



MIDLAND MAIL

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



President: Elizabeth Lewis

Chairman:
Chris Jackson

Treasurer:
Elizabeth Lewis

Secretary:
Eric Lewis

Number 118, January 2001

NEW MEMBER

We extend a cordial welcome to John Phillips who collects Birmingham Postal History.

CONGRATULATIONS

Our congratulations to the following members who gained awards at Glasgow 2000: Harold Wilson received a Large Vermeil in the International Class for his "*Early Travelling Post Offices of Great Britain*", Tom Poynton received a Vermeil in the Overseas Postal History Class for his "*Portugal in World War I*", and Chris Jackson's "*The Mileage Marks of Worcestershire*" earned a Vermeil in the National Class.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

At the December meeting, which marked our 25th Anniversary, the Chairman presented to Mr Chester a certificate conferring life membership of the Society. It was "Ches" along with Steph Stobbs who not only conceived the idea of a Midland Postal History Society but took the necessary steps to bring it into being. We all owe a great debt to "Ches" for this.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

On 17th February our meeting will be held at the Worcester Guildhall in conjunction with the fair organised by the Worcester Philatelic Society. The meeting will start at 2 p.m. and will consist of a display by Eric Lewis on "*Social Philately with an emphasis on Postal Services*".

We return to Carrs Lane, Birmingham on 10th March when the meeting, which starts at 1.30 p.m., will consist of one board displays by members on the theme "*Registered Mail and the Like*". This meeting replaces the usual annual competitions. Please see the note on the next page.

2001 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Carrs Lane Church Centre on 21st April, commencing at 12.45 p.m. It will be preceded by a committee meeting at 10.45 a.m. Please note the above date and times in your diary now.

MATERIAL FOR THE ANNUAL AUCTION

In order that catalogues can be sent to our overseas members in good time for them to submit bids it is necessary to have auction lots in by 10th March at the very latest, i.e. the date of our March meeting.

It would however be appreciated if you could submit lots before that date, perhaps at the meeting on 17th February or by post to Mrs E. Lewis at 27 Rathbone Road, Smethwick, B67 5JG

Please include full descriptions together with estimated market values and your reserve price, or state no reserve. A gift of any surplus material that you may care to give to sell for Society funds would, as usual, be much appreciated.

NOMINATIONS REQUIRED

Our Chairman's term of office of three years ends at the end of this season. Consequently, nominations for a new Chairman are sought. Please give nominations, along with the names of a proposer and seconder, to Eric Lewis, having secured the agreement of the person concerned.

JON BAKER TROPHY

Nominations are needed for the best article to have appeared in Midland Mail during 2000. The definition of best is left to you, but all nominations should be sent to the Editor by the date of the March meeting at the latest. Possible nominations include: "*Double-Stamped*" by Alan Marshall (MM114/4), "*Stratford-on-Avon Duplex Marks*" by Bryan Jones (MM115/4), "*Birmingham's Posts 1748-1785*" by Christopher Beaver (MM15/9), "*Straight-Line Nottingham 124 Mileage Marks*" by Alan Marshall, "*Czechoslovak Forces in Great Britain during WWII*" by Bryan Jones (MM117/4), and "*Nottingham Unofficial Local Posts*" by Alan Marshall (MM117/8). There may be others which I have overlooked so please peruse MM113 to MM117 and let the Editor know your decision.

INTER-SOCIETY COMPETITION

As we are not holding our usual competitions this year, we are looking for a member to produce a suitable nine sheet entry to represent the Society at the Spring Convention of the Midland Philatelic Federation which is being hosted by the Streetly Philatelic Society at the United Reform Church, Sutton Coldfield on 7th May. If you are interested in producing an entry would you please contact Eric Lewis. Should more than one member express an interest, the entry will be chosen by drawing lots.

THE NOVEMBER MEETING

There was an unusual theme for the meeting when we met on 4th November in Warwick at the premises of Warwick & Warwick for an afternoon devoted to maps and related material. John Calladine began the proceedings by showing books of modern reproductions of maps by Moule, Pigot and Speed as well as Beresiner's Guide (1983) to British County Maps. John then produced originals of the 1st edition of Cary's Road Book (1801) and the 10th edition of Paterson (1794). A town plan of Nottingham (1820) shown by Alan Marshall contained a fascinating amount of detail including the position of the post office. Among other Nottinghamshire maps shown by Alan were those produced by Van Langeren (1590), Bowen (1740) and Cary (1817). In addition, Alan showed us a the General Map of England and Wales produced by Mogg for the 1822 edition of Paterson's Roads. Harold Wilson also showed maps of the whole country including The Official Travelling Map (1833) of James Bingley and Cary's 1796 map corrected to 1813. Among Harold's maps of Derbyshire were those of Kitchin (1764) and Cary (1821).

In the county maps produced by Emanuel Bowen the area around the actual map contains a remarkable amount of information and that was certainly true of the Northamptonshire map displayed by Derek Smeathers who also showed us maps of the parliamentary divisions of South and North Northamptonshire in 1859. Also from the 1850s was a map of the railways in the country produced by Tallis. As well as showing us strip maps produced by Ogilby and Jefferys, Malcolm Allison displayed a number of Worcestershire maps including a Chapman (1832), two small Carys (1810 and 1812) and a large Cary (1805). Chris Jackson also exhibited Worcestershire maps which included a Lewis (1819), the usual enormous Greenwood (1830) and a Bowen with the usual large amount of information surrounding the actual map.

Among the Warwickshire items exhibited by Alan Godfrey were an 1810 Wallis and an 1811 Cary. Alan also showed us a strip map of the Banbury - Stratford road. John Bradnock too produced a strip map, in this case of the Kidderminster - Bridgnorth road.

Chris Beaver took a different approach showing among other items a gazetteer of Staffordshire, a 1787 list of post towns and sub-posttowns with their distances from London, and an 1839 list of mailcoaches taken from an almanac. John Soer concentrated on the work of John Cary with two maps of Leicestershire and the 1816 Map of England and Wales - described as an out of date road atlas.

Richard Farman rounded off the afternoon with a wide range of material. After a discussion of Ptolemy's projection and its use in the remapping of Scotland using a Roman map, Richard went on to show a number of early Staffordshire maps including those a Van Langeren (1643), a small Speed (1727) and a Moll (1724). Later items included maps by Kitchin (1764), Laurie and Whittle (1806) and Moule as well as town plans of Lichfield and Tamworth. A 'free' letter of 1819 showed on the reverse side a plan of an intended turnpike near Biddulph. Richard ended with a map of a proposed canal linking Gloucester, Tewkesbury and Wolverhampton.

Our thanks are due to Messrs Warwick & Warwick for generously providing the excellent facilities for a different and very enjoyable afternoon.

