act\\_2011](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postal_Services_Act_2011)

*Ofcom Website*: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/postal-services/information-for-the-postal-industry/conditions>

*Listing of regulated postal operators with code identifiers:-*

[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/35740/register\\_of\\_code\\_identifiers.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/35740/register_of_code_identifiers.pdf)

*Yellow Jersey Delivery Ltd website*: [www.yjdelivery.co.uk](http://www.yjdelivery.co.uk) (now removed)

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From the Editor - A HELP section in Midland Mail?

As the majority of members might know by now I like to find covers between Shropshire and overseas, that is not to say that I have abandoned pre- or post-stamp within the UK, though *very early* covers / entires are virtually impossible to find, which is why I turned my attention to overseas covers. There have been a few occasions when I have had trouble deciphering the manuscript rate marks on a few of these covers, particularly incoming ones. I would like to suggest we put a HELP section in Midland Mail – any comments / observations? Does anyone have a query on any cover, pre-stamp, post-1840, parcel post, to or from overseas or anything else for the January edition of Midland Mail?



Bill Pipe

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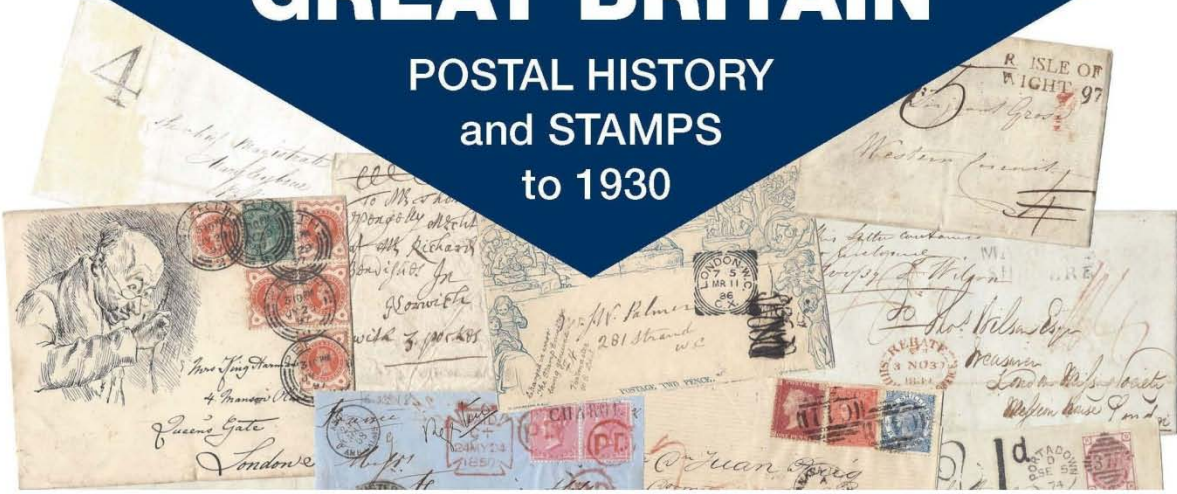


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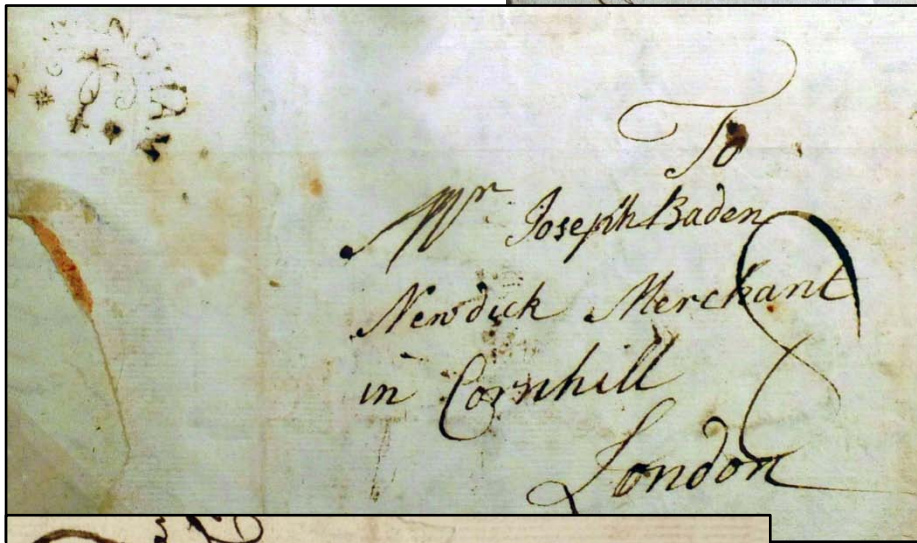
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THE BIRMINGHAM 'CHANDELIER'

