

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Number 149, April 2007

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Our Annual General Meeting and Auction will be held on **21st April** at **St Germain's Church Hall, Portland Road, Birmingham**. The AGM is scheduled to begin at 1.15 p.m. and the auction should start at 1.45 pm, but full details of the day are given in the auction catalogue.

On **12th May** our meeting is held in conjunction with the Worcester Society's Annual Fair and the Midland Philatelic Federation's Spring Convention at **Oldbury Park Primary School, Worcester**. The fair opens at 10.30am and thirty-one dealers are scheduled to attend. The meeting which will begin at 1.30 pm will be devoted to members' displays of "Squared Circles". It is hoped to have on display the copy, that the Society has purchased, of the latest edition of the book on squared circles at that meeting.

Midpex will take place on **30th June**. Further details appear on page 6.

Please note that there is no report of the February meeting as it was cancelled because of the weather in the West Midlands.



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THE JANUARY MEETING

Whenever Eric Lewis stands up to display material, we have come to expect that we will see a very entertaining and eclectic mixture of postal history and related material. Those present on 10th January were not disappointed when Eric opened "Box 13", though he did admit that the contents now occupied three boxes.. Eric began with a number of covers with weird addresses and followed those with a copy of the *Morning Post* for 6th May 1840 which contained the comment on the Mulreadies - "A more disgraceful production it is difficult to conceive." Then came covers illustrating the anti-vaccination campaign of the nineteenth century.

The second section of Eric's display began with a sheet entitled "Post Office Precision". A letter of 1739 carried an Edinburgh Bishopmark on which a London Bishopmark had been superimposed exactly. We then a 1775 AIR mail cover, though this had more to do with a town in Scotland rather than transit through the skies. A page from the stamp impression book of the Pershore post office contained an inspector's comment "Try to keep cleaner." Another item from the same office showed that not only were the postmen expected to work for several hours on Christmas Day starting at either 5am or 6am, but also to be back at 5am on Boxing Day for a full days work.

Next, Eric showed us a number of covers carrying unusual endorsements. A letter on which a Late Fee had been paid had written round the penny stamp "Extra stamp to save tonight's post". While a letter which, judging from the dates in the datestamps, had taken 6300 years to deliver showed the endorsement "Immediate". A card advertising Dr Dandruff's White Wax Hair Nourisher, which cost 19s/6d carried the inscription "Let your maid rub the hair nourisher into the parting with emery paper".

Among a number of covers carrying 'Postage Due' adhesives was an unsealed item which had been returned to sender. As the post office concerned had no 1½ Postage Due the charge had been made up of a 1d and a bisected 1d stamp.

Among other amusing items shown by Eric were: a letter sent in 1791 from the GPO to the postmaster of Bridgnorth granting him a rise backdated five years and which said " ... hope that this will have the effect of inciting you to an assiduous care of the Revenue and that you will do the business of the office with the greatest punctuality and exactness."; a letter addressed to a "Mr Woodward deceased" which started "Dear Mr Woodward deceased"; a telegram sent by a farmer to the nearest fire station "Come at once. Rick on fire."; a rather terse letter of seventeen of which the main part was - "I have decided not to send my son to school again."; and to counterbalance the previous item a card carrying no fewer than 1517 words - or so Eric told us.

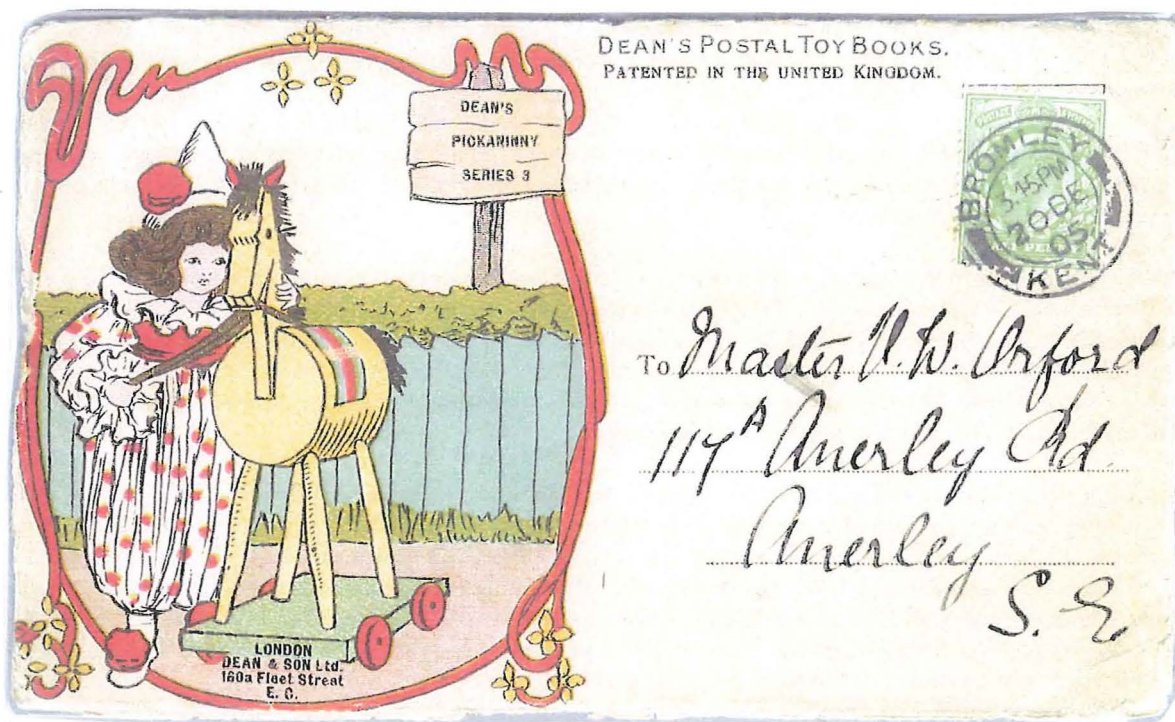
Eric began the second half by showing a number of Chinese montage cards. These consisted of designs such as a Union Jack on a flag pole made out of pieces of postage stamps. A large interlocking design had been constructed from three types of postage stamp - the penny lilac, the five anna red and the penny red. Then came a large section on advertising material which included receipts from the Falcon Inn, Bromyard and the Angel Inn, Ludlow, and an advertisement for Sunlight Soap in the form of a penny lilac carrying the word "Stamp out Dirt".

The next section consisted of covers with the dealers' descriptions. A cover of 1840 described as "slightly over inked" on which the adhesive had been almost totally obliterated by the Maltese Cross cancellation was a typical example. We then saw a number of tiny covers from the Victorian era. These were followed by a section entitled "Abnormal Rates" where sums such as ¾, 1¼, 1¾ in various currencies were made up of a stamp plus the appropriate part of a stamp.

In January 1946 the Conservative party sent out letters carrying the slogan "A Happy New Year/and a NEW GOVERNMENT SOON". The latter part was blacked out by the Post Office. Of particular note in the latter part of Eric's display were three examples of 'Dean's Postal Toy Books'. Each booklet consisted of eight pages stapled into an envelope with gummed tear off edges which then formed the book cover. When introduced these 'toy books' being in a 'sealed envelope' could only be posted at the one penny letter rate. From 2nd May 1905 revised regulations to the halfpenny packet post, which now included all formal, partly-printed items, permitted these 'toy books' to be posted at the ½d up to two ounces rate. (See the upper item on the next page.) Eric also showed us examples of novelty folded cards that could be sent at the halfpenny rate after the regulations had been changed,

In his vote of thanks Derek Smeathers said that the word to use to describe the display was "entertainment". The material had been presented in an entertaining way and also showed what an enormous amount of knowledge Eric possessed. It had been a truly fascinating afternoon.

The envelope to series three was posted at the correct halfpenny packet post rate for December 1905.



LITTLE Betty Blue lost her holiday shoe:
What can Little Betty do?
Give her another to match the other,
And then she may walk in two.



THREE wise men of Gotham
Went to sea in a bowl;
If the bowl had been stronger,
My tale would have been longer.

THE MARCH MEETING

There was an excellent attendance at the Collingwood Centre on 10th March when the theme of members' displays was '*Redirected, Misdirected and Missent Mail*'. Richard Farman began the proceedings appropriately with two very early 'missents' of 1790 and 1793 from Staffordshire. The earlier cover had a manuscript 'Missent to Stone' while the later one, sent from Nantwich to Newcastle under Lyne showed a manuscript 'Missent to Lichfield'. Richard also showed the different types of missent mark used at Stafford in 1834, 1839 and 1842. Jim Hammond's display was on the charges shown on redirected mail which were paid on receipt after redirection. These included a letter sent in 1851 from Bovey Tracey in 1851 to Bitton and then redirected to Chew Magna; three London items with handstruck '1's; and a 1^d₄₀₀ in an oval on a letter redirected from Ilfracombe.

Alan Godfrey then took us to Warwickshire from where we saw three missent items from Stratford-on-Avon, the missent marks of Warwick (1853) and Leamington. We also saw a Returned Letter Branch mark on a cover from Leamington as well as an unusual mark - 'PO BOX CEASED'. Then on to Worcestershire from where Chris Jackson showed the oval missent marks of Kidderminster (1831) and Stour port (1823). There was a redirected cover with a penny black as well as a number of covers with 'Missent to' in manuscript in conjunction with a variety of different handstamps.. Chris rounded off his frame with the actual missent mark of Worcester.

Next, we paid a longer visit to Northamptonshire. Derek Smeathers displayed a number of misdirected and missent covers., beginning with a manuscript 'Missent to' alongside the boxed 'TOWCESTER/60' mileage mark. A letter of 1851 addressed to Corby was redirected to Rockingham, while a letter of 1839 was missent to Kettering where it was endorsed "try near Northampton". A letter sent from Scaldwell to Binfield and then redirected to Jersey showed three UDC marks - those of Scaldwell (1) and Binfield (2). We stayed in Northants to see Paul Bradshaw's material which began with a letter of 1787 from Thrapstone on which the reply had been written. The Thrapstone mileage mark was used in conjunction with a manuscript "Missent to". Unusually the missent mark of Daventry, of which we saw a strike of 1831, comes in three lines. A more recent cover of Paul's was one of 1971 struck with a 'NOT KNOWN AT/ NORTHAMPTON' mark.