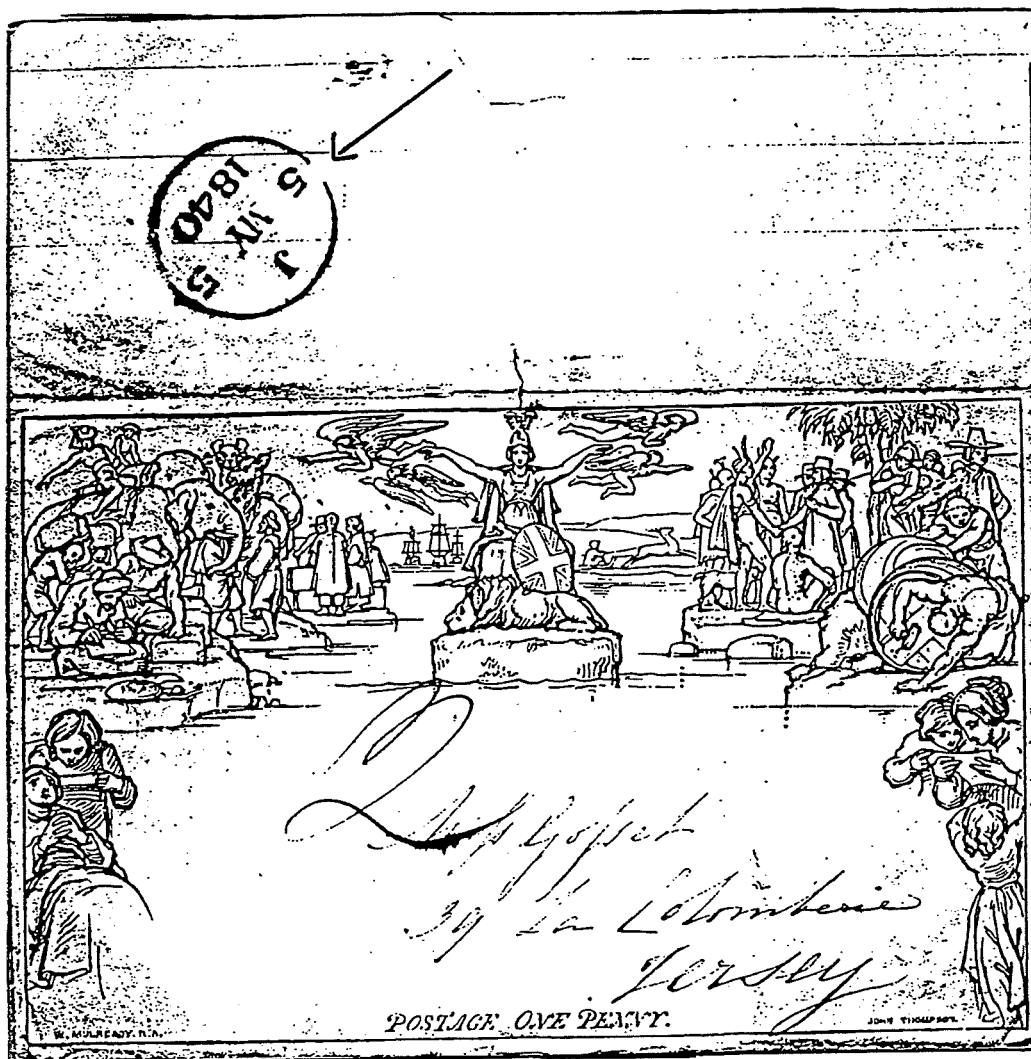
THE DECEMBER MEETING

On 9th December 2000, we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Society at our traditional gathering in the Bass Museum, Burton-on-Trent. After an excellent lunch, Jan Young in proposing the health of the Society outlined the history of the Society and mentioned a number of those who had contributed to its progress. Our President, Elizabeth Lewis, concluded her response on behalf of the Society by pointing out that it was quite fitting that both speeches had been given by ladies as a female head had appeared on the stamps of this country for the majority of the years since 1840.

We then sat back for the afternoon's entertainment which was to be provided by John Bohn who was to display "*The Mulready, Its Caricatures and Illustrated Envelopes*". John began by explaining how he became interested in Mulreadies rather than traditional philately, ending with a poem of which, unfortunately, I cannot remember the exact words. He then went on to outline how the Mulready came into being, William Mulready having been commissioned by Rowland Hill to design Great Britain's first pre-paid postal stationery which was to be sold alongside the adhesive stamps. Both lettersheets and envelopes were ready to be put on sale on 1st May 1840 but were not to be used until 6th May.

The first sheet shown by Mr Bohn was an original Post Office notice of 10th January 1840 about Uniform Penny Postage and giving the various rates. This was followed by an example of each of the three temporary envelopes issued to Parliament - Houses of Parliament, House of Lords and House of Commons. These are very rare, having been issued in January 1840 and then withdrawn on 5th May.

Although the Mulready was issued to be valid on and from 6th May 1840, we were shown copies used on 2nd and 5th May. The latter is reproduced below. We then saw a first-day cover Mulready sent from Birmingham to Kent on 6th May 1840 followed by one directed on 10th May - the first Sunday of use.



A used Mulready is usually seen cancelled, according to the regulations, with the Maltese Cross applied to Britannia. However we were shown an example with the handstamp applied to the right of Britannia. This was followed by Mulreadys cancelled with various colours of Maltese Cross. Then came examples showing unusual Maltese Crosses such as those of Leeds, Manchester and Wotton-under-Edge.

It should not be forgotten that the Mulready was produced in a twopenny version and we saw an example of this dated 8th May 1840. Next came Mulreadys which had been uprated to take account of the weight of the contents. For instance one carried two penny blacks while another carried two twopenny blues. One of these caught the eye of our Chairman as it originated from a Worcestershire town. However, a really spectacular item was a twopenny Mulready sent to India and uprated by the addition of no less than five twopenny blues (1841). Finally, in this section, John showed us the only Mulready known to have been sent into this country, from Vera Cruz to Liverpool.

Rowland Hill was rather surprised that people liked and used the penny adhesive rather than the envelopes with Mulready's extravagant design which was widely ridiculed to such an extent that within two weeks caricatures had been published. John Bohn's next section was devoted to these caricatures - all postally used. Among the wide range that we saw were Fores number 1 drawn by John Leech, eleven of the fourteen published by Spooner and, from Scotland, Hume's Comic Envelope number 1. And, as said before, all were postally used.

The introduction of illustrated postal stationery resulted in some of the large number of propaganda organisations which existed in the mid-19th century producing envelopes with ornate designs and slogans. We saw examples in favour of Anti-Corn Laws, Penny Ocean Postage and Anti-Slavery - one produced by Valentine and one printed in blue by Marshall. One supporting the campaign against Sunday work showed a devil emptying a sack of mail over a church. Another carrying the slogan "INTEMPERANCE IS THE BANE OF SOCIETY" had Hogarthian scenes on the lefthand side but on the right had scenes of prosperity and happiness arising from temperance.

Mr Bohn began the second half of his display with advertising envelopes the first few of which had a show business theme. Also of note were those produced by Bemrose of Derby, one of which had been sent from Birmingham to Ashby. Some were semi-political in nature with one showing Gladstone chopping off the head of Queen Victoria (the stamp).

The final section of John Bohn's display consisted of hand-illustrated envelopes. No description can possibly do justice to the artistic talent shown. Of particular note were those produced by George Edwards, a watercolourist, and Hugh Rose who was a professional soldier. In 1896, he began a correspondence with Constance King-Harman, illustrating his envelopes with great talent. I particularly liked an envelope showing a superb Christmas scene. Another noteworthy Christmas scene was produced in pen and ink by Arthur Ellis on a letter sent to the Duchess of Somerset. Also of note was a watercolour drawn by one of Queen Victoria's children and sent from Buckingham Palace. The display ended with an envelope sent to John Bohn by David Swales the author of "Hand-Illustrated Envelopes".

In his vote of thanks Chris Jackson commented that he had seen some good displays but this was surely the best display that he had ever seen. I can only add that in the twenty years that I have been a member of this Society, I have seen some outstanding displays of postal history of which those given by Michael Jackson, Malcolm Ray-Smith and Martin Willcocks come readily to mind. To that list must now be added that given by John Bohn for his display was notable not only for the postal history content but also for the visual impact that it made. The above account can be no more than an inadequate attempt to describe a superb afternoon's entertainment.

Again our thanks are due to Richard Farman for his efforts in laying on such a good venue and lunch.

