# MIDLAND (G.B.) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY 1975

PROVINCIAL

*Please reply to:*


Chairman
Elizabeth Lewis
Tel No 021/429/1222

Treasurer
Peter Baxter
72 Midhurst Rd
Kings Norton
Birmingham

Secretary
Richard Farman
124 Henhurst Hill
Burton on Trent
Tel. 0283/6615



B U L L E T I N N O. 2 3 J A N U A R Y 1 9 8 2


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**Next Society Meeting**
**PLEASE NOTE DATE**

Saturday 23 January at Dr.Johnson House, Room 2 Birmingham. Warwickshire & Birmingham UDC's for Towns I-Y. Followed by an interesting Display. Commencing at 2 pm (Committee meet at 1 pm please)

**Annual Competition**

Nine Sheet postal history competition (GB any subject) Saturday 20 February at Dr Johnson House. ALSO a short display by a guest speaker.
AUCTION : please bring list only of material you wish to be auctioned at this meeting.
Note Auction will be held on 17 April.

**AMENDED MEETING**

Change to Programme arrangements
A JOINT meeting with members of The Postal History Society has been arranged for Saturday 20 March. See back page for details. It would be nice if our Society could be well represented at this meeting. Members are requested to bring along up to 25 sheets representing generally any (or all) of the following 'Collection, Despatch, Carriage and Delivery of Mail' as applicable in United Kingdom. It should be a very interesting joint meeting between two Societies and well worth attending.

