



MIDLAND MAIL

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



President: Elizabeth Lewis

Chairman:
Chris Jackson

Treasurer:
Elizabeth Lewis

Secretary:
Eric Lewis

Number 117, November 2000

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

At our meeting at the Bass Museum on **9th December**, we will celebrate the Society's 25th Anniversary. Members are invited to bring standing displays, on the same theme as the afternoon's display, from 10 a.m. up to lunch which will be at 12.30 p.m. Then, at 2 p.m. John Bohn will display "*Mulready Caricatures and Pictorial Envelopes*". Those who have seen John's entries at Stamp 2000 and Autumn Stampex will realise that we are in for a real treat. If you wish to join us for the special lunch to celebrate our anniversary please contact Richard Farman on 01283 566515 by 2nd December.

On **13th January 2001**, we meet at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham for a double bill in which Richard Farman will show "*Ashby-de-la-Zouch and associated Penny Posts*" and John Soer will display "*Postal History of the City of Leicester*".

Our meeting on **17th February** will be held in conjunction with the fair organised by the Worcester Philatelic Society in the **Worcester Guildhall**. At 2 p.m. Eric Lewis will display "*Social Philately with emphasis on postal services*".

SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE POSTAL HISTORY

Bryan Jones, one of our members, is giving a display with the above title to the Solihull Philatelic Society on 5th December. If anyone is interested in attending that meeting they are very welcome to do so, and can contact Bryan for full details on 0121 744 7673.

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PERMEX*

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THE OCTOBER MEETING

Despite the roadworks which made it very difficult to find our normal venue there was an excellent turnout at Carrs Lane on 21st October to see displays of Worcestershire material by John Calladine and Chris Jackson.

One could have believed that we had strayed into a rehearsal for the Full Monty despite the fact that the programme had led us to believe that John was to display material from Stourbridge for, after the introduction, John removed his tie and, after some gyrations in a corner, he emerged wearing a top-hat and bow-tie. John then informed us that it was in fact 1890 and that he was Francis Knight, the recently retired postmaster of Stourbridge. He had been appointed in April 1882 but had not taken up the post until the August, the intervening months having been taken up in haggling with his incompetent predecessor. Then, Mr Knight/Calladine showed us a map so that we should all know where Stourbridge is located and went on to explain that he was responsible for eight rural sub-offices, eight TSO's, eleven clerks, twelve town postmen in addition to various auxiliaries and telegraphists etc. There then followed a brief account of the four families - Lyttletons, Foleys, Milwards and Greys - whose correspondence had contributed so much to our knowledge of the postal history of the area.

Mr K/C then showed us some of the postmarks from his period in office, though I am not sure how the UDC of Hagley in a variety of colours crept in here. Anyway, there was a variety of datestamps and rubber handstamps. Mr K/C was positively boastful about the new office that he opened in Upper High Street. This replaced a TSO and he was able to show us a copy of the short-lived cds from that sub-office. There were ten different duplexes, one of which had the name of the town spelt as "Stourbrigde" as did a single circle. As he could not provide examples of the instructional marks on cover, Mr K/C brought along the actual handstamps so that members could make their own covers. The section was rounded off with a number of parcel post labels including the first type of 1884 and one on a tie-on label.

John then proceeded to work backwards in time. We saw an example of the sideways duplex used as late as 1862, various skeletons, a handstruck 2 and missent marks. A letter sent on the last day of the fourpenny post preceded penny blacks on covers with the Stourbridge cds showing inverted slugs and Mulreadies. Next we saw various items from the penny post featuring receiving houses such as Brittle Lane and Wordesley. A letter sent in 1819 from Stourport to Audnam showed a charge of 4 increased to 5, denoting the extra charge for local delivery. After a number of mileage marks with distances 135 or 124 miles came a letter of 1781 showing a superb strike of a straight-line 'HAGLEY' - possibly struck at Hagley Hall. We saw examples of the unusual three line mark - STOW/ER BR/IDGE in a circle. John ended with a letter written in 1716 by Ann Foley to her brother Phillip about his engagement. She disapproved of his fiancée and wrote so in rather vicious terms. Two weeks after the letter had been written, Phillip died. We can only imagine that Ann must have regretted for the rest of her life writing such a letter.

After the break for tea, it appeared that Chris Jackson had left his Ascot gear at home. However, he began his display with a number of maps of Worcestershire and one showing the boundaries of Evesham. Among some early letters were an 'EVER/SHAM' of 1713 and an 'AVER/SHAM' of 1732. A variety of straight-line marks then followed. The mileage marks were dealt with thoroughly, but if anyone has a good copy of the boxed mileage mark of Evesham will they please send it to Chris immediately. There was the obligatory Penny Black but they are not always easy to find for a particular town. From the second half of the nineteenth century came a comprehensive display of UDCs, numeral cancellations, duplex marks and squared circles. Of particular note was a letter sent in 1853 from Jamacia which showed a number of postmarks.

Another item with a set of interesting marks was a letter sent by Zeppelin to Rio de Janerio. Next, Chris showed us a number of registered items followed by covers showing the use of the different surcharge handstamps - not easy to find with good strikes. A whole series of sheets showed postcards featuring the sub-offices along with copies of postmarks from that office. I know from my own experience that it must have taken a lot of time for Chris to assemble such a collection. Next, came a number of parcel post labels from the various sub-offices.

Chris rounded off his display with two items, the first of which was a photograph of 1883/4 showing all the Evesham Post Office stall along with Rover the dog, and then an item from the Evesham Journal of 19th October 2000 on the history of the post office in the town. The office is to move into the premises of the Coop.

Roger Broomfield and Eric Lewis then expressed the thanks of all those present for a superb afternoon's postal history. The length and warmth of the applause indicated that we had been well entertained.

THE TOWN SUB-OFFICE DESIGNATION NUMBERS ON REGISTRATION LABELS OF LEICESTERSHIRE

My thanks to Tim de Rousset-Hall who has added the following information to that contained in the article in MM116.

LEICESTER

16 Abbey Park (replaced Argyle St. in 1958.)	40 Knighton Fields
47 Humberstone	51 Knighton
79 Evington	87 Francis Stret
	67 Henley Road
	239 The Roundway

Tim believes that 2 was Highcross Street and that 67 was the Campbell Street Sorting Office label for use on "Posted out of Course" items as illustrated.

MARKET HARBOROUGH

2 Great Bowden	3 New Harborough
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WIGSTON

1 The Orchards

	REGISTERED LETTER. THIS LETTER MUST BE GIVEN TO AN OFFICER OF THE POST OFFICE TO BE REGISTERED, AND A RECEIPT OBTAINED FOR IT. THE ADDRESS MUST BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE.		LEICESTER 19 SPARKENHOE
<i>Mr Rudolf Low Beer</i> <i>XXI/5 Shadlow</i> <i>Vienna</i>			
FEE 2³ PAID.			

LEICESTER 91
but no marks
identifying a
sub-office or
firm.