CARING ABOUT MILESTONES

by Christopher Beaver

A day conference in October 2000 held at the Black Country Museum attracted about sixty of those who have realised the need to coordinate the recording, preservation and restoration of surviving old waymarks. Thousands were removed in 1940 and never put back. Hundreds do survive in a great variety of shapes and sizes. A few of the Roman era are still in situ, rather more in museums. Most are of the turnpike era when trusts were required to show where their roads went. The word milestone is often a misnomer inasmuch as many are entirely of cast iron or the words and figures are on a metal plate bolted onto the stone.

In the course of the day slides were shown of many of the best survivors, and of some of the worst. County Councils have legal responsibilities, yet whether necessary action is taken often depends on the awareness and persistence of amateur enthusiasts. At the end of the conference it was resolved to form a Milestone Society, concentrating on England at present, and a committee was appointed to plan action and the launch of the Society.

One of the enthusiasts, Carol Haines, was by chance able to launch a book during the day, the product of personal research over many years.

"*MARKING THE MILES*" correctly claims to be "the first in depth study of milestones in England." Preliminary chapters concern roads, miles and maps. There is a useful bibliography, and an essential gazetteer in county order gives the grid reference of each waymark described in the heart of the book, sixty-three of them clearly illustrated as practicable.

Two or three examples must suffice. "Outside the Red Lion at Atherstone is a rectangular stone with metal plates on its side and upper faces. It was known as the 3L Stone because it stated that London, Lincoln and Liverpool were each 100 miles from that spot One metal plate still shows 100 miles to London but the plates on the side faces have been substituted by two closer Ls - Lutterworth and Lichfield." Is the author correct in stating that all the original distances were wrong?

The other examples selected are at Dunchurch, neither a typical milestone. A hexagonal obelisk was in 1813 "placed on the site of a shaft of an old market cross which had been destroyed at the Reformation. It is on the route of the old coaching road to Holyhead and what Pevsner describes as an inscribed waistband gives distances of 79 miles to London and 178 to Holyhead. It was renovated in 1953 to celebrate the Coronation and again in 1977 to mark the Queen's Jubilee." This is intriguing for in 1813 Dunchurch was using an 81 mileage stamp; 80 was considered the correct figure in February 1829 and 79 in 1831, all of these to the GPO which moved in September 1829 from Lombard Street to St. Martin-le-Grand, whereas the obelisk figure would be to Hick's Hall in Clerkenwell, the best part of a mile nearer than either. Holyhead's 278 stamp in 1813 was by a different route, but became 275 when the route was changed to be through Dunchurch, Birmingham and Shrewsbury from 1817. After Telford's work on this road was completed, the 1827 time-bill gives a total of 261 miles 2 furlongs, and an 1838 Return for the Select Committee on Postage gives 259 miles 2 furlongs. Do the figures on the obelisk date from 1813 then, and if so was it erected as part of the campaign to improve the road and shorten the time to and from Ireland? In addition "a mounting block-cum-milestone which has lost its inscription stands just outside Dunchurch."

Not surprisingly Mrs Haines does not know the story of the "moving milestone" recounted in MM61/9. About 1789 Christopher Saverland was instructed by John Palmer to explain an increase of postage between Dunchurch and London to the complainants, among whom was a Mr Caldecote. He had written that there was a stone beyond the inn where the mail bag for Dunchurch and Rugby was dropped giving a distance from London of 80 miles. When the surveyor arrived he found labourers digging up the said stone south of the said inn! Had the ruse succeeded the postage would not have reverted to fourpence of course because it was based on the distance to Lombard Street not Hick's Hall. It remained fivepence until 1831. One question more. Did Mr Caldecote have a hand in the erection of the obelisk in 1813?

Marking the Miles - A History of English Milestones by Carol Haines is privately published at £12.
ISBN 0 9538885-0-9.

THE DISTANCE OF BEDFORD FROM LONDON

Although Bedford does not come into the area covered by our Society, I do feel that it is of relevance to our latest project to see how the distance of towns from London could be open to dispute.

In a letter sent to Freeling by an M.P. for Bedfordshire it was stated that the 50th milestone was exactly 400 yards from the High Street and this was a measurement made some years before. But, from the improvements made in the previous three years between London and Shefford by cutting off corners, lowering hills and filling in valleys, it seemed probable that the distance had been shortened by more than half a mile. Added to this, the recent relocation of the G.P.O. would have reduced the mileage by a similar distance. Therefore, Bedford should not come into the 50-80 miles band and so the postage from London should be reduced to sevenpence.

Freeling commented, "...we ought to have an actual admeasurement more especially as if the distance be within 50 miles, it may affect other Towns upon a long line of Road." He then went on to suggest that Mr Cary be employed to make such a measurement. The result is shown below. It is possible that the earlier measurement was not made by Cary for it was not until 1807 that Bedford received its mail by the route shown below.

[Ref: Post 40/1076/1829]

*From the General Post Office
to Bedford*

	M	F	P
Islington - Angel Inn	1	2	8
Holloway - Toll Bar	2	6	14
Whitehorn - Green - Horn	9	3	27
Barnet - Black Horse	11	2	31
Barnet - Pillar	12	2	12
Potters Bar	14	7	16
Bell Bus - White Hart	17	1	11
Hatfield Post Office	19	7	29
Stamforough	21	5	22
Lemsford	22	5	29
Brickwall - Toll Bar	23	6	27
Hollyn - Post Office	25	3	19
Codricle	26	7	12
Langley	29	7	14
Kitchin - Bridge	34	3	30
Shefford	41	4	0
Cotton End - Bell	47	3	24
Bedford Post Office and - U.K.	51	2	6

*I certify that the above admeasurement
is correct*

Wm James Hunt
January 11. 1830

John Cary

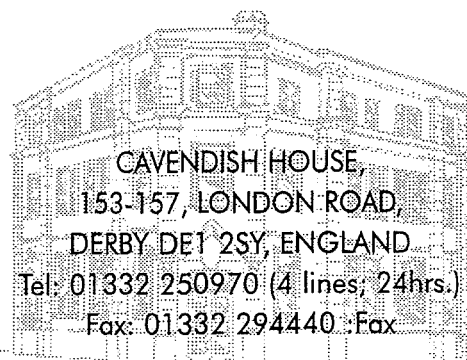
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MIDLAND POST OFFICES OPENED OR CLOSED DURING 2000

by Ken Smith

Some of the closures shown may be temporary, for example, Badsey, Evesham has recently had its contract withdrawn by P.O. Counters, but it is a large village and the office will almost certainly be re-located.

The P.O. Counters list of current offices on the internet has been helpful, especially as opening hours are given, and in most cases the exact address. This has been useful as I regularly visit offices to obtain datestamp impressions on certificates of posting etc. Many rural offices are in unmarked private houses, and even some of the locals do not realise these offices exist! For example, Ashford Carbonel, Ludlow which closed in 1970 and for which the internet lists an office in the village hall. When I visited in October, I was told that the post office had been in the village hall since 1970 and was run by volunteers from the village, on Thursday afternoons only. Another village hall is listed at 'Calverdale' near Whitchurch. There has never been, I believe, an office of this name, although 'Calverhall' closed in 1979. I have not yet visited this one, and if anyone is passing on a Thursday between 9 a.m. and noon, I would be grateful for a certificate of posting! Other village hall offices listed in Shropshire are at Wrockwardine (Tuesday & Thursday a.m.) and Rodington (Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri/Sat a.m.).