by Ian Baker

Four copies of the Birmingham 'Chandelier' (BM 47) are known in the public domain and I am fortunate to currently have one of them in my care (Fig 1). The letter is dated 12 December 1772, the earliest known date, and was sent to London where a Bishop Mark was applied to confirm its arrival on 14 December. The charge to London was 4d, being the then rate for a single sheet for more than 80 miles.

Fig 1 →



At Autumn Stampex Martin Townsend had another copy (Fig 2), the exact date of which is not known but probably December 1772. The letter has two sheets, hence the double charge of 8d. It is available at £1,500.

← Fig 2



Across the aisle on the Cavendish stand was the example from the Eric Lewis estate (Fig 3). This letter, for which no charge is shown, was written on 16 January 1773 again to London and has an arrival Bishop Mark for 18 January. It realised £1,400 at the recent Cavendish sale, excluding the dreaded 'Buyers Premium' and all taxes.

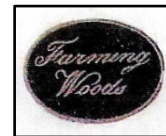
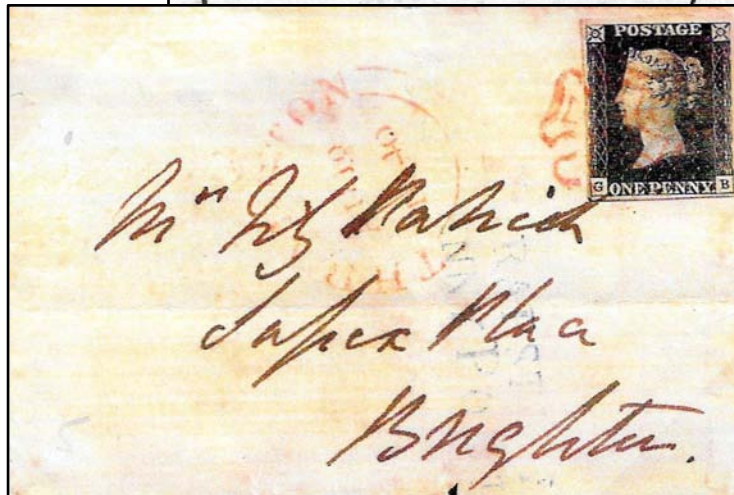
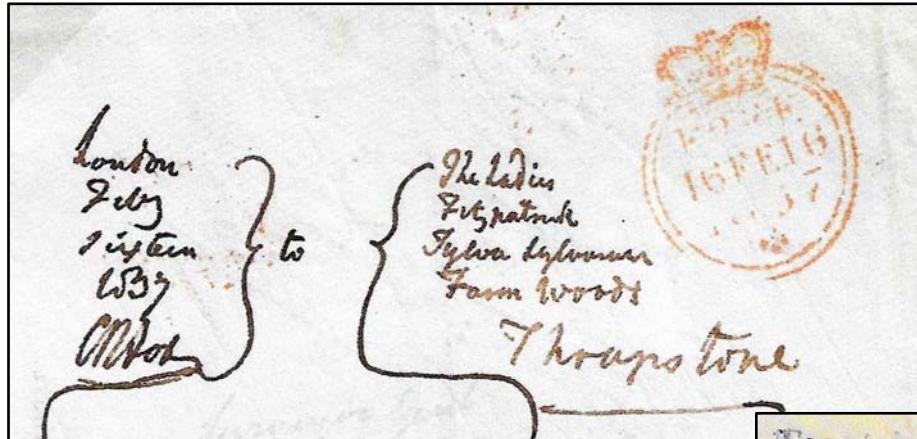
The fourth example is a 'light' impression compared with the others. The Cavendish example was discovered by Robson Lowe, the other three by Sydney Raine in the archives of a local county solicitor. The 'Chandelier' was named by Sydney Raine as it reminded him of the gas lamps made in Birmingham during the late 1700s.