This space is reserved	REGISTERED LETTER. THIS LETTER MUST BE HANDED TO AN OFFICER OF THE POST OFFICE AGAINST A RECEIPT.	
TO <i>A. Jarmann Esq.</i>		
<i>28. De Montfort St.</i> <i>Leicester</i>		
Registration Fee.....d. paid. (See note on back)		

CZECHOSLOVACK FORCES IN GREAT BRITAIN DURING WWII, A LARGELY IGNORED ASPECT OF MIDLANDS POSTAL HISTORY

by Bryan Jones

1. Background

After the occupation and dismemberment of their country in 1938/9 large numbers of the Czechoslovak armed forces found ways to leave their country and continue the fight against the Nazis, some as part of the communist forces in the east, but many more in France, as part of the Anglo-French forces trying to stem the German advance. The Czech forces were originally grouped in the southern area of France and after the evacuation of British and French troops at Dunkirk the vast majority managed to escape to Great Britain where they regrouped and trained in order to take part in the eventual liberation of Europe.

Initially, around five thousand Czechoslovak soldiers and airmen gathered in this country, and quite quickly the Czechoslovak Air Force personnel were segregated and absorbed into the R.A.F., leaving the remaining ground troops to create an independent Czechoslovak force of brigade strength. Numbers remained static throughout 1942 but had increased to about 6,500 by 1944.

The first location for the newly formed units was in the grounds of Cholmondeley Hall near Malpas in Cheshire. However, for the record the full list of locations for the Czechoslovak Forces and their periods of tenure is as follows:

Cholmondeley, Malpas, Cheshire	Early July to October 1940.
Leamington Spa	October 1940 to late May 1942.
Ilminster, Somerset	Late May 1942 to August 1942.
Lowestoft, Suffolk	August 1942 to May 1943.
Dovercourt, Essex	May to September 1943.
Desborough , Northants	September 1943 to May 1944
Galashiels	May 1944 to August 1944
Bridlington, Yorks	August 1944, then embarkation for France.

2. The Leamington Period - October 1940 to May 1942

It was during their period of training at Leamington that the various groups of Czechoslovak troops were consolidated into a single Independent Brigade (the nucleus of an Independent Armoured Brigade formed on 1st September 1943), with all of the various support functions that such a unit would need attached. Headquarters were established at Harrington House and also at 22 & 23 Newbold Terrace, Leamington, with billets apparently based in the Gospel Hall, Charlotte Street. It is understood that the Field Post Office for the Czechoslovak Forces was located somewhere on The Parade, Leamington. Other units and training facilities were scattered throughout a number of villages in the locality as follows:

2nd Battalion	Walton Hall, Wellesbourne.
1st Battalion	Moreton Paddox House and Moreton Hall, Moreton Morrell.
Anti-aircraft & Anti-tank Units	Kineton
R.E.M.E	Wellesbourne
Training Grounds	Barford

It was during their stay at Leamington that two members of the Czechoslovak forces, Sergeants Jan Kubis and Josef Gabcik were selected for "Operation Anthropoid", and were dropped in occupied Czechoslovakia on 29th December 1941. This resulted in the assassination of Rudolph Heydrich on 27th May 1942. Both men were later cornered and killed by German Forces. A memorial fountain, dedicated to the memory of these two brave men and a number of other Czechoslovak parachutists was erected in the Jephson Gardens, Leamington.

3. Postal "Souvenirs" of the Leamington Period

Ever anxious to keep the memory of their country alive the Czechoslovak Forces, no doubt prompted by the London based Government-in-Exile, recognised the propaganda value of postal material and other philatelic souvenirs featuring Czechoslovak anniversaries, and set out to produce a regular stream of highly decorative and collectable items, especially during the period from 1940 to 1943. Hence there are numerous examples that were produced in the "Leamington Period" and so qualify in their own way as Midlands Postal History.

The material can be segregated into a number of classes as follows:

- 3.1 Souvenir folders produced in limited quantities to commemorate specific events or anniversaries. These folders normally include photographs and/or stamps, sometimes pre-war issues of Czecho-slovakia, embellished with any one of a number of highly decorative cancellers produced on behalf of the Czechoslovak forces.
- 3.2 Commemorative postcards and philatelic covers produced for members of the Czechoslovak forces, and usually cancelled by favour with any of the same range of pictorial cancellers. Many of these carry low value G.B. definitives of the time and if sent through the normal postal attracted G.B. postal markings.
- 3.3 Commemorative postcards and philatelic covers (as 4.2 above) where, in some cases, only pre-war stamps of Czechoslovakia have been used. This will have been cancelled by favour and do not carry any external postmarks.
- 3.4 "**Courier Mail**". In essence this is another sub-division of 3.2 above. Certainly they can be classified as manufactured items in which covers carrying pre-war Czechoslovakian stamps, tied by one of the special pictorial cancellers, and addressed to an external destination in this country, are endorsed in manuscript "*By Courier Mail*". In these cases there are no G.B. stamps or postmarks. The inference is that these were carried by a member of the Czechoslovak forces who happened to be visiting the addressee, possibly attending meetings or on leave.
- 3.5 Other outgoing mail from members of the Czechoslovakian forces, featuring the first official Czechoslovak Field Post Office cancellation. This rectangular postmark was introduced on 28th May 1941. Items on which the adhesives were cancelled by this handstamp did not need to show any normal postal cancellation, so hiding the exact location of these military units. However, if the Field Post Office cancellation was applied clear of the G.B. definitives, the stamps would be cancelled in the normal way.
- 3.6 Incoming Mail. The correct postal address for incoming mail from outside the U.K. was FPO 226, London E.C. 1 which followed the Czechoslovak forces as they moved around the country, and can only be directly related to any specific location by the date of receipt. Fortunately, it appears to have been the practice that mail addressed to FPO 226 received the Field Post Office cancellation as an arrival datestamp, so enabling a particular item to be allocated to a specific location.

4. Registered Mail.

No mention of Registered Mail is made in the above because it appears that during their stay at Leamington no special registered handstamp or label was in use. Outgoing registered items (and these are rare) carry the normal oval Warwick & Leamington datestamp plus the conventional blue registration label. (So much for security.)

5. The Czechoslovak Field Post Office and its Operation.

Photographs titled "An Office of the Czechoslovak Field post somewhere in England" have been identified as having been taken on 23rd August 1941, i.e. during the "Leamington Period".

Although the Czechoslovak forces were scattered around the Leamington area, as already described, it is probable that only one Field Post Office existed, and that that was located in Leamington. The reasons for this assumption are as follows:

- a) Incoming commercial mail whether addressed to FPO 226 or to Czechoslovak forces, G.B. would not carry any unit identification. Hence it was essential to have a central receiving point capable of identifying the unit to which an individual belonged and forwarding the mail.
- b) The only local postmarks found on mail from these forces are those of Warwick & Leamington. There is no evidence of any item from any member of the Czechoslovak forces entering the civilian postal system at any of the villages in which they were billeted.

6. Censorship and Anonymity of Location

There are two early examples of special cancellers, one produced at Cholmondeley (in July 1940), and the other on arrival at Leamington (in October 1940), which include the place name. Although examples of both of these are known in their original state, on philatelic souvenirs, the mistake was spotted and the name excised.

Items destined to be carried through civilian postal services would, until 28th May 1941, be postmarked with a Warwick and Leamington machine cancellation or handstamp. As already stated, the introduction of the Czechoslovak Field Post Office cancellation obviated the need for any normal Post Office cancellation and so disguised the location of the Czechoslovak forces.

After the introduction of the F.P.O. cancellation on 28th May 1941, the only examples of normal Warwick and Leamington cancellations seen are those in which some or all of the G.B. definitives are not tied by the F.P.O. cancellation. This apparent breach of security appears to have registered, if only temporarily, with the authorities for a small number of covers, all dated March 1942, are known in which the name "Warwick & Leamington" around the outer edge of the dater portion of the machine cancellation has been obliterated in black ink, leaving only the date legible.

