

MIDLAND MAIL

President: John Soer

Chairman:
Chris Jackson

Treasurer:
Elizabeth Lewis

Secretary:
Eric Lewis

Number 109, April 1999

NEW MEMBER

We extend a cordial welcome to David Glover of Amersham who is interested in the development of postal routes in English counties.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND AUCTION

This is a reminder that the AGM and auction will be held on 24th April starting at 1 p.m. By now, members should have received their catalogue and programme for the day.

AN ADDITION TO THE LIBRARY

A copy of 'A History of the Post in England from the Romans to the Stuarts' by P. Beale has been added to the Society's library. This is a fascinating book which should be read by all postal historians, whatever their interests.

TWO DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Midland Federation's Spring Convention will be held in conjunction with a fair organised by the Birmingham Philatelic Society at Carrs Lane Church Centre on 8th May, starting at 10.30 a.m.

Midpex 1999 will be held on 3rd July at the Midland Sports Centre for the Disabled, Tile Hill, Coventry, starting at 10 a.m. Please note that these are the correct dates; ignore those in the programme.

POST OFFICE ARCHIVES

Because of renovation work being carried out at Archives, access to documents will be restricted from 1st March for about three months. They apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and will try to provide limited services but cannot guarantee the availability of records or access to the Search Room. If you are intending to visit Archives, it is suggested that you ring them on 0171 2392570 beforehand.

GLASGOW 2000

Although November 2000 is sometime away, it would help the organisers of Glasgow 2000 if those considering submitting an entry filled in a preliminary form. These can be obtained from Eric Lewis who will also provide a photostat of the competition rules. There are four postal history classes:

- International Class for which pre-qualification is necessary, including the exhibit having received at least a Silver Gilt award at National level;

- National Class in which no pre-qualification is needed for entries which may be of 2, 3 or 4 frames (32, 48 or 64 sheets);

- a "Cinderella" postal history competition to be judged by jury under rules set by Glasgow 2000;

- an Open competition to be judged by the public attending the exhibition and which will allow virtually any exhibit that "tells a story" based on letters or similar forms of communication.

NOMINATIONS FOR PRESIDENT

A reminder that there is still time to submit nominations for the post of President to the Secretary.

THE JANUARY MEETING

There was a very good attendance at the meeting on 6th January to see Richard Farman's display of 'Staffordshire'. Richard set the scene with a number of early maps of the county, ranging from a Speed of 1627 to a Cary of 1792.

The next section was devoted to letters carried in early posts in and out of the county such as one of 1584 which had been privately carried, one of c1690 sent to 'Sand Coffee House' in Lichfield. These were followed by a number of early town marks including a 1707 from Stone, a 'NEWCASTLE:/UN LINE:' of 1714 and a 'UTOX-/ETER' of 1736. Richard then showed us a number of Crosspost items which he alleged had passed through the county.

A section devoted to Military Mail contained several items which were of interest for the contents. There were two letters from the Civil War period and one from a Napoleonic Prisoner-of-War being held at Ashby-de-la-Zouch; not as might be expected a Frenchman but an Irishman.

Then it was back to postmarks with a selection of the various mileage marks, including the very large 'CHEADLE/147'. Next, came a section devoted to Missents, starting with a letter of 1786 sent from London to Leek but missent to Stafford, and going on to various Missent marks of Stafford, Stone and Lichfield.

Richard began the second part of his display with letters carried by Pickfords and by canal boat. Richard then showed a number of items relating to railways which included the UDC of Whitmore station, a letter sent from Stafford to Shrewsbury in 1851 with a label of the Shropshire Union Railway, and a 'parcel letter' sent from Wolverhampton with a GWR parcel label. We were then shown material relating to the village of Barton-under-Needwood, starting with a letter of 1593 sent to the Sheriff of Staffordshire, going on to the penny post and ending with the UDC. The section ended with a display of Mulreadies, UDCs on letters with penny blacks and the 1844 numeral cancellations.

Covers which illustrated the changing rates for registered mail started the third part of the display. Richard then went on to show a number of items of foreign mail all of which had the rates fully explained. Of note amongst these were a letter of 1648 sent from Shenstone to Brussels and one sent in 1672 from Aleppo to Lichfield. After a look at the explanatory marks of Burton-on-Trent and the handstruck unpaid '1' and '2' of Stafford, Richard ended the afternoon's entertainment with several postcards of the Wolverhampton Exhibition of 1902.

I very much liked Richard's unusual approach of taking a number of themes rather than a chronological display of postmarks; it certainly provided a most entertaining and interesting afternoon.

THE FEBRUARY MEETING

I am not going to try and present the conventional report on the display on 'Free Franks' given by Ralph Richardson at Worcester on 20th February and for which the meeting room was well filled. This is no reflection on the material shown by Mr Richardson for there were many rare strikes on display, but because it was the amusing way in which Mr Richardson put over the historical background that made it such an enjoyable afternoon.

The first item shown by Mr Richardson had been sent to one of his great, great grandmothers. He then went on to outline the development of the franking system. Amongst the early letters were one of 1689 endorsed "Francke", a number showing the 'P' for privilege and one of these on which the 'P' had been crossed out as the letter was addressed to the Countess of Portland. In 1764, the 'FREE' handstamps were introduced. Mr Richardson took us through the various types which included some very scarce ones from 1790 and the early 1800s. We were then shown two letters from the last week of the franking system, several abuses of the system and a number with Worcestershire connections. The first half of the display ended with a number of handstamps relating to contraventions of the regulations.

The second half of Mr Richardson's display was devoted largely to the franks of various Prime Ministers. These included the Earl of Liverpool, Canning, F.J. Robinson, the Duke of Wellington, Earl Grey and Melbourne. There were also franks of Robert Peel, Disraeli and W.E. Gladstone when they were merely Members of Parliament.

The applause at the end indicated that we had been treated to not only a very informative afternoon but also one that was extremely entertaining.

THE MARCH MEETING

It is possible that the poor weather accounted for lower than usual attendance on our Competition Day. By lunchtime the snow was being to settle.

The judge for the competitions, John Field, brought a wonderful display of Spanish Postal History to entertain us while he was judging the competitions. This created a lot of interest and discussion; items noted included a letter of January 1798 with a 'B./CATALONIA' mark and endorsed 'Parva entregar al' (Care of); a March 1936 'TERRITORIO DE IFNI' on a rubber stamp and signed by the post office official as required by regulation - IFNI did not issue stamps until 1941/2.

Turning to the competitions the entries were:

pre-1840	Guy Bridges	Shifnal
	Eric Lewis	London to Birmingham 1812
1840-1940	Elizabeth Lewis	Birmingham Surcharge Handstamps
	Guy Bridges	Oswestry Park Hall Camp
	Alan Godfrey	Warwickshire Skeletons
	Chris Jackson	Worcestershire Travellers
post-1840	No entries	

The winners were Eric Lewis and Chris Jackson with Chris's entry going forward as the Society's entry at the Midland Federation in May.