Shrewsbury
NOT
Birmingham

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**CONTENTS**

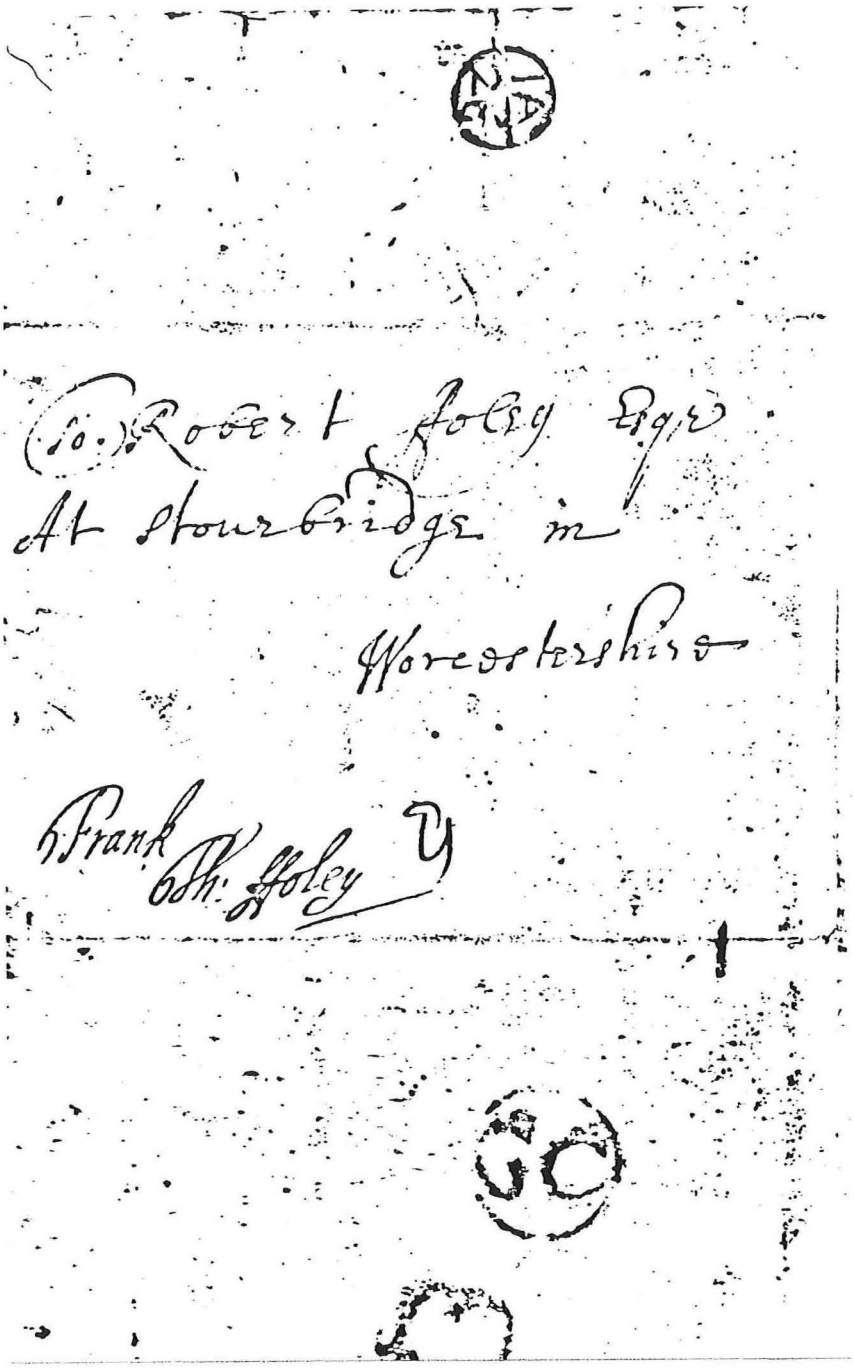

Report on December Meeting by Chairman — Pages 4 and 5
'An Inn in the High Street' by John Calladine — Pages 2 and 3
A visit to Post Office Archives by John Calladine — Pages 3 and 4
An Important Discovery by Dennis Salt — Page 5


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Forthcoming Attraction : In the next issue of Bulletin, which is hoped to be published in March, there will be an interesting article on 'Penny Posts, Twopenny Posts and other 'Rural Posts' in Derbyshire by James Grimwood Taylor.

**Reminders**

Have you enrolled a new member lately ?
What about that short 'piece' for the Bulletin ?
Turn out surplus material for the Auction - make a list now.
Bring along something for the joint meeting with Postal History Society




' G.C.'
Peceivers
Mark

AN INN IN THE HIGH STREET - SECTION SEVEN

by John Calladine.

(Sections One to Six appeared together in Bulletin No.21 in September '81)

The story so far - Richard Foley's "Brick House" in Stourbridge High Street has, between 1657 and 1685, become the Talbot Inn. By 1693 it is the Stourbridge Post Office. The year is 1712 and Mary Clarke, widow of Daniel, is now both owner of the inn and postmistress.

Mary Clarke prospered at the Talbot. She bought land in the town and arranged a very satisfactory marriage for her daughter. For 23 years she remained postmistress but increasingly her elder son George undertook the work and by 1733 it was George who was paying the proceeds of the office to the GPO in London. In that same year, Mary made her will in which she bequeathed the Talbot and most of its contents to George. She probably died within a year or two and George Clarke became postmaster in 1736.

A recent discovery in the Worcester Records Office is a letter from Thomas Foley in London to Robert Foley at Stourbridge. (You may recall that our story originated with the Foley family.) Although the letter is undated, it is struck with a Bishop Mark of a type that suggests it was written during the time that Mary Clarke was postmistress. On the reverse of the letter is a crude handstamp with the letters 'GC' in a circle. There can be little doubt that this is a "Receiver's Mark' which, while taking many forms, were almost invariably home made. Who would want to doubt that this is George Clarke's mark ?

George Clarke was postmaster himself for just five years from 1736 to 1741. He owned the Talbot for many more years but was probably wealthy enough to retire and lease the inn. It has been suggested [1] that the Talbot was first leased in 1755 although the source admits to being "not quite sure whether the Talbot had been in the occupation of Ellen Southwood, a widow, for a brief period". In fact, Post Office records show John Southwood to have been the Stourbridge postmaster from 1742 to 1748/9 and Ellen Southwood to have succeeded him until 1758. Moreover, in the year 1750, John and Ellen were paid jointly for the previous year's work and it seems most probable that Ellen was John's widow. It would appear likely that George Clarke leased the Talbot some years earlier than previously supposed and that the lease of 1755 was not the first.

It so happens that an inventory of the Talbot Inn exists for 1755 and it seems reasonable that we should have a fair chance of identifying the room used as the post office.....

Ref : 1. "Gentlemen at the Talbot" by Alderman H.E. Palfrey.

Illustration : The "GC" receiver's mark.

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## A VISIT TO POST OFFICE ARCHIVES -PART 1

by John Calladine.

If you have never considered a visit to the Post Office Archives (or Post Office Records if you prefer the earlier name), you could have missed a treat. If you are a veteran researcher but have not been recently, a pleasant surprise awaits you. For, over the past six months or more, extensive modernisation of the facilities has been undertaken and anyone who remembers the small and dusty room of a year ago will be amazed at the transformation.