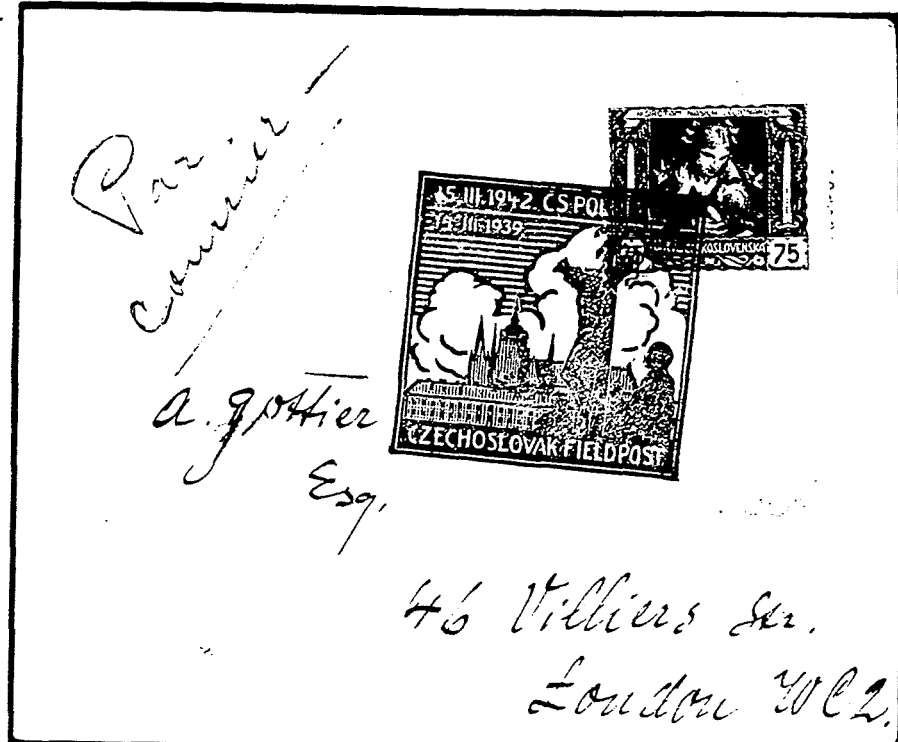
There is no evidence of civil censorship of outgoing mail until late 1941, but the fact that no examples addressed outside the U.K. have been seen from that period could alter this statement. The earliest examples of outgoing mail being intercepted by the civil censors appear in December 1941, and show the normal octagonal "crown" censor handstamp on postcards and the PC-90 resealing labels used on envelopes. The fact that these items appear not to have been opened and resealed suggests that, while censorship at unit level existed, it was the convention to hand in unsealed all outgoing items of mail which were then sealed after inspection. It is possible this only applied to mail addressed abroad.

All recorded examples of mail from abroad, addressed to FPO 226, were opened and examined by the civilian censor on arrival in the U.K., as shown by the presence of the PC-90 "Opened by Examiner" label.

There is no evidence from markings, of any military censorship while the Czechoslovak forces were at Leamington, though this would change once they were deployed as part of the invasion force in 1944.

7. Cancellations and Postal Markings used by Czechoslovak Forces while resident at Warwick & Leamington, October 1940 - May 1942.
- 7.1 **28th October 1940.** The "*Leamington Coat-of-Arms*" handstamp. A large circular handstamp featuring the Leamington coat-of-arms which initially, but mistakenly, included the town name. Introduced on 28th October 1940 and used to 15th January 1941 and also on 28th October 1941, it was always struck in red.
- 7.2 **7th March 1941.** 91st anniversary of the birth of T.C. Maseryk. Large circular cancellation, applied in red, with the initials T.C.M. and a linden leaf spray in the centre.
- 7.3 **15th March 1941.** 2nd anniversary of Partition of Czechoslovakia on 3rd March 1939. Large circular cancellation, struck in black, showing a map of the country, Hradcany Castle and a linden leaf spray.
- 7.4 **4th May 1941.** 22nd anniversary of the death of General Stefanik - one of the founders of the Czechoslovak Republic and who was killed in an air crash.
- 7.5 **28th May 1941.** Introduction of first type of Czech Field Post cancellation.
- 7.6 **28th May 1941.** Birthday of President Benes of Czechoslovakia.
- 7.7 **19th September 1941.** Birthday of Czechoslovak poet, Petr Bezruc.
- 7.8 **28th October 1941.** 33rd anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovak Republic.
- 7.9 **7th March 1942.** 92nd anniversary of the birth of T.C. Maseryk.
- 7.10 **15th March 1942.** 3rd anniversary of the invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia.

An item of Courier Mail (3.4)
with handstamp 7.10.



3.5 (7.5) with 7.6

Mr. F.O. Horne
 Umberlade
 Offord
 Kent

ČESKOSLOVENSKÁ
 POŠTÍ POŠTA
 - 5 JUN 1941
 CZECHOSLOVAK
 FIELD POST



POST

THE ADDRESS TO BE



priv.

Robert M. Trager
 Technical depot, Czech Army
 Gosnell Hall, Charlotte-Sheet
 Leamington-Spa

