MIDLAND MAIL

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

President: Mr. W.S. Chester

Chairman: Richard Farman

Treasurer: Trevor Clewley

Secretary: Elizabeth Lewis

NUMBER 57, NOVEMBER 1988

Did you get to Stampex this autumn? It was worth the journey merely to see Michael Jackson's display on The Early Postal History of the British Isles. The Postal Mechanisation Study Circle also put on a fascinating display, but was it really necessary to hide it in the attic? If the present premises are the best that London can offer, all I can say is that I passed a better site going to the October meeting which seemed to be attracting visitors from all over the country. It may surprise you to know that although I live a little more than thirty miles from Central London, it only takes me twenty more minutes to reach the N.E.C. than it does to get to Greycoat Halls. Elsewhere Chris Beaver refers to the excellent display of postal history mounted by the Hinckley Philatelic Society. This prompts me to ask if the rules for the competitions at various levels are in need of revision particularly regarding the use of collateral material. I doubt if the display at Hinckley would have won many medals, yet it was visually attractive as well as well as telling its story clearly and concisely. Surely that is all that is needed. It was a display more likely to win converts to the hobby than those at Stampex. An alternative approach, which I like very much but is not really appropriate for public exhibitions, is that adopted by the Postal History Society in which each entry is accompanied by a research paper. Incidentally our congratulations are due to Denis Salt for winning that competition last year.

Eric and Elizabeth have asked me to say that if the member who left a copy of the Central Literary Magazine at the October meeting contacts them, they will arrange for its return.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The annual gathering at the Bass Museum, Burton on Trent will take place on 10 December. If you wish to join us for lunch (approximate cost £4.50), beginning at 12.30 please contact Richard Farman (0283-66515) before 3 December. The museum is open from 11 a.m. for those who wish to see the new exhibits before we start to meet at noon. The meeting proper will begin at about 1.45 when Richard will give a display on Beer. It is actually a display of postal history.

On 14 January we meet at 1.30p.m. at Carrs Lane, Birmingham when we are asked to bring nine sheets on "The Post and Postcards". If you have nothing on that theme please feel free to bring covers on any other theme.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to Mr. J. Woodings of Barton under Needwood and Stuart Hobson of Longsdon.

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

Despite other meetings, a new venue, the Chairman having to park somewhere in the depths of Worcestershire and an attempt by another group at the Carrs Lane Church Centre to dispatch John Calladine to Central America, fourteen members were present for the first meeting of the season on 24th. September to show some of their recent acquisitions.

Alf Fieldhouse kicked off with nine sheets on the Edinburgh Penny Posts, starting with items from Peter Williamson's Penny Post. These included a 1780 strike of the circular E. PENNY POST NOT PAID. Then from the Official Penny Post we saw examples of the District Receiving House stamps such as Dalkeith, Musselburgh and Lasswade. Time stamps from the Head Office were also shown. Items which had recently come through the post to his place of work formed the bulk of David Hardwick's display. These included machine cancellations with inverted dies, incorrectly dated meter mail with large triangular postmarks giving the correct date of posting, and an envelope torn by a machine. David concluded with a very rare Rugby Station double circle. A letter, sent in 1727, endorsed "To be left at Post House Alcester " was Peter Sharp's first item. He then went on to show various Warwickshire UDCs followed by parcel post labels from Treddington. Sadie Cole displayed privately carried letters from the Persehouse correspondence, most of which were from the early seventeenth century and the Civil War period. Chris Beaver too showed items from this correspondence. He then went on to show a NCASTLE/ULINE from c1720, and, to torment the Chairman and Editor, he finished with a letter sent in 1786 from Burton to Ashby via Derby and Loughborough. Roger Broomfield began with a Ledbury skeleton of 1902 and then went on to show various UDCs from Herefordshire and surrounding counties. These included a UDC which was not a UDC - the Pen y Bont CDS with the slugs removed.

The first display of the second half was also from Scotland, with Ches showing mileage marks used there. These included an example of the English type used at Dumfries in 1802, and to redress the balance, a Scottish used at an English post-town, Longtown. Derek Smeathers began with a letter sent from Northampton in 1644. Amongst other items from the same county was a cover carrying the Uniform Penny Post mark and UDC of West Haddon. We were then treated to a conducted tour of Gloucestershire by John Calladine. In the course of this we saw a variety of marks including GLO'STER, GLOCESTER, WOTTON G, MORETON IN MUSH and finally the unusual boxed Newent/No 3. Much of which goes to show that an inability to spell correctly predates the introduction of comprehensive schools. Elizabeth journied through much of the Midlands, showing "traveller" handstamps from Hereford, Worcester, Ludlow, Leamington, Whitchurch and, dated 7 October 1840, Shrewsbery (another place where they couldn't spell - or is that how I should pronounce the name of the place?). Many of these are unrecorded. Amongst Eric's nine sheets were examples of the Birmingham Roller Cancellation, the unpaid P.P.14 of Castle Bromwich and, my favourite, a postcard sent to Birmingham with a map instead of an address. A display of Staffordshire Military Postal History by Richard concluded the afternoon's entertainment. Of particular interest was a card sent to the Cyclist Batillion of the North Staffs. Regiment. As Richard said in thanking everyone it had been a most interesting afternoon with material from a range of places and periods.

My grateful thanks are due to Eric and Elizabeth for providing the copies of some of their items, shown opposite.

POST CARD.

THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE.

To the manager of the shop, which is marked with the red spot, and where everything in the window is marked 3/-

Birmingham

CORPORATION ST.

LIVERPOOL 98

NUMBER 14 - CASTLE BROMWICH

TOPAZ 1D 31

A traveller handstamp used at Whitchurch

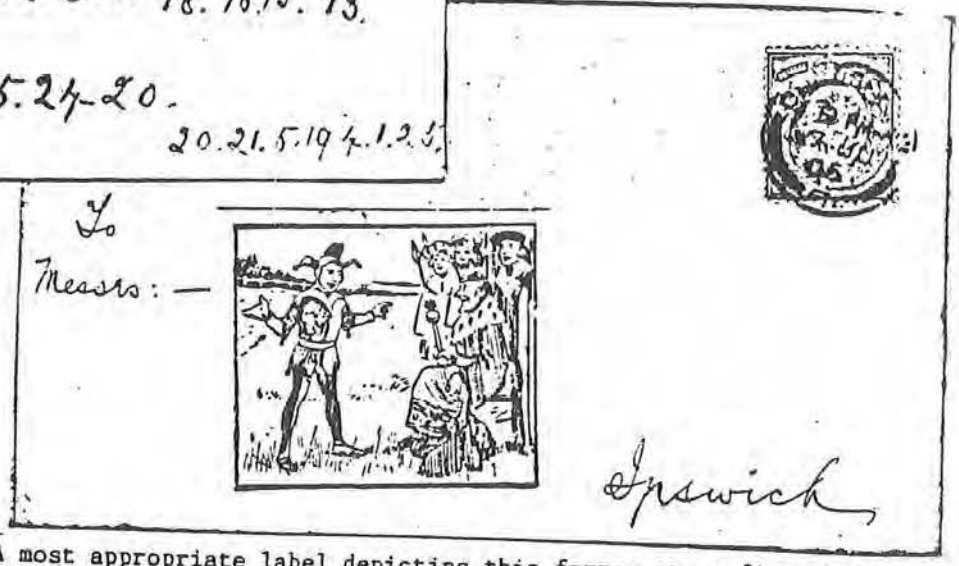
Roller cancellers were manufactured and issued to ten towns in the autumn of 1857, Birmingham being one of those chosen