Bob Viney showed us three examples of the small triangular marks that one school of thought says are railway missent marks - SW/2, GE/6 and SOU^TON/5. The last of these was used on a card sent from Lucerne to Quorn. Bob produced a number of overseas items. A letter sent in 1882 from Bath to Moscow was redirected at the latter place, while a letter of 1906 appeared to go London to Buxton to Omsk. Finally, a letter carried three strikes of a Bridgewater squared circle as it was carried to and from villages in that area. Sadie Cole began with a letter for Leintwardine which had been sent in error to Hereford. Another cover carried fourteen different marks among which were handstamps of Chester, Kington, Shrewsbury and Radnor. The journey of a more recent letter took in Ipswich, Knighton, Ludlow, Morpeth and Scunthorpe on its journey from London to Presteigne.

Our next 'port of call' was Nottinghamshire. Mick Gill began with what must surely be the earliest (and most rare?) missent mark - that of Newark, in this case used in 1787 on a letter from Alnwick to Claxby. We saw a later missent mark of Newark used on a Mulready. A letter of 1804 which had been misdirected to Newark was annotated "Supposed Southwell". Although most of his material was from Nottinghamshire, Alan Marshall did stray over the border into Leicestershire with the boxed missent mark of Loughborough on a letter from Leicester to Derby. Alan also showed the missent mark of Nottingham struck in red and black inks.

Eric Lewis said that the staff in the sorting offices seem to have been confused about the difference between 'missent' and 'misdirected' for although a letter had been incorrectly addressed as "Bewdley, Birmingham", the Birmingham office had stamped it with a missent handstamp. A letter wrongly addressed to Hereford was also treated as a missent letter. However, Worcester actually had a mark 'MISDIRECTED TO' which we saw used alongside a cds. Eric also showed a variety marks from Birmingham which ranged from a "Missent to Birmingham" wholly in manuscript, through a manuscript "Missent to" used along with a straight-line mark to a number of actual missent handstamps struck in a range of colours.

Guy Bridges also produced two early items - a letter of 1773 from Worcester to Whitchurch which was sent in error to Shrewsbury, and one sent in 1789 from Bristol to Donnington which again was sent to Shrewsbury. In this case the letter was endorsed "Try Donnington near Shiffnal". Three different missent handstamps were used at Shrewsbury and Guy showed examples of these in different colours. Finally, we saw the 'MISDIRECTED TO' mark of Shrewsbury used in 1889.

BARRED NUMERAL CANCELLATIONS

John Parmenter writes that he has started work on the third and final update of the 'Barred Numeral Cancellations of England and Wales'. John would be grateful if members could send to him any new information that could be incorporated in the update.

Illustrated below is an example of the new format which includes the status of the various offices as well as the information acquired since the publication of the original volumes. The latter are underlined. To make it more useful, old unchanged dates are included.

Office status is important as it helps to explain: the rarity of many cancellations; the variety and number of cancellations issued; dates of use and transit marks.

Any information should be sent to John Parmenter, 23 Jeffrey's Road, London SW4 6QU, or by e-mail to john.parmenter@btconnect.com

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4VOD 29AUG1864 to 24JUN1899 Price A £3

4VODX Split in the upper bars 24JUN1899 Code E Price H £50



MALTESE CROSS CANCELLATIONS

Our member Mike Jackson has recently published the first volume of an 'Encyclopaedia of The Maltese Cross Cancellations of Great Britain and Ireland'. An advertisement for this appears below.

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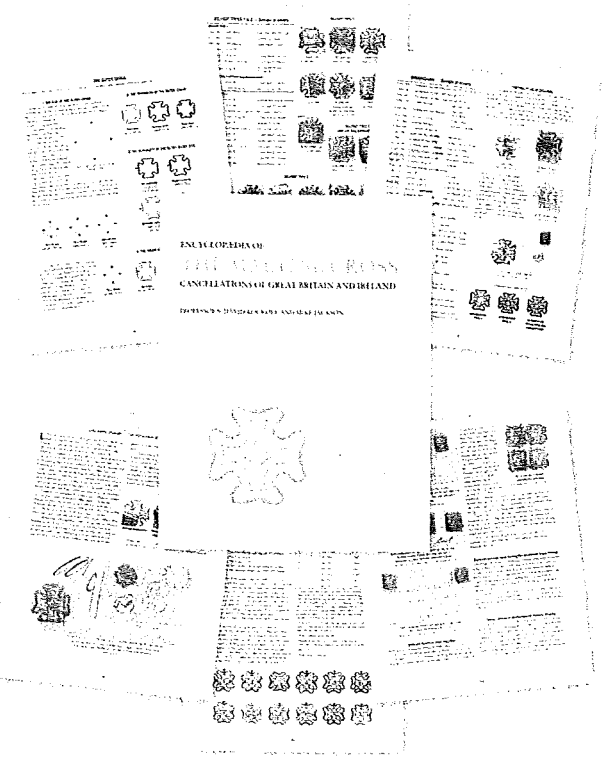
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MIDPEX 2007

The Society will have a stand at this event for which details are given below. If you are going to be there please do visit our stand. Offers of help on the day will be very gratefully received.

MIDPEX 2007.

Midpex 2007 will take place at "Midlands Sports Centre for the Disabled, Cromwell Lane, Tile Hill, Coventry, CV4 8AS on Sat 30th June 2007.

Progress Report at End February 2007.

1. We have 43 Dealers signed up, including many from outside the Midlands, and two from the Netherlands. Details can be found on the website.
2. We have 42 Specialist Societies signed up. Details can be found on the website.
3. The Web-Site is up and running, and is being updated. <http://www.Midpex.co.uk>
4. Information for the Exhibition Brochure is now being collated.
5. A single page "flyer" will be produced and made available around late April/early May.
6. Exhibition Hall layouts are being finalised and will be available for viewing on the website.
7. "How to Get There" maps will be included on the website, on the single page "flyers", with local train and bus timetables, and postcodes for those with satellite navigation equipment.
8. ABPS are providing generous support with frames, and will be holding their AGM during the Exhibition.

Cavendish have agreed to act as sponsors, their extremely generous support will help to make this a successful venture.

So can you all sit back and wait for it to happen? No, of course not!

We want your support, particularly with regard to co-ordinating Advertising and Publicity, are you prepared to help? If so contact either:-

Bryan Jones, Chairman, Midpex Organising Committee – bryanjones@editorpisc.fsnet.co.uk
(Tel no:- 0121-744-7673).

Colin Searle, Secretary Midpex Organising Committee – searlec@gmail.com (07879 6656458)

Even if no-one is willing to act as co-ordinator for all Advertising and Publicity we want all Midland Philatelic Societies to undertake publicity, nearer the date of the Exhibition, in your own areas. If you have a nominee in your society, who is not already represented on the Committee please contact the committee so that you, too, can be kept informed.

From a standing start we are "up and running", there is still much to be done, but we have a hardworking committee who are determined to make this, the biggest Philatelic exhibition in the Midlands, a resounding success, and establish a framework to be carried over to the next Midpex in 2009, almost certainly in the new Sports Centre at Tile Hill which should be available by then.

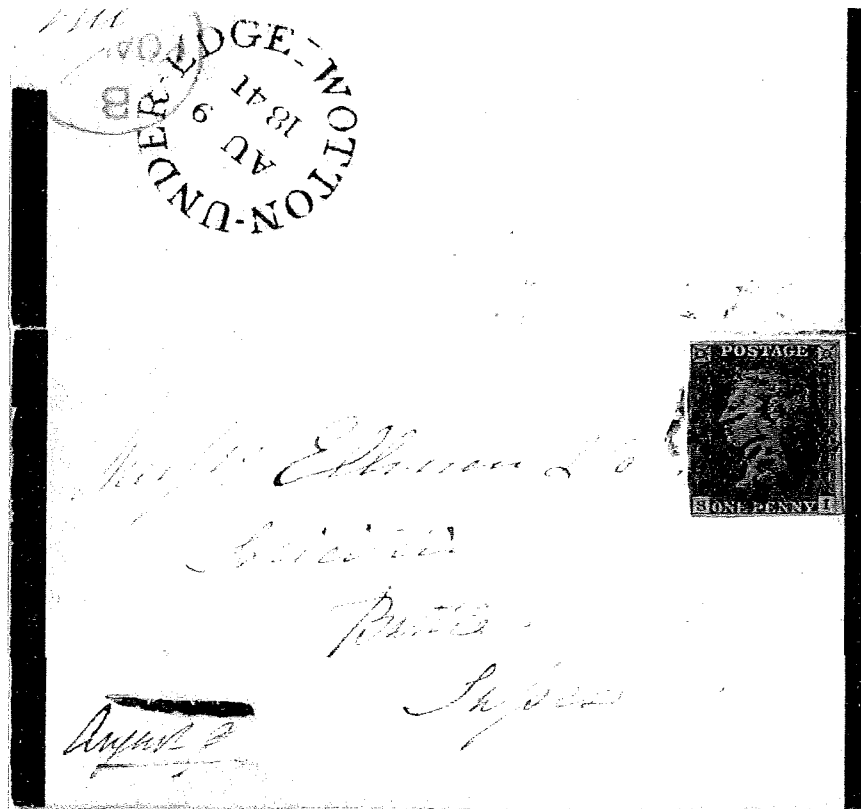
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A RAILWAY JOURNEY IN 1841

by John Calladine

Among miscellaneous items included in the collection of the late R.C.Alcock, sold at auction last year, was a photocopy and transcript (but not the original) of a letter written by a young man in London to his mother. The precise date, 24th January 1841 is important, as we shall see later, although the excuse for reproducing it here is its entertaining content.

Sunday Jan. 24th. 1841
Old Slaughter Coffee House,
St Martin's Lane,
London

My Dear Mother,

This is to say as how I hopes you are better & as how I am come up to Lunnun (sic) quite safe. Just returned from the Roman Catholic Chapel. There were no singers of great note this morning, yet their music was scarcely human and seemed to transport one out of this world with all belonging to it except indeed that the extreme beauty of a Miss Ward, a very young girl and one of the singers who promised to excel by & bye in her art, recalled one from Heaven occasionally – and all for the small sum of 18 pence.

I arrived in town too late to send you a letter by yesterday evening's post &, as there is no post out from London on Sundays, this will not start till tomorrow morning, & you will probably not get it till Tuesday. Undoubtedly you will fret yourself about not hearing from me sooner, I know you can't help it; neither you see can I.