7.4

7.3

POST CARD

Communication - Correspondence

Address - Adresse



Ind Bethe
 gedulted Army
 Milton Hall



NOTTINGHAM UNOFFICIAL LOCAL POSTS

by Alan Marshall

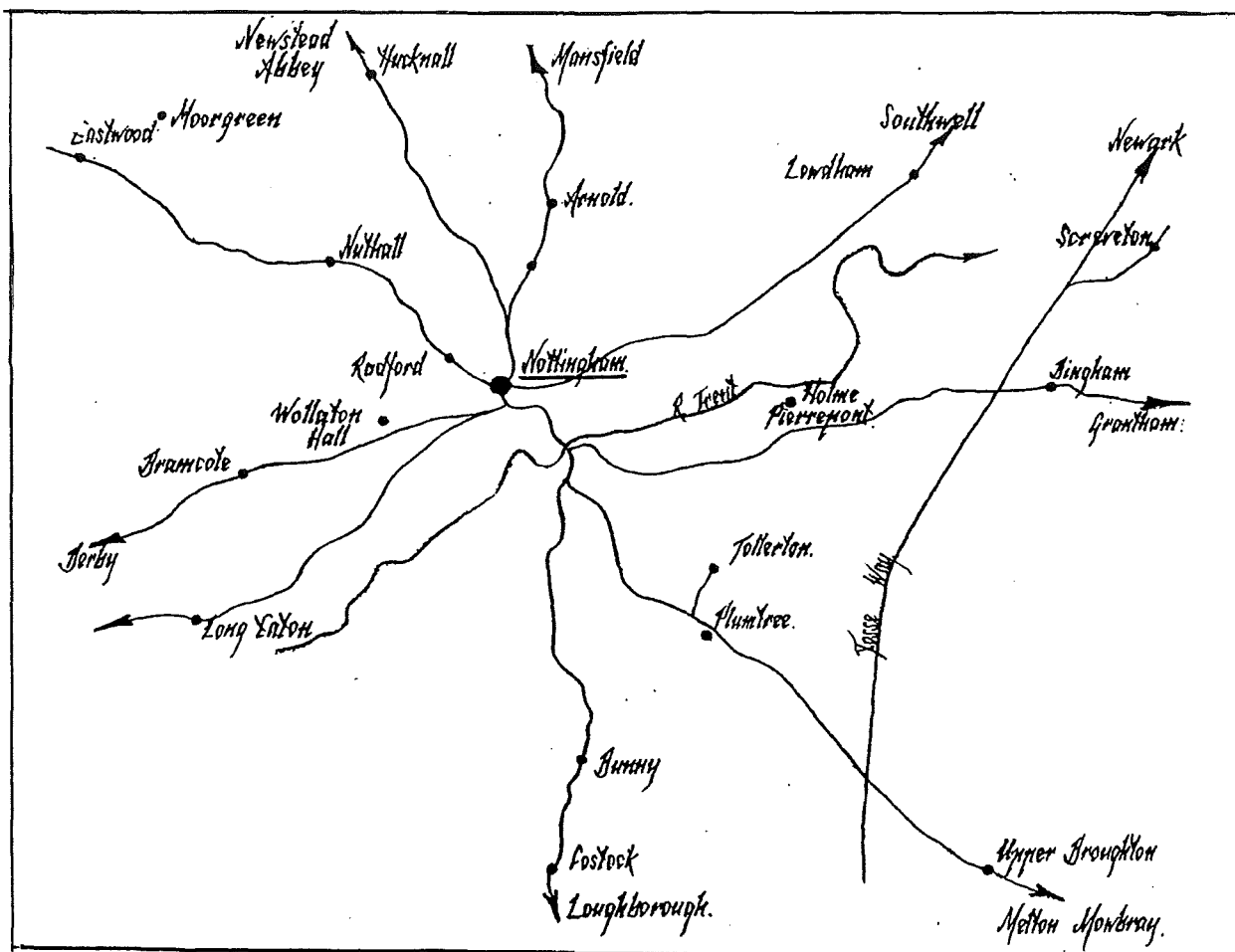
Page 206 of 'The Local Posts of the Midland Counties to 1840' is devoted to the above topic. At the time of publication an appendix listed fourteen recorded items. It is now possible to extend this to thirty-seven examples as shown below. The last in the list is depicted in Hall's 'The Post Office at Nottingham'

DESTINATION	MILEAGE	DATE
Nottingham	Town delivery	30NOV1793
Wollaton - Nottingham	3	14OCT1796
Nottingham - Screveton	12+	13JAN1797
Nottingham - Thurland Hall	Town delivery	1801
Nottingham - Arnold	3	22MAY1801
Annesley - Holme Pierrepont	15½	28DEC1801
Nottingham - Arnold	3	14DEC1803
Bunny - Nottingham	7	12MAY1807
Eastwood - Nottingham	8	27JAN1817
Nottingham - Thurland Hall	Town delivery	25AUG1818
Nottingham - Lowdham	7	10SEP1818
Nottingham - Tollerton	5	1818-20
Nottingham - Nuthall	5	10DEC1819
Upper Broughton - Nottingham	12	4MAY1821
Long Eaton - Nottingham	6	22AUG1821
Costock - Nottingham	9½	24NOV1821
Hucknall - Nottingham	6½	4APR1823
Nottingham - Nuthall	5	10APR1823
Nottingham - Hucknall	6½	21MAY1823
Nottingham - Bramcote	5	29JUN1823
Nottingham - Bramcote	5	12JUL1823
Nottingham - Hucknall	6½	31JAN1824
Nottingham - Hucknall	6½	22FEB1824
Costock - Nottingham	9½	2MAR1825
Nottingham - Mansfield Road	Town delivery	18SEP1825
Nottingham - Thurland Hall	Town Delivery	11JUL1826
Nottingham - Nuthall	5	8FEB1827
Nottingham - Nuthall	5	19SEP1827
Newstead Abbey - Wheeler Gate	10	10JUL1828
Nottingham - Moorgreen	7	20DEC1830
Costock - Nottingham	9½	18JAN1833
Eastwood - Nottingham	8	2DEC1834
Nottingham - Radford	1½	13JAN1837
Nottingham	Town delivery	16MAR1838
Nottingham - Costock	9½	20MAR1838
Nottingham	Town delivery	16DEC1838
Nottingham - Wollaton	3	27DEC1839

The list confirms examples on all the arterial routes out of Nottingham at that time and they display thirteen of the twenty-six handstamps used in that period. Clearly it is not known how many items of mail were handled by this system but with less than forty known survivors from a forty-five year period of operation it is hard to believe, as it is alleged, that the system was self-financing at only one penny a letter. In the week ending 11th March 1838, the Nottingham office delivered 4,950 letters of which 261 were franks and 603 penny post or local letters (See Hall's book) amounting to a total of £2-10-3 (or £131 p.a. and just covering the cost of the two clerks employed at that time). However it is also stated that receipts for the Penny Post in Nottingham for the year ended 5th November 1837 were £11-7-2, this for letters posted for delivery in the town. (There was no mention of delivery out of the town.)

Could it have been that letters on the routes that carried a lot of mail were charged an extra penny to subsidise the system? If they were, it must have been authorised. The starting point for such a conjecture has to be an acceptance that the rates quoted for up to 15 miles include the 15 and the next rate starts at over 15 as follows:

1796	3d up to & including 15 miles	4d over 15 miles & up to 30 miles
1805	4d up to & including 15 miles	5d over 15 miles & up to 30 miles
1812	4d up to & including 15 miles	5d over 15 miles & up 20 miles



There can be no argument against the mileage Nottingham to Loughborough being 15 miles. The respective mileage marks of 124 and 109 confirm this, as does a timebill of 1820 (Royal Mail in Leicestershire & Rutland p. 287). Also, a letter sent to Loughborough in 1803 and rated 3d endorses the fact. However, the evidence for the distance Nottingham to Derby, at present 15 miles, is less clear. Hall quotes a payment made in 1791 'for conveying cross road mail to & from Derby:- 17 miles at £4-13-4d per mile'. Paterson's Roads of 1822 gives the distance as 16 miles. However, both the Murray County Road Map (1830) and the J & L Walker Map (1850) display the distance as 15 miles.

It is very interesting, then, that from 1805 both the Nottingham - Loughborough and Nottingham - Derby routes were charged 5d and not 4d. Clearly the 5d charge must have been authorised, but was there more to it that was never divulged?

Within the thirty-seven items listed at the start of the article there are seven that are of such interest to make them worthy of being individually highlighted.

1. The letter sent from Wollaton in 1796 went on to Musselburgh near Edinburgh and is actually a 'free' letter with the frank of Lord Middleton of Wollaton Hall. The front displays the NG153 stamp and a ms '1' for the Wollaton to Nottingham part of its journey. It then travelled 'free' to Edinburgh where it received on the reverse an Edinburgh Bishopmark of 17th October in red and a ms '1' for the Edinburgh to Musselburgh section. A double penny post!
2. The item sent to Tollerton in 1818/20 is actually a wrapper and so should not, I presume, have travelled for one penny.
3. The letter of 19th September 1827 to Nuthall was missent to Newark where the ms '1' was crossed out along with Nuthall and Nottingham. Newark Post Office was written on and a ms '6' surcharge added. To reach its proper destination surely it would have had to pass back through the Nottingham office who had missent it, but no change was made to the erasures.
4. An early OHMS item of December 1830 to a Captain Barber of the South Notts Yeomanry Cavalry at Moorgreen did not escape the local post charge even though it contained secret Army information.
5. The year 1833 is missing in the NG186 cds on a letter sent from Costock on 18th January 1833.
6. The letter sent to Radford in January 1837 has a manuscript "Not to be found" in red on the front.
7. Page 31 of Hall shows an entire dated 27th December 1839 (i.e. in the Uniform Fourpenny Post period) with a handstruck '4' crossed out and replaced by a '1' for delivery to Nottingham.