THE OCTOBER MEETING

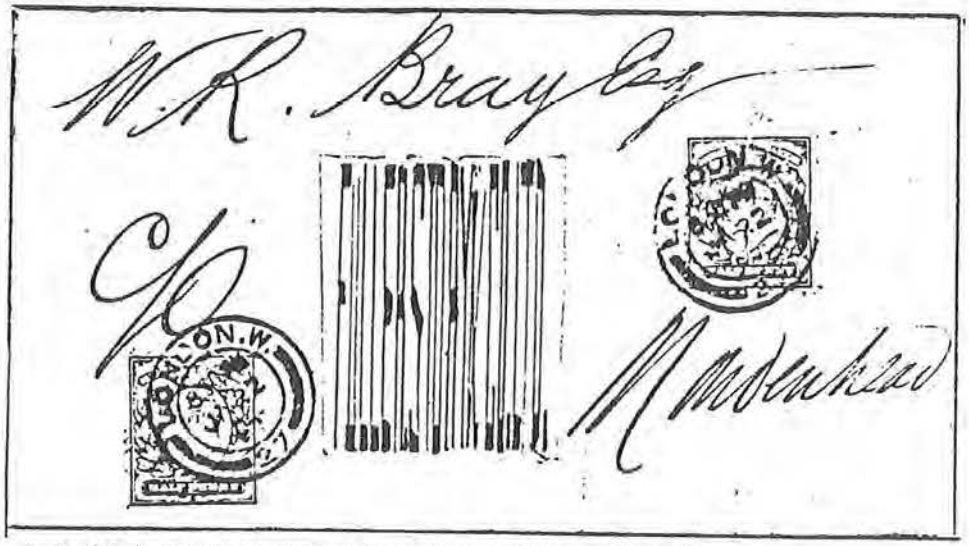
Despite other events, eighteen members were present at the meeting on 29 October when Elizabeth and Eric Lewis provided the entertainment which took the form of a quiz. Despite a late run by our Treasurer, on the questions on machine cancellations, the overall winner was Harold Wilson. Richard thanked Elizabeth and Eric for providing such an enjoyable and informative afternoon in which they had displayed material from 1660 right up to the present day. The illustrations below are taken from the quiz. The answers will appear in the next issue.



This card posted in 190[illegible] has a message in a very straightforward code



A most appropriate label depicting this former stamp firm which at one time was as well known as Stanley Gibbons. Who were they ?



And which company was this letter addressed to ?

"365"

Full marks for enthusiasm. Paul Hill, one of our newest members, had his interest in Postal History kindled by our President less than two years ago, and began the compilation of "The Story of Hinckley's Postal Service" this year. The local Philatelic Society knew the first postmaster was appointed in 1788, when the diversion of the London - Chester - Holyhead mailcoach brought the developing hosiery town into direct communication with the rest of the kingdom, and they have supported Paul's project marking the anniversary to the hilt. A book of over sixty A4 pages, profusely illustrated, is no mean achievement, and it is good to learn that local interest was kindled sufficiently to cover the costs of production within a fortnight.

The prelude surveying the to-us-familiar scene for the general reader is wide ranging and clearly presented. The meat of the book concerning Hinckley itself contains most of the new material. What is stated about the postmasters and the location of the post office is somewhat tentative yet and further research should enable more certainty in due course. Much more precise is the important survey of how the post has reached Hinckley and the development of services to the surrounding area. The final part of the book outlines what is known of the town sub-offices and the dependent village offices, their postmarks and existing post-boxes. As Paul remarks there are parts of the story where information is still very scarce.

Evident errors are few - most glaringly concerning Rowland Hill; most are failures in checking proofs. Maps of Hinckley and the surrounding area would have been helpful. Few of us would have dared attempt so much as Paul has done, with or without the ready assistance of others. The result is good and publication should attract a steady trickle of new information. In fact at this year's Hinckley Stamp Fair an excellent display of Hinckley Postal History, separately compiled and very well written up by another member of the philatelic society, included fresh details and a wealth of covers of which a selection might have been used as illustrations had space allowed. May Paul's achievement be "pour encourger les autres." The book costs £3.50 plus postage and packing, and can be obtained by ringing either 0530-36808 or 0455-39384.

C.M. Beaver

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"COACHING DAYS AND POSTING WAYS"

On 18th. October there was quite a gathering at the Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery - Mayor and Mayoress, representatives from the Nuneaton post office and the Midland Region Postal Board, along with postal historians from neighbouring societies. All had been invited for the opening of Gay Parker's exhibition "Coaching Days and Posting Ways".

Gay must have put a lot of time into organising this display of artifacts and memorabilia of the postal service - uniforms, pillar boxes, coaching prints, time-bills, coach lamps and one hundred and one other items which played a part in the delivery of mail. The great attraction of the day was the Norwich Union's restored mailcoach "The Mercury 205", which is still licensed to carry the Royal Mail, along with the four Greys which pulled the coach from Nuneaton to Bedworth. The streets were lined with school children who linked hands and formed a corridor. John Parker who drove the coach has his name in the Guiness Book of Records for the longest coach drive by a single driver. Gay Parker in top-hat and a brown cape sat up front looking every bit like an 1820 coachman.

Gay is bringing out a new book, "Nuneaton - a Warwickshire Post Town", which should be ready before the exhibition ends on 5th. December. The exhibition is open daily to 5 p.m. at the Museum in Riversley Park, Nuneaton, and I am sure that you will find a visit worthwhile.

On behalf of the Midland Philatelic Federation and the Midland Postal History Society, I would like to thank Gay and all the others involved in arranging such a fascinating display of postal history artifacts.

W.S. Chester

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ΦΙΛΟΤΕΛΙΚΟ ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟ

by John Calladine

Notwithstanding the frustrations of air traffic delays this summer, Greece is likely to remain a popular holiday destination. If you find yourself spending a few days in Athens, you may be unaware that the city has a "Postal and Philatelic Museum". Its full title is significant because the contents are of more than straightforward philatelic interest. Unlike our own postal museum, half the Athens museum is devoted to postal history, albeit interpreted with Hellenic eccentricity. It is worth a visit.

The museum is in an unpromising street close to the 1896 Olympic Stadium but there are small signposts if you look carefully for them. The opening hours are as unusual as the contents; 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. from Monday to Friday and also 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays. However one should be warned that important Greek archaeological sites, let alone postal museums, do not always open at the advertised times and it would be unwise to rely on the evening opening taking place. The combination of an unlikely location and uncertain opening hours appears to have the (desired?) effect of deterring visitors. My appearance was greeted with some surprise and the light switches had to be found.

The museum is air conditioned and well laid-out in two large basement rooms. In the first are exhibited "various objects which have marked the evolution of the postal service". That description covers a lot of ground. There are early post boxes from Greece and Crete and one from Germany - or was it a heating stove? There is a "package tying machine", sorters' pigeon holes, clocks, a post office safe, early typewriters and even electric lights and fans, presumably from post offices but giving no hint of their origin. However, of more relevance, there is a Krag cancelling machine, a Greek postal delivery map of about 1900, some details of the Thurn and Taxis post under Leonard II (1594-1628) - which didn't embrace Greece - and a datestamp with its box of slugs (all 48 of them).

The second room, said to contain "exhibits related to stamps and their printing methods" provided the major surprise. Certainly the philatelic display is quite excellent. There is much original artwork, progressive proofs, printing plates, a six foot "dandy roll" and, in pull-out display frames, all the Greek stamps, largely in chronological order, with the early and rare stamps displayed in full sheets! For a postal historian, the gem is a whole cabinet of handstamps, both datestamps and instructional marks. There are three large sheets of their strikes (100 or more) and, whilst most are in Greek, I noted a boxed "via Belgrade" and several registered marks.