To finish off the afternoon Chris Beaver had brought a short display of material from a single correspondence relating to 'The Improvement of the Mail Road to Manchester', concerning the re-alignment of the road from Ashbourne to Leek in 1825. The display showed the problems that were encountered because of the difficulty in getting three different sets of Turnpike Trustees to agree and because there was no proper map in the Act of Parliament, giving rise to disagreement about whose land the new road would affect.

By the time we left the snow had turned to rain.

C.J.

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MIDLAND POST OFFICES OPENED OR CLOSED DURING 1998

by Ken Smith

BIRMINGHAM

Wheeler Street renamed Great Hampton Row 7/12/1998.

DERBYSHIRE

Biggin, Buxton closed 28/10/1998.
Brassington, Matlock closed 27/11/1998.
Darley Bridge, Matlock closed 29/5/1998.
Eggington, Derby closed 26/2/1998.
Roston, Ashbourne closed 24/3/1998; reopened 3/9/1998.
Weston-on-Trent, Derby closed 28/8/1998.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Adlestrop, Moreton-in-Marsh closed 31/12/1998.
Culkerton, Tetbury closed 25/9/1998.
Bristol Road (TSO), Gloucester reopened 20/7/1998; had closed 5/11/1997.
Hewelsfield, Lydney replaced by The Triangle, Brockweir 26/2/1998.
May Hill, Longhope closed 8/4/1998.
Newmarket, Stroud closed 3/6/1998.
Tytherington, Wotton-under-Edge reopened 6/7/1998; had closed 29/5/1996.

LEICESTERSHIRE

Astill Lodge, Leicester opened 17/8/1998.
Burrough-on-the-Hill closed 1/2/1999.
Burton-on-the-Wolds, Loughborough reopened 1/10/1998; had closed 29/3/1997.
Frog Island (TSO), Leicester replaced by Woodgate 1/9/1998.
Medbourne, Market Harborough to close 13/3/1999 (advance notice).
Nether Broughton, Melton Mowbray closed 31/3/1998.
Osgathorpe, Loughborough closed 24/2/1998.
Thurcaston, Leicester closed 23/10/1998.
Tur Langton, Leicester closed 2/5/1998.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Great Houghton, Northampton reopened 8/10/1998; had closed 17/12/1997.
Holcot, Northampton closed 16/12/1998.
Pitsford, Northampton reopened 18/2/1998; had closed 23/12/1997.

OXFORDSHIRE

Abingdon Road (TSO), Oxford closed 30/9/1998; reopened 7/1/1999.
Iffley (TSO), Oxford closed 17/12/1998.

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RUTLAND

Great Casterton, Stamford closed 16/9/1998.

SHROPSHIRE

Beckbury, Shifnal closed 19/11/1998.

Brockton, Much Wenlock closed "early 1998".

Chetton, Bridgnorth closed 17/8/1998.

Child's Ercall, Market Drayton closed 14/1/1998.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Edingale, Tamworth closed 28/8/1998.

Leigh, Stoke-on-Trent closed 20/5/1998; reopened 13/8/1998.

Park Estate, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent closed 1/4/1998.

WARWICKSHIRE

Churchover, Rugby replaced by Coton 6/7/1998.

Great Alne, Alcester closed 26/8/1998.

Little Compton, Moreton-in-Marsh closed 27/11/1998.

Long Shoot (TSO), Nuneaton replaced by Horeston Grange 30/4/1998.

WEST MIDLANDS

Silver End (TSO), Brierley Hill reopened 19/3/1998; had closed 6/8/1997.

Colley Lane (TSO), Halesowen closed 3/6/1998; reopened 1/9/1998.

WORCESTERSHIRE

Lickey End (TSO), Bromsgrove closed 15/7/1998.

Cleeve Prior, Evesham closed 8/4/1998; reopened in the village hall 21/9/1998 but closed 14/1/99 following a raid on the office.

Upper Wyche (TSO), Malvern closed 4/3/1998.

Newnham Bridge, Tenbury Wells closed 28/10/1998.

Norton, Worcester closed 17/6/1998.

St Peter's (TSO), Worcester opened 10/8/1998.

Warndon Village (TSO), Worcester opened 2/11/1998.

There will be other offices which have closed during 1998 of which I am unaware and I should be pleased to receive further information from members. Post Office Counters is currently putting pressure on 'non-cash account' offices to change to 'cash-account' offices as computerisation continues to be introduced. This is resulting in more paperwork for sub-postmasters many of whom open for only one or two mornings per week, and some are giving up because of the extra workload. I have lists for each county of offices which I believe still to exist and would be grateful for any help in checking for offices which are now closed. One problem is that some offices are in unmarked private houses, so it is a matter of asking local inhabitants.

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POSTAGE REDUCTIONS IN 1837-1838

by Christopher Beaver

The most familiar such alteration was the introduction of a twopenny rate in the General Post from 6th January 1838. This was to be the charge for a single letter sent up to eight miles. For such letters the postage was halved. Surprisingly, Alan Robertson's 'Post Roads, Post Towns and Postal Rates 1635-1839' omits all mention of this reduction, but Martin Willcocks does not (1).

Postal connection between two geographically close posttowns could of course be circuitous and the resultant postage and time lag caused public protest as well as illegal carriage of letters by a more direct route. Another change occurred later in 1838 with the announcement of 19th September that postage would be calculated according to the actual distance by the nearest carriage road (2). That meant if the G.P.O. chose to direct the mail another way, including on a railway for example, the rates of postage would remain consistent as well as seem fair.

In fact the old principle of charging according to the distance the Post Office chose to convey mail had been breached the previous year following the opening in July 1837 of the Grand Junction Railway. This involved the deviation of virtually all routes between the southeast and northwest of England through Birmingham. One consequence, for example, was that a letter between London and Walsall was now carried over 120 miles and therefore to be taxed tenpence instead of ninepence - the distance between Birmingham and Walsall being a little further via Bescot station than by the direct road (3). Before all the alterations could be calculated (for the decision to use the railway was sudden) it was decreed that postages should continue (or be changed back) as if the deviation had not happened - unless the new route was shorter (4). Was it simply a matter of re-interpreting the existing law in rapidly changing circumstances?