I arrived at the Station at Bristol just in time for the 9 o'clock train & ought to have arrived in London at half past four, but the roads were so bad beyond Bath that the coach came into Wootton Bassett (sic) too late for the *proper train* (my italics) notwithstanding a quantity of very edifying whipping and grumbling and swearing; and so we had to wait till the next train. Now it be known unto you that travelling by railway is brought to the highest perfection of rapidity & discomfort, in all other things, but more especially in regard to luggage – for example, a lady got into the coach at Bath & kept us at least five minutes in stowing away the usual numbers of packages, boxes, baskets, bundles, parcels & small cases amounting in all to about 15. At Paddington station, after knocking down several small boys, swearing haughtily at an upright policeman & insinuating myself between the legs of many stout porters, I did at length get possession of my portmanteau and had leisure for my favourite habits of observation. The first object that struck my contemplative gaze was our unfortunate Bath lady holding in her hands half a bandbox & a bird cage crushed as flat as her own bonnet, with the linnet inside screaming in unison with her Mistress's voice. Nothing else could she get for it appeared that the railway attendants had by extraordinary diligence & attention contrived to lose every one of her parcels, notwithstanding that they were originally so numerous.

Went to the Haymarket at half-price last night and saw 'Family Jars(?)' – don't think it good.

W.O.Maclaine

Apart from the reference to the six day post from London, perhaps the description of the start of the journey from Bristol is the most intriguing because it is apparent that the 9 o'clock "train" caught at Bristol was not a railway train but a horse-drawn coach. This took the passengers to Wootton Bassett, a railway station between Chippenham and Swindon where, at a later date, the line from London to South Wales diverged from the line to Bath and Bristol. The reason for the coach journey takes us back to the piece in the last "Midland Mail" about Denbigh Bridge, when the delay in completing Kilsby Tunnel required part of the journey to be made by coach. The problem in this instance was Box Tunnel, between Chippenham and Bath. Box Tunnel was an even greater undertaking than Kilsby Tunnel and it, too, was delayed. The official opening of Box Tunnel was not until 30th June 1841, when Brunel's dream of a line from London to Bristol (and on to New York by steamer) was finally realised. The letter above was written on 24th January, before the tunnel was completed. In this case, it was not the middle of the journey that had to be undertaken by road but the (still substantial) segment beyond Wootton Bassett.

KILSBY TUNNEL – A POSTSCRIPT

by John Calladine

Although not directly of postal significance, it was the delay in completing Kilsby Tunnel that led to mailcoaches using Denbigh Bridge as a temporary terminus (see 'Denbigh Bridge – where was it? what was it?'). The item in 'Midland Mail' No.148 repeated accepted wisdom that the reason Robert Stephenson tunnelled through Kilsby Ridge was that local landowners forced the line of the London-Birmingham Railway away from Northampton. In fact, in 1857, long after the line had been completed, Stephenson himself confirmed that he had met "more furious" opposition to railways from Northampton than elsewhere and the town "presented a very great objection to the line approaching it nearer than it does".

An article in the Journal of the Northamptonshire Record Society dated 1959 and titled 'Northampton Re-vindicated' has recently come to light. It produced a considerable body of evidence to dispute the accepted truth and suggested that the alleged and unsubstantiated opposition of Northampton simply provided Stephenson with a convenient excuse for the error made in his choice of line. It is suggested that Stephenson followed accepted 'canal practice' by choosing a route that had the least difference between the highest and lowest points. Northampton lies in the valley of the River Nene and, if he had chosen a route close to the town, he would have increased the difference in level on the Northamptonshire section by about 80 feet, thus placing additional strain on the puny locomotives available at that time. He should have known that a tunnel through Kilsby Ridge would present severe problems because much the same difficulties had been encountered when the Blisworth canal tunnel was constructed. An anonymous but authoritative letter in the Northampton Mercury in 1859 accused the railway company of an "atrocious blunder". It claimed that Northampton, through its Corporation and Chief Magistrate, petitioned in favour of a line through the town and only a few coach proprietors and hotel keepers with vested interests opposed it.

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A NORTHAMPTON RECEIVING HOUSE

by Derek Smeathers

A friend recently referred me to a website (www.sundialgroup.com) with an interesting potted history of one of Northampton's earliest receiving houses. In the *List of Principal Post and Sub-Post Towns* published on 1st January 1793, the town has three receiving houses - Lamport, nine miles away on the road to Market Harborough, and Highgate House and Welford, both on the Leicester Road, at 8 miles and 15 miles respectively. Those who habitually read this Society's *Local Posts* book will already be familiar with Highgate House on pages 183 to 185, but wait - there's more.

The House stands between the villages of Creaton and Spratton and was already over a hundred years old when the 1793 list appeared. About nine years before this date, Creaton's 12th century parish church had received a new curate, a young man brought up on fire and brimstone at Aberystwyth, with the not unusual Welsh name of Thomas Jones. He brought to this quiet corner of Northamptonshire not only his intense religious fervour but also a belief in encouraging the poor and needy to help themselves, and an organising ability which made that possible. It is said he formed 'classes of instruction' for making clothes; a club to help the sick and injured; a marketing plan to obtain food cheaply for those in poverty; and the first Sunday School for miles around. Jones also published a regular magazine which he called the *Clerical Journal*, distributed over a wide area, and he would travel some distances to help fellow clergymen in need - in one of his letters he mentioned having been "in Melburn, Derbyshire for three weeks, preaching for Mr Middleton who is ill". In his first ten years at Creaton, Jones also extended the church to take an extra hundred people - he wrote that there was hardly a seat to spare.

He did not get off to a good start, however. The Creaton of 1784 was a small community, and Jones could not find anywhere to live. In desperation he went to Highgate House which had been an inn since 1663; this was against all the religious principles of the time and as the website puts it "his bishop and fellow clergy were scandalised ..." but Jones defended his actions and his host the innkeeper assured the bishop that "his presence has a good effect on the conduct of the customers". This is reflected in one of his letters when he says "When our sky is so overclouded and darkened with mist, it is reviving to the weary traveller to see some stars making their appearance, especially in these evil days when by far the majority vote that no good thing shall remain on Earth except good beer and things of that sort". He must have met many a weary traveller in Highgate House - raising their flagging spirits with such messages of good cheer, or perhaps with some different spirits.

His letters also show he maintained a connection with many of the clergy in all parts of England. As well as other Northants villages such as Orlingbury, Watford near West Haddon, and Pitsford, he mentions Mr Houseman of Oxford, Mr Evans of Yelling (Hunts) and Mr Robinson of Cambridge all of whom seem to have visited him, presumably at Highgate House! One of them was on his way to see the Bishop of Chester, too! The letters in my collection are all in the mid-1790s and I have seen others from dealers or in auctions. If you have any, I would be delighted to receive copies.

One of mine is dated 25th November 1794 and is addressed to Revd. Mr Griffin at Freston near Ipswich (Fig. 1). It was carried via London - a total journey of some 135 miles. Stamped at Northampton, it was charged 4d to London where the "4" was deleted and "7" applied. I do not understand this. The correct charge should have been either 8d - 4d into London and 4d from there to Ipswich or 6d the single charge for under 150 miles. Can anyone work out the 7d charge? The following letter in the correspondence is dated 25th September also addressed to Mr Griffin but now he is Leeds and that has a 5d charge (Fig. 2) which I think is correct.

Rev. Thomas Jones remained at Creaton and neighbouring Spratton until 1836, so he would have seen Highgate House become the busy receiving house in the unofficial Northampton local post. The map shows how important it was, handling mail for a considerable distance around - no less than ten villages and numerous outlying farms or hamlets. A bag was sent from Northampton post office daily and a number of messengers had to be at Highgate House to receive their bundle for delivery - it was quite an organisation. Who in this country area could organise such an undertaking? Most of the other dispersal points were the houses, halls or castles of local aristocrats or gentry with substantial staff; only Highgate House was an inn. Perhaps a local man with suitable organising skills was found, possibly living at the inn. There was such a man and his name was Jones ...

Fig. 2

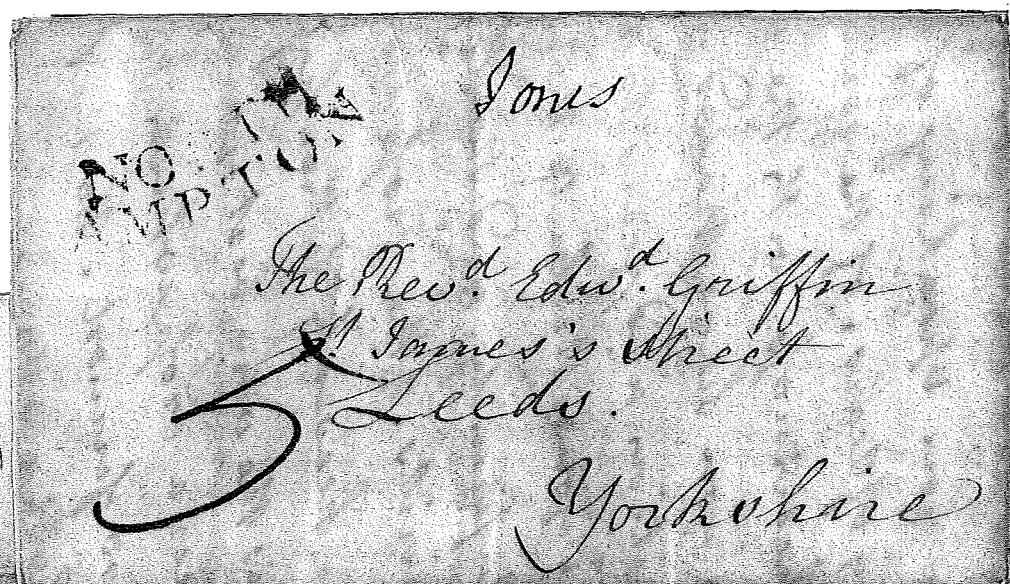
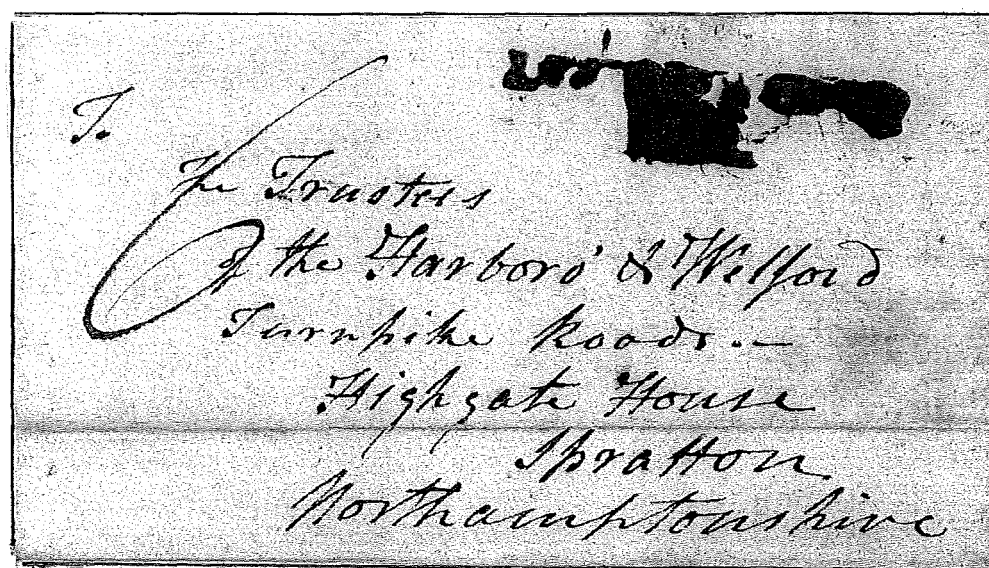


Fig. 1



A letter sent to Highgate House in 1818. The reverse shows a charge of 7d.