The leaflet advertising the museum mentions a special dated "cachet seal" available to visitors. This proved elusive as the staff speak almost no English and, if it proved difficult to explain to them that I wanted a strike of their handstamp, it proved just as difficult for them to convince me that I must apply adhesive stamps to my leaflet (to the value of the minimum inland rate at least) before they would look for the "cachet". Since items may be posted there, for "cachet" read "cancellation".

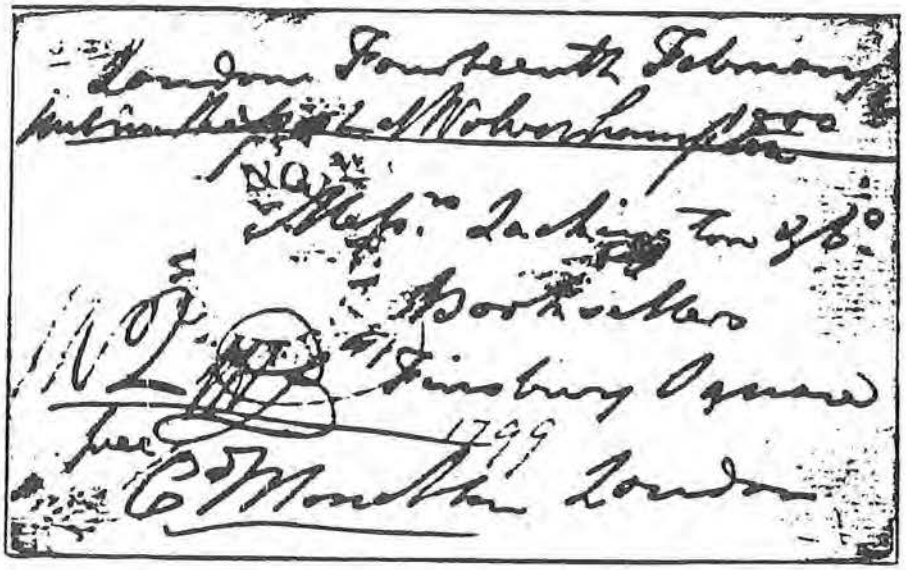


There is a small snag of course. Although the descriptive leaflet (available at the Greek tourist office in Regent Street) is in English, French and German, the entire contents of the museum are captioned only in modern Greek. When I asked the staff whether anyone could translate the captions into English, they handed me two more copies of the leaflet, confident that if one leaflet helped not one iota, three copies surely would. My comment in the visitor's book may bear fruit and future foreign visitors may yet know whether the German "postal object" consumes letters or coal: it could be important.

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"CONTRARY TO REGULATIONS"

Bob Flamank has sent a copy of a free front which is shown below. Ostensibly the letter was written in London but was put into the post at Wolverhampton as evidenced by the manuscript above the "reversed horseshoe" of Wolverhampton which itself adds further proof. The letter then attracted a charge of 1s. 2d.



FREE FRANKS AND PENNY POST STRIKES IN CHELTENHAM

by R A Flamank

Recently I have acquired a considerable number of free franks which were addressed to Cheltenham and which also have received a strike of the Cheltenham Penny Post. There were sixty free fronts in all and I thought it would be useful to do an analysis of them to see to whom they were addressed and from whence they came.

The strikes of the Cheltenham Penny Post which had been used divide into three:

Type A 39 x 11 mm Type B 46 x 13 mm Type C 44 x 11 mm

The number of franks are as follows:

Type A 12 fronts Type B 23 fronts Type C 25 fronts.

The addresses which were used are as follows:
Beaufort House (which I believe was in Montpelier Terrace), Pittville, Brunswick Terrace, Arundel House, Bagshill House, Montpelier Terrace and addresses receiving only one item. The persons living at the principal addresses were for Beaufort House, Lady Whitmore and family who at an earlier date lived at the Citadel in Plymouth, the Thornhill family at Pittville and at Brunswick Terrace, Lady Whitmore again at Arundel House, the Fallon family at Bagshill House, and at Montpelier Terrace the Reverend James Samaurez and his wife.

	Total	A	B	C
Beaufort House	25	2	13	10
Pittville	6	1	2	
Brunswick Terrace	2			2
Arundel House	1			1
Bagshill House	9	5	2	2
Montpelier Terrace	7			7
Only 1 item	10	4	3	3

I further analysed the postings and the following result appeared:

	A	B	C
London	8	18	23
Oxford			1
Devizes			1
Ireland	1		
Warwick	1		
Bristol	1		
Ludlow	1	1	
Derby		2	
Lymington		1	
Calne		1	
Totals	12	23	25

Then I analysed the signature of the free fronts under the headings: Members of Government, Peers, Members of Parliament, Bishops. The result was:

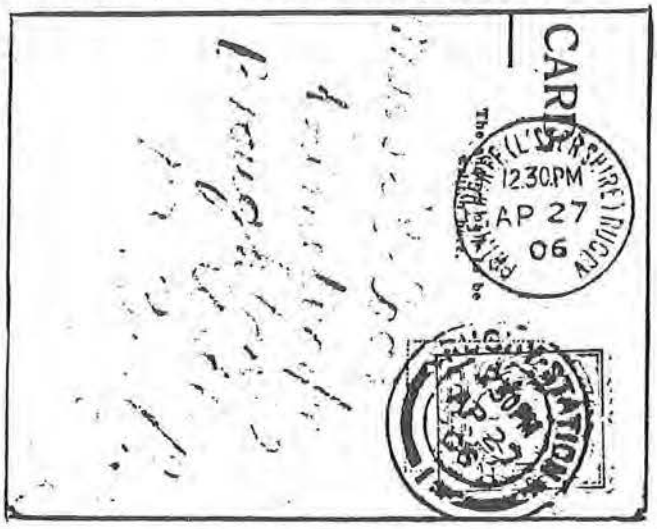
Total franks	60
Members of Government	3
Peers	13
MPs	43
Bishops	1

It is quite rare to have a relatively large sample for one particular town and I hope that fellow members will find this an instructive article. I know that it does not cover our particular area, but it is so close to the Midlands that I hope I shall be tolerated for spilling across the borders.

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ODDS AND ENDS

I was rather surprised to come across the Primethorpe postmark, illustrated below, which reads PRIMETHORPE (L'STERSHIRE) RUGBY.



I had assumed that the thimble had remained in use until 1909 when Primethorpe was transferred to Leicester and issued with a single circle PRIMETHORPE LEICESTER. Since handstamps by that time were supposed to show the correct postal address, I concluded that Primethorpe, Rugby was not good enough for the postal authorities. But why not? Since many of the answers to our questions are to be found in the Post Office Circular, it was those volumes which I consulted and eventually found the answer in the edition for 22 August 1905 shown below. Does anyone have a copy of the Princethorpe postmark which was presumably issued?

Since there are two other items on the same page of more general interest,I have reproduced those too. How did the sorters find those postcards which exceeded the prescribed dimensions? They surely cannot have measured every card. Did they stand all the cards on a table and see which were larger than the rest? Does anyone have an example of such a card being surcharged?

365022/05

Discontinuance of the designation "Railway Sub-Office."

With reference to the notice in the special Post Office Circular of June 28th, No. 1668, to the effect that the letters S.O. will in future be employed to indicate both Railway Sub-Offices and Independent Sub-Offices, both these classes of Office will in future be known as Independent Sub-Offices. Any amendment that may be necessary in official records, notices, &c., should be made as opportunity offers.

Sub-Offices.—Changes of Address, &c.