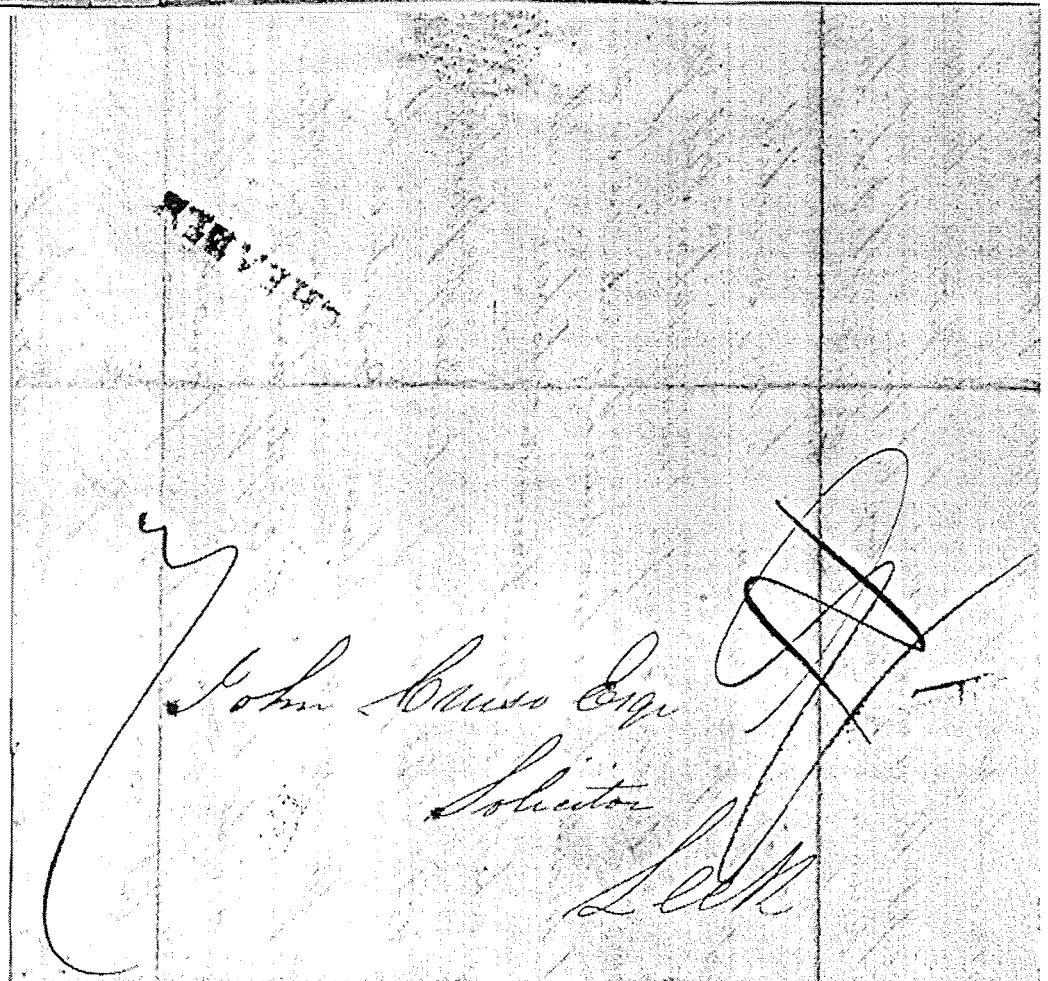
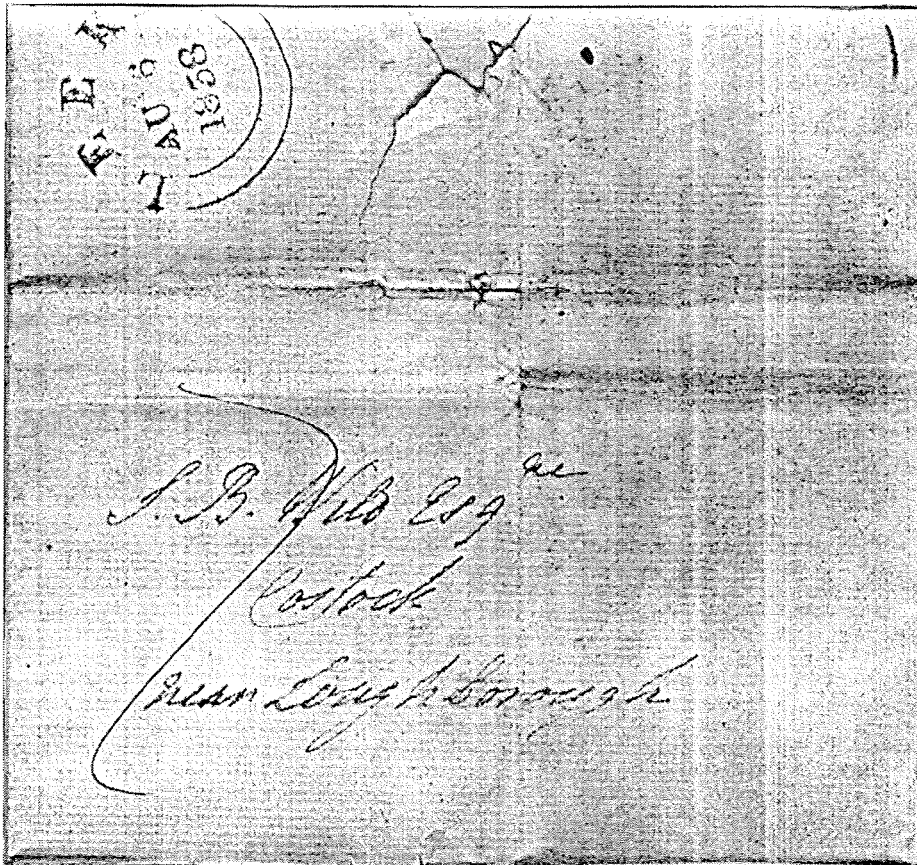
An example of a letter from this period, shortly before the 'nearest carriage road' announcement, is illustrated. Leek to Loughborough for sevenpence indicates a General Post charge for less than fifty miles, the direct distance between the two towns having been 47 miles of the Manchester to London mailcoach route which was reduced to a Derby to London mailcoach when the GJR opened. The actual route of this letter will have been rides via Newcastle-under-Lyme to Whitmore station, from Birmingham to Derby on the Sheffield mailcoach, and then on the London mailcoach as far as Loughborough. (Any delivery arrangement across the Nottinghamshire border to Costock was unofficial.) The total General Post distance was approximately 73 miles by road plus 43½ miles on the GJR, for which the postal rate would have been ninepence.

The second illustration is of the same period, a letter of January 1838 from Cheadle to Leek showing a postage of ninepence corrected probably in the same hand to seven pence. In this case the actual route was considerably shorter than it had been before the GJR opened. Until July 1837 such a letter would have gone via Stone, Manchester and Macclesfield for ninepence, but now the route was via Stone, Norton Bridge station, Whitmore station and Newcastle-under-Lyme, perhaps 38 miles instead of 90. By the nearest carriage road the distance between Cheadle and Leek is only about nine miles, so between September 1838 and January 1840 the appropriate rate, yet to be seen, was a more reasonable fourpence. It is likely though that many letters between the two towns were illegally conveyed until 1840.

Relevant circulars by Benjamin Churchill, surveyor of the North Wales District are in Post 68/3. One of 14th December 1837 instructs postmasters to report if the rate of postage has "increased or diminished since mails have been conveyed by Railway, stating the difference." (Postage to and from where is unspecified.) Another of 4th January 1838 attempts to clarify that the impending "reduction to 2d between places within 8 miles is intended to apply when the nearest travelled carriage road does not exceed 8 miles", an anticipation of the change for all General Post rates the following September.

References:

1. England's Postal History by Martin Willcocks, page 101
 2. Post 14/48/208 cf MM82/16
 3. Post 14/47/252 (August 1837)
 4. Post 14/47/387 (December 1837)
- See also MM108/10 & 13



THRAPSTONE'S POST IN 1825

In July 1825, some of the inhabitants of Thrapstone and its neighbourhood, in particular the Ladies Fitzpatrick of Brigstock, complained that they had received no benefit from the improved state of the post. In fact, their mail instead of arriving earlier was later than it used to be.