A NEWARK CONUNDRUM AND A 'NEW' OLLERTON DISCOVERY

by Mick Gill

In early 2004 I was asked to provide details of my Nottinghamshire mileage marks in connection with the Society's book project. In December that year, by which time I was a member of the Society, I received the draft entries for Newark, Ollerton, Southwell and Tuxford for checking. This was the first time that I had had the opportunity to compare my examples with those of others. Two points struck me as needing investigation: the draft illustrations of the NEWARK mileage removed mark MMM 6013 and the OLLERTON/134 mileage marks MMM 6039 and MMM 6040.

NEWARK mileage removed mark

The draft illustration for the NEWARK mileage removed mark MMM 6013 (33 x 3.5 mm) was clearly longer than the NEWARK of the previous mileage mark MMM 6011 (32 x 3.5 mm). Additionally, the draft illustration showed an 'E' with the bottom extension longer than the top and a very wide and open 'W', whereas that of the previous mileage mark had an 'E' with the top and bottom extensions of equal length and a very closed-up 'W'. The draft illustration was evidently not the previous mileage mark with the mileage removed.. Additionally, it did not match any of the three earlier mileage marks.

The current County Catalogue records two mileage removed marks of Newark: NG96 (32 x 4 mm) which 'spreads with wear' and is recorded in use between 1829 and 1838; and NG 98 (28 x 3 mm) recorded in use only in 1834. A check of my thirteen 'mileage removed' marks revealed they matched the draft illustration MMM 6013 - all had 'E's with the bottom extension longer than the top and very wide, open 'W's. Not one showed any of the characteristics of the previous mileage marks and none showed any sign of the removal of a mileage component - see mark on entire dated 12 August 1833 (fig. 1). Also, my examples ranged in date from 27 May 1829 to 20 June 1838, the same date range as for NG 96 in the County Catalogue.

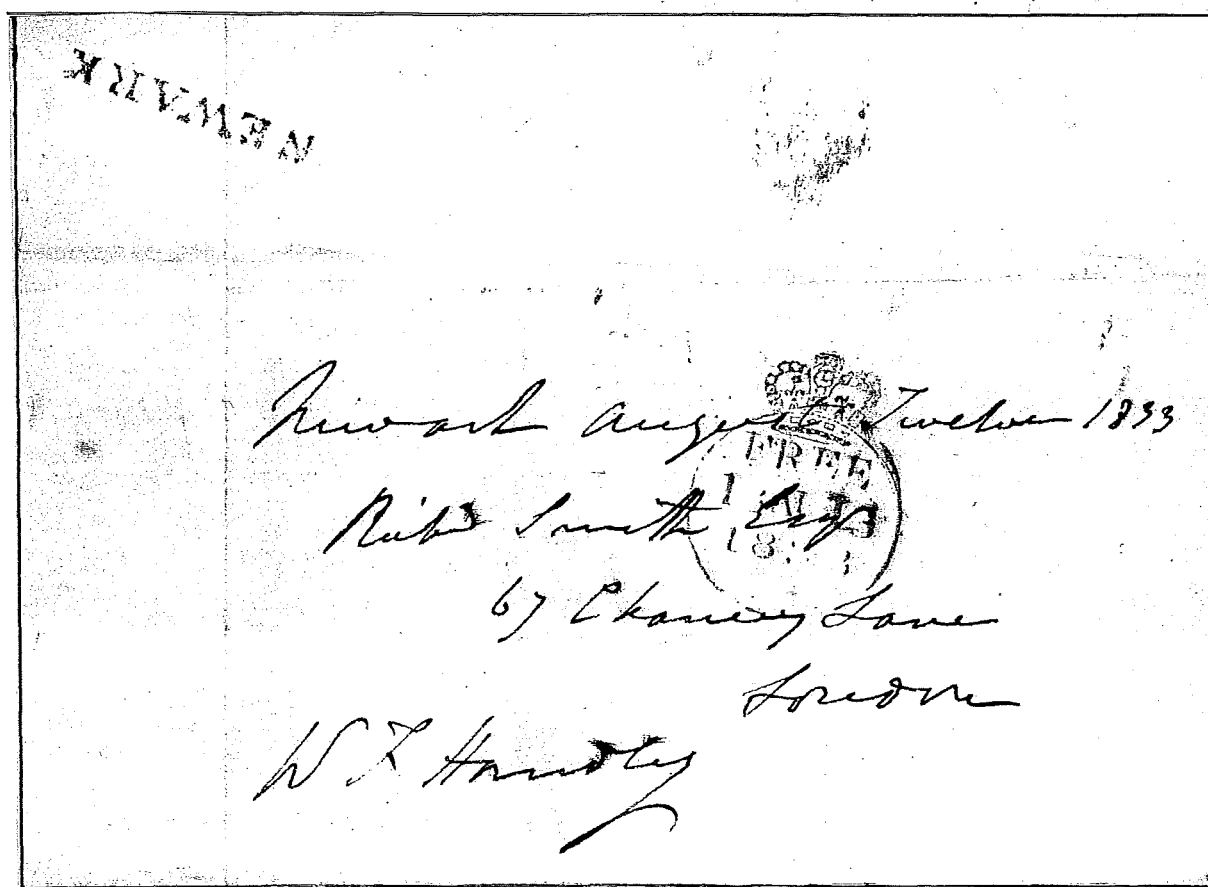


Fig. 1. Letter dated 12th August 1833 with straight-line mark 'NEWARK' , 33 x 3.5 mm

What was noticeable, however, was that the draft illustration MM 6013 bore a very striking similarity to my 2 April

1801 example of the straight-line mark NG86 (fig. 2), recorded in the County Catalogue as in use between 1800 and 1801. Both marks measured 33 x 3.5 mm, both had 'E's with a longer bottom extension and both had very open 'W's. It was clear to me that the marks I had long accepted to be 'mileage removed' were identical to my one example of the straight-line mark NG86. Could this be a coincidence? Had the earlier handstamp survived and been brought back into use around 1829 or had a new, but near-identical, straight-line handstamp been introduced when the mileage marks were abandoned?

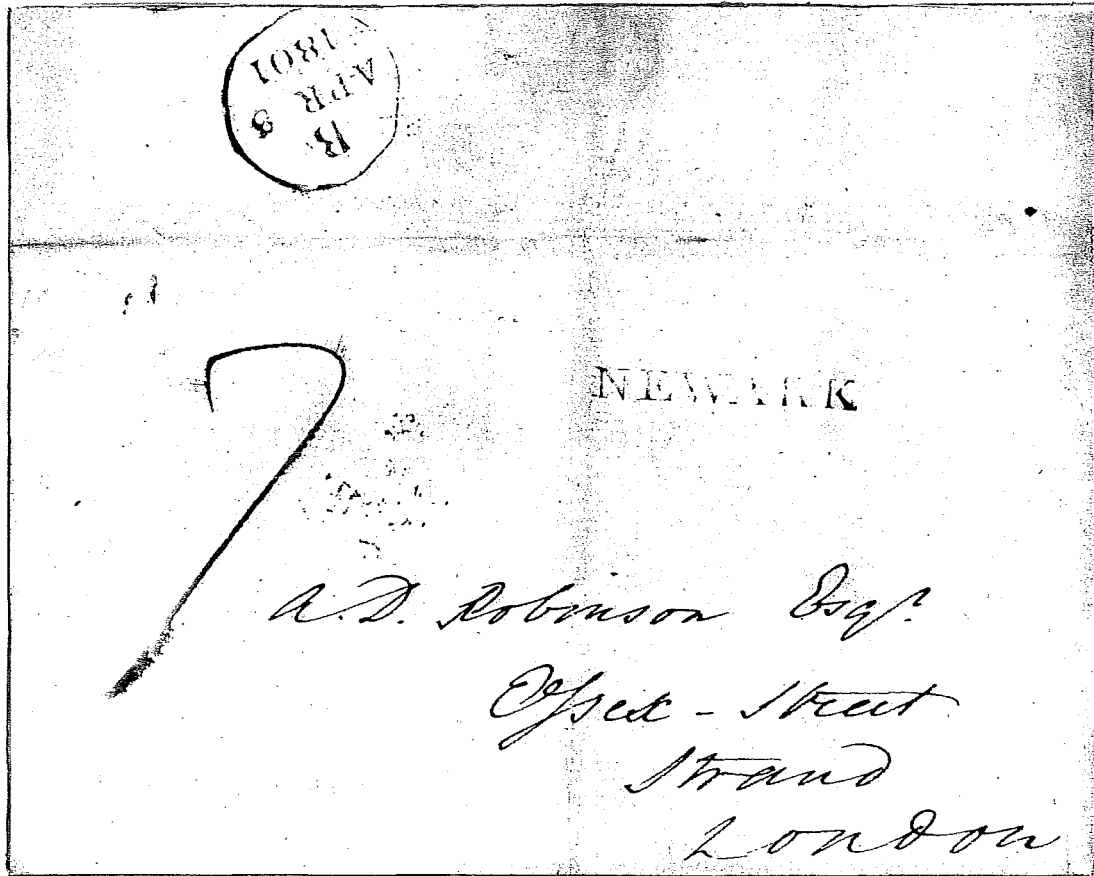


Fig. 2 Letter dated 2nd April 1801 with straight-line mark 'NEWARK', 33 x 3.5 mm.