But, to start at the beginning, where are the Post Office records held ? Post Office Archives are to be found in the Postal Headquarters Building, St. Martin's le Grand, London EC1. It is within a short distance of St. Paul's Cathedral and almost directly opposite the Postal Museum. You could take the Central Line tube to St. Paul's or a No.9 bus, for example, would drop you on the far side of the cathedral, only a few hundred yards distant. You enter the Headquarters Building through an archway leading to a central courtyard but, immediately on your right (if you enter from the Postal Museum end - you can walk through the courtyard from the other end), is a door into the foyer where you should sign the visitors' book. Security is reasonably tight and you may well be approached by staff before you enter the door, let alone reach the visitors' book !

If no one is available to escort you to the Archives, turn left down the long corridor and pass through seemingly endless sets of swinging double door until you reach the staircase at the far end of the building

Go down the stairs to the sub-ground level and Room SG 28 lies ahead of you with a cast iron pillar box standing outside as sentinel. If the surroundings look somewhat dingy, have no fear as you will enter a large well-lit room with fitted carpet and new tables and chairs to your right. On your left are the desks and files of the staff (usually four) and the whole room is lined with smart shelving bulging with fascinating documents.

An appointment to visit Post Office Archives is generally unnecessary but, if it is your first visit or you are travelling a long distance, you might well consider it a sensible precaution to contact them beforehand. The telephone number is 01-432-4521 and the Archives are open to the public from 9.00am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday only. They do not close at lunchtime. A second visitors' book should be signed there which, unlike the other, seeks to establish what you are studying e.g. "Derbyshire P.H." or "Modern Slogan Cancels". The scope for study seems endless but it is the aim of this short series of articles to indicate how one might approach some of the topics likely to interest the average postal history enthusiast. When was a post office established in my area ? Who were the postmasters of my local town ? How did the mail reach the main post town ? How was local rural delivery organized ? What correspondence about my town's post office exists ? A surprising amount of information is within a few feet of you, the majority of it unresearched by anyone before you. But probably the most popular query is "What postmarks were issued to my town ?" In the next Bulletin, we will look at that topic in some detail.

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December meeting

On Saturday December 5th we had an enjoyable and well attended meeting including several guests. The meeting was held in the private bar of the Bass Museum in Burton on Trent. We were sorry to hear that the room was to be demolished within the next few weeks.

The afternoons display was given by Derick Smeathers, those present were privileged to see a selection of his Northamptonshire Postal History. The first half concentrated mainly on Towcester and the surrounding areas. In the 1700's Towcester was a small town and most letters originating from there came from two or three local Solicitors. It was situted on the London to Chester Post Road (Watling Street) and as a result had one of the first Cross Posts. The display commenced with a 1722 cover from Northampton to London which travelled on this Cross Post Road. Phillip Doddridge, a leading religious leader of the time, wrote many letters to a Rev. Fawcett at Kidderminster in his own early type of shorthand many of these letters have 'turn at Towcester' endorsed on them.

The display continued with an assortment of markings of the town and surrounding area, Mr. Smeathers having many interesting stories to tell of individual covers or their contents. One item causing much discussion was a cover sent apparently from Towcester to Towcester, judging by Town date stamps on the back, but with a 'Midland District Sorting Carriage' mark on the front. This apparently had possibly travelled on the Euston to Leeds train via Rugby, Northampton and Leicester. Even our experts on T.P.O's were not sure why this should be and no acceptable theory was forthcoming.

continued at bottom of next page.

## AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY

by Dennis Salt

Since I wrote the "Introduction to the Postal Service in Shropshire 1660 - 1840 (not 1940) which appeared in Bulletin No.22, an important discovery has been made by James Grimwood-Taylor and reported in "Shropshire Post No.2" (March 1981). This consists of a letter dated 3 March 1705/6 bearing a straight line SHREWSBURY stamp, and another letter dated 17 October 1707 bearing a straight line SALOP stamp with a large S. These show that the apparent indiscriminate use of the names "Shrewsbury" and "Salop" goes back to these very early stamps, pre-dating those mentioned in my article by four years. Both names continued to be used alternately until 1771, when the last SALOP handstamp appears to have been issued, the town name on all subsequent stamps being SHREWSBURY, normally in two lines instead of one.