Although Thrapstone was in Mr Hart's district, the matter was first of all referred to Mr Karstadt as Thrapstone received its London letters by a ride from Kettering which waited for a ride from Northampton. This in turn was dependent upon the arrival of the London mail - the mailcoach to Manchester. Mr Karstadt said there could be no foundation to the complaint as the Manchester mailcoach had been successively accelerated and the ride had been dispatched proportionately earlier. Indeed, as the application had been referred to him on the eve of another acceleration of the Manchester mailcoach, he had retained it to see the result and could now state the ride reached Kettering by 6.15 a.m., nearly an hour earlier than before.

Unfortunately, two days later Mr Kardstadt reported that as the Manchester mailcoach was overloaded, the London bags to Northampton were to be carried on the Chester mailcoach [See MM107/9] which arrived thirty minutes after that to Manchester. Consequently, it would not be possible to send off the Kettering ride as early as had been done.

Mr Hart said that it was true that there had been an acceleration of the Edinburgh mail. Although the deputies at Huntingdon, Stilton and Stamford were kept in "watchfulness" for the arrival of the accelerated mail to receive their bye-bags, they were then kept a further hour waiting for the "old mail" (that to Glasgow) which brought their London bags. But he did feel that it was possible to accelerate the ride from Stilton to Thrapstone by giving a further allowance to the contractor and by putting pressure on the deputies at Stilton and Oundle to dispatch the mail more quickly. Thus the ride should arrive at Thrapstone within fifteen minutes of that from Kettering so the letters carried by the two posts could be collected or delivered at the same time. He went on to give the times of the mail at the various towns:

KETTERING

Arrive from Northampton 6.30 a.m.
Arrive from Thrapstone 6.30 p.m.

Depart for Northampton 7 p.m.
Depart for Thrapstone etc 6.50 a.m.

THRAPSTONE

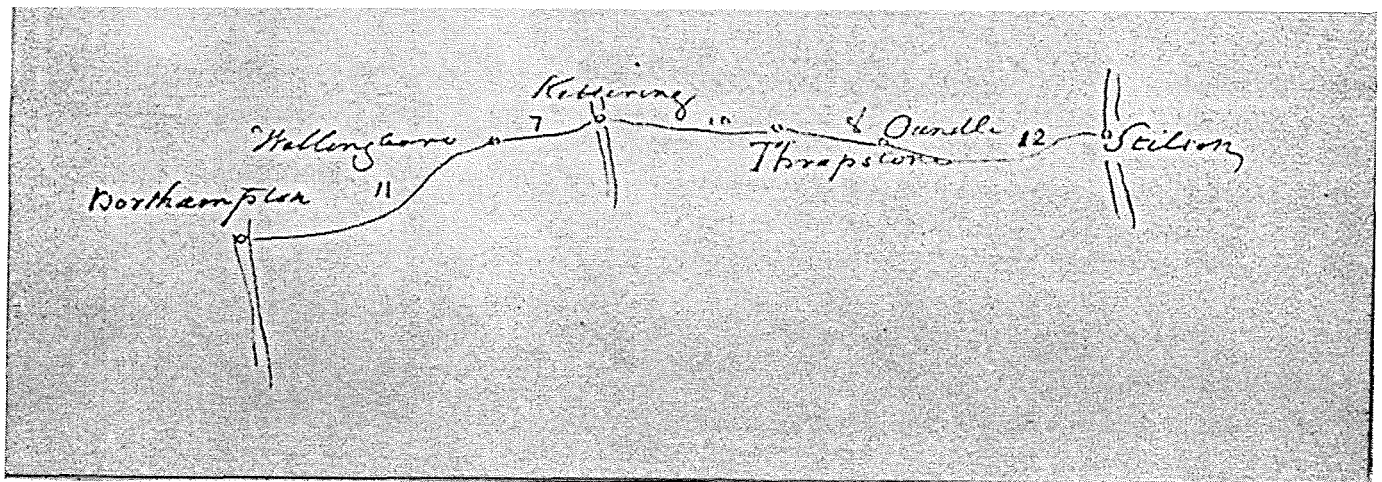
Arrive from Kettering 8 a.m.
Arrive from Stilton and Oundle 8.45 a.m.

Depart for Kettering and Northampton 5 p.m.
Depart for Stilton and Oundle 2 p.m.

OUNDLE

Arrive from Stilton 7.15 a.m.
Arrive from Northampton and Kettering 3 p.m.

Depart for Stilton 5.30 p.m.
Depart for Kettering etc 7.40 a.m.





GENERAL POST-OFFICE.

Earl of CHICHESTER, Postmaster-General.

Stilton and Kettering

TIME BILL.

DAILY.

Contractor.	Miles.	Time allowed. H. M.		Hours.	Mins. after.
			Received the Glasgow Mail Coach from London, at -	5	
			The Edinburgh Mail Coach from London, at -	4	
			Dispatched from the Post-Office, Stilton, the 29 of	5	20
			<i>Levi</i> 182, at -		
			<i>P. King</i> Postmr.		
12	1	45	Arrived at the Post-Office, Oundle, at -	7	
			<i>W.C.</i> Postmr.		
			Sent to Thrapston, at -	7	15
8	1	10	Arrived at Thrapston, at -	8	15
			Sent away, at -	5	
			<i>J.L.</i>		
9	1	20	Arrived at Kettering, at -	6	35
29	4	15	Dispatched to Northampton, at -	7	
			<i>W.C.</i>		
			RETURNED.		
			Received the Mail from Northampton, the 30 of		
			<i>W.C.</i> 182, at -	6	15
			Sent to Thrapston, at -	7	5
9	1	10	Arrived at Thrapston -	8	15
			Sent to Oundle, at -	2	
			<i>J.L.</i>		
8	1	10	Arrived at Oundle, at -	3	10
			Dispatched the Mail to Stilton, at -	5	30
			<i>W.C.</i> Postmr.		
12	1	45	Arrived at the Post-Office, Stilton, at -	8	
29	4	45	Edinburgh Mail, at -	10	
			<i>P. King</i> Postmr.		

When any material Loss of Time occurs, the Deputy is to write the Cause of it upon the Time-Bill

The Time must be punctually observed, and the Bills correctly dated. On any particular irregularity happening the Bill to be sent by the first Post, to the Surveyor of the District, the others by every Monday's Post, and One Month before they are expended, notice to be given and one enclosed to him. If these Bills are misapplied, and it should be necessary to reprint them before Twelve Months, it will be done at the Postmaster's expense.

February, 1825.—380.

THE ORIGINS OF A PENNY POST AND FIFTH CLAUSE POST IN OXFORDSHIRE

In September 1824, some of the inhabitants of Banbury led by a Mr Cobb complained about the interval between the times of arrival and dispatch of some of the letters. They suggested that the ride from Oxford to Bicester should leave Oxford at midnight instead of 6 a.m. and return from Bicester at midnight instead of 7 p.m. By this means Banbury would receive all its letters by the mailcoach. Freeling thought this an ingenious idea but sought the opinion of the surveyor.