Several village hall post offices are listed in Oxfordshire. Charlton-on-Otmoor's post office closed in 1977 but there is currently a village hall service, provided from nearby Ambrosden on Thursdays 10.30 a.m. to noon, using one of the Ambrosden self-inking datestamps. The postmistress told me that she has been running this service since about 1988, and it may well have been going continuously since 1977. At Islip the village hall houses a shop which opens Monday to Saturday, mornings only, with the post office, which is probably served from Kidlington, open on Tuesday & Thursday mornings. Unfortunately, when I visited on 28th December, the shop and post office were closed for the week, so I do not know what datestamp is used. Other village hall offices in Oxfordshire are listed at Aynho, Broughton, Upper Tadmarton, Marston St. Lawrence, Brize Norton, South Moreton, Hinton Waldrist, and Brightwell Baldwin. Cassington which closed in 1989 is listed at the 'Red Lion', Mon to Thurs mornings. Sydenham, Thame which I believed had closed before 1983 is listed at The Old School House, Fridays 11 a.m. to noon. Forest Hill, Oxford, which closed in December 1978, is given as open on Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to noon, though no address is given.

Titely in Herefordshire is listed as open on Thursday afternoons only at 'Yew Tree Cottage'. When I visited the village in October, three elderly villagers assured me that the post office no longer existed, and they had never heard of Yew Tree Cottage. They pointed out three previous locations of the office, one of which was a shed in the garden of one of the villagers who spoke to me. Later, I wrote to the address given on the internet, asking for my certificate of posting to be datestamped and returned. To my surprise, about six weeks later, I received this certificate, duly datestamped, but with no information as to the location of the office. So, even the local inhabitants do not know of this office, or if they do, they do not discuss it with strangers. Certainly I could not find Yew Tree Cottage, although I passed just about every house in the village.

Any further information please to Ken Smith, 3, St. Agatha's Close, PERSHORE WR10 1DQ.

BIRMINGHAM

378, Dudley Road, 18	closed 9/2/2000.
Sparkhill MSPO	temp. closure 3/8/2000; reopened 9/10/2000.
Spring Hill, 18	closed 19/12/2000.
Weoley Castle, 29	temp. closure; reopened 14/12/2000.
Weymoor, 17	closed 2/10/2000.

DERBYSHIRE

Church Broughton, Derby	closed 1/3/2000.
Coton-in-the-Elms, Swadlincote	closed 20/9/2000.
Cressbrook, Buxton	closed 18/8/2000.
Cubley, Ashbourne	closed 24/2/2000.
Lower Pilsley, Chesterfield	closed 30/11/2000.
Lullington, Swadlincote	closed 21/3/2000.
Mappleton, Ashbourne	reopened 14/9/2000 (temp. closure 14/9/99).
Poolsbrook, Chesterfield	closed 28/7/2000 (t.c. 14/10/99; reopen: date unknown.)
Scropton, Derby	closed 6/6/2000.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Bowbridge (TSO), Stroud
 Colesbourne, Cheltenham
 Cutsdean, Cheltenham
 Frampton Mansell, Stroud
 Gretton, Cheltenham
 Rodmarton, Cirencester
 Sling, Coleford
 Temple Guiting, Cheltenham

closed 13/9/2000.
 temporary closure 29/3/2000; reopened 19/4/2000.
 closed 25/8/2000..
 closed 25/1/2000.
 closed 4/8/2000.
 closed August 2000 (officially 31/10/2000).
 reopened 21/2/2000 (temporary closure 30/11/1999).
 closed 8/2/2000.

HEREFORDSHIRE

Brampton Abbots, Ross-on-Wye
 Colwall Green, Malvern
 Fromes Hill, Ledbury
 Michaelchurch Eskley, Hereford
 Tarrington, Hereford

closed 7/9/2000; reopen 15/1/2001.
 closed 28/3/2000.
 closed 28/4/2000.
 temporary closure 31/7/2000; reopened 5/12/2000.
 temporary closure 23/2/2000; reopened 8/5/2000.

LEICESTERSHIRE

Cotesbach, Lutterworth
 Croxton Kerrial, Grantham
 Donisthorpe, Swadlincote
 Eastwell, Melton Mowbray
 Foxton, Market Harborough
 Gaddesby, Leicester
 Goadby Marwood, Melton Mowbray
 Great Dalby, Melton Mowbray
 Highfields (TSO), Coalville
 Hose, Melton Mowbray
 Lubenham, Market Harborough
 Northampton Road, Market Harborough
 Saddington, Leicester
 Sewstern, Grantham
 Wellinger Way (TSO), Leicester

closed 27/1/2000.
 closed 13/10/2000.
 closed 13/9/2000.
 closed 31/3/2000.
 closed 22/3/2000.
 closed 10/10/2000.
 closed 3/1/2001.
 closed 6/9/2000.
 closed 9/2/2000.
 to reopen 25/1/2001.
 closed 28/6/2000.
 to be renamed Western Avenue 17/1/2001
 closed 20/3/2000.
 closed 22/3/2000.
 closed 20/4/2000.

**RUTLAND**

Barrowden, Oakham
 Lyddington, Oakham

closed 22/3/2000.
 closed 7/4/2000.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Ashby Fields (TSO), Daventry
 Benefield, Peterborough
 Castle Ashby, Northampton
 Charwelton, Daventry
 Chipping Warden, Banbury
 East Carlton, Market Harborough
 Eydon, Daventry
 Great Addington, Kettering
 Loddington, Kettering
 Maidwell, Northampton
 Pytchley, Kettering
 Shutlanger, Towcester
 Watford, Northampton
 Whitfield, Brackley

New office opened 6/11/2000.
 closed 21/11/2000..
 closed 29/9/2000 (Actually earlier as postmistress broke a hip).
 closed 12/1/2000.
 closed 6/12/2000.
 closed 5/1/2000.
 closed 6/6/2000.
 closed 12/4/2000.
 closed 2/5/2000.
 closed 30/6/2000.
 closed 11/4/2000.
 reopened 8/2/2000; (temp. closure 15/4/1999).
 closed 4/4/2000.
 closed 14/6/2000.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Blidworth, Mansfield
 Cottam, Retford
 Egmanton, Newark
 Hawksworth, Nottingham
 Hickling, Melton Mowbray
 Kneesall, Newark
 Main Road, Ravenshead, Nottingham
 North Clifton, Newark
 Nuthall, Nottingham
 Thorneywood Rise (TSO), Nottingham
 Wellow, Newark
 Weston, Newark
 Wheatley, Retford
 Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, Loughborough

closed 24/3/2000; reopened; closed 23/11/2000.
 closed 27/1/2000.
 closed 17/4/2000.
 closed 30/8/2000.
 closed 26/4/2000.
 closed 14/8/2000.
 closed 11/10/2000. (Formerly "Fishpool" 1937-66).
 closed 25/10/2000.
 closed 7/9/2000.
 closed 13/6/2000.
 closed 16/8/2000.
 closed 28/4/2000.
 New office opened 27/2/2000; replaced North Wheatley cd 3/8/99
 closed 20/6/2000.

OXFORDSHIRE

Adderbury, Banbury
 Benson, Wallingford
 Blewbury, Didcot
 Botley Road (TSO), Oxford
 Bucknell, Bicester
 Chilton, Didcot
 Curbridge, Witney
 Ducklington, Witney
 Epwell, Banbury
 Florence Park Road (TSO), Oxford
 Freeland, Witney
 Horley, Banbury
 Iffley (TSO), Oxford
 Piddington, Bicester
 South Newington, Banbury
 Sunningwell, Abingdon
 Swinbrook, Burford
 Tackley, Kidlington
 Tidington, Thame
 Warborough, Oxford
 Wardington, Banbury

temporary closure 13/12/2000.
 temporary closure 6/11/2000 (robbery 6/11); to reopen mid-Jan.
 closed 8/8/2000.
 closed 31/5/2000.
 closed 30/8/2000.
 closed 31/12/2000.
 closed c. July 2000.
 closed 23/5/2000.
 closed 30/6/2000.
 closed 27/4/2000.
 closed 3/8/2000.
 closed 10/1/2000.
 temporary closure 17/12/1998; reopened; closed 16/10/2000.
 closed 19/5/2000.
 closed 27/3/2000.
 closed 28/3/2000.
 closed 2/11/1999 but closure date also reported as 11/1/2000.
 closed 29/6/2000.
 reopened May 2000 (Wed. p.m. satellite office of Great Milton.)
 closed 29/6/2000.
 closed 22/5/2000.