Fig 3 is cut down above the Bishop mark to get all three examples on one page to make comparison easier - Ed.

← Fig 3

FARMING WOODS & the THRAPSTONE PENNY POST

One might think that Farming Woods had more to do with coppicing or pollarding but it turns out to be the name of a large house 2 miles beyond Brigstock, Northamptonshire, serviced in the 1830s first by a 5th Clause Post and later a branch of the Thrapston (modern spelling) penny post. **Derek Smeathers** has provided two covers, the first a 16 February 1837 free cover from London with an unusual address panel to 'The Ladies Fitzpatrick...Farm Woods, Thrapstone' but no sign of a penny post mark. It was the *Ladies Fitzpatrick* (Gertrude and Anne) who had the 5th Clause Post established after complaining to the PMG.



Seal on the reverse

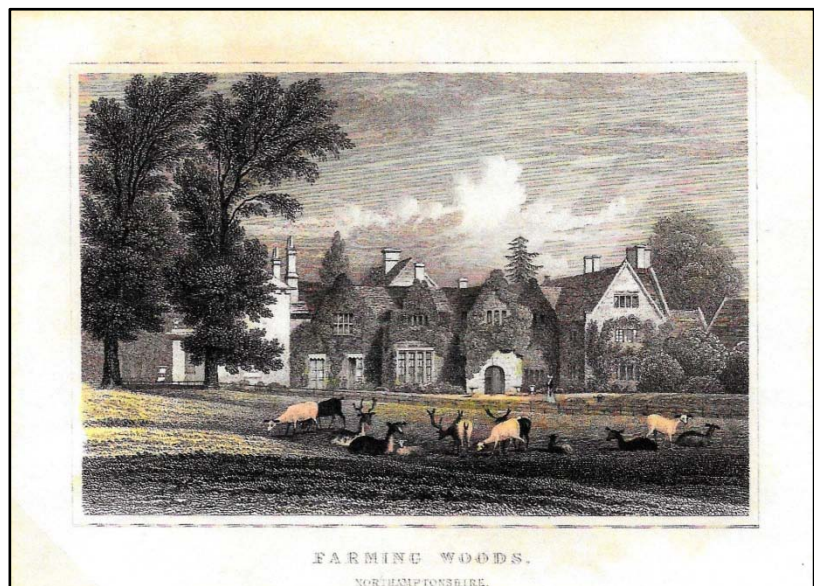
However, a later 10 August 1840 penny black cover to Brighton has a light THRAPS-TON / PENNY POST in blue together with a NORTHAMPTON date stamp in red. The penny post stamp is recorded used in red and blue from October 1834 to July 1843 (NN222 in the Midland

edition of the County Catalogue). Derek writes that as with other penny posts it should not have been used after the advent of uniform penny post but it remained a post-1840 town name stamp. The cover originated from Farming Woods and was sealed with a small wafer seal, instead of wax, with an italic *Farming Woods* in white on a black background (See above right).

As a 19th century print (reduced) of *Farming Woods* shows, it was quite imposing in its day.

