

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Number 155, June 2008

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a cordial welcome to John Paulson of Matlock who collects the postal history of Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, and to Gwyn Hughes of Buckingham who collects material from Northamptonshire south of the M1 as well as numeral and duplex cancellations. John works for Cavendish Auctions so may be known to many of our members.

THE OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL POSTS

Descriptions of the Oxfordshire local posts and the handstamps they used continue in this number of 'Midland Mail' with details of the Enstone Penny Post, following descriptions of the local posts of Nettlebed and Tetsworth in the last issue. Witney will be appear in the August issue. These write-ups are intended to supplement the information in the Society's 'local posts' book (which lacked an Oxfordshire section) and will, one day, be incorporated into a second edition of the book.

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

Full details of the Society's programme of meetings for the new season is not expected to be available until the August issue of 'Midland Mail'. However, the first meeting will be on 20th September at Kington St Michael and will be an all-day meeting, with coffee available from 10.30am for an 11 o'clock start. Full details and a tear-off attendance slip will be included with the August 'Midland Mail' but, on this occasion, it will not be a joint meeting with the Somerset & Dorset PHG. The principal display will be by Eric Goffe, his first to the Society, and his subject will be 'The Worcester Road' (from London, through the centuries). Eric has a high reputation as a knowledgeable and entertaining speaker. Members' 9-sheet displays, to follow the display, will be on the theme "A Road in my County". Please make a note of the date in your diary.

YOUR NEW SECRETARY

Now that my arm has returned to its normal position from being twisted up my back, I thought that members might wish to know a little about their new Secretary.

Firstly, I am of that age where I can, and do, make full use of my Senior Railcard, National Bus Pass and all other "concessions" on offer. My working life was spent with the Post Office so perhaps it is only natural that I take an interest in matters postal.

I commenced my Post Office service at Newark in 1961, transferred to Nottingham in 1969 and moved to post Office HQ in London in 1973. There I worked in Training Division, first preparing training material for the large, new mechanised letter and parcel offices then being opened and later on for what was known as "code/sort". Promotion took me into Industrial Relations, where I learned my secretarial skills organising and writing up the draft minutes of the regular meetings between the Chairman and Directors with the Council of Post Office Unions. A move into Personnel followed to look after Pay Related Conditions of Service.

After the split of the Post Office businesses I found myself allocated to Parcelforce, still responsible for Conditions of Service but with "anything that didn't fit anywhere else" added. After Parcelforce HQ moved to Milton Keynes finances became extremely tight and volunteers for redundancy were sought. As I had been involved in preparation of the redundancy package I offered myself for the chop. Thus, in April 1992, after some 30½ years service, I found myself basically 'retired'.

I decided not to seek re-employment immediately but decided to have a "gap year". However, my time was quickly taken up with gardening and my long-standing interests in family history, collecting old local postcards and, of course, the postal history of the Newark, Ollerton, Southwell and Tuxford areas of