SHROPSHIRE

Atcham, Shrewsbury
 Chelmarsh, Bridgnorth
 Chirk Bank, Wrexham
 Coalport, Telford
 Knowbury, Ludlow
 Tetchill, Ellesmere
 Wall-under-Heywood, Church Stretton

closed 28/9/2000.
 closed 30/3/2000.
 closed 1/3/2000.
 closed 'by October 2000'.
 reopened 4/1/2000; temporary closure 15/9/1999.
 closed March 2000.
 closed 19/9/2000.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Bagnall, Stoke-on-Trent
 Bishops Offley, Stafford
 Blymhill, Shifnal
 Caldon Low, Stoke-on-Trent
 Copmere End, Stafford
 Edingale, Tamworth
 Ettingshall, Wolverhampton
 Gentleshaw, Rugeley
 Longsdon, Stoke-on-Trent
 Stonnall, Walsall
 Warslow, Buxton
 Waterhouses, Ashbourne

closed 29/8/2000.
 re-established 22/6/2000, replacing Copmere End.
 closed 29/8/2000.
 closed 13/9/2000.
 replaced by Bishops Offley 22/6/2000.
 closed 19/5/2000.
 closed 14/2/2000.
 closed 29/8/2000.
 closed 25/8/1993.
 to close 31/1/2000.
 closed 2/2/2000.
 reopened 24/8/2000; had closed 5/2/1999.

WARWICKSHIRE

Baginton, Coventry	reopened 15/3/2000; had closed 3/11/1999.
Bickenhill, Solihull	closed 1/11/2000 (also closed 27/11/1996 so must have reopened).
Church Lawford, Rugby	closed 16/6/2000.
Fenny Compton, Southam	closed 27/10/2000.
Fieldgate (TSO), Kenilworth	closed 3/10/2000.
Haseley Knob, Warwick	closed 6/7/2000.
Leek Wootton, Warwick	closed 31/5/2000.
Oxhill, Warwick	closed 4/4/2000.
Princethorpe, Rugby	closed 28/1/2000; reopened 5/4/2000.
Shustoke Green, Birmingham	closed 19/5/2000.
Temple Herdewyke, Leamington (Army accommodation, Central Ammunition Depot)	closed 31/5/2000.
Tredington, Shipston-on-Stour	closed 31/10/2000.
Wood End, Atherstone	closed 26/4/2000.

WEST MIDLANDS

Longford (TSO), Coventry	to close 11/1/2001.
Lightwoods, Oldbury, Warley	temporary closure 2/2/2000.
Spon End (TSO), Coventry	closed 14/9/2000.
Tividale Road (TSO), Warley	closed 6/12/1999; reo 18/5/2000; clo 2/10/2000; reo 16/10/2000.

WORCESTERSHIRE

Badsey, Evesham	temporary closure 30/12/2000.
Rous Lench, Evesham	closed 4/8/2000.
Sedgebarrow, Evesham	reopened 6/7/2000; had closed 21/10/1999.
Stanford Bridge, Worcester	closed 27/7/2000.

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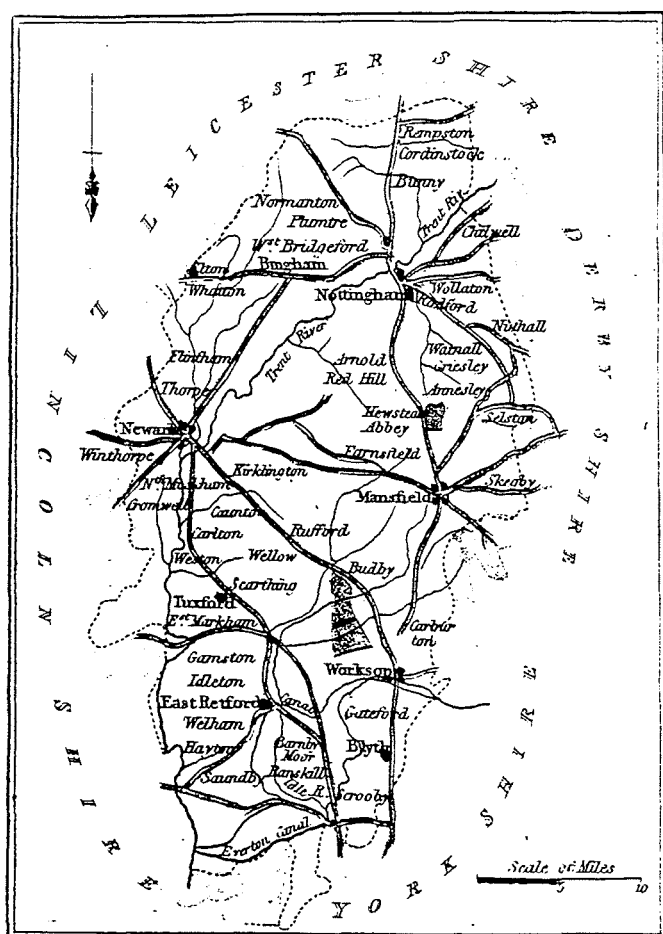
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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE 'INVERTED'

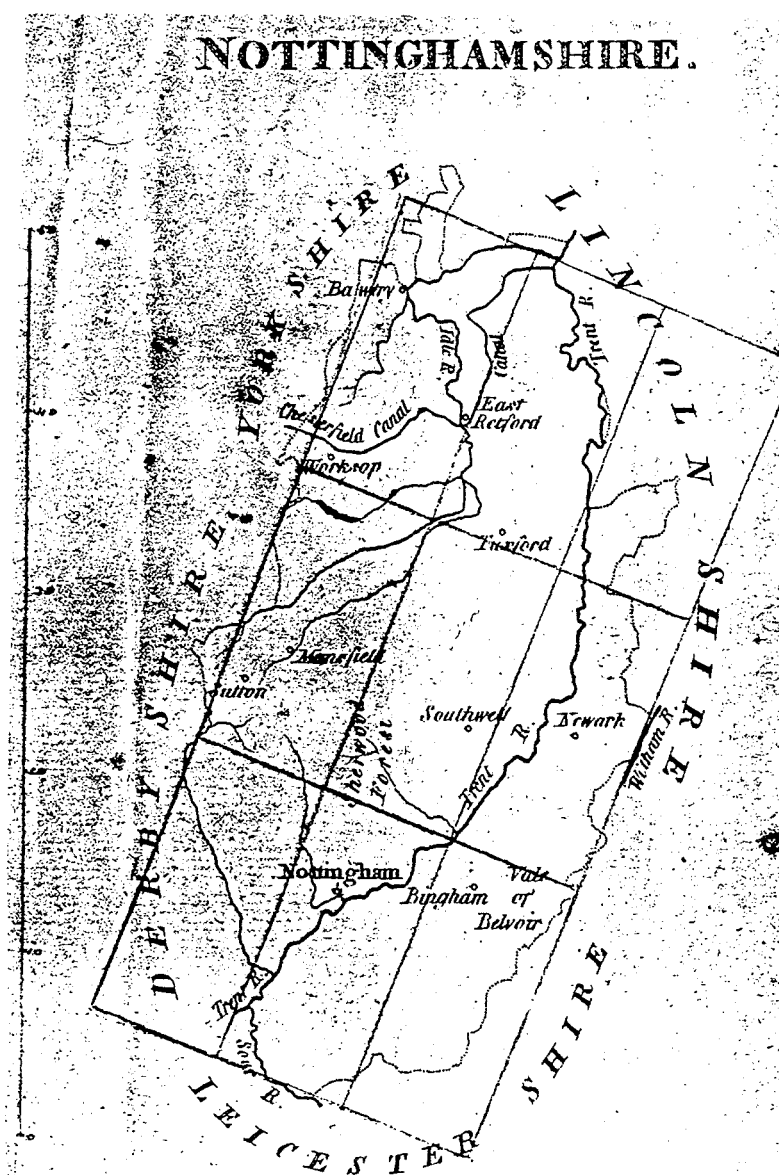
by Alan Marshall

Within two weeks of the meeting at Warwick on 'Maps and related Material' a lucky find has added three items to the maps that I displayed at that meeting.