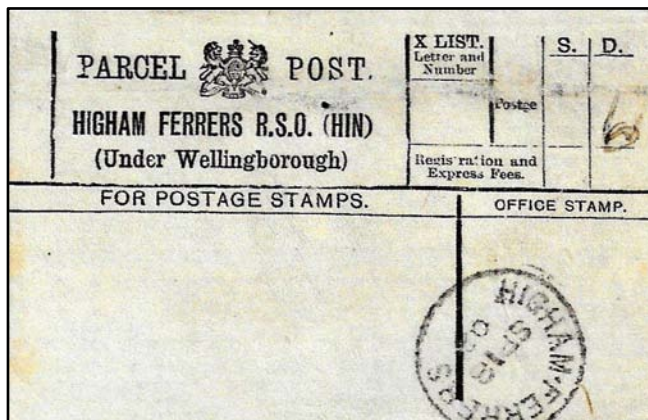
Reference:

The Local Posts of the Midland Counties, Society publication No3



HIGHAM FERRERS R.S.O.

Derek Smeathers reports that the 18 September 1902 parcel post label shown below is, currently, the only evidence he has seen regarding the town being a Railway Sub-Office.

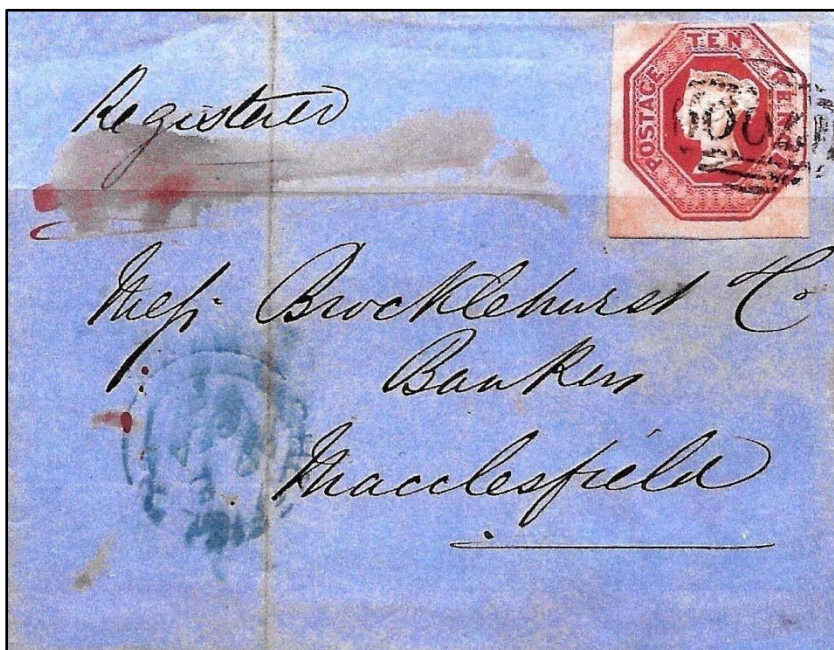
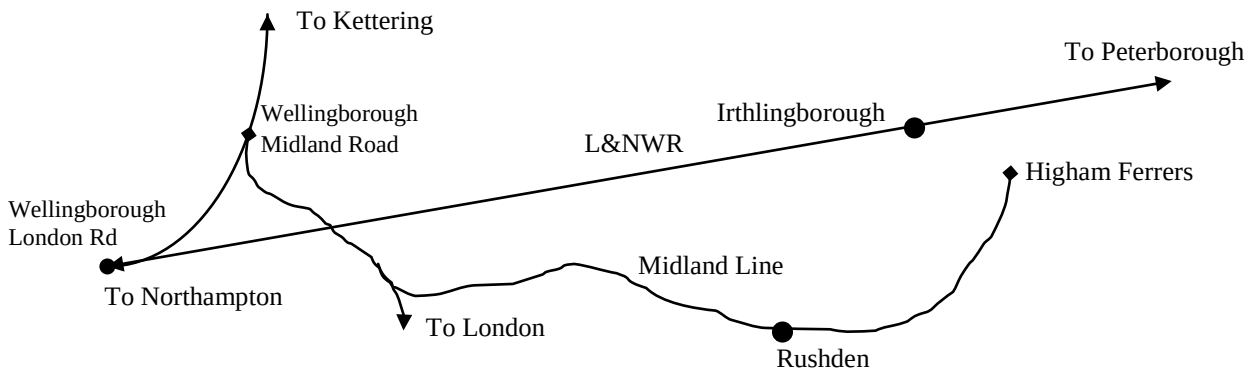


He goes on to say the first Higham Ferrers railway station was built by the London & Birmingham Railway Company about 1½ miles from the town centre and less than 1 mile from Irthlingborough Cross; it opened on 2 June 1845. On 28 April 1885 the name was changed to HIGHAM FERRERS & IRTHLINGBOROUGH, when the line was operated by the London & North Western company.