On the 1st proximo the addresses of the undermentioned Sub-Offices will be changed:—

FROM	TO
*Primethorpe, Rugby	*Primethorpe (Leicestershire), Rugby.
*Princethorpe, Rugby	*Princethorpe (Warwickshire), Rugby.
*Murton Colliery S.O., Co. Durham	*Murton S.O., Co. Durham.

* Indicates a Money Order Office.

Post-Cards exceeding the prescribed dimensions.

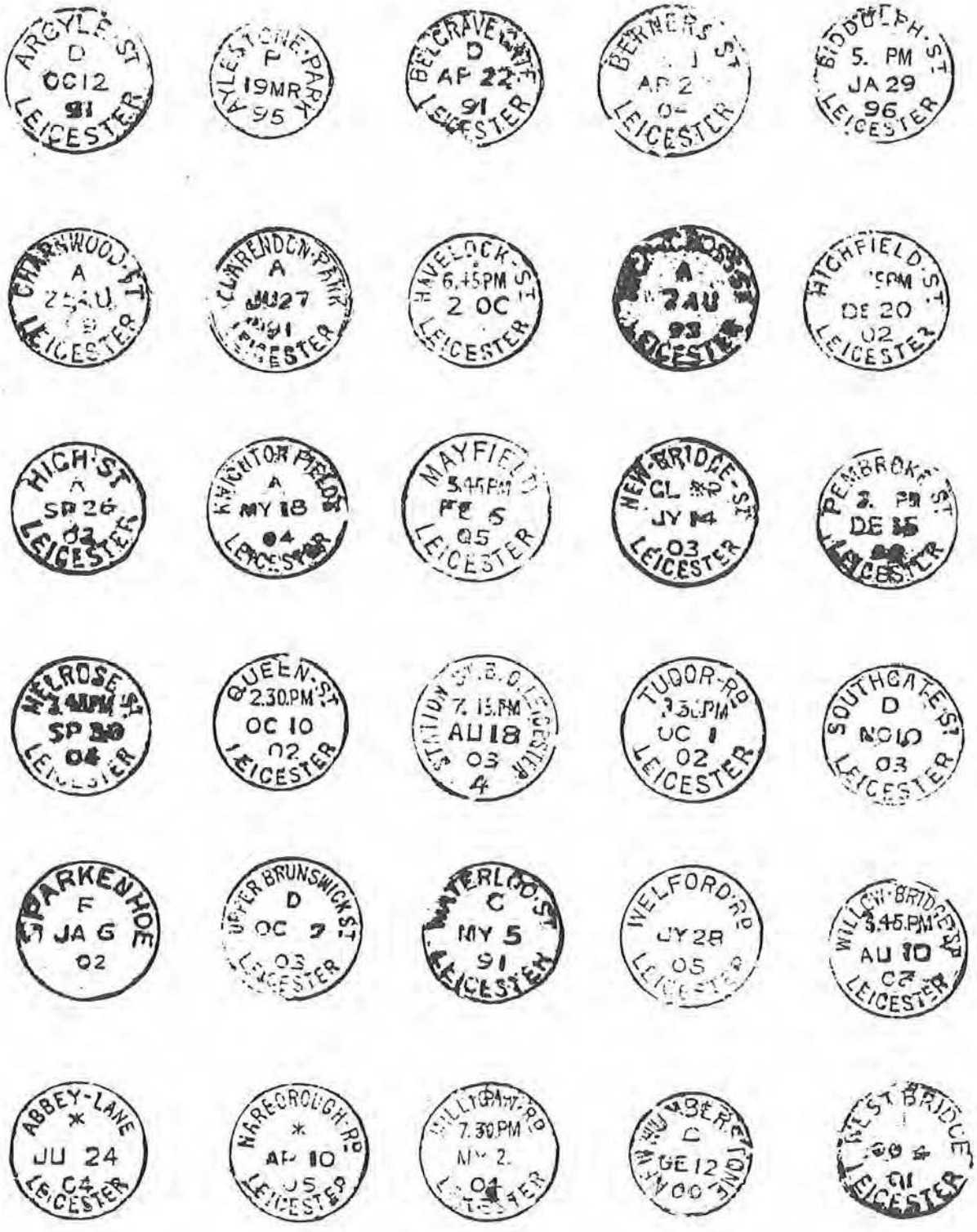
The special concession announced in the Post Office Circular of the 25th of October, 1904, under which post-cards exceeding the prescribed dimensions by not more than $\frac{1}{10}$th of an inch have been allowed to pass temporarily without surcharge, will be withdrawn at the end of this month.

Postmasters should therefore note that on and from the 1st of September next the regulation regarding the size of cards used as post-cards is to be strictly enforced.

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LEICESTER TOWN OFFICES, 1891-1905

This is offered as a response to John Calladine's contribution in MM52, and in the hope that I am not the only person (fool?) interested in these. It is not on the same scale as John's effort since, although there were one or two more offices such as Frog Island, I have not yet found copies of their handstamps.



AUXILIARIES AND ALSO RANS

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

In the article "Four Classes of Mail Coach" (MM53/5ff), reference has occasionally been made to "Auxiliary Mail Coaches" as a term used for some at least of what the list of "c. 1814" refers to as Third Class. This class is described as "Coaches found by the Contractors", some limited to four outside passengers, others allowed "as many as the Act permits". Whether the Fourth Class coaches were also termed auxiliary is uncertain. These were "Penny Post coaches or such as were put on by the surveyors", evidently also privately owned, but generally it seems having no guard and no timepiece; the coachman was armed and responsible for the time-bill. All classes carried passengers inside and outside.

The Report from the Select Committee on Mail Coach Exemption (Parliamentary Papers Vol III 1810-11, pages 709ff) records revealing evidence about Auxiliaries from a Mr Mountain in response to questioning by Sir Patrick Murray, the Chairman:

What is your employment and trade? - A Stage Coach-master.

Where is your house? - The Saracen's Head, Snow-hill.

Have you any concern in Mail Coaches? - I have a small concern; I work a part of an Auxiliary Mail to Boston, which takes the bags at Stilton.

What do you mean by an Auxiliary Mail? - We run a coach from London an hour or two before the Mail that goes to Stilton, and has the letters from the York Mail, which it takes on to Boston, which saves expense.

Then I understand your coach pays Toll from London to Stilton but is exempt from Stilton to Boston? - Certainly.

Do you know what would be the amount of Toll, were your coach subject to it from Stilton to Boston? - I never calculated, but I suppose near 2d. a mile, a distance between forty and fifty miles.

The Third Class list of twenty-three routes, among them Foreign Mails from London to Exeter and Harwich, in "c.1814" (see MM53/6 for the Midlands ones and for comment on the date) included Boston - Stilton, established 5 July 1807. The 1823 mail routes map shows the distance as forty-two miles, but instead of a stagecoach there was from 1818 a patent mail coach from London through to Louth. The London contractor of that in 1824, and of the "Wareham by Poole", was Mr. Fagg of the Bell and Crown, Holborn; he had the Wells(Norfolk) and the Poole in 1838, at the time of the last Procession of London Mail Coaches. At the latter date the "Louth by Boston" was the responsibility of none other than Mr. Mountain of the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill. That is less surprising when it is discovered on a time-bill of 1827 that the upper ground between the G.P.O. was worked by Messrs Fagg and Mountain jointly.