Furthermore, if, as would be expected, the mileage had been removed from the last-used mileage handstamp, why had examples not come to light given the volume of mail dealt with at Newark? Also, it was hard to accept the validity of the County Catalogue entry NG98 which records at least one 1834 example of the mileage being removed from one of the earlier mileage handstamps, as this is some five years after the abandonment of mileage marks and the apparent re-use of the earlier straight-line handstamp. These questions were sufficient for the entry for MMM 6013 in the published book to be amended to read "not seen by the County Editor" and for the County Catalogue entry NG98 to be omitted from the Mileage Book. Can anyone throw any light on this conundrum?

OLLERTON/134 mileage marks

The County Catalogue records only two OLLERTON/134 mileage marks - the boxed mileage mark NG210 (35 x 10 mm) in use between 1801 and 1818, and the lined mileage mark with sloping figures, NG213 (36 x 11 mm) in use between 1816 and 1830. At the time of checking the draft entries for the mileage book I had only two examples of the former (dated 2 November 1801 and 6 January 1805) and none of the latter.

However, I also had an example of an OLLERTON/134 mark, seemingly with lines, on a cover dated 1 April 1816. The strike is fair but did not match either of the two draft Ollerton/134 illustrations. With a measurement of 36 x 11.5 mm it was taller than both draft illustrations, had upright figures and a very round top to the '3'. It appeared to me that this was a previously unrecorded mark but, without a better example for comparison, it was judged to be a very late use of the Ollerton/134 boxed mileage mark MMM 6039. Accordingly, the date of the latest recorded use for this mark was published as 1 April 1816.

At York in January 2005 I obtained a letter dated 16 March 1818 with a poor strike of an Ollerton mileage mark, described by the dealer as an Ollerton/134 boxed mileage NG210. On close examination at home I found that the positions of the figures matched those of my 1 April 1816 entire. Here surely was another example of 'my' previously unrecorded mark.

At Midpex 2005 I was fortunate to acquire two further examples of Ollerton/134 mileage marks. One was the boxed mileage mark on a letter dated 6 September 1801, two months prior to the earliest date published in the Society's book. The second was on a 'Free' letter from Earl Manvers dated 27 February 1815 (fig 3). This has one very good strike of the lined mileage mark plus another part strike. The good strike measures 36 x 11.5 mm, has upright figures and a '3' with a very round top and matches exactly the two earlier examples described above. Here at last was the indisputable proof of the existence of a second Ollerton/134 lined mileage mark. Together, my three examples of this new-found mark give a known range of date of use from 27 February 1815 to 16 March 1818.

Given this proof, it is clear that the date range published for the Ollerton/134 boxed mileage mark MMM 6039 requires correction. The item I obtained at Midpex takes the date range back to 6 September 1801 but the latest date of use of 1 April 1816 is clearly incorrect. Although the County Catalogue entry for this Ollerton mark (NG210) gives a date range of 1801 to 1818, I consider that 1818 is extremely suspect and far more likely to refer to the latest date of use of the newly found lined mileage mark.

In summary, I consider that amended entries are needed in the Mileage Book as follows:

NEWARK

Amend/add data on page 96:

6013	NEWARK (mileage removed)	Black	Not recorded by County Editor	NG96 1829-38
	Note: The mark NG96 described in the County Catalogue as 'mileage erased, spreads with wear' appears to be a re-use of the straight-line mark NG86 and not a mileage removed mark.			
6013A	NEWARK (mileage removed)	Black	Not recorded by County Editor	NG98 1834

OLLERTON

Amend/add data on page 98:

6039	OLLERTON/134	Black	6 SEP 1801 - 6 JAN 1805	NG210 1801-18
6040A	OLLERTON/134	Black	27 FEB 1815 - 16 MAR 1818	None

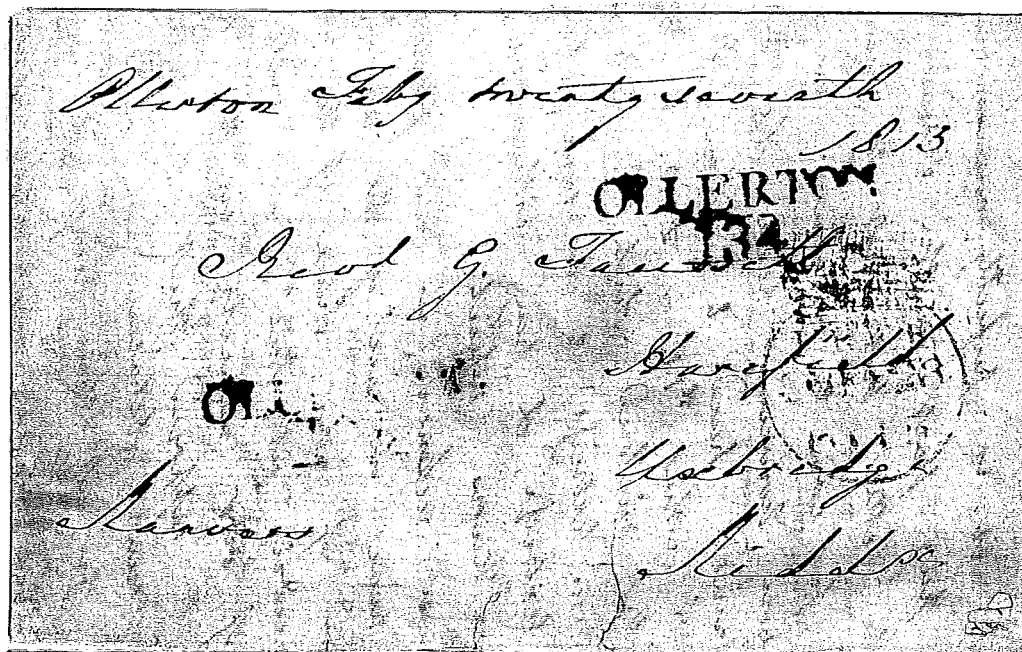


Fig. 3. Letter dated 27th February 1815 with previously unrecorded lined mileage mark 'OLLERTON'/134

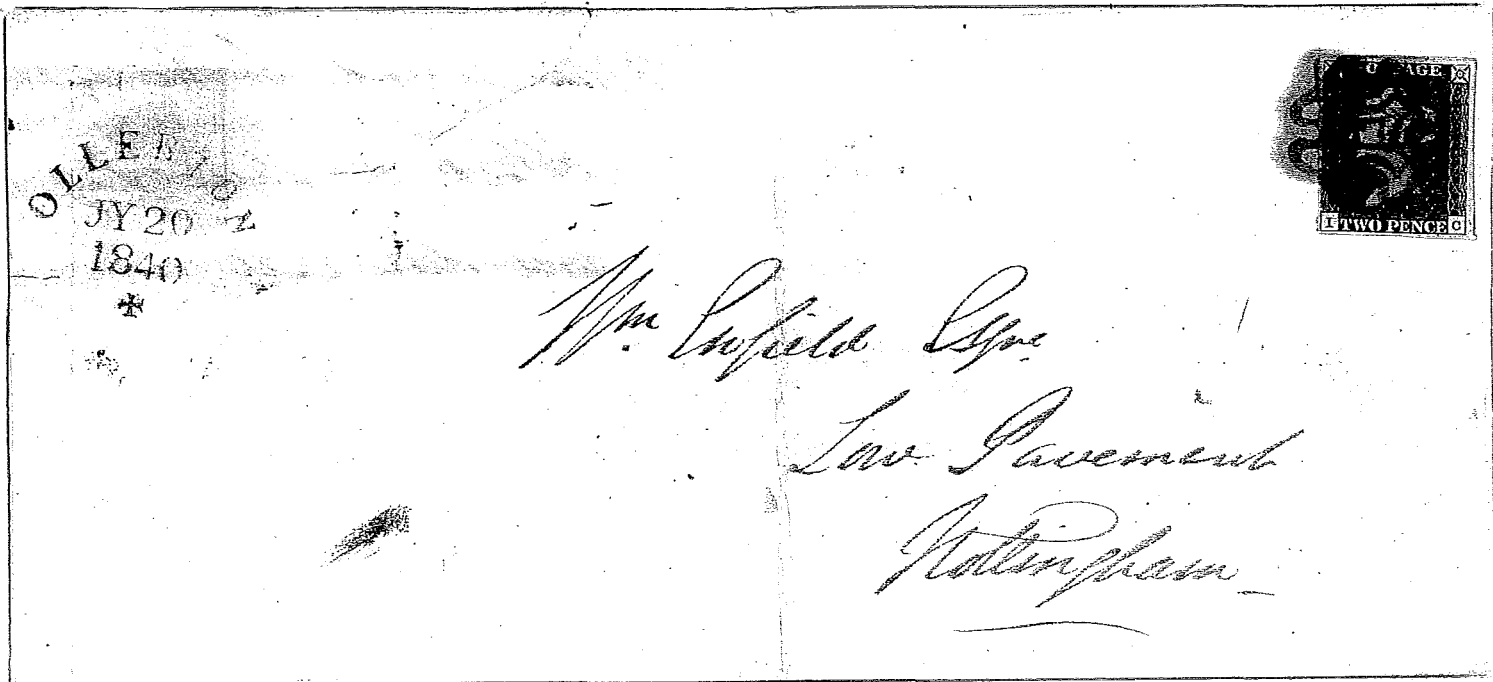
ANOTHER OLLERTON DISCOVERY

by Mick Gill

I paid my usual visit to Philatex in October last year where, despite much rummaging, I unearthed only a couple of minor items of interest. Before calling it a day I decided to have one last look around and, to my amazement, I spotted a very interesting item on the stand of a well-known dealer. How I had come to overlook the item I do not know.