Another stamp reported by James Grimwood-Taylor at the same time was a dated "S" stamp, similar to the Bishop Mark type of stamp known to have been in use by the Exeter to Bristol cross post, which was established in 1696. Both the Exeter "E" and the Bristol "B" are known as early as 1697. This cross post was extended to Shrewsbury and Chester in 1700, and was the only cross post in existence until about 1708. Only the cover of the letter with the "S" stamp has survived, and there is no indication of the place or date of posting. However the letter appears probably to have been written in the early years of the 18th century, it is addressed to Taunton which is served by this cross post, and the stamp bears several distinct likenesses to the "B" and "E" stamps of Bristol and Exeter. Shrewsbury is the only post town on the route of the cross post between Exeter and Chester whose name starts with the letter S, and it is reasonable to think that it was issued to Shrewsbury for use on this cross post. This is the only known example of this stamp, and there appears to be no reason to doubt its genuineness.

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December meeting contd.

After viewing the items from Towcester we settled down to tne second half of the display which was based on the villages of Northamptonshire, with some very early covers including a 1654 letter about the Lord Protector written from Dene. The writer of another interesting letter dated 1675 from Cottesbrook asked for £200 to be sent to London 'under the laundry' - apparently to hid it from highwaymen !

Among other letters which aroused interest was one dated 23 September 1839 from Rushmills of Northampton to Perkins, Bacon & Co regarding the supply of paper for the printing of the penny blacks. Rushmills eventually supplied the paper for these stamps.

The whole of the display was well iluustrated with suitable maps etc. particularly of the local railways which comprised three different railway Companies with lines crossing and recrossing each other as they passed through the County. Other items of ephemera relating to the subject were shown together with more up to date material such as parcel post labels etc.

Frank Peach concluded the meeting with a well worded vote of thanks to Derick Smeathers.

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Note this space could be yours for free for your 'Wants' and missing items from your collection. Write to Editor at 13 Station Road Hinckley LE10 1DS.

The Postal History Society Meeting at the Beauchamp Hotel The Mount, Shrewsbury, on Saturday, 20th March 1982.

The Midland (G.B.) Postal History Society meeting fixed for the same day as the above, will now be held at Shrewsbury jointly with the Postal History Society, from 10.30 am to about 4.30 pm. Members wishing to attend are asked to notify Richard Farman at 124 Henhurst Hill, Burton-on-Trent, one week before the meeting. It will be a great help and will avoid disappointment if they will at the same time let Richard Farman know which of the following alternative main courses they would like to have for lunch:-

Roast Turkey & Seasoning
Roast Beef & Yorkshire Pudding
Roast Port & Apple Sauce
Duckling A L'Orange
Roast Chicken & Seasoning
Deep Fried Plaice
Steak & Kidney Pie

The cost of the meeting, including lunch, will be £6.00 per head. A map or plan showing the position of the Beauchamp Hotel will be sent to all who apply to attend the meeting.


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DO YOU COLLECT G.B. POSTAL HISTORY ? THEN WHY NOT SEND FOR OUR PERSONALISED ILLUSTRATED LISTS.JUST TICK THE BOXES THAT INTEREST YOU.

IF YOU ONLY COLLECT ONE AREA OR TOWN IN A COUNTY PLEASE INDICATE THIS.

PRE 1840 ..... POST 1840 ..... TO WHAT DATE ? .....

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| LONDON | CHESHIRE | MANCHESTER |
| SCOTLAND | CORNWALL | LEICS |
| IRELAND N. | CUMBERLAND | LINCS. |
| IRELAND S. | DERBY. | MDDSEX. |
| WALES | DEVON | NORTHANTS. |
| AIRMAILS | DORSET | NORTHUMBERLD. |
| REGISTERED | DURHAM | NOTTS. |
| PARCEL POST | ESSEX | NORFOLK |
| RAILWAY | GLOUCS. | OXON. |
| MARITIME | BRISTOL | RUTLAND |
| TRANSATLANTIC | KENT | SHROPS. |
| ACCOUNTANCY/ | HANTS. | SOMERSET |
| RATE MARKS | HEREFORD. | SURREY |
| BERKS. | HERTS. | STAFFS. |
| BUCKS. | HUNTS. | SUFFOLK |
| BEDS. | LANCS. | SUSSEX |
| CAMBS. | LIVERPOOL | WILTS. |
| WARWICK. | WORCS. | WESTMORLD. |
| | YORKS. | |

OTHER SUBJECT OR THEMES .....

WE TRY TO MAINTAIN AN ACCURATE RECORD OF YOUR REQUIREMENTS,AND WILL SEND YOU FUTURE LISTS AS NEEDED.