One route seems to have been worked in accordance with Mr. Mountains description of an Auxiliary Mail right through from 1791 to 1843 - the London and Yarmouth. There is no "Yarmouth" on any of the extant lists of the Mails which took their places in the annual processions, yet London directories consistently include it. It may be recalled that the list of London mail coaches signed on 22 November 1837 by Thomas Wedderburn has the note in another hand "This is not a mail coach out of London", (MM40/7). (Senior Clerk then, he had started in the Mail Coach Office in 1827 and was promoted to succeed George Stow as Surveyor and Superintendent of Mail Coaches at the end of 1852.) A time-bill of 1827 shows clearly enough what was meant by the correction. The Yarmouth coach (it had no number) was due to leave London at 6.30 p.m., whereas all others (numbers to be inserted in their time-bills) were to be "dispatched from the General Post Office at 8 p.m. Those others included a Norwich mail coach which followed on the same route through Ingatestone, Witham, Colchester and Bently as far as Ipswich where the mail coach was due at 4.1 a.m., with ten minutes allowed there. The Yarmouth coach was allowed much more time on the journey.

The instruction "to arrive at four" was printed on the time-bill against Ipswich, and there is space to note the connection: "Mail Coach at", before "Off at" with "about 4.15" inserted in m/s. Continuing through Wickham Market, Yoxford and Wangford, where five minutes were allowed, Yarmouth P.O. was to be reached at "11.8 a.m." and the time piece (carried from London without transfer) delivered to the postmaster. Distances are separately totalled, 69 miles 6 furlongs from London to Ipswich, and 54 miles 4furlongs as a mail coach (toll-gates open!). The fact that both the Norwich and Yarmouth time-bills conclude with the standard sentence "The Guard is to give his best assistance in changing whenever his Official Duties do not prevent it" is no proof that the latter had a guard, for what the "c.1814" list calls Fourth Class have the same instruction on their 1827 time-bills but no place for a time piece number nor for the name of the person to whom that might have been entrusted, but instead do have places to insert "Coachman's Name ." It would seem unlikely that a P.O. Guard would be employed to travel sixty-nine miles without mail to protect, so one must assume the coachman was armed and carried the timepiece, and that the mail-box was under his seat; in that case it would make sense if he was a P.O. employee, like the horse-post and mail-cart riders. The contractor of the Yarmouth coach's upper ground was Mr. Eames of the Angel by St. Clement Danes in the Strand and later of the White Horse, Fetter Lane. Neither inn was within easy walking distance of the G.P.O., so it must be assumed the coach did call there just to collect the timepiece and sign for it.

Apart from "Ipswich-Yarmouth" few of the Third and Fourth Class Mails of the "c.1814" list remained as such in 1827 - only the Oxford-Bristol, Southampton-Lymington, Canterbury-Margate and Birmingham-Walsall. Three had become patent coaches, some twenty-five had ceased or become part of a longer route. Conversely, one route previously patent had been downgraded, and non-patent coaches were operating on twenty-three additional routes.

Note: The 1827 time-bills are in private hands. They cover 101 routes in England, Wales and Scotland. There are no "foreign mails" among them, but otherwise the collection seems to be complete. For thirty-one of the routes (since there is no place for a coach number) the contractors supplied the mail coaches, just one of them in Scotland. The remainder were owned by the Post Office and purpose-built.

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THE BISHOP OF TAMWORTH

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

I thought members would be amused by reading what a local historian made of the earliest letter from London to Tamworth he had come across. The letter and comments were published in the Tamworth Herald of 1 November 1940, and are reproduced on the next page. H. Charles Mitchell was so prolific a writer that in due course his collection of newspaper cuttings filled half a dozen large volumes, now in Tamworth Library. If anyone replied or commented on his letters and articles, that too went into the collection. Clearly no-one realised his errors on this occasion. A surprise to me is that neither Mitchell nor his readers drew attention to the fact (if I interpret the content of the letter aright) that in 1726 a house could be purchased for £75 - though he did go on to point out that a builder charged only 1s 4d. for a day's work, and nine feet of eaves boards cost 6d. and 2900 tiles £1 4s 9., when the necessary repairs were done.

Anyway enjoy what he had to say before I spoil it all with my own observations on his findings.

PEEPS INTO THE PAST

No. 25

Thomas Guy's Relations

Contributed by H. CHAS. MITCHELL, A.R.Hist.S.
Hon. Curator Castle Museum

On 4th September 1724, Thomas Guy, founder of the great hospital in London and of Guy's almshouses in Tamworth, sealed his will. Incorporated within that lengthy document are bequests of property in Tamworth to his cousin George Orton, and further gifts to other relatives, amongst whom were Thomas Orton brother of George, and to the wife and children of Benjamin Mitchell.

Guy died shortly afterwards, and about a year after the proving of his will Thomas Orton, who then lived in London, and who appears to have been none too prosperous, sold a house on the Staffordshire side of Church Street which he had inherited from Guy, the purchaser being Elizabeth Mousley. The property adjoined that of Benjamin Mitchell's, which also had been inherited from Guy, and is now to have occupied the site of the Late Mr. H. Hicklin's former residence and his premises. Later, both properties came into the possession of the Marquis Townshend.

I am greatly indebted to Mr. H. E. Hicklin for the gift of some interesting records regarding the sale and subsequent repair of Orton's property.

The legal documents relating to the transfer, written partly in Latin and partly in cursive English, are of no general interest, being of the usual verbose type characteristic of that period.

There are, however, in the collection of papers, personal letters and tradesmen's commonplace bills, which, by the lapse of years, give interesting peeps into the everyday life of our forebears.

EARLIEST TAMWORTH POSTMARK

One of the letters referred to was written on behalf of the brothers Orton by a professional letter-writer. It was written in a clear, firm hand, and will probably endure more years than a modern typescript would months. The letter was posted in London on Feb. 26th, 1726, and, two days later, was delivered in Tamworth. That speaks highly for a winter service, a century before the advent of railways, and shows that our inland communications, even then, were efficiently organised. The missive bears no indication of the cost of its postage.

Two centuries ago envelopes had not been invented, but our forefathers managed exceedingly well without them. The letter was written on one side of a single sheet of paper, of excellent quality, a very broad margin being left down one edge, the address being written on the other side. The sheet was then folded in half, and again twice in the opposite way into two-inch-wide strips, the smaller division forming a flap, which was secured to the larger division by sealing wax. It was impossible to read the correspondence without breaking the seal.

On the outside appeared the address:—

"To mr Jos: Wilson at the Syne of The Wool Pack in Tamworth nigh Lichfield in Warwickshire."

To which the letter-writer appended his own monogram. The date "26 Feby 1726" was added by another hand, probably by the clerk at the receiving office.

On the back of the "envelope" was stamped, what must have been, the earliest Tamworth Post Office date-stamp in existence. It was struck from a circular die five-eighths of an inch in diameter and gave the date on which the letter was received—23th February.

Here is a copy of this interesting stamp.



The Wool Pack tavern stood on the Warwickshire side of Church Street, nearly opposite Thomas Orton's property hence the address, "Warwickshire."

Following is a copy of the letter sent to mine host, Joseph Wilson.

"Mr. Wilson

I return you many Thanks for your loving Care yt you have Taken in my affare, As for mrs Mosely's Account I think it tis very fare, it being Sixt Six pounds Seven Shillings and Six pence and the Ballance Due to me is Eight pounds Twelve Shillings and Six pence which makes Seventy five pounds, which is According to our former Agreement, and when you have received the mony I desire that you will remit the Same p' Bill or in Cash for my brother George is to have halfe the Sum mentioned and his Mody may order the Writtings to be made as Soon as She Sees fit I desire that you will give my love to my wife and Child and so doth my brother George, mr Wilson I am so very ill that I could not wright my Self and God knows when I shall be better—I am

Yor loving friend and humble Servt

London, Febry the 26 1726

(signed in shaky handwriting)
THO: ORTON
GEORGE ORTON"

Mrs. Mousley having purchased the property then proceeded to put it in repair. Following are copies of some of the bills rendered by various builders. Bill-heads appear to have been unknown, and the accounts were made out on scraps of paper [illegible] written on both sides.