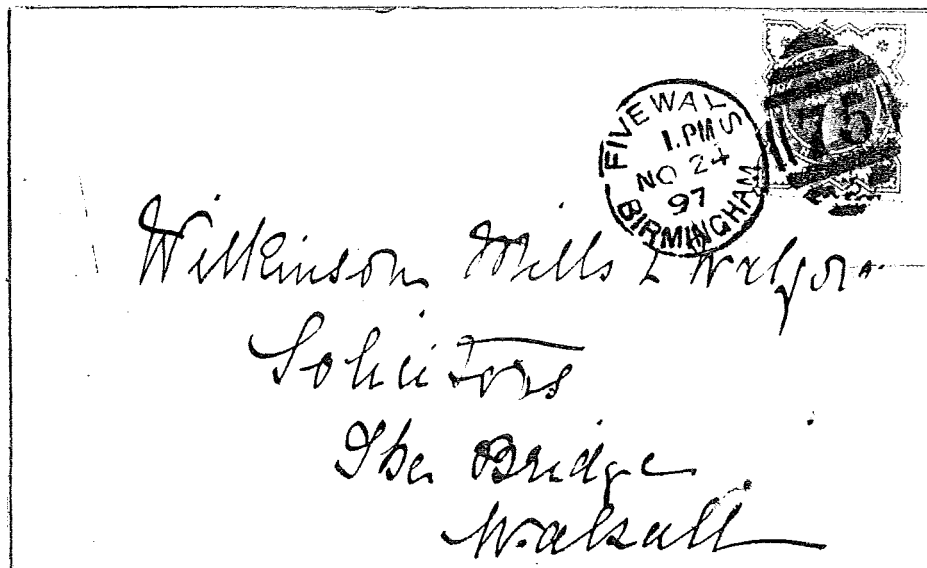
The item was a large piece addressed to Nottingham with a four-margin twopenny blue, plate 1, lettered IC, cancelled by a red Maltese Cross and complemented by a fine 'OLLERTON/+' seriffed traveller dated JY 20 1840. The mark is in green ink and measures 30 x 25 mm. I happily took the item home though now my budget now was exhausted.

On checking my copy of the revised 'Skeleton Postmarks of England and Wales', I found that the mark is unrecorded. Again I had come across another 'new' mark from Ollerton, a small place in central Nottinghamshire where George Gill, my great great-grandfather had started his bakery and confectionery business.



AN UNRECORDED BARRED NUMERAL CANCELLATION

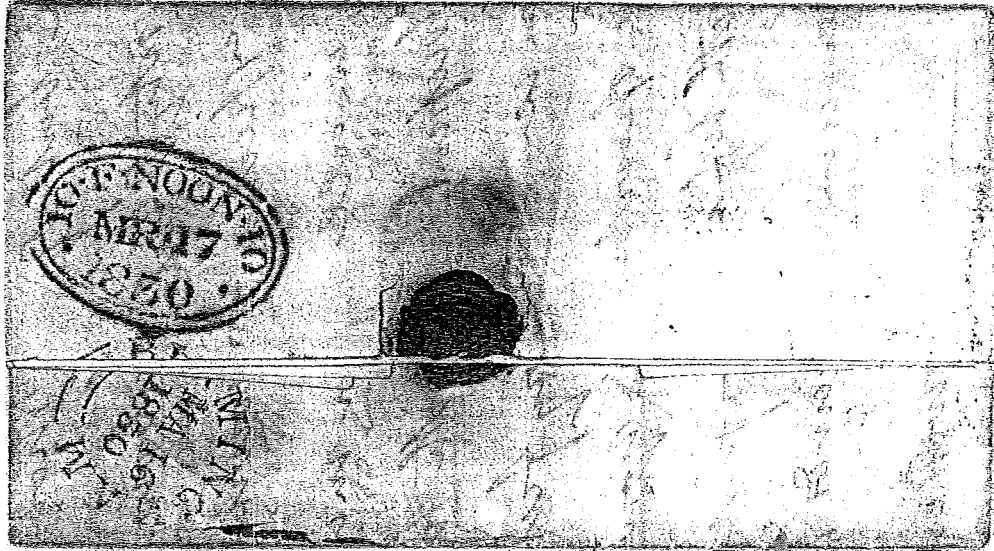
I am indebted to Ian Baker for sending a copy of the cover shown below. The canceller has a '3' in the basal bars.



'MA' OR 'MR' FOR MARCH

by Ian Baker

Recent correspondence in the journals of other societies has raised the subject of the mixed use of 'MA' and 'MR' for March in handstamps during the period from the 1820s to the 1840s. The cover illustrated below was paid for and sent from Birmingham on MA16/1830 and received in London on MR17/1830.



The Proof Books show a mixture of 'MA' and 'MR' entries, the latest 'MA', for the Midland counties, I have noted being MA29/41 for Ludlow in volume 4/63. For other parts of the country there is an even later one - MA 11/46 for Kendal.

It would appear that even the person(s) making up the proof book entry was inconsistent and under no instruction.. The British Postal Museum Archive have not as yet been able to trace a Post Office Notice stating tfrom when 'MR' should be used.

Does anyone know of a PO Instruction or other information. Meanwhile, perhaps members could check their collections and record the latest year in which 'MA' was used in their town or county of interest. Also, if a town had more than one handstamp in use whether or not both abbreviations were used in the same year. It has recently been noted that this was the case in Birmingham in 1832.

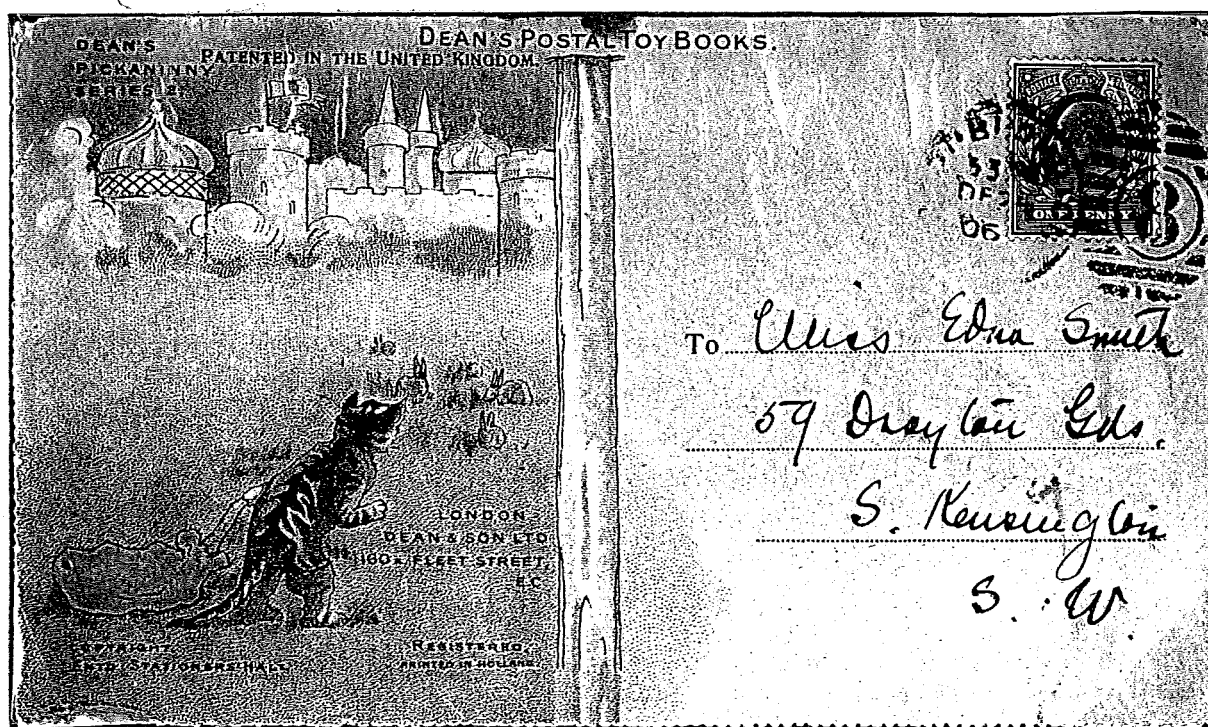
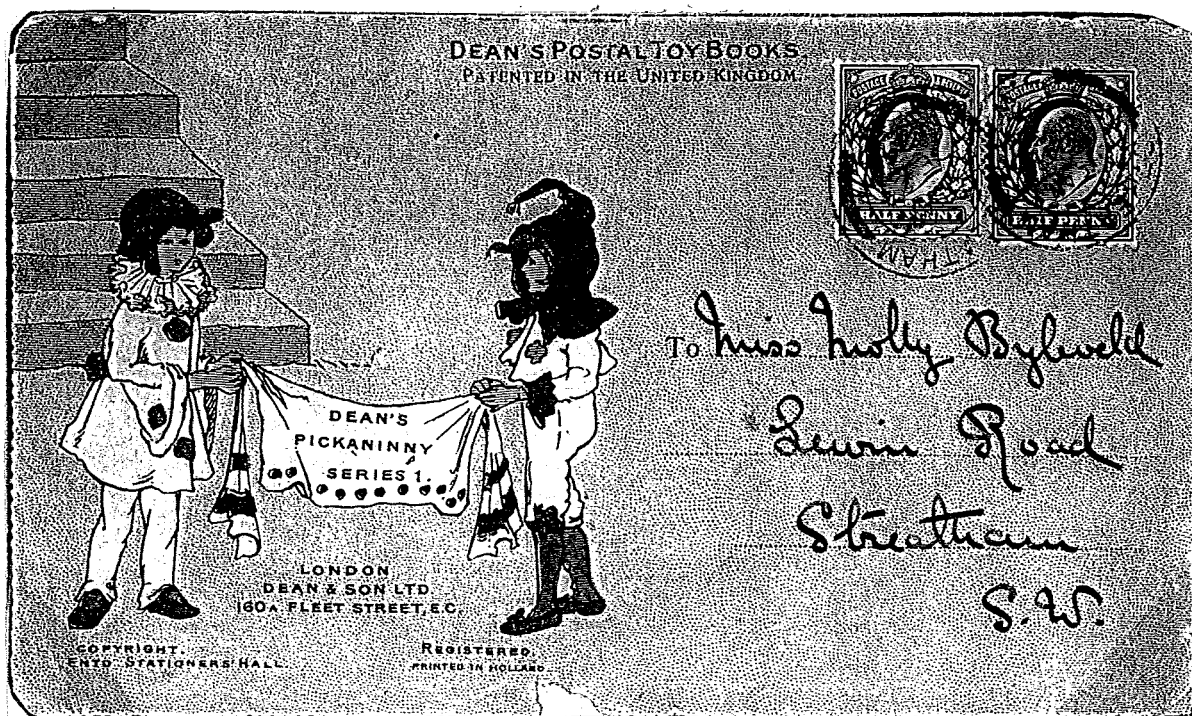
A NEW TYPE OF CANCELLATION?