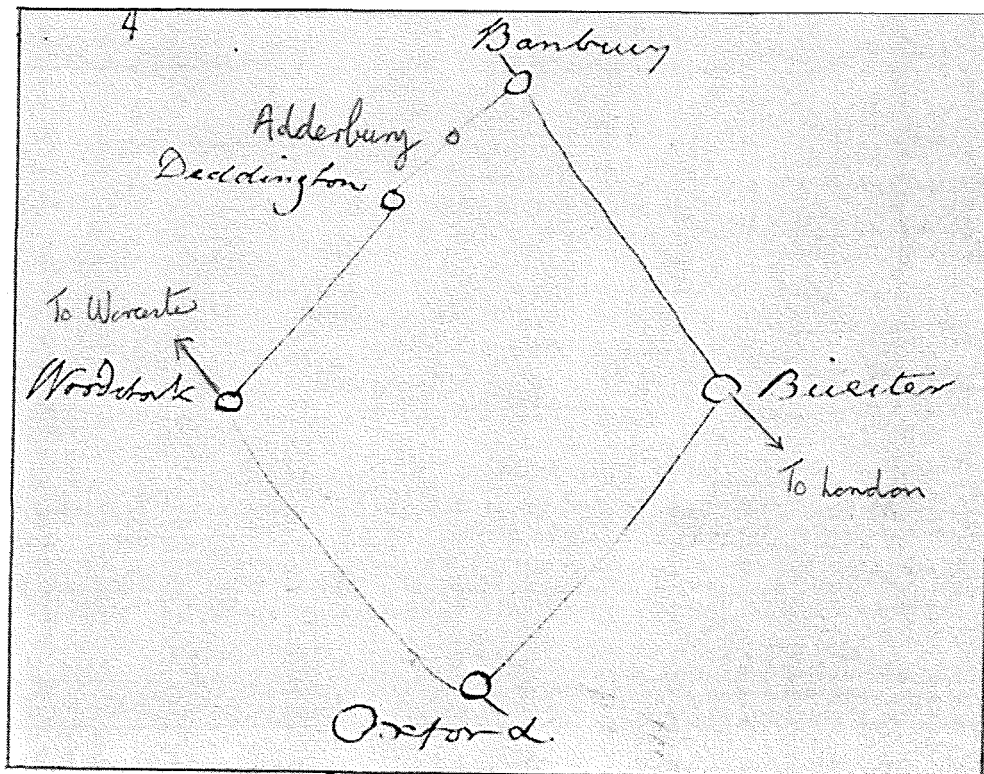
Mr Rideout said that the advantages were that the Oxford and Banbury mailcoach would become redundant; Banbury would gain nearly eight hours in answering its Oxford and Western letters but was already better served in this respect than many places, having five hours to reply to these letters; only one delivery would be needed at Banbury. Set against this were: a delay of nearly twenty-four hours to bye-letters for Bicester, Woodstock and Banbury brought to Oxford by the two mailcoaches from London and the ride from Towcester; the fact that the Oxford-Bicester ride would need to be a double one; and that Deddington would need to be served from either Woodstock or Banbury.

As no change was made to the riding work forms, obviously it was decided to maintain the status quo.

However, Mr Cobb and his colleagues were not discouraged for in August 1825 they sent up another petition, seeking an earlier delivery and later dispatch of the Oxford and Western letters. They stated that the London letters were delivered at 7.30 a.m. in summer and 8 a.m. in winter. The letters from Oxford etc arrived by coach at 11 a.m., necessitating another delivery, and were dispatched by the same coach at 4 p.m. Note had probably been taken of the objection raised by Mr Rideout, for they went on to suggest that the letters from Oxford could be sent by the down Worcester mailcoach as far as Woodstock where they would arrive sometime after 4 a.m. and from where they could be carried by a horse post to arrive in Banbury by 7 a.m. The return from Banbury could be at 7 p.m.

Freeling was in favour of this as he had "never been an advocate for irregular Mail Coaches i.e. Coaches carrying a greater number of Passengers than by our rules we confine ourselves too - but it is sometimes very difficult to resist applications that Coaches already on the Road may carry a bag of letters." However, no change could be made until the existing contract expired on 5th April 1826.

At the start of April 1826, Mr Rideout reported that he had contracted for a ride to leave Oxford at 4 a.m. (fifteen minutes after the arrival of the ride from Towcester), to reach Woodstock at 5 a.m., Deddington at 6.15 a.m., and to arrive at Banbury at 7.30 a.m. The return from Banbury was to be at 5 p.m., Deddington 6.15 p.m., Woodstock at about 8 p.m., arriving in Oxford at 9.15 p.m. In the event there appears to have been a slight difference in some of these times as fifteen minutes was allowed for office duties at Woodstock. In the same report, Mr Rideout said that he had been informed by the postmaster of Woodstock that a considerable number of letters was left on the road between Woodstock and Deddington on which extra charges were levied, so it occurred to him that a penny post might be "very advantageously established".



Further reports gave details of the services at places between Woodstock and Banbury other than Deddington which was a sub-office. The guard left letters at The Holt, The Fox and Adderbury.

The Holt was an inn about six miles from Woodstock within a two mile radius of which there were eight villages. [Middle Aston, Steeple Aston, Upper Heyford, Lower Heyford, Rousham, Steeple Barton, Westcott Barton and one other Barton the name of which is illegible]. The guard charged one penny on each letter left there as did the person distributing and collecting the letters. Mr Rideout proposed that a penny post receiving office should be opened at The Holt, the letters to be delivered from the office to persons calling for them for the "legal penny rate only." The inhabitants of the villages would then have to make their own arrangements for obtaining their letters from there. Freeling was assured by the Solicitor that this was perfectly legal.

The Fox was also an inn - eight miles from Woodstock - within a two miles radius of which there were three villages [Duns Tew, North Aston and Somerton]. Here an extra threepence was charged on letters both received and sent - a penny to each of the guard, the innkeeper and the person who delivered the letters. Mr Rideout proposed to open a penny post receiving office on the same terms as at The Holt.

Adderbury, "a considerable village", was 13½ miles from Woodstock and halfway between Deddington and Banbury. As at The Fox, the guard charged a penny and the person delivering the letters a penny on both those received and sent. At first, Mr Rideout proposed to open a penny post receiving office and provide a letter carrier to deliver mail within the village. Bags for Adderbury were to be made up at Woodstock and Banbury.

Yet, Mr Rideout acknowledged, there was an inconsistency in this.

Deddington had for years been a sub-office of Woodstock and the short-letters between the two towns had always been charged fourpence. Strictly the penny post bag for Adderbury should be made up at Deddington as Adderbury was between Deddington and Banbury, but there was not time for the rider to wait at Deddington for the bag to be made up. So, should letters put in at Woodstock for Adderbury be charged fourpence to Deddington and one penny from there, or should they be charged one penny as being a penny post under Woodstock. The latter did not seem fair to Deddington which was 3½ miles nearer Woodstock. Freeling said that the letters must be charged fourpence as short-letters or a penny as penny postage; they could clearly not be charged both. He then passed the matter back to Mr Rideout.

Mr Rideout went back to Adderbury and was eventually able to report that none of the inhabitants objected to the establishment of a 5th Clause Post, making the letters liable to a penny above the General Post charge on delivery and the short-letters from Woodstock fourpence. Also, an open box would be provided - the pence being charged on letters put in.