JOBBING BUILDERS TWO CENTURIES AGO

"Work Done for Mrs Mousley for 27 hours of sparing a 2 pence half penny a yard comon; to

	£	s.	d.	qr.
	00	05	7	2
for 2 wall staves	00	03	0	0
for 9 foot of oake boards	00	00	6	0
for won day Scores of my self	00	01	4	0
for won day's worck of my son	00	01	0	0
	00	11	5	2"

From which it appears that a jobbing builder, in 1726, charged 1s. 4d. for a day's work for himself, probably of eleven or twelve hours, and that his account, for labour and materials, amounted to eleven shillings and five pence half penny.

He was evidently an old-timer, and clung to the ways of his fathers. Other builders were advertising the property adjoining in the local newspaper column, but the quarters [illegible] continued to be very erratic.

"Work Done for Mr Mousley
For the Sons of Thomas orton
For 50 yards of coate spring at 3 pence half penny a yard

	£	s.	d.
	00	06	3
for Lining	00	03	6
for won prop	00	02	0
for won prop	00	00	4
for 22 yards of spar'g at 3 pence 2/4 a yard	00	06	5
for 7 yards of spar'g at 3 pence a yard	00	01	9
for 2 days and a half worck	00	03	4
	1	3	11"

BURTON
TAILORS AND OUTFITTERS
DRESS YOU
Tamworth: 15-16, GEORGE STREET

The 28th February 1726 was a Monday. The letter, written the previous Saturday, will in fact have left the G.P.O. around 2 a.m. on Wednesday 2nd. March, and with luck reached Tamworth the next day. Mitchell did not make out the word "Free" or the signature following and had not heard of a franked letter. Nor did he realise the probability that Joseph Wilson was a solicitor or property agent rather than the innkeeper. Whether the Wool Pack was also the post office I don't know. Postmasters of Tamworth are known from 1697, but no postmark is yet recorded earlier than 1739. This letter is the earliest clear evidence yet seen that Tamworth was served by a bye-post from Lichfield, and not from Coleshill as in 1669; it remains guesswork that it was a thrice-weekly horse-post, part of the Lichfield postmaster's "riding work". So thank you, Charles Mitchell, for recording what you saw in 1940. Tamworth Castle Museum might even find the letter and more evidence besides. It's worth asking.

*****

SIX-DAY TOWNS, 1761 & 1763

Reproduced below is a list of towns, which were to receive mail from London six-days a week, additional to those on the 1755 list (MM56/17). On the opposite page is the full list of 1763. I have tried to mark those which were added after 1761 with a x, but check for yourselves. Again relevant to the articles by Chris Beaver in previous issues is that although Coventry was added in 1761, Coleshill and Lichfield still do not appear. Some towns, e.g. Ampthill, Bromsgrove and Evesham appear on the 1755 list but not on that of 1763.

Additional Places ſent to every Night, by Order of the Poſtmaſter-General, June 22, 1761.

Appleby	Darlington	Kendal
Barnard's-Caſtle	Daventry	Keſwick
Barnet	Doncaſter	Lancaſter
Barnſley	Dunſtable	Leeds
Bawtry	Durham	Lewis
Biſceſter	Eaſingwould	Mansfield
Bradford, Yorkſhire	Eaſt-Grinſtead	Middlewich
Brough	Ferrybridge	Newark
Carliſle	Grantham	Newcaſtle
Caxton	Hallifax	Northallerton
Cheſterfield	Howden	Penrith
Chorley	Hull	Preſton
Cockermouth	Huntingdon	Rawcliffe
Coventry	Huthersfield	Rotherham
Ryegate	Stratford on Avon	Whitehaven
St Albans	Tadcaſter	Wigan
Sheffield	Thirſk	Workington
Shipton	Thorne	Worksop
Stilton	Tuxford	York
Stamford	Wakefield	

GENERAL POST-OFFICE, October 10, 1763.

His Majesty's Poſtmaſter-General have been pleaſed to eſtabliſh a Daily Poſt to and from the following Towns, (*Sundays* excepted)

Abingdon
xAnnan
Appleby
Athburton
Attleborough
Barnard'sCaſtle
Barnet
Barnſley
Bath
Bawtry
Beccles
Beconsfield
Birmingham
Biſcefter
Bradford, York
Bridgewater
Briſtol
Brough
Burntwood
xBurton
Bury St. Edmd.
Cambridge
Campden
Canterbury
Carliſle
Caxton
Chatham
Chelmsford
Chortley
Cheſter
Chetterfield
Chipp. Norton
Chorley, Lanc.
Cirenceſter
Claremont
Cobham
Cockermouth
Colcheſter
xColeſworth
xColterſworth
Coventry
Croydon
Dorking
Darlington
Dartford
Daventry
Deal, Derby
Doncaſter
Dover, Dunſtable
xDroitwich
xDumfries.
Durham
Eaſingwold
Eaſt-Grinſtead
Enfield, Epſom
Eſher, (Surrey)
Exeter
Farringdon
Ferrybridge
Feverſham
xGarſtang
Gerrards Croſs
Glouceſter
xGodſtone
Grantham
Gravefend
Grays
Guildford
Halifax
Ham in Surry
HamptonCourt
HamptonTown
HamwickSurry
Hanworth,Mid
xHenley Arden
Hereford
Hertford
High Wickham
Howden
Hurthersfield
Hull
Huntingdon
Ingateſton
Ipſwich
Iſleworth
Kelvedon
Kendal
Keſwick
Kingſton
Kingſton Wick
Lalam
Lancaſter
Leatherhead
xLedbury
Leeds
Leiceſter
Lewes
Littleton, Mid.
Liverpool
Loughborough
Lowſtoff, Lynn
Maidſtone
Mancheſter
Manſfield
Mark.Harboro
Middlewich
Mouſley,Surry
Namptwich
Newark
Newcaſtle
Newmarket
Newport Pagn.
Northallerton
Northampton
Northwich
Norwich
Nottingham
Oxford
Penrith
Peterſham
Plymouth
Portsmouth
Preſcot
Preſton
Queenborough
Rawcliff
Richm. Surry
Ripley, Surry
xRochdale
Rocheſter
Rotherham
Royſton
Rumford
Rygate
Sandwich
Saxmundham
Sheffield
Shepperton
St. Albans
Shiffnall
Shifton
Shrewſbury
Sittingbourn
Southall
Stafford
Stamford
Stilton
StokeinNorfolk
Stone
Stratford, Avon
Sunbury
Tadcaſter
Taunton
Teddington
Thame
Thames Ditton
Thanet
Thetford
Thirsk
Thorne
Tiverton
Tuxford
Twickenham
Uxbridge
Wakefield
Walſall
Walton
xWare
Warrington
Warwick
Wellington
Wells
Weybridge
Whitehaven
Wigan
Windham Norf
Windſor
WinghamKent
Witham
Witton
Wolverhampton
Wooburn
Worceſter
Workington
Workſop
Yarmouth
York.

A Mail from London *to* Edinburgh, *and from* Edinburgh *to* London, *departs every* Monday, Tueſday, Thurſday, Friday, *and* Saturday; *in which are included the Letters to and from* Morpeth, Alnwick, Belford, *and* Berwick.

A Poſt is eſtabliſhed ſix Times a Week between Edinburgh *and* Aberdeen, Glaſgow, Greenock, *and other intermediate Towns in* Scotland.

To Tunbridge *every Night from* Midſum. *to* Michaelmas.