The first of these is a hand tinted and is very unusual in that it depicts Nottinghamshire inverted. At a first glance Nottingham itself appears to be shown in the north of the county, but then one notices that the compass points down the page, so giving North at the bottom of the page. As this originates from an 'Atlas of England 1803/4 by R. Butters then it is possible that the other counties are likewise inverted. Can anyone confirm this?

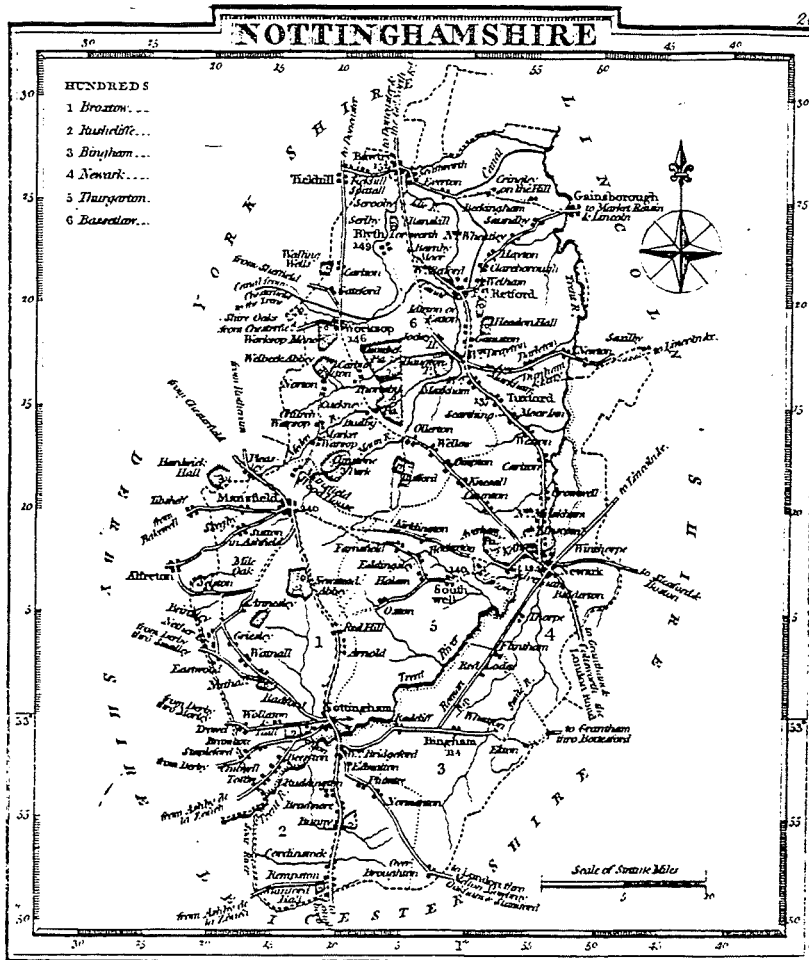


NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.



The second item is an engraving of 1790 by J. Aikin. The minute dots accurately define the county boundary but the map only shows the main towns and rivers. It is covered by a pencilled grid, probably to aid calculation of the county area which incidentally appears in the book containing the third map. A scale at one side from 0 to 50 does confirm the 50x25 miles overall size.

The third map is from a very small book titled '*Topographical & Statistical Description of the County of Nottingham*' by George Alexander Cooke, editor of '*The Universal System of Geography*'. It is prefixed by a copious travelling guide, listing the 'Direct and Principal Cross Roads' as well as the inns, distances and the houses of the various gentlemen. Ironically, although the mileages from the main towns are given, Nottingham is omitted. The book also includes four tiny but excellent engravings of Nottingham Castle, Newark Castle, Southwell and Welbeck.



The county is divided into hundreds by red and the respective boundaries of the county by different colours which descriptions are peculiar to the superior Edition.

AN ITINERARY of all the DIRECT AND PRINCIPAL CROSS ROADS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

In which are included the STAGES, INNS, and
GENTLEMEN'S SEATS.

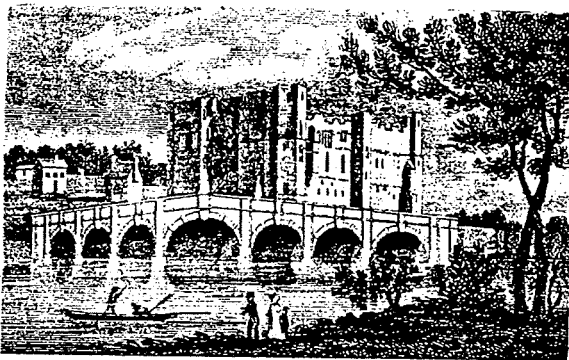
N. B. The first column contains the Names of Places passed through; the Figures that follow show the Distances from Place to Place, Town to Town, and Stages; and in the last Column are the names of Gentlemen's Seats and Inns. The right and left of the Roads are distinguished by the letters R and L.

JOURNEY FROM BALDERTON TO BAWTRY, THROUGH EAST RETFORD.

BALDERTON T.G.		
to		
NEWARK.	2½	2½ Inns—Kingston Arms, Ram,
On R. a T. R.		Saracen's Head.
to Sleaford; on L.		About one mile and a half to
to Nottingham.		the L. of Newark, Kel-
Cross the river		ham Hall, George Sutton,
Dean.		esq; beyond which is
On L. a T. R.		Averham Park, late G.
to Mansfield.		Sutton, esq.
Cross the river		
Trent.		
South Muskham	2½	4½ W. D. Rastell, esq. and
North Muskham,		Winthorpe Hall, R.
T. G.	1	5½ Pocklington, esq. R.
		— Chaplin, esq. R.
Cromwell	2	7½ Jos. Pocklington, esq. R.
Carlton	1½	9½ Sir William Earle Welby,
		bart. R.
Sutton	1½	10½ Ossington Hall, John Deni-
		son, esq. L.
Weston	1½	12½
Scarthing Moor		
Lin	2	13½

A 2

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.



Newark Castle

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.



Southwell

THE BIRMINGHAM - WORCESTER MAILCOACH

In a report dated 3rd November 1834, the date on which the above mailcoach ran for the first time, Mr Rideout gave details of the changes he proposed in the delivery of the letters at Bromsgrove, Droitwich and Worcester.

At Bromsgrove there were two deliveries - at 8 a.m. of the letters brought by the mailcoaches from Birmingham (9.35 p.m.) and Bristol (3 a.m.), and at 11 a.m. of the London letters etc brought by the ride from Stratford. As the new mailcoach would arrive in Bromsgrove at 9.16 a.m. from Birmingham and from Worcester at 4.24 p.m., the 8 a.m. delivery would be withdrawn and three deliveries would take place - at 9.16 a.m., 11.30 a.m. and 4.24 p.m. For this extra duty the letter carrier would receive an extra 1/- a week.