References:

Post 40/570/1824
Post 40/152/1826
Post 40/334/1826

Post 40/536/1825
Post 40/305/1826



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THE SURVEYORS' JOURNALS (Part 35)

As in the previous year, many of the journals, namely those from April to October, for 1826 are missing. In a report to the Postmaster General written in December 1826, Freeling indicated that the journals hadnot been sent up as regularly as they should have been. As that report explains the purpose of the journals, I am reproducing most of it here.

"These Journals are a summary of the objects to which the attention of the Surveyors has been afforded during the month, shewing not only how they have been occupied but the number of days they have been employed upon each object. Their services may by this means be kept under Check and Control, and the Journals are also a check upon the statements transmitted quarterly of the sums due to each of the Surveyors, according to the number of days he may have been absent from home on the public service.

"With such objects they are invariably scrutinised by myself and I have not infrequently had occasion to apply to the Surveyors for information or explanation before I submitted them to the Postmaster General. Indeed I have spared no pains to make these Documents as clear and faithful representations as may be of the duties to which they refer.

"The reports of Riding Work are also material records of the manner in which all the rides in the Kingdom are performed. They are made out by the Surveyors after a careful examination of the Time Bills, and when received here are inspected, and if anything occurs to me upon them I correspond with the Surveyors.

"Both Journals and Reports are afterwards laid before the Postmaster General with any observations of my own that may appear necessary.

"I regret that with the pressing duties of their Districts, some of the Surveyors have lately not transmitted these Documents to me so regularly as could be wished, and I recently issued a circular to them on the subject. It is right however to bear in mind that the Time Bills from which the reports are drawn up, are, in the first instance necessarily sent to the Surveyors at a given Town from which they may be at a great distance, that when forwarded to them their time and attention may be wholly occupied with matters of importance, and that the examination of those Bills must itself be a work of sometime and labor. I hope however they will be enabled to make arrangements to transmit the reports with the Journals about the middle of the Month following that for which they are made out ..."

Three months later, towards the end of March 1827, in explaining the delay in presenting the journals for January he said that the surveyors, "as well as ourselves" had been occupied in making out the "elaborate Accounts" for which the Commissioners of Enquiry had asked.

Mr Churchill arrived in Wolverhampton on 11th January 1826 to make arrangements for the forwarding of the letters for Burton-on-Trent from the Liverpool and Manchester roads. His next stop was at Wellington to alter the ride between there and Hay Gate to meet the Holyhead mailcoach. Then, it was on to Shifnal in order to investigate a complaint from Wenlock about the late arrival of the post. He arranged for the letters to be dispatched immediately after the arrival of the Holyhead mailcoach, so giving an earlier delivery of the letters. His next piece of business was at Ellesmere as the bag between there and Overton had been lost by the guard. He arranged the distribution of handbills offering a reward for the recovery of the bag.

On 1st February, Mr Churchill set out for Stone and Cheadle as the contractor for the ride between the two towns had given notice to quit. Despite spending four days looking for a new contractor, he was unable to find one so he agreed to continue with the present contractor at an increased rate of pay. It was also necessary to increase the pay for the ride between Burton-on-Trent and Ashby-de-la-Zouch. While in that area, Mr Churchill arranged the times of the footpost to and from Overseal as well as attending to the duties of the Burton office so as to "facilitate the delivery of letters there as much as possible." Mr Churchill immediately went on to Wolverhampton to alter the duty there on the arrival of the morning mail from Liverpool so that the mail to Burton could be sent via Lichfield. Several days were spent in Birmingham where he took on two new clerks, altered the management of the office so as to accomplish the work with "greater facility", including the mail from Sheffield which had necessarily remained unopened until after the dispatch of that to London but was now able to be forwarded.

Investigations into thefts of letters occupied Mr Churchill for several weeks. Firstly, two letters in very suspicious circumstances connected with Nottingham, Derby and Birmingham. He questioned every individual at each of those offices as well as the driver of the Nottingham and Derby mailcart. He also made enquiries at the banks in Nottingham and Derby. The loss of two letters from Wirksworth which should have passed through Derby was found not to be connected with the Nottingham and Birmingham case.

The first four days of March were spent investigating the loss of a letter containing a £20 bank note sent from Newport Pagnell to Walsall. This took Mr Churchill to the banks and several shops in Birmingham and then the post office in Walsall where all the staff were thoroughly questioned. Eventually the note was traced to the neighbourhood of Bentley Hay Colliery which was the place to which the letter had been addressed. The installation of a new postmaster at Wolverhampton took up five days before he was able to go to Birmingham to resume his enquiry into the missing letters from Nottingham. He obtained a warrant to search the house of the mail guard before going to Nottingham where he did likewise. A search of the house of the driver of the mailcart revealed a great deal of coin and bank notes which led to the driver being taken into custody. However, the investigation was not finished for Mr Churchill then went to Sheffield to search the lodgings of the mailguard there. Matters were then interrupted by the need to look into the loss of three letters containing money sent from Shrewsbury to Wem. After two days, Mr Churchill resumed his original enquiry in Manchester and "other places" where the driver, Gilbert, had changed notes. Gilbert was traced to a "variety of low public houses" and to a silversmiths where he had purchased double sovereigns but Mr Churchill was not able to ascertain the particulars of the notes Gilbert had passed. He returned to Nottingham for a second examination before a magistrate of Gilbert who was discharged for want of some direct proof of his guilt.

As with the other surveyors, the next journal of Mr Churchill is that for November 1826 when he was still on the trail of stolen letters. In that instance the stolen £5 note was found in the street at Llanfair. Then, on 25th November, Mr Churchill went to Derby as several letters in that district had been stolen. After several days he traced the missing notes to the possession of the Derby and Wirksworth rider and so obtained warrants to search the house of the rider at Wirksworth and to take him into custody. Mr Churchill then spent the first half of December gathering evidence against the rider.

A petition from Sundon for a daily letter bag took Mr Churchill to Stone. He eventually arranged for the letters to be left by the guard to prevent the delay about which complaints had been made. Mr Churchill's two last duties in the Midlands in 1826 were to install a new receiver at Tunstall and collect money owed by the deputy at Oswestry.

Mr Karstadt had only one piece of business in the Midlands during January 1826 - to look into an unspecified application from Dronfield. During February, he was in Yorkshire and Lancashire. The first ten days of March were spent on the road between Lincoln, Newark and Nottingham, arranging horseposts to replace the mailcoach. At the end of the month he appeared in Nottingham to help Mr Churchill with the investigations described above.

For the whole of November Mr Karstadt was in charge of the Sheffield office. Towards the end of December he was in Nottinghamshire to establish a new ride between Mansfield and Newark to carry mail from the Leeds road and to accelerate the ride from Nottingham to Lincoln to meet the Hull mailcoach.