NOTTINGHAM'S DELIVERIES IN 1834

In a report about the extra charges levied at Nottingham, Mr Karstadt outlined the deliveries at that town. The first mail, that from Leeds, arrived at 6 a.m. and along with that from Derby, which brought letters from Manchester and Glasgow, and which had arrived at 9.30 p.m. the previous evening, constituted the first delivery. The letter carriers set out on this at 8 a.m. An earlier start was not feasible as the warehouses and shops did not open till then. The letter carriers were only able to deliver the letters for about an hour as they had to return to the office for the mail from London which, since a recent acceleration, arrived at 9.15 a.m. Even so, the delivery of the London letters was delayed a little to 10 a.m. by the need to wait for the ride from Loughborough which arrived at about 9.35 a.m. with letters from the Leicester line of road. The third delivery consisted of letters from the Birmingham line and from Liverpool and Manchester via Lichfield, all of which were brought by a ride from Derby, along with those brought by a ride from Newark. Both of these rides had arrived together at about 1.30 p.m. but since the acceleration of the mailcoach from Birmingham, the ride from Derby had arrived at noon. However, Mr Karstadt had found that he could only gain fifteen minutes when he had tried to accelerate the ride from Newark. Consequently, the third delivery did not begin until about 1.45 p.m.

The new ride from Mansfield (see MM116/7) arrived at about 3 p.m. but the number of letters for Nottingham amounted to no more than five or six a day and were available to callers at the office.

Mr Karstadt said that the principal cause of complaint was the extra charge made in "the more distant parts of the town" which consisted in some places of a halfpenny and in others a penny per letter. The letter carriers justified these charges on account of their inadequate wages and a "plea of long custom". The allowances for the three letter carriers were 16/-, 14/- and 10/- per week. Mr Karstadt proposed that these should be raised to 20/-, 18/- and 16/-. The first two letter carriers were said to make 5/- and the last about 8/- a week from the extra charges. Mr Karstadt mentioned a map showing the boundary of the free delivery but this is no longer with the Post 40 report. But, he did mention that Radford, Sneinton and some houses on the Mansfield Road were outside the boundary. The letter carriers were to be allowed to charge one penny for taking letters to those places after they had finished the afternoon delivery.

[Ref: Post 40/3/1834]

AN ACCELERATION OF THE MAILCOACH FROM HOLYHEAD AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

In February 1834, Mr Churchill reported on the changes that would take place in his district on the introduction on 1st March, of a later departure and acceleration of the mailcoach from Holyhead to London. This was to allow letters in Dublin to be posted as late as 6 p.m. instead of 4 p.m.

The arrival of the mailcoach at **Oswestry** was to be at 1.17 p.m. instead of 11 a.m., giving two more hours in which to answer the London letters. However, an alteration in the times of the ride to and from Ellesmere meant that there would be one hour less in which to reply to letters from Chester and Liverpool etc. brought by that ride. Also, the quick communication between Oswestry and Whitchurch (depart 11 a.m., arrive 4 p.m.) was to be broken as the mailcoach would not arrive in Shrewsbury until after the departure of the ride to Whitchurch.

The up mail was due to arrive at **Shrewsbury** at about 3 p.m., some three hours after the down mailcoach, so giving the people of Shrewsbury the chance to answer their London letters by return of post. The mailcoach to Welshpool and Newtown was to be dispatched as soon as possible after the arrival of the down mailcoach so as to give an earlier arrival of the London letters. Also, it was possible for the return from Newtown to be at 8 a.m. instead of 5 a.m. So that the letters from Ireland for Welshpool etc. should not be delayed for nearly a day at Shrewsbury, Mr Churchill proposed that these letters should be taken off at Oswestry and sent by an express ride to Welshpool to arrive before the mailcoach.

A later dispatch of the London mail was possible at **Wellington**.

At **Shifnal** the rides to Newport and Wenlock had waited until the arrival of the up mail at 3 p.m., but as this would not now arrive until 5 p.m., Mr Churchill said that these rides should leave as soon as possible after the arrival of the down mailcoach, a little after 10 a.m. He also proposed the withdrawal of the ride to Spread Eagle (between Wolverhampton and Penkridge) which had carried letters to the Birmingham - Manchester as these could not be sent through Wolverhampton, arriving at 10 a.m. and leaving at 5 p.m.

Wolverhampton along with **Bilston** and **Bridgnorth** had more time to answer their London letters.

The effect on the **Birmingham** office was considerable. The mailcoach from Holyhead was due to arrive at 7.31 p.m. and leave for London at 8.06 p.m. The mailcoaches for Liverpool, with seven bags, and Bristol, with twelve bags, both departed at 8 p.m. The mails from Stourport and Walsall were to arrive at a later time, possibly 7 p.m. In addition, the mailcoach from Manchester arrived at 7.14 p.m. All of this meant that, along with the letters put into the letter-box, there were thirty-seven bags to open and thirty-two to be made up. Mr Churchill doubted that this could be done without extra help. To give some relief he said that the box should close at 7 p.m. (It had been 5.30 p.m. for London and 7.30 p.m. for Liverpool and Bristol.) As the mails from Stourport, Walsall and Holyhead would arrive too late for the evening delivery at 6 p.m., Mr Churchill said that the office window should open from 8 to 10 p.m. to give people chance to call for their letters.

The rides from Leamington and Nuneaton would arrive later at **Coventry**, giving Nuneaton, Bedworth, Foleshill and Kenilworth more time to answer their London letters.

In April 1834, Mr Churchill reported that the contractor of the Birmingham - Walsall mailcoach would not agree to an earlier departure from Birmingham by which the inhabitants of Walsall would receive the benefits of the recent acceleration of the Holyhead mail. [Unfortunately, no details are given but it is difficult to see how the acceleration of the up mailcoach could lead to an earlier departure from Birmingham.] Nevertheless, the Postmaster General decided to withdraw the branch mailcoach. Mr Churchill found a person willing to work a mailcart for £80 p.a. He felt that it was not necessary to provide the driver with clothing but he was to be provided with a pair of pistols for "the better security of the valuable Bags entrusted to his charge."

In April 1834, the inhabitants of Congleton asked for a ride from that town to Bosley, on the road between Macclesfield and Leek, to fall in with the Manchester to London mailcoach so as to allow more time to answer their London letters. It occurred to Freeling that it was possible to give a later dispatch of the London letters not only to Congleton but also Lawton, Newcastle, Stone and Stafford by means of the Manchester to Birmingham mailcoach. [At Stone and Stafford the improvement amounted to the saving of a day in their correspondence with London.] As this coach now arrived in Birmingham before that from Holyhead, it was possible to send the letters on the coach from Manchester as far as Birmingham from where they could be taken on to London by the Holyhead mailcoach. Before, the letters from Newcastle and Stone had been taken by a mail-cart leaving Newcastle at 11.45 a.m. and arriving in Stafford in time for the letters to be forwarded on the mailcoach from Chester which passed through Stafford about an hour before that from Manchester. At first, Mr Churchill felt that the ride between Newcastle and Stafford could be withdrawn, but further investigation showed that it carried significant amounts of mail from Ireland, North Wales etc for Newcastle which would be delayed a day, and the village of Trentham, the residence of the Duke of Sutherland, would be left without any accommodation. Consequently, it was decided to retain the ride.