Bags for the following Towns are diſpatch'd Mondays, Tueſdays, Thurſdays, *and* Saturdays; *and the Returns are delivered*, Mondays, Wedneſdays *and* Saturdays, *viz.* Arundel, Brighthelmſton, Chicheſter, Godalmin, Haſlemere, Midhurſt, Petworth, Steyning, and Shoreham.

The Mail goes from *London* by way of *New-York*, for the Continent of *North-America*, the ſecond *Saturday* in every Month.

To *New-York*, *New-England*, *Virginia*, *Maryland*, and all the other Colonies on the Continent of *North-America*, a ſingle

THE R.A.F. IN SHROPSHIRE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

PART 2

by Steph Stobbs

I must apologise, most sincerely, for not dealing sooner with the wonderful response that I had to my article in MM53, but this was due to domestic reasons beyond my control. It would be invidious to mention anyone in particular, but it would be wrong if I did not express my thanks to Brian Atkins who, when collaborating with me in writing articles on camps of all kinds in Shropshire for the "Shropshire Post" wrote to the Ministry of Defence, Air Historical Branch. He has kindly passed on to me the information he received, and extracts from this are included under each camp. Also included is further information supplied by my friend who inspired the first article.

ATCHAM
RAF Atcham was opened as a Station in No. 9 (Fighter) Group on 20 August 1941. It was also a 9 Group Sector HQ for a period. Squadrons, all flying Spitfires, based there were: No. 131 (County of Kent) 27.9.41 - 8.2.42; No. 350 (Belgian) 17.2.42 - 5.4.42; No. 232 10.4.42 - 16.5.42. On 11 June 1942, Atcham was taken over by 31st United States Pursuit Group whose Headquarters it became. It remained with the USAAF (8th Air Force) until it was returned to the RAF on 14 March 1945. It then became a satellite of RAF Ternhill in Flying Training Command. Atcham was officially abandoned on 22 October 1946, and was finally disposed of on 20 January 1958.

It is almost four miles E.S.E. of Shrewsbury. I have never seen a R.A.F. cover. It is almost certain that the civilian post office they used would have been Shrewsbury. The U.S. Forces used "U.S. Army Postal Service 526". Also covers exist from: 1042 Signals Co; 2909 South England Flying Training Squadron; 29th South England "B" Depot.

BRIDGNORTH (Previously known as STANMORE CAMP)
Stanmore is 1.5 miles east of Bridgnorth.

Stanmore ,Bridgnorth Salop	1941
Bridgnorth.Shropshire/R.A.F.P.O.	S/R 20.12.43 - 25.4.46
Bridgnorth R.A.F. Bridgnorth/Shropshire	D/R 13.11.58 - 5.6.62
Bridgnorth R.A.F./Shropshire	Seal Issued 4.9.61
R.A.F. Post Office/Date/Bridgnorth	49 6.1.56
R.A.F.Post Office/Date/Bridgnorth.Salop	73 10.3.59 - 30.4.63

BRIDLE WAY GATE
This is a mile N.N.E of Preston Brockhurst, Shrewsbury.
245 Maintenance Unit January 1944 to October 1945.

BROCKTON
There are five "Brockton"s in Shropshire but I believe this is 3 miles S.W. of Shifnal.

CHETWYND
This is 1.5 miles N.N.W. of Newport.

CONDOVER
I know well this little airfield, 4.5 miles south of Shrewsbury, as I used to sit on Lyth Hill with my family, and watch the planes take off and land. It was used as a satellite for Shawbury from August 1942, then Ternhill from February, 1944. It was placed on a care and maintenance basis in May 1945, and finally closed down on 21 May 1946. Since Condover RAFPO was ordered in 1944, and the station was not placed on a care and maintenance basis until May 1945, there must be a small chance this datestamp did exist and copies may still be seen.

COSFORD
An additional camp, Cosford is two miles west of Albrighton.
Cosford Camp/Wolverhampton.Staffs S/R 1.8.40 - 1946
Cosford Camp/Wolverhampton/Staffs 18 2.1.59
Parcel Received/Open/Damaged/At R.A.F.
Post Room, Cosford/Date.....Senior Postal Clerk 50-9
Station Mail Room/Date/Royal Air Force Cosford 203 25.11.59
R.A.F.A. Rocket Display/Date/Wolverhampton.Staffs 176 27.9.69
Cosford Camp.Wolverhampton.West Midlands S/R 1977

HALFPENNY GREEN
The name was changed from BOBBINGTON so as to avoid confusion with Bovingdon. It is 2.5 miles E.S.E. of Claverley.

HIGH ERCALL
This is about five miles N.W. of Wellington. It was occupied by the following: 60 OT Unit, May 1943 - March 1945; 29th Maintenance Unit, October 1940 - October 1945; 222nd Maintenance Unit from May 1942. The fact that a datestamp was ordered in 1945 along with the report of a RAFPO registered label must give hope of eventual success here too.

HINSTOCK (OLLERTON)
Hinstock is a little over five miles S.S.E. of Market Drayton. Ollerton is Two miles S.S.E. of Stoke-upon-Tern. No postmark has been reported.

HODNET
Is 5.5 miles S.W. of Market Drayton. Again no postmark has been reported.

MONTFORD BRIDGE
The site was prepared as a satellite airfield for Atcham in 1940. It was later decided that it should also be used as a satellite for the Fighter Operational Training Unit (No. 61) at Rednal. It was transferred to Maintenance Command on 8 August 1945 abandoned 15 November 1947, and transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture 1949/50. 34th. Maintenance Unit were there January 1944 to December 1950.

PEPLOW
Originally this airfield, three miles S.S.E. of Hodnet, was known as Child's Ercall but was renamed Peplow on 16 August 1943 to avoid confusion with High Ercall. The first recorded use was in March 1941. In January 1942 it became unservicable but reopened in 93 Group on 24 May 1943 as a O.T.U. On 28 October 1944 Peplow was transferred to 23 Group and 23 H.G.C.U. formed to train glider pilots following the heavy losses at Arnhem. On 17th January 1945 this unit was disbanded. For a month from 26 January No. 21(P)A.F.U. (21 Group) used Peplow after moving from a satellite at Tatenhill. They moved out on 28 February when Peplow was loaned to the Royal Navy.
Peplow R.A.F.P.O./Market Drayton S/R 3.8.44 - 6.10.44
Also a registration label R.A.F.P.O. Peplow, Market Drayton No. 0941 used on 6.10.44

REDNAL
Rednal, which is N.W. of Shrewsbury opened on 8 April 1942 in No. 81 Group, Fighter Command. No. 61 Operational Training Unit was located there from 16 April to June 1945, flying Spitfires. It was placed on a care and maintenance basis in June 1945 and finally closed down on 15 April 1946.
Rednal R.A.F.P.O./Oswestry.Salop S/R 3.8.44 - 22.8.44

SHAWBURY
Although Shawbury village post office is no distance from this camp, seven miles N.E. of Shrewsbury, almost all the mail seems to have through Shrewsbury Head Post Office. It was occupied by 27th. Maintenance Unit from 1938.
Station Post Office/Date/* Royal Air Force, Shawbury *
13.4.48

SLEAP

This station, half-a-mile S. of Crudington, Wellington, was opened on 15 January 1943 in No. 93 Group, Bomber Command as a satellite to Tilstock. On 1 January 1944 the airfield was transferred to No. 38 Group for glider towing. On 28 December 1945 Sleap was placed on care and Maintenance and transferred to No. 25 Group. It is interesting to note the following information given for it: Address - Myddle, Shrewsbury; Telephone - Wem 180; Railway Station - Yorton.
Sleap R.A.F.P.O./Shrewsbury.Shropshire S/R 1944 -1945.