The 1st January 1826 found Mr Rideout in Bishop's Castle - his first visit there since the introduction of the Welshpool-Ludlow mailcoach. Most of the rest of the month was spent at Oxford, removing the postmaster and instructing a replacement. [There is sufficient material in Post 40 about the misdemeanours of the Oxford postmaster in the previous two years to fill an edition of Midland Mail.] Much of the second half of February involved work in the area of Oxford. First, the ride from Oxford to Towcester was altered to meet the Liverpool mailcoach at the latter town. The earlier departure of that ride from Oxford made it necessary to accelerate the ride from Abingdon and Wantage to give an earlier arrival in Oxford. The same was necessary for the ride from Bicester. For most of March, Mr Rideout was in charge of the office at Cheltenham as the postmaster there was in arrears.

In November, Mr Rideout went to Moreton-in-Marsh and Winchcomb to introduce a new post to the latter town. [This involved the withdrawal of the footpost between Moreton and Stow and altering the route of the horsepost from Moreton to Winchcomb so that it went through Stow. By this means Stow gained a further two hours to answer its letters. The horsepost was made a six-day one rather than four days a week.] He then looked into the possibility of extending the penny post from Cheltenham to Prestbury and Charlton Kings. For most of December, Mr Rideout was in South Wales, though towards the end of the month he did renegotiate the contracts for some of the rides in Gloucestershire.

ADDENDA

THE ACCELERATION OF THE HOLYHEAD MAILCOACH

In September 1826, Freeling sent to the Postmaster General a report from Mr Churchill on the changes he had been able to make in his district on the acceleration of the Holyhead mailcoach. Freeling prefaced his report by saying that the acceleration had been carried out in conjunction with the introduction of steam packets to Dublin which as far as could be ascertained had more than answered their expectations. The London letters of Monday night had been delivered in Dublin between 9 and 10 a.m. on Wednesday. This gave nearly five hours to answer, so gaining a whole day in the communication.

The alterations mentioned by Mr Churchill are described below.

The earlier arrival of the mail at Coventry enabled him to dispatch the Warwick ride at 6.45 a.m. [instead of 7.45 a.m.] so as to reach Warwick in time for the first post to Leamington by which means the North letters would be delivered with those from London two hours earlier than before. Also at Coventry, he was able to dispatch the footpost to Nuneaton earlier so as to arrive there at 9 a.m. The return was not until 5 p.m., giving a further three hours to answer letters. Coventry, itself, also gained more time to reply to London letters.

At Birmingham, the mails to Walsall and Kidderminster as well as the footposts to Sutton, Castle Bromwich and Halesowen were dispatched an hour sooner with a later return in the evening. The receiving houses were kept open an hour later as the London mail now arrived at 8 a.m. and was not dispatched until 5.50 p.m. Before the acceleration of the Holyhead mail, a partial delivery of the letters from the West had been made in some of the streets near the office from 8 to 9 a.m. This partial delivery was discontinued as the London mail now arrived at 8 a.m. and the letter carriers needed to be at the office then so that the delivery of the London letters could take place at 9 a.m. after the dispatch of the branch mails.

Wolverhampton benefitted by an earlier arrival and a later dispatch, giving an extra two hours to answer letters. The ride to Bridgnorth was dispatched an hour sooner but returned at the usual time to reach Wolverhampton in time for the "North Mail". [I presume this was the mailcoach from Birmingham to Manchester.]

Shifnal gained nearly three hours in which to answer its London letters the same day. The Rides to Newport and Wenlock waited for the up Holyhead mail at 2 p.m. to take the letters from Shrewsbury, Ireland and North Wales etc which would have been delayed a whole day if the rides had left on the arrival of the down mail at 11 a.m. Even so, the arrivals at Newport and Wenlock were only about an hour later than before.

Wellington gained nearly two hours in "the arrival and dispatch" - i.e. four more hours in which to reply to London letters?

At Shrewsbury, in the twenty minutes allowed for office duty, all the sorting for North Wales had to be done. In addition there was a connection with the Chester and Hereford mail. In order to reduce the amount of work, Mr Churchill ordered Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Shifnal and Wellington to vouch with Oswestry, Bangor and Holyhead. The letters were delivered as soon as the mailcoaches had been sent off with the result they were delivered ninety minutes earlier. The alteration of the Shrewsbury and Chester mail meant that Ellesmere and Overton received their London letters an hour and a half earlier. The ride to Whitchurch was sent off at 2 p.m. and arrived there at 5 p.m. which allowed an evening delivery in the town.

[Ref: Post 40/388/1826]

THE DELIVERY AT DERBY

A complaint was made in August 1826 about the extra penny charged by the letter carriers in some parts of the town. Mr Karstadt began his report by giving details of the population of the town to illustrate the rapid growth there had been.

1801	10,832
1811	13,043
1821	17,423
1826	21,000 - [This was an estimate.]

Mr Karstadt went on to say that the parts of the town where the extra charge was levied were, a few years before, on the outskirts and detached from other buildings. But now, they were united with other buildings and, in some cases, within the built up area. He could see no good reason why the free delivery should not extend as far as there was an continuous line of streets and buildings, particularly as this was all within the limits of the Borough.

There were two deliveries in Derby carried out by two letter carriers, a principal on 14/- a week and an assistant on 9/-. But they were unable to deliver the letters in good time and had been obliged to employ extra help. If the limit of the free delivery was extended, it would be essential to employ another letter carrier and he proposed a first letter carrier at 16/- a week, a second at 14/- and an assistant at 10/- a week. The increase in the wages of the first two was to compensate for the loss of the extra pence.

In connection with this matter, Mr Karstadt said that when difficulties had first been experienced with the delivery at Derby four years before, he had commented to the postmaster that the wage of the assistant letter carrier seemed rather inadequate. The postmaster had misconstrued his remark and had paid the letter carrier an extra 1s/6d a week out of his own pocket. The sum was so small that at first it did not arouse comment and when it did it was impossible to withdraw it as the work was increasing daily. He had let the matter stand over until there was a revision of the delivery, so he now asked that the postmaster be allowed 1s/6sd a week backdated to 9th September 1822.

[Ref: Post 40/377/1826]

KNIGHTON TO LUDLOW

Mr Rogers the MP for Bishop's Castle applied in February 1826 for a post from Ludlow to Knighton to replace that between Presteigne and Knighton.

Mr Karstadt said that the letters for Knighton were carried from Presteigne on five days a week - Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Mr Rogers proposed that the letters should be carried by horse post from Ludlow on the arrival of the London mail so as to reach Knighton at about 6 p.m. instead of the next day as they did by Presteigne. The ride was to return in the morning in time for the mails to London and Shrewsbury. Mr Karstadt felt that this measure would have considerable advantages but that it would be opposed by Mr Price the Member for Radnor who would not be willing to give up the communication with his constituents through Presteigne.

Later, Mr Karstadt was able to report that Mr Price was willing to sacrifice two days in the Presteigne post. Thus he was able to propose that there should be a post between Presteigne and Knighton on three days a week - Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and a post from Ludlow on five days a week - Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

This measure would be attended with a greater increase in expense than the receipts at Knighton really warranted. However it would be of great benefit to two large villages between Ludlow and Knighton, Leintwardine and Brompton Bryan. Mr Karstadt proposed that a receiving house should be opened at Leintwardine with a salary of £4 p.a. with the receiver charging one penny on each letter delivered but nothing on those put into the office.