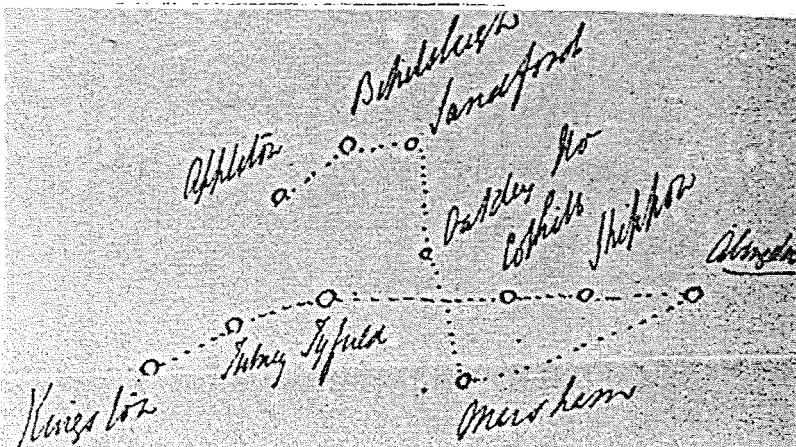
[Refs: Post 40/102/1834, 40/295/1834, 40/350/1834]

SOME OXFORDSHIRE PENNY POSTS

In June 1834, Lord Radnor complained about the late arrival at Kingston Inn of the post from Abingdon [MM112/15]. The delay was caused by the messenger having to make a detour to serve the village of Marcham. The solution suggested by Mr Rideout was to create two penny posts from Abingdon. One was to go direct to Kingston Inn through Shippon, Cothill, Tubney and Fyfield with the messenger arriving at Kingston Inn at 8 a.m. instead of 9 - 9.15 a.m. The second messenger was to go to Marcham and from there to branch off to Sandford, Besselsleigh and Appleton where a receiving office would be opened. In the previous year the penny post to Kingston Inn had made a profit of about £31 and despite the increased expense, Mr Rideout expected that there would be a surplus of at least £13 p.a. from the two penny posts.

Three months later, the vicar of Hinton asked that that village be included in the Kingston penny post. In his report, Mr Rideout said that Hinton was about a quarter of a mile beyond Longworth which was served by the penny post. It appears that in the intervening three months the walk had been extended beyond Kingston to Longworth. As no extra expense was involved the small extension of the walk was approved.

[Refs : Post 40/436/1834 and 40/632/1834]



AN IMPROVEMENT AT BICESTER

In a report written in June 1834 Mr Rideout gave details of how he intended to connect Bicester with the Oxford - Northampton post. [An article in MM100 has described the importance of this post which provided connections at Towcester with the London-Holyhead and London-Liverpool mailcoaches and at Northampton with the London - Manchester and London - Chester coaches.] The Northampton ride left Oxford at 8 p.m. and on its return arrived there at 6.30 a.m. The ride to Bicester left Oxford at 6 a.m. - thirty minutes before the arrival from Northampton. However, there was a connection in the other direction as the ride left Bicester at 5.30 p.m. and arrived in Oxford at 7.30 p.m. This connection had been made in 1828; before then, the ride had left Bicester at 6.30 p.m., arriving in Oxford at 8.30 p.m.

Mr Rideout pointed out that both rides used the same road for the first eight miles out of Oxford as far as Gosford, a penny post under Oxford. So, he proposed that Bicester should make up bags for Towcester and Northampton to be taken by the ride, which was now to leave at 6.30 p.m., as far as Gosford where it would arrive at 8 p.m. and where the bags could be left to be picked up at 8.30 p.m. by the ride from Oxford.

In the opposite direction the bags from Towcester and Northampton could be left at Gosford at 6 a.m. and picked up at 6.30 a.m. by the rider on his way from Oxford to Bicester. By this measure, Bicester was able to gain twenty-four hours in the receipt of its letters from the North via Towcester and Northampton.

[Ref: Post 40/463/1834]

A DIRECT POST TO STUDLEY

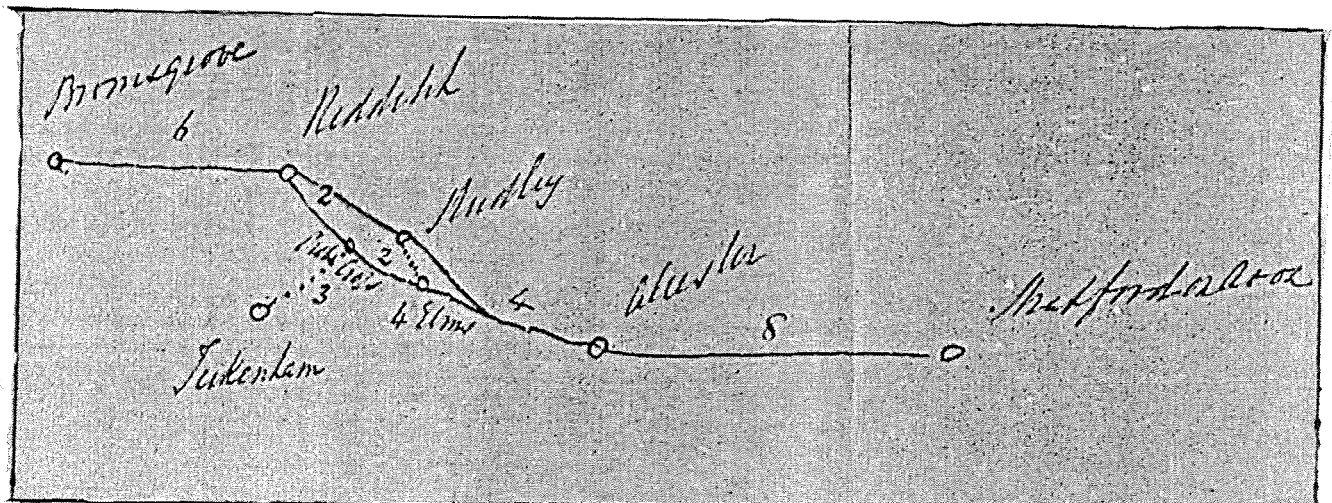
A Mr Holyoake Goodrik asked in July 1834 that the Stratford - Bromsgrove should pass through the village of Studley rather than take the route through Crabb's Cross.

Mr Rideout reported that Studley was $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the north of the postroad between Alcester and Redditch. He commented that although the post had been established long before he knew the district, the line had probably been adopted to serve Feckenham which was three miles to the south of the road and a penny post under Stratford and Bromsgrove. The penny post bags were left at Crabb's Cross. The messenger left Feckenham at 1.45 p.m. for Crabb's Cross where he met the ride on its return from Bromsgrove and then returned to Feckenham where he arrived at 4.15 p.m.

Mr Rideout said that though the route through Studley was a little shorter, the road was narrow and not to be compared with that through Crabb's Cross. The revenue at Studley was £96 p.a. compared with £92 p.a. at Feckenham.