The illustration below is from a letter sent from Leicester to Yardley Hastings in Northamptonshire.



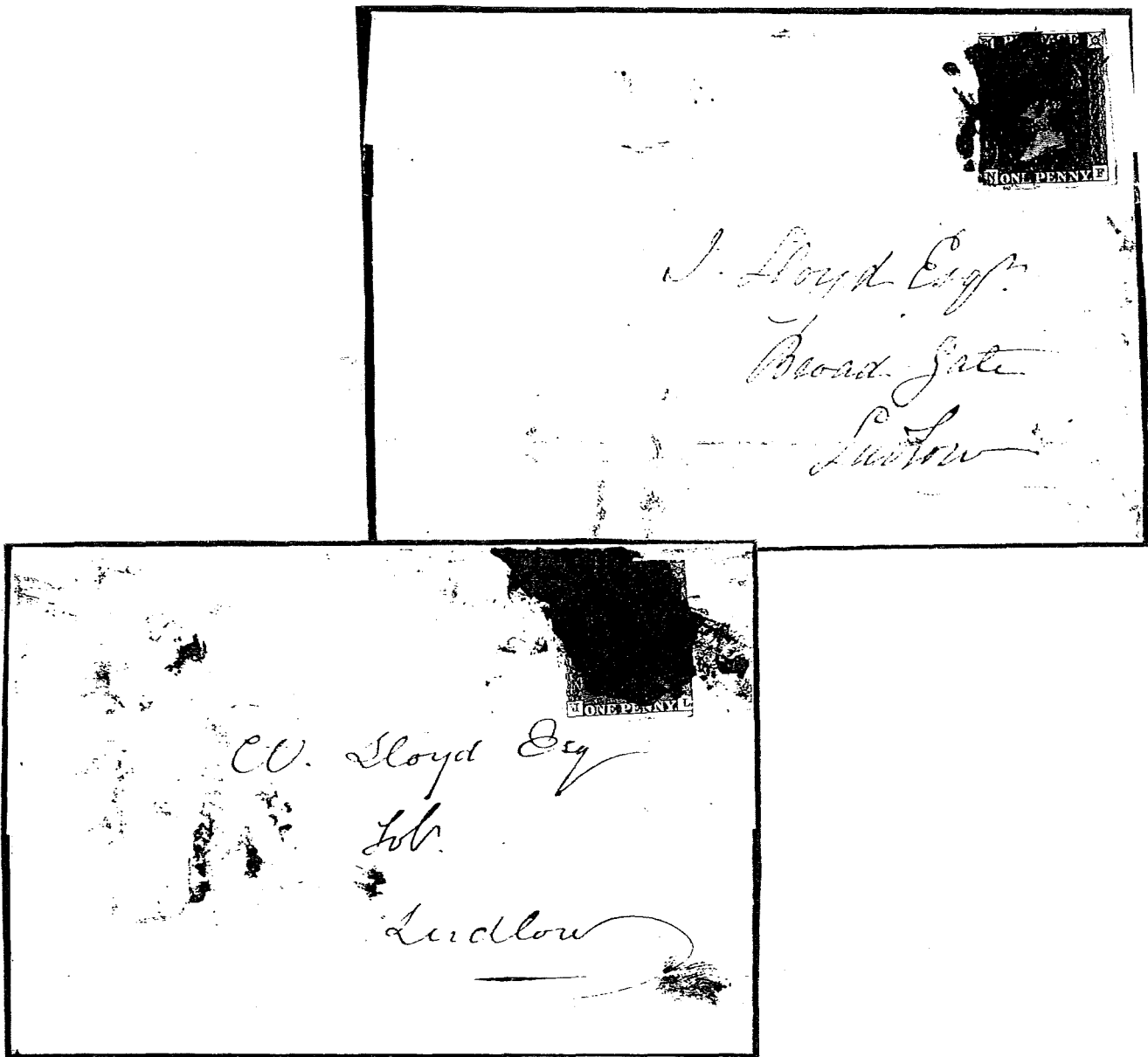
MORE OF DEAN'S POSTAL TOY BOOKS

The upper envelope was posted at the correct rate of one penny in December 1904, while the lower one was incorrectly franked at one penny in December 1906.



DEALER'S DESCRIPTION:- 'POSTMARKED CLEAR OF CORNER CHECK LETTERS

Shown below are two more items from Eric's display in January. The stamp on the top one is a penny black while there is a penny red on the lower cover.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE USAGE PAGES OF THE SOCIETY'S UDC BOOK**

Updating the Birmingham pages of the UDC book has required an inordinate amount of detailed work by Elizabeth and Eric Lewis, the County Editors, as Eric insisted on checking many of the reported colours in the 4th Edition by reference to the original reports and the current owners. Where else in the Midland counties can one find two different ink colours genuinely used for the same stamp on the same day? There are no fewer than a hundred changes of colour or usage on the new list, not to mention the addition of two previously unlisted stamps, one a 'Cresswell'.

This amendment work is now approaching its conclusion. Amended lists for Warwickshire and Derbyshire remain to be published in future issues of 'Midland Mail' and then, as promised, a summary of associated changes to the Office Lists will be provided. If anyone has amendments to the Derbyshire list, previously not notified to the County Editor, Gordon Hardy, or to the Co-ordinating Editor, we would be pleased to receive them as soon as possible.

BIRMINGHAM

HENLEY IN ARDEN	C3	29AUG28		1/74	R	13SEP30- 5FEB41
					B	31MAR41-29JUL48
					BL	18MAY49-10JAN50
DUDDESTON	C2	16APR42	Birmingham	5/86		
HARBORNE	C2	13JAN44	Birmingham	7/17	BL	4MAY46- 9MAY56
					B	15MAY46- 6JUN49
					BL/GR	4FEB52
SOLIHULL	C2				B	5APR38-23AUG39
MOSELEY	C1	31MAY44	Birmingham	7/66	B	19FEB45-18JUN46
					BL	30CT47- 4MAR50
					GR	2NOV56
YARDLEY	C1	6JUN44	Birmingham	7/68	R	1DEC44-12APR49.
					GR	57
HOCKLEY-HILL	C1	27FEB45	Birmingham	7/129	GR	13AUG45- 4OCT57
					B	4AUG49
					BL	7MAR45-19AUG57
					BL/GR	4NOV57-16NOV57
HALESOWEN	C1	1JAN47	Birmingham	9/1	B	8FEB47-20JUN49.
HIGHGATE	C1	28JAN47	Birmingham	9/7	BL	24NOV47-26JUN58
					BL/GR	13JUN47-27SEP59
					B	29MAR51-18APR58
					GR	25AUG52-29JUN58.
					BR	5AUG58-27SEP59
PEUNS	C1	12MAR47	Birmingham	9/27		Note 1.
SPARKBROOK	C1	12MAR47	Birmingham	9/27	BR	16JUL47-15JUN48
					R	14OCT50- 7SEP51
					BL	29NOV53-24JAN56
					GR	22NOV57
GREAT ALNE	C1	19APR47	Stratford on A	9/31	BL	9JAN52
ASTON	C1	24MAY47	Birmingham	9/44	BL	4APR48-22JUN54
BIRCHFIELDS	C1	24MAY47	Birmingham	9/44	BL/GR	10SEP52
					BL	23MAY53-29JAN60
SMALL-HEATH	C1	11JUN47	Birmingham	9/51	B	27MAY54-10OCT56
					GR	1MAY56-24JUL56.
PENNS	C1	13AUG47	Birmingham	9/70	R	14OCT47- 6APR52
ASTON-ROAD	C1	18NOV47	Birmingham	9/79		
EDGBASTON	C1	15JAN48	Birmingham	9/117	B	3APR48-29APR59.
					GR	4FEB57-26FEB58
					BL	15JUN57
					BL/GR	12FEB57- 5JUN57
					dkBL	13MAR58-23JUN59
TANWORTH	C1	24MAY48	Stratford on A	9/151	BL	24MAR51-16JAN56
					?	13OCT57
NEITHER-WHITACRE	C1	28AUG48	Coleshill	9/177		Note 2.
THE-LOYELLS	C1	28AUG48	Birmingham	9/177		
THE-LOZELLS	C1				BL	11JUN53-12SEP53
					B	24JUL54-25JUL54
HALL-GREEN	C1	31MAY49	Birmingham	10/2	BL	14APR51
BALSALL-HEATH	C1	10JUL50	Birmingham	10/99	B	30SEP51- 56
					BL/GR	12JUL56-11JUL59
					BL	9JUL57- 7JAN59
SUMMER-LANE	C1	8NOV50	Birmingham	10/116	B	20DEC50- 5FEB51
					BL	13APR53
					GR	23OCT56-12DEC56

Notes:

1. Probably not used - see 9/70.
2. Probably not used in this form but corrected locally - see below.

HAMPSTEAD-ROAD	C1	24APR51	Birmingham	10/193	B GR BL/GR BL	5JUL52-30DEC59 6MAY56-11MAY58 20SEP56- 3SEP59 30CT56
LEA-MARSTON	C1	9JAN52	Coventry	11/12		
HOCKLEY-HEATH	C1	6MAR52	Stratford on A	11/26	BL B R R/BR BR GR	2APR52- 20CT52. 26JUN52-24AUG57 24JAN55 21MAY55 17JAN56-29APR56 29APR56-10SEP56
ASTON-NEWTON	C1	OCT52	Birmingham	11/106	GR dkBL	200CT53 12AUG59
HAMPTON-IN-ARDEN	C1	OCT52	Coventry	11/109	GR B	28FEB57 17MAY58
CAPE-OF-GOOD-HOPE	C1	JAN53	Birmingham	11/129	B BL/GR	19AUG53- 57. 23SEP57-29MAR58
NECHELLS-GN	C1	JAN53	Birmingham	11/129		
SALTLEY	C1	JAN53	Birmingham	11/129	Y/GR	10DEC56
WINSON-GN	C1	JAN53	Birmingham	11/129	GR BL	4MAR58 3MAR59
SHIRLEY-BIRMINGHAM	C1	FEB53	"Mr Churchill"	11/143	BR B	5MAR53-15MAY55. 6MAR53-30JAN56
LEE-CRESCENT	C1	APR53	Birmingham	11/157	B	7MAR53- 9MAR54
ULLENHALL	C1	APR53	Stratford on A	11/159	R	24JAN55
WOOTTON-WALWEN	C1	APR53	Stratford on A	11/159	BL/GR	17MAR57
GOACH-ST	C1	APR53	Birmingham	11/161		Note 3.
GT-HAMPTON-ST	C1	AUG53	Birmingham	11/206	BL GR BL/GR	12APR55-13APR55 22OCT56-25JUL57. 27JUN58
LANGLEY	C1	OCT53	Birmingham	11/248	BL	28NOV54
HANDSWORTH	C1	DEC53	Birmingham	12/7	B	19FEB54- 55.
OLDBURY	C1	DEC53	Birmingham	12/7		
ICKNIELD ST	C1	MAR54	Birmingham	12/40		
BEECH-LANE	C1	20JUL54		12/93		
HARBORNE-HEATH	C1	20JUL54		12/93	BL	13OCT54
QUINTON	C1	27OCT54	Birmingham	12/129	B	5DEC55-14FEB60.
GREAT BARR	C1	7DEC54	Birmingham	12/137	B R GR B BR	4DEC54 27JUL55 21OCT56 14DEC57- 58 6MAY58
CASTLE-BROMWICH	C1	4DEC55	Birmingham	12/276		
ELMDON	C1	4DEC55	Birmingham	12/275	GR	30JAN56-30JUN56
ERDINGTON	C1	4DEC55	Birmingham	12/275	Grey B	19APR58-14FEB60. 16JAN59
KINGS-NORTON	C1	4DEC55	Birmingham	12/276		
KNOWLE	C1	4DEC55	Birmingham	12/275		
MINWORTH	C1	4DEC55	Birmingham	12/275	BL/GR	8DEC56
NORTHFIELD	C1	4DEC55	Birmingham	12/276	GR BL/GR	2JAN58 24DEC57- 3APR58
ACOCKS-GREEN	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		
ALCESTER-LANE-END	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		
ASTON-PARK	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		
BICKENHILL	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		
CATHERINE-A-BARNS	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		
CURDWORTH	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		

Notes:

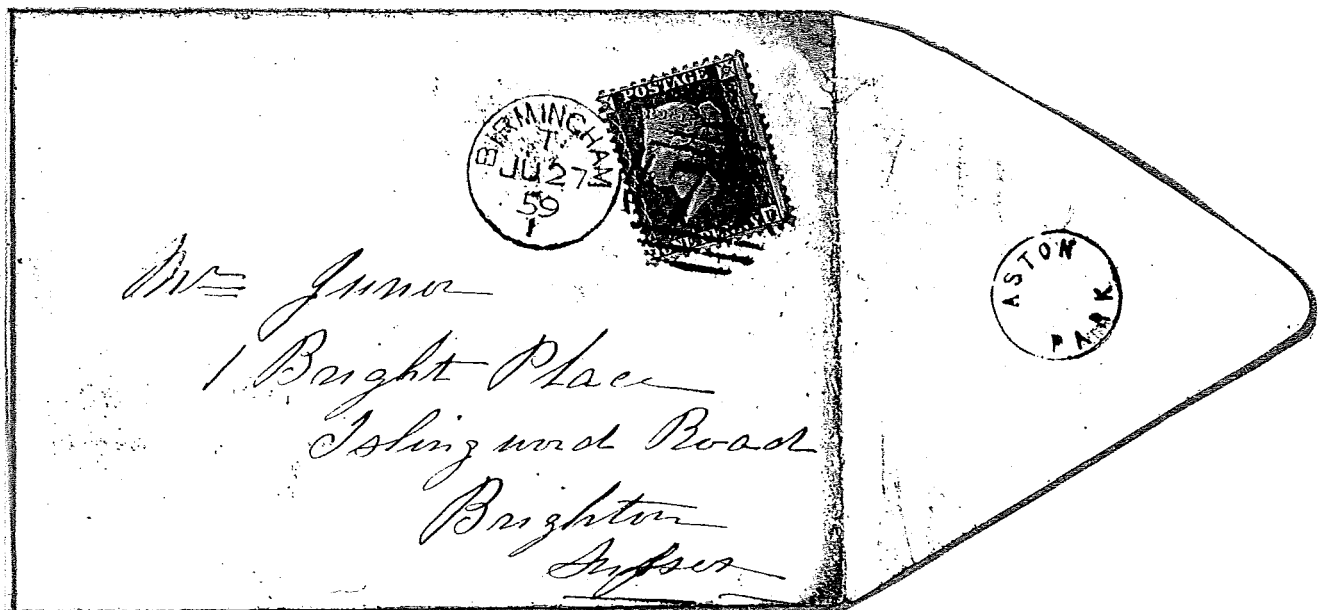
3. Incorrect spelling of 'Gooch'.

GRAVELLY-HILL	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331	GR B dkBL BL	6JUL56 3DEC58 6MAR59 25JUL59
KINGS-HEATH	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331	BL	20NOV59
LAPWORTH	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		
LITTLE-ASTON	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		
MARSTON-GREEN	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		
OSCOTT	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		
OVER-WITTON	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		
PERRY	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331	GR BL/GR	19OCT56. 14DEC58
SELLY-OAK	C1	25MAR56	12/331			
STIRCHLEY	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331		
WASHWOOD-HEATH	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331	B	1JAN58
WATER-ORTON	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331	BL	MAY58
WILD-GREEN	C1	25MAR56	Birmingham	12/331	GR	7MAR58.
QUEESLET	C1	29JUL56	Birmingham	13/48		
HAMPSTEAD	C1	5AUG56	Birmingham	13/51	BL/GR	6MAY58
SHIRLEY	C1	5AUG56	Birmingham	13/51	BL GR	4JUN57 57
MERE-GREEN	C1	8AUG56	Birmingham	13/57		
REDHILL	C1	12SEP56	Birmingham	13/63		
SMALL-HEATH	C1	25MAR57	Birmingham	13/192		
BARTLEY-GREEN	C1	27MAR57	Birmingham	13/197		
GT-HAMPTON-ST	C1	18APR57	Birmingham	13/210	BL/B B BL ?	57- 58 17MAR58- 4MAR59 23MAY58-24SEP58 23MAY59
MILPOOL-HILL	C1	8JUN57	Birmingham	13/250		
ASHTED/ROW	D3	cJUL57			B GR/B dkBL	16JUL58- 6MAY59. 1NOV58 4JUL59
ASTON/PARK	D3	cJUL57			B	21JAN59-15AUG59
BRISTOL/STREET	D3	cJUL57			BL	7JUL58
CASTLE/BROMWICH	D3	cJUL57	The Steel Impression books do not record any type D3 marks.		B GR GR B BL dkBL	18SEP58 11OCT58 4DEC59 ? 15SEP59 18OCT58 17JUN58 18JUN58-25AUG59 29MAY59-24NOV59. 29MAY59 7JUL59- 6OCT59
HAMPSTEAD	D3	cJUL57			GR	17JUN58
HARBORNE	D3	cJUL57			B	18JUN58-25AUG59
MERE/GREEN	D3	cJUL57			BL	29MAY59-24NOV59.
MINWORTH	D3	cJUL57			GR	29MAY59
MONUMENT/LANE	D3	cJUL57			GR	7JUL59- 6OCT59
MOSELEY	D3	cJUL57			B B BL dkBL	25AUG58 14JAN59 3DEC59 6DEC58-23JUN59.
PENNS	D3	cJUL57			B	13SEP58
SMALL/HEATH	D3	cJUL57			GR B	13SEP59 8NOV58
STIRCHLEY	D3	cJUL57			dkBL BL	5OCT58 5OCT59
SUMMER/LANE	D3	cJUL57			GR	?
WASHWOOD/HEATH	D3	cJUN57			B	15SEP58
YARDLEY	D3	cJUL57				
KNOWLE	D4	10DEC57	Birmingham	14/105		
OSCOTT	D4	10DEC57	Birmingham	14/105		
HOCKLEY-HEATH	D1	3FEB58	Birmingham	14/134	B	15DEC58
HOCKLEY-HILL.RO	D1	5FEB58	Birmingham	14/140	GR BL/GR B Drab BL	16FEB58-10JUN59 17FEB58-17APR58 9MAR58-20JUL58 11AUG58 7MAY59

BEECH-LANE	D1	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192		
CAPE-OF-GOOD-HOPE	D1	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>BL/GR</u>	20JAN59-19JAN60.
CASTLE-BROMWICH	D1	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>B</u>	58
DUDDESTON-ROW/R.O.	D2	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>B</u>	2JUN58
FIVE-WAYS/R.O.	D2	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>B</u>	26JUN58-29SEP59
					<u>dkBL</u>	14JUL58- 5MAR60.
					<u>GR</u>	59
GOOCH ST/R.O.	D5	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192		
GT ALNE	D4	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>B</u>	29NOV59
ICKNIELD-ST/R.O.	D2	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>GR</u>	18SEP58
LANCASTER-ST/R.O.	D2	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>B</u>	13JUL58
LOZELLS/R.O.	D5	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>GR</u>	6JAN59
PENNS	D4	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192		
SAND-PITS/R.O.	D2	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>dkBL</u>	1MAY58
SMALL-HEATH	D1	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192		
SPARK/BROOK	<u>D2</u>	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>BL/GR</u>	14JAN60
SUMMER-LANE/R.O.	D2	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>GR</u>	12MAY58-14JAN60
WATER-ORTON	D1	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192		
WOOTTON-WAWEN	D1	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192	<u>B</u>	4JUL59-23AUG59.
YARDLEY	D4	6APR58	Birmingham	14/192		
HOLLYWOOD	D1	15APR58	Birmingham	14/199		
PARADE	D4	28AUG58	Birmingham	16/26	<u>B</u>	25MAR59-27JAN60.
					<u>BL</u>	60
QUEESLET	D1	14DEC58	Birmingham	16/113		
HALL-GREEN	D1	21JAN59	Birmingham	16/142		
HAMPTON-IN-ARDEN	D1	9APR59	Coventry	18/24		

Notes:

4. Previous listings have included occasional 'BL/B' usage in the 1858-1860 period. It has now been decided that the ink is basically black with traces of blue and 'BL/B' usage has therefore been eliminated from the list.
5. Inks listed as 'R' can vary from red to orange.



The type D3 ASTON/PARK, only recorded on a single batch of four letters sent to a Brighton address in 1859.