STOKE HEATH

One of our members who served in the R.A.F. confirms that this was not part of Ternhill but a separate station 4.5 miles S.S.W. of Market Drayton. No. 24 M.U. moved from Ternhill to Stoke Heath in July 1943. It disbanded there on 15 March 1951 but was reformed at Stoke Heath on 1 June 1956, by the amalgamatiom of Nos. 30, 34 and 291 M.Us.
Stoke Heath R.A.F.P.O./Market Drayton.Salop S/R 22.9.44 - 8.8.53
R.A.F.P.O./Stoke Heath
* R.A.F. */Stoke Heath/Date/Market Drayton/
Station Post Office 24.2.49

TERNHILL

This large and important station is three miles W.S.W. of Market Drayton. The post office was first a RAF operated RAFPO followed later by a GPO manned RAF Station PO. Each may have occupied the same premises but at different times.
Ternhill R.A.F.P.O./Market Drayton.Salop S/R 22.9.44 - 13.11.56
Ternhill R.A.F./Market Drayton.Shropshire S/R 26.1.58 - 10.1.71
Parcel Post/1/Ternhill R.A.F.P.O./
Market Drayton/Shropshire 17 1947
RAF Post Office/Ternhill/-/-/Market Drayton/Salop 100
RAF/Ternhill/Market Drayton/Salop/Post Office 101 29.1.60 - 15.2.60
R.A.F. Post Office/Ternhill 234

TILSTOCK

This station, originally named WHITCHURCH HEATH was 2.5 miles S. of Whitchurch about halh-a-mile from Higher Heath. The station opened on 28 August 1942, and 81 Operational Training Unit, the main unit in occupation throughout the Second World War, arrived in September. On 12 May 1946 the station was transferred to Maintenance Command. It was reduced to inactive status on 11 December 1953 and finally disposed of on 1 August 1956.

WESTON PARK

This is N.N.E. of Tong. I have postmarks from civilians at Weston but these are always the single circle or double circle of Weston-under-Lizard.

*****

G.B. COVERS

Do you see my lists of GB cover material? If you don't and are a member of The Midland (GB) Postal History Society, you should! They contain a wide selection of interesting and unusual items - county material, difficult values and rates- from 1840 to date. Send for a copy of my latest list today. All 'Wants Lists' for specific items or county material will receive my personal attention.

ROGER HUDSON PTS

P.O. Box 172,
COVENTRY CV6 6NF

Phone: Warwick (0926) 492326

AN 1829 TIME-BILL

Alf Fieldhouse has kindly sent this copy of a time-bill which is notable for the manuscript comment: "Time lost in Warwick by being upset as the coach was turning round the corner of the market place, opposite the post office, broke one of the lamps, & the beading off the top of the coach, no other part is injured. The coachman's name is Pinker to whom no blame is to be attached."

GENERAL POST-OFFICE.

. Duke of *MANCHESTER*, His Majesty's Postmaster-General.

Birmingham and *London* TIME BILL.

Dispatched from the Post-Office, *Birmingham*, the ... of ... 182 ... at ... by Time-Piece / by Clock

To leave the *Coach Office* at 5 : 30.

Coach No. 213 sent out { With a Time-Piece safe / No. ... to ...

Contractors' Names	Number of Passengers In.	Number of Passengers Out.	M.	F.	Time allowed. H.	Time allowed. M.	
Vyse	4	4	12..		1	16	Arrived at *Learnfield*, at 6-45
Tims	4	4	9..		1		Arrived at *Warwick*, at 7-50
						10	*Ten Minutes allowed.*
Bodily	1	2	9..4		1	1	Arrived at *Southam*, at 9-40
	1	2	5..6			37	Arrived at *Fenny Compton Wharf*, at 10-20
	1	2	8..4		1		Arrived at *Banbury*, at 11-20
Drinkwater						10	*Ten Minutes allowed.*
	1	2	15..4		1	45	Arrived at *Bicester*, at 1-20
Deakin	2	3	17..		1	50	Arrived at *Aylesbury*, at 3-55
	2	3					Arrived at *Berkhempstead*, at 5-9
	2	3					Arrived at the *Green Man* and *Still*, at 8-15
Hearn	2	3	42..2		4	40	Arrived at the General Post-Office, the ... of ...
			119..4		13	29	182..., at ...

Coach No. 3 arrived { Delivered the Time-Piece safe / No. ... to ...

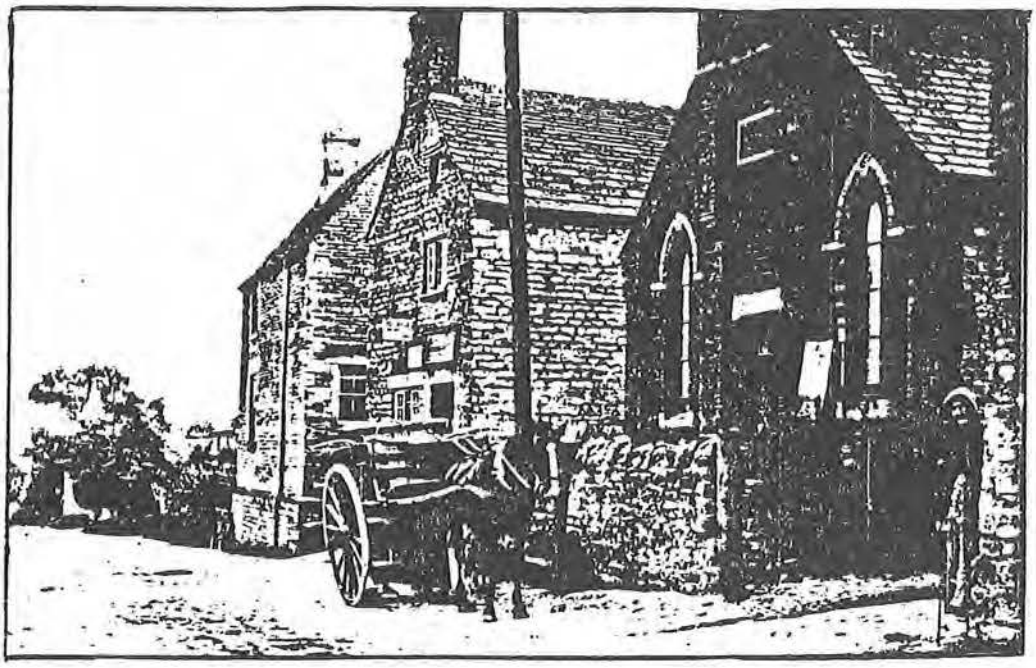
THE Time of working each Stage is to be reckoned from the Coach's Arrival: and as any Time lost, is to be recovered in the course of the Stage, it is the Coachman's Duty to be as expeditious as possible, and to report the Horse-keepers if they are not always ready when the Coach arrives, and active in getting it off. The Guard is to give his best assistance in changing, whenever his Official Duties do not prevent it.

By Command of the Postmaster-General,

CHARLES JOHNSON,
Surveyor and Superintendent.

A RUTLAND POST OFFICE

We rarely mention Rutland in this journal, so the postcard of Greetham is to rectify this and to act as a "trailer" for the January meeting.



RUTLAND LIVES

In case you thought that the Post Office had abolished the above county, this is to show that you were wrong. Presumably the aim is to distinguish this Belton from that near Loughborough amongst others.



THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

This will appear after the January meeting. In addition to the usual reports, it is hoped to include a look at some rural posts in the Southwest Midlands as well as more on mileage marks. As for the rest ....
John Soer, 51d Barkham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 2RG.

For POSTAL HISTORY

Especially GB (County), Maritime, Transatlantic and some Foreign

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