The solution proposed by Mr Rideout was that the ride from Stratford should go through Studley on its way to Redditch and return to Stratford via Crabb's Cross where the rider would drop off the bags for Feckenham. Thus, Studley would get its bag direct from Stratford but the bag to Stratford would still have to be sent to Four Elms to meet the ride. Feckenham lost nothing for the messenger only met the return ride from Bromsgrove. The bag from Stratford had remained at Crabb's Cross from 10.30 a.m. until 3 p.m. The bag to Bromsgrove had remained at Crabb's Cross overnight. It would now be taken to Alcester by the return ride and remain there overnight.

[Ref: Post 40/582/1834]



THE DERBY - MANCHESTER MAILCOACH

In early November 1834, Freeling commented, when submitting to the Postmaster General a report from Mr Johnson, that it had "long been an object of much importance to obtain a Mail Coach from Derby to Manchester by the route of Belper, Cromford, Matlock, Bakewell and Buxton." Mr Johnson reported that he had found contractors who were willing to work a mailcoach between Derby and Manchester at the rate of nine miles an hour, with four horses, for fourpence the double mile. He suggested that the departure from Derby should be at about 9.30 a.m., giving an arrival in Manchester at 4.20 p.m., and the return from Manchester should be at 9 a.m. with an arrival in Derby at about 4 p.m.

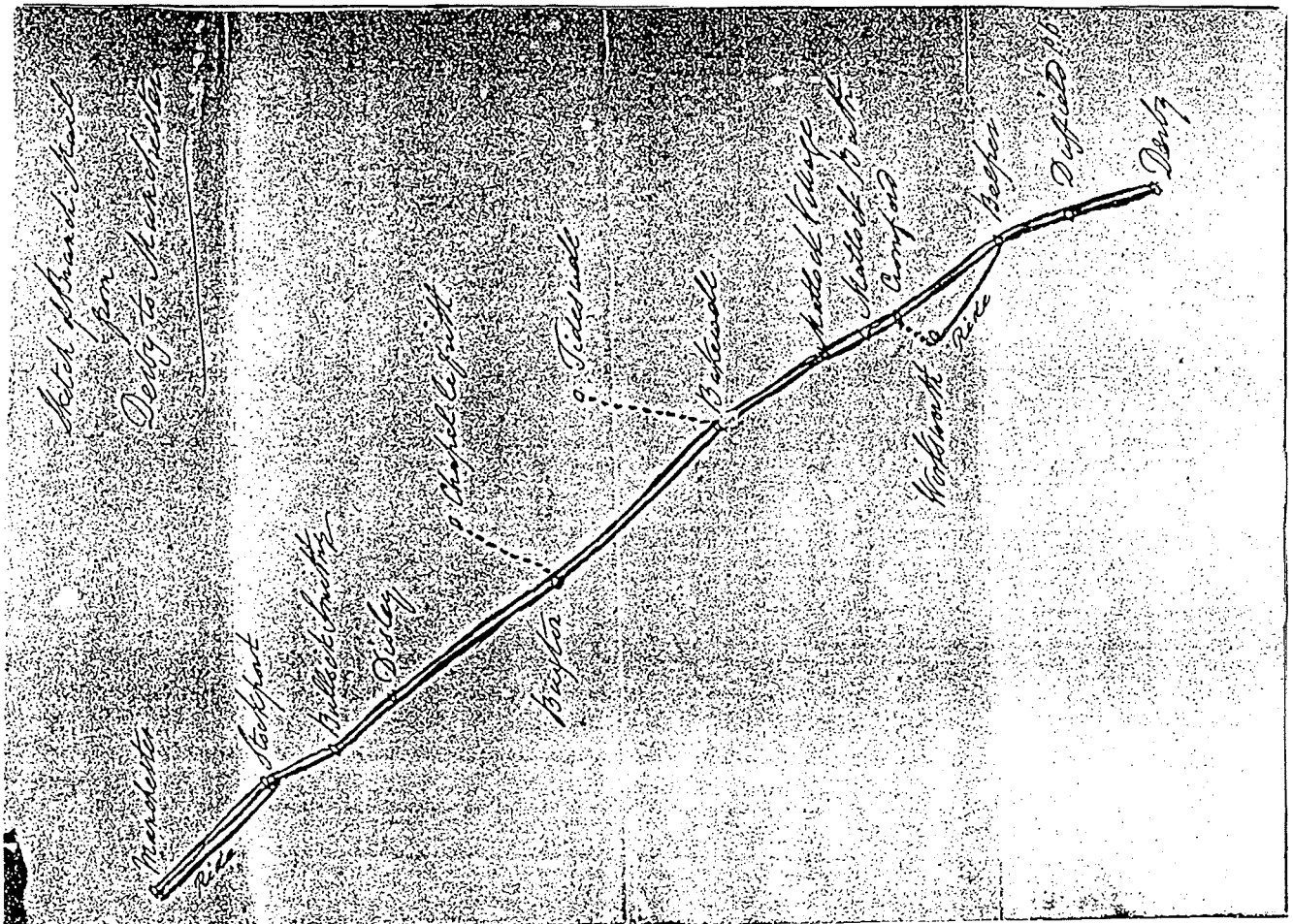
The possibility of some change in the postal services in this district had apparently been raised earlier in the year, for, in a report of September 1834, Mr Karstadt had discussed the possibility of using "the new road avoiding the hills" rather than going through Wirksworth.

After the Postmaster General had authorised the establishment of a mailcoach from Derby to Manchester, Freeling asked Mr Karstadt to make the necessary arrangements. He agreed with Mr Johnson that the Wirksworth road was not suitable for a mailcoach. While Cromford seemed to be the obvious place from which to serve Wirksworth, to do so would have reduced the time for answering letters from the South by about an hour which was contrary to the main object of establishing the mailcoach. Mr Karstadt proposed that a ride from Belper should serve Wirksworth with its letters from the Derby direction. With regard to letters from the North, he again rejected Cromford as a possible connecting point with the mailcoach and chose Matlock instead. The reason for this was that about two thirds of the letters going to Wirksworth (about £1000 p.a.) were for places further on such as Matlock, Matlock Bath, Cromford and surrounding villages. As these places would no longer be in the delivery of Wirksworth, a different means of serving them was needed. Since it was not possible for the coach to stop in each of these villages, it was necessary to have an established office on the route of the coach. Mr Karstadt felt that Matlock Bath was the most suitable place. He quoted the distance of Matlock Bath from London as 144 miles.

Other points that Mr Karstadt made were: Bakewell and Buxton both gained in the earlier arrival and later departure of their London bags but as the coaches met near Bakewell they did not gain a day in the reply; Chapel-en-le-Frith and Tideswell which had been served by a footpost from Stockport would be better served from Buxton and Bakewell respectively; the rides from Derby to Wirksworth and from Wirksworth to Bakewell were to be withdrawn and that from Manchester to Buxton was no longer needed beyond Stockport.

The mailcoach started to run on 6th December.