At Droitwich there were also two deliveries, at 8 a.m. of letters brought by the mailcoaches from Birmingham and Bristol, and at 11 a.m. of the London letters and other correspondence brought by the ride from Worcester which was now to be withdrawn. The delivery of the London letters was now to take place at 10 a.m. on the arrival of the new mail and there would be an additional delivery at 3.45 p.m. of letters carried by the new mail from Worcester. However, as this would consist of only Worcester letters and so should not take the letter carrier long to carry out, an increase in pay was not necessary.

Mr Rideout said there was a problem at Worcester as the London delivery started at 10 a.m. and the new mail did not arrive until 10.40. The only solution that he could see was that there should be a delivery at the office window only at 10.40 a.m. and letters that had not been collected should be sent out with the evening delivery at 4.30 p.m.

[Ref: Post 40/774/1834]

REDDITCH'S MAIL

Towards the end of 1834 some of the inhabitants of Redditch complained about the delays caused to some of their mail caused by the nature of the posts between Birmingham and Bromsgrove. There were two main complaints: Firstly, mail for Redditch which arrived in Birmingham at 6.30 a.m. by the mailcoach from Liverpool was not delivered until 11 a.m. on the following day. (Presumably it circulated through Stratford.) Secondly, letters which arrived in Birmingham after the departure of the Oxford mail at 2.15 p.m., i.e. those brought by the mailcoaches from Manchester, Sheffield, Stamford, Holyhead, Stourport and Walsall, were forwarded by the Bristol mailcoach at 8 p.m. as far as Bromsgrove where they remained until 2 p.m. the following day.

The memorialists said that they had been informed that the London letters for Bromsgrove were to be carried by the Holyhead mail to Birmingham from where they would be taken by a mailcoach about to be established between Birmingham and Worcester. They asked if they could derive some advantage from an alteration in the working of the Stratford - Bromsgrove mailcart.

When the matter was referred to Mr Rideout, the surveyor, he said that he had been on the point of suggesting that the ride from Stratford should be stopped at Redditch and a separate ride put on between Bromsgrove and Redditch. He said that the ride from Stratford when established had carried the London bag for Bromsgrove but it would now be superseded in that respect by the new mailcoach from Birmingham to Worcester. Furthermore, the ride left Stratford at 8.16 a.m., arriving in Redditch at 10.20 a.m. and Bromsgrove at 11.06 a.m. The return from there was at 2 p.m., reaching Redditch at 2.46 p.m. and Stratford at 4.50 p.m.

Mr Rideout proposed to dispatch a ride from Bromsgrove at 9.36 a.m., thirty minutes after the arrival of the new mailcoach from Birmingham. [There is a small discrepancy between the time given here and that quoted in the previous article.] This would reach Redditch at 10.30 in time for the London delivery, and would return at 2.50 p.m., giving the inhabitants time to reply by return of post. The only drawback to this arrangement was that letters from the Stratford to Bromsgrove would be delivered at 4.40 p.m. instead of 11.30 a.m. However, these only came to £40 p.a. whereas the letters from the North and West for Redditch came to £270 p.a.

[Ref: Post 40/19/1835]

FOOTNOTE If anyone is asking why the MM107/14 contains no mention of an alteration in the circulation of the Bromsgrove letters, I asked myself that question. A return visit to the appropriate volume shows that there should be an entry:

3NOV1834 The bag for Bromsgrove and its delivery is to be sent to Birmingham

Apologies for that, but it is so much easier when you know exactly what it is you are trying to find. But, should there not also be a mention of Droitwich?

ANOTHER OXFORDSHIRE PENNY POST

In March 1835, Mr Rideout reported that as the stop of the mailcoaches at Oxford was to be abolished on their acceleration, it would be necessary to make some provision for the village of Ensham which was situated between Oxford and Witney. The letters for that place had been sorted during the stop of the mailcoaches and then sent on in a private bag by the Gloucester mailcoach, and the person who took the letters charged one penny a letter. [It is not clear if Mr Rideout was referring to the mailcoach guard or someone in the village.]

Mr Rideout proposed the appointment of a penny post messenger from Oxford to leave there at 6.30 a.m. and arrive in Ensham at 8.30 a.m. The messenger was to deliver all the letters and return at 5.45 p.m., arriving in Oxford at 7.45 p.m. This would give the village the advantage of connections in both directions with the important rides to Newbury, with mail for the West, and that to Towcester and Northampton.

The messenger's pay of 14/- a week was to include the payment, twice a day, of crossing "Lord Abingdon's private Bridge".

[Ref: Post 40/159/1835]

THE OXFORD-ABINGDON RIDE

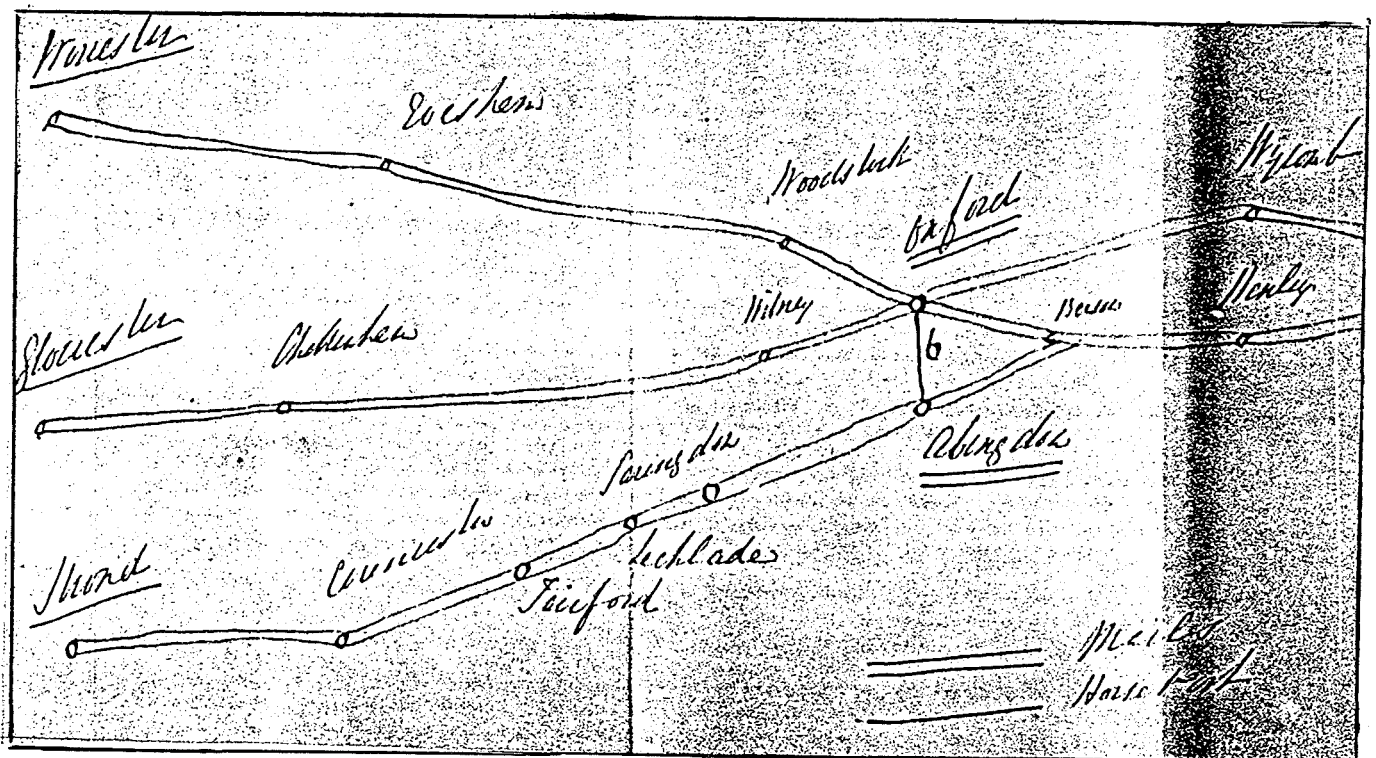
The acceleration of the Worcester mailcoach took Mr Rideout to Oxford in April 1835 to ensure that a connection was maintained between Oxford and the Stroud mailcoach.