On 1 May 1894 a new station named HIGHAM FERRERS was opened by the Midland Railway company within 200 yards of the town centre, at the end of a short branch line from Wellingborough through Rushden. For about 20 years both stations used the joint names of the two places, but on 1

October 1910 the station in the valley, on the Blisworth – Peterborough line of the L&NWR was officially renamed IRTHLINGBOROUGH and the Midland section was officially HIGHAM FERRERS again.

Derek has even provided a sketch (not to scale) for us:



In the absence of SAVED FROM A GOAT this quarter, at the September meeting **Brian Purcell** showed a number of registered covers and, though not from the Midlands, I thought this cover deserved to be seen by a wider audience.

Dated April 1854, it was sent from Sheffield to Macclesfield with a lovely 10d brown embossed issue, die 1, cancelled with the 700 of Sheffield, the stamp paying the 6d Registration fee (1848 – 1862) and the 4d 2oz letter rate, a stunning cover in every respect.

The legitimate use of the 10d embossed still eludes me - Ed!!

PARCEL POST LABELS – NEW RECORDS

by Brian Purcell

A recent stock purchase unearthed six new parcel post labels that are not listed in *The Parcel Post Labels of the Midland Counties* (Midland (GB) PHS, 2018). There were also six labels that extend the recorded dates of use.

New records



Birmingham - Type E2 used 7 December 1917



Derbyshire - Type E2 used 6 October 1917



Leicestershire - Type E2 27 November 1917



Nottinghamshire - Type E2 used 6 October 1917



Warwickshire - Type E2 used 12 September 1918



Worcestershire - Type E2 used 12 November 1917

THE 811 3VOS of MONTFORD BRIDGE & 709 CHURCH STRETTON DUPLEX (2 KNOWN OF EACH)

The 811 was issued to Montford Bridge, through Shrewsbury on 15 June 1877 (SIB 36 / 37), there are two recorded examples one dated 31 January 1879, said to be a poor strike and the other 14 February 1879, code B, illustrated below and in the collection of our member Jim Ball. The cover is franked with the 1d red plate 209.



The MONTFORD-BRIDGE date stamp was issued on 7 July 1877 (proof strike above) and has 3 records of use, the two noted above for the 811 and 5 October 1890, codes B (2) and C.

Montford Bridge is a small village about 4 miles north west of Shrewsbury just to the east of the A5 with the bridge across the Severn. The A5 used to run through the village and over the bridge, which was Thomas Telford's first bridge design. It was built between 1790 and 1792 by two local contractors, John Carline Jr and John Tilley and cost £5,800 to build. It has three masonry elliptical arch spans, two of 55ft, and the central one of 58ft. The red sandstone was obtained from Nesscliffe Hill four miles away. An undated MONTFORD was issued on 24 January 1849 (SIB 9 / 207a), it has one record of use. The 811 was issued when Montford Bridge became an RSO.

The CHURCH STRETTON 4VOD is another rare (with only two recorded, I think it is safe to use rare) Shropshire item. Issued on 16 November 1875 (SIB 35 / 11) its two records of use are 30 December 1875 (code & collector unknown) and 7 March 1876, code B, illustrated below.



709 3VOS issued in November 1874

It is a bit of a mystery why the duplex was issued to Church Stretton at all because a 3VOS had been issued only a year previously on 25 November 1874 (SIB 34 / 83), it has 16 records of use from 17 May 1875 to 27 December 1890, including on an 11 July 1886 cover, cancelling the two 1d lilacs and ½d blue to Salzburg, Austria. Even before the last use in December 1890 the 3VOS is very worn and yet the duplex refuses to appear, I wonder why?

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