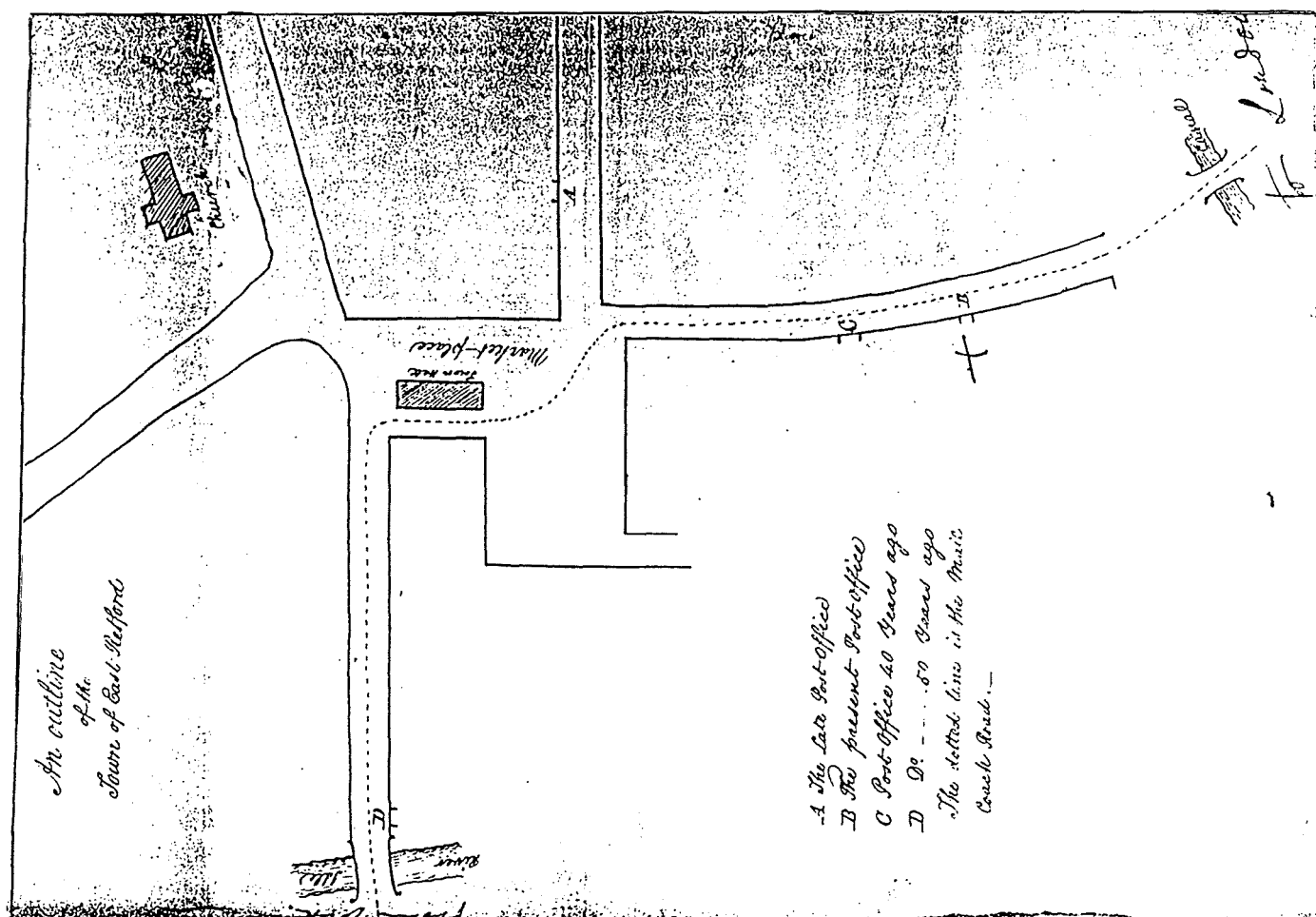
[Ref: Post 40/800/1834]



THE POST OFFICE AT EAST RETFORD

The town clerk of East Retford complained in November 1834 that the postmistress had moved her office to an inconvenient position. In his report Mr Karstadt submitted a plan of the town and said that it took no more than two minutes to go from the Market Place to the post office so any inconvenience was too small to amount to a serious objection. The postmistress had been compelled to leave the premises housing the previous office and had not been able to find any other in the centre that was within her means. The new office had the advantage that the mailcoach passed by it. Also, As the bankers of the town, who received the largest amount of correspondence were quite happy, Mr Karstadt saw no reason to object to the new position.

[Ref: Post 40/801/1834]



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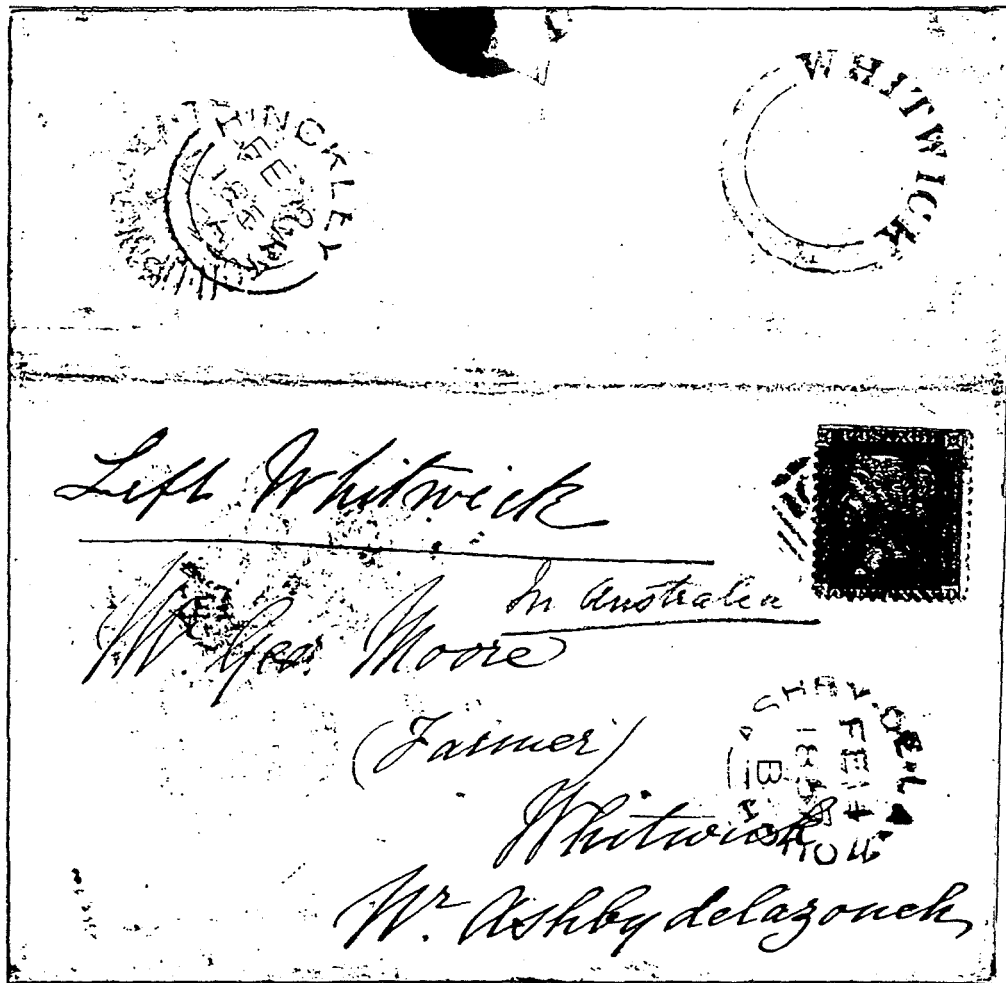
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IN AUSTRALIA

There could hardly be a better reason for the fact that this letter sent in 1857 from Hinckley to Whitwick could not be delivered to the addressee. There is a nice strike of the Whitwick UDC in green ink.

**THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL**

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