By January 1827, the riding work forms showed a ride between Ludlow and Knighton. It left Ludlow at 3 p.m. and arrived in Knighton at 6.40 p.m. The return left Knighton at 4 a.m., arriving in Ludlow at 7.40 a.m.

[Ref: Post 40/75/1826]

A PENNY POST REGULATION

Three gentlemen from Cheltenham complained in April 1826 that they had been charged with the penny postage though they sent to the office for their letters.

Mr Rideout stated that these three gentlemen all resided outside the three delivery and the penny was charged on the letters as they were directed to the houses concerned. He admitted that this charge had only been made in the last month. Because the postmaster had misunderstood the regulations he had allowed letters directed to the penny post to be collected at the office without the penny being paid. Mr Rideout had found that the practice of calling at the office for letters by people living in the penny post delivery had grown to such an extent that it was delaying the morning delivery.

Freeling explained to the Postmaster General that the principle adopted in all places where a penny post was established was to enforce payment on all letters directed within the penny post delivery, even if the recipients chose, for their own convenience, to collect them from the office in the posttown. But if letters were directed to the posttown only, the addressee was entitled to receive them at the office there for the General Postage only.

[Ref: Post 40/194/1826]

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JAMES DAVIS - POST OFFICE MESSENGER

Illustrated below are the letters concerning the appointment and resignation of a James Davis. Someone has added to the second letter the year in which he died - 1918. If that is correct Mr Davis lived to the age of 97.

"
Perthore Aug 7. 1886
To the Postmaster General
Sir

I beg to resign the
situation as Town Letter
Carrier for Perthore
having been in the service
38 years, and being
now over 65 years
of age, my eyesight
is beginning to fail.

I am Sir
your obedt.

Humble Servant

James Davis

R. 1821. 10. 1918

James Davis
Lord Clarendon

having been pleased to appoint you
to the situation of Refractor from
Perthore to Lexington, on the
recommendation of Mr. J. H. H.

Foley M.D., I request you will
present yourself to the Refractor

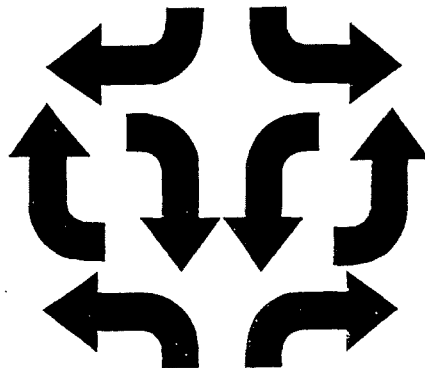
of Perthore, from whom you will
receive your instructions.

The mayor will be a great

Yours,
J. Davis

General Post Office
12 October 1887.

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YOU LOOK AT IT!



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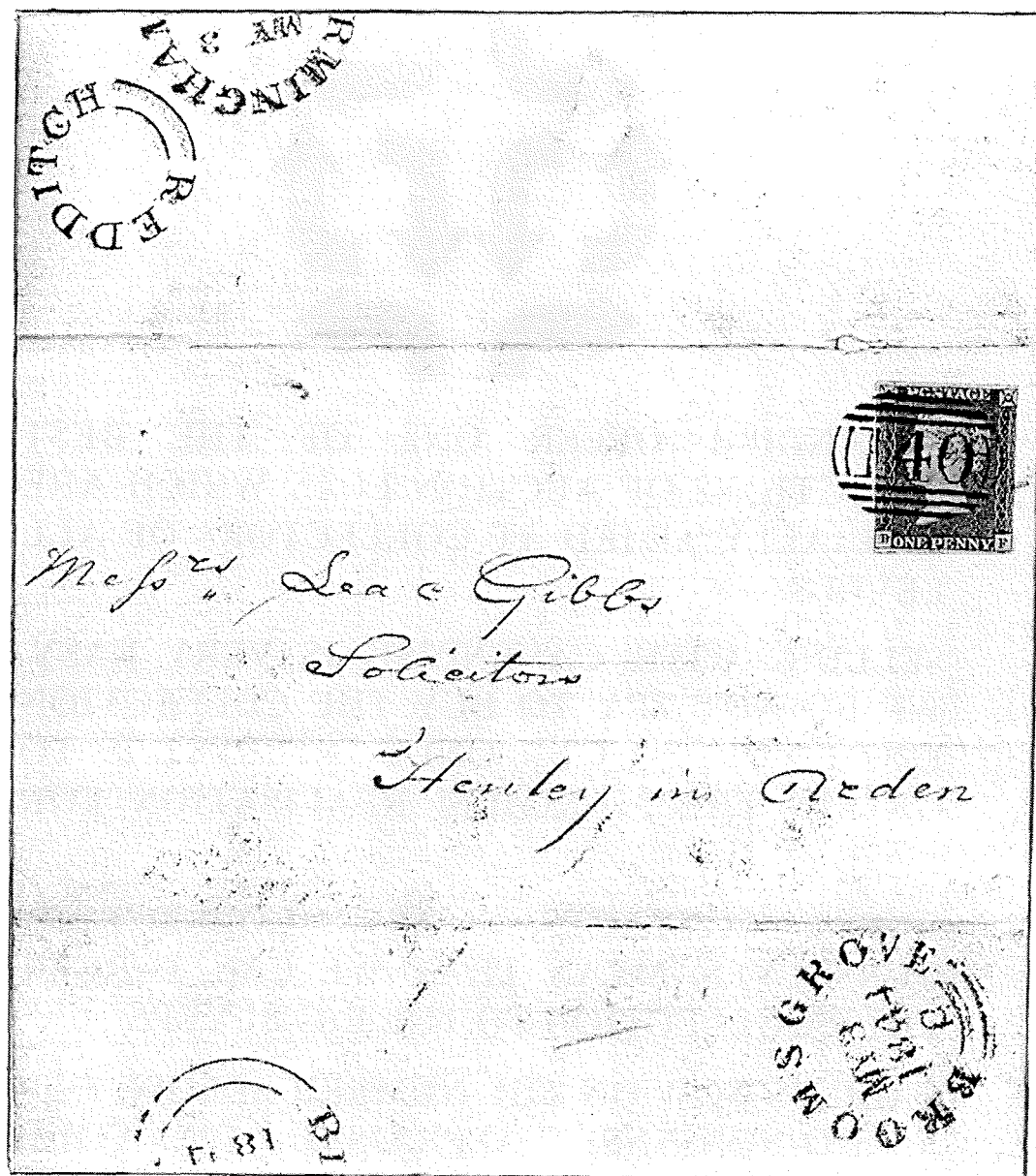


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DERBY, DE1 2SY, ENGLAND.
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Fax: 01332 294440

Internet: <http://www.thesaurus.co.uk/cavendish/>

ANOTHER EARLY 1844 NUMERAL CANCELLATION

Chris Jackson has kindly forwarded a copy of the 140 numeral cancellation of Redditch used on 3rd May 1844.



THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

I hope that this will be distributed by the middle of June. It will contain a report of the AGM and a little more from the surveyors' journals. There may be more from the Order Books of the Inland Office but that depends on access to Post Office Archives. So all articles, however short or long, will be welcomed by:

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