Before the acceleration, the mailcoach from Worcester arrived at 11.30 p.m. and that from Gloucester two minutes later. Both coaches left at midnight and immediately afterwards a ride left for Abingdon to catch the mail from London to Stroud. It returned immediately taking to Oxford letters from the up Stroud mailcoach and arrived at 2 a.m. in time for those letters to be forwarded at 2.30 a.m. by the mailcoaches to Gloucester and Worcester.

In the proposed alterations the mailcoach from Worcester was to arrive in Oxford at 12.07 a.m. and that from Gloucester two minutes later. The Worcester mailcoach from London was to arrive at 2.07 a.m. and that to Gloucester at 2.38 a.m. This meant that there would not be time for the ride to go to Abingdon and back.

The solution that Mr Rideout proposed was to reverse the ride i.e. to run it from Abingdon and back. The ride was to leave Abingdon at 12.15 a.m., five minutes after the arrival of the mailcoach from Stroud, and reach Oxford at 1.15 a.m. It was to return immediately so as to reach Abingdon at 2.15 a.m., thirty minutes before the arrival of the coach to Stroud.

[Ref: Post 40/ 207/1835]



WIRKSWORTH REVISITED

Mr Karstadt reported in July 1835 that he had revised the post to Wirksworth as connected with the new Derby and Manchester mailcoach [MM117/13] by which Wirksworth received its South letters by means of a ride from Belper and its North letters through a footpost from Matlock.

However, the nearest point to Wirksworth passed by the mailcoach was the village of Cromford - two miles away. It had occurred to Mr Karstadt that a footpost twice a day from Cromford could provide Wirksworth with an equally good service. He had found that a respectable innkeeper at Cromford would be willing to carry the bags on horseback twice a day for 16/- a day, taking about fifteen minutes for the journey.

Mr Karstadt explained that although the distance from the South would be three or four miles longer, the road from Belper was so bad and the mailcoach road so good it would be possible to get the letters to Wirksworth just as early as before. The alteration gave a saving of over £35 p.a.

[Ref: post 40/423/1835]

OLLERTON AND WORKSOP

In a brief report of March 1835, Mr Karstadt stated that a saving of over £187 p.a. had resulted from sending the Glasgow mailcoach through Ollerton and Worksop, so making redundant the horseposts between Newark and Ollerton and between Worksop and Retford.

There is no other report or minute that I can find on this matter, so I assume the change was made to save money. However, it is possible that it was linked with intended acceleration of both the Glasgow and Edinburgh mailcoaches (see below).

The actual change was probably made in February 1835 for another perusal of Post 14 has revealed that the following entry should be added to those in MM107/10:

17FEB1835 A Sack labelled 'Newark & Worksop' is to be made up of the bags for Newark, Ollerton and Worksop and is to go by the Glasgow mail.

It also now occurs to me that there should be an entry for 1827 to the effect that the Worksop bag should be sent to Retford. Watch this space!

[Ref: Post 40/127/1835. See also MM93/11 MM108/17, and MM110/11.]

MAILCOACH ACCELERATIONS

The Post Office constantly sought to run the mailcoaches at greater speed. In this they were often carrying out the wishes of the commercial classes in the major cities who sought a speedier communication with London. A constant theme throughout the Freeling reports was the need to give a place more time to reply by return of post to its London letters. Though, as Mr Karstadt commented in a report, "*...whatever time is gained with London is lost with the North.*" The cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh were particularly vociferous in 1834 in asking for a faster communication with London. The reports from the surveyors show that this was not easily done for the mailcoach system was made up of a number of interlocking parts, and to accelerate the mailcoach to Edinburgh it was necessary to make changes in Norfolk, Suffolk and elsewhere. The documents describing all of this make fascinating reading but this is possibly not the appropriate place to discuss them. However, the acceleration of the Edinburgh and Glasgow mailcoaches did affect the Midland Counties in two ways.

An impediment to the acceleration of the coach to Edinburgh was that it would have passed through Huntingdon before the arrival of the mails from Norfolk etc. And, on the up journey, the letters from the North for Norfolk would have arrived in Newmarket several hours after the mailcoach to Norwich. The solution was the establishment of a mailcoach between Birmingham and Yarmouth via Grantham and Norwich. [For a brief article on the sorting and mailcoach activity at Grantham in 1835 see MM58/8.] Mr Karstadt said that connected this were mailcoaches from Grantham to Nottingham and Derby [Elsewhere I have this as a ride - MM84/21], and from Melton Mowbray to Stamford.

There were difficulties further north. At Retford the the up and down mails arrived within 1½ hours of each other so the ride to Worksop waited and took the letters from the North and the South. On the new times the mail from London was scheduled to arrive in Retford at 10 a.m. but the up mail was not due until 2.45 p.m. So, either the ride to Worksop was delayed for five hours or the letters from the North had to be delayed for nearly a day. In the first instance, it appears that the latter option was chosen but as we have seen above the Glasgow mailcoach was eventually diverted through Worksop.

The acceleration of the mailcoaches from London to Worcester and Ludlow, London to Gloucester, Cheltenham to Hereford, and Gloucester to Carmarthen were described in some detail by Mr Rideout. The main effect, in the Midlands, was to increase the time available to reply to London letters. I will leave readers to work out for themselves the extra time available at each place from the data below:

London to Worcester and Ludlow

	ARRIVAL DOWN		DEPARTURE UP	
	OLD	NEW	OLD	NEW
Oxford	2.30 a.m.	2.07 a.m.	mnight	12.07 a.m.
Pershore	8.07	7.22 a.m.	5.45	6.45 p.m.
Worcester	9.17	8.20 a.m.	4.45	5.45 p.m.
Bromyard	11.57	10.37 a.m.	1.23	3.33 p.m.
Leominster	1.35 p.m.	11.50 a.m.	11.55 a.m.	2.15 p.m.
Kington	3.05	1.23 p.m.	10.15 a.m.	12.47 p.m.
Tenbury	12.37	11.40 a.m.	1.05	2.25 p.m.
Ludlow	1.42 p.m.	12.45	noon	1.20 p.m.

At Oxford it was possible to dispatch the ride for Banbury at 3 a.m. instead of 4 a.m., giving an arrival there one hour earlier at 6.45 a.m. At Worcester, the rides to Upton and Malvern were sent out about fifty minutes earlier and returned later. It was possible for the rides to Ludlow from Bishops Castle and Knighton to leave those places later in the morning to catch the up mail.

London to Gloucester (Carmarthen) and Hereford

Cheltenham		7 a.m.	7 p.m.	7.57 p.m.
Tewkesbury	8.54	8.08 a.m.	5.54	6.43 p.m.
Ledbury	10.31	9.40 a.m.	4.22	5.11 p.m.
Hereford	12.18 p.m.	11.21 a.m.	2.35	3.30 p.m.
Gloucester	8.45	8 a.m.	5.45	7 p.m.
Ross	11.11	10.09 a.m.	2.44	4.51 p.m.

At Witney, Burford, Northleach and Andoversford the down mail arrived before 7 a.m. so did not affect the delivery, but the mail to London left about an hour later. At Tewkesbury there was an earlier dispatch and later return of the Upton-on-Severn post. The same applied to the ride from Hereford to Brecon and those from Gloucester to Newnham and Newent.

[Refs: Post 40/243/1835, 40/382/1835]

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

It is anticipated that this will be distributed towards the end of March. As to the contents, that depends upon what is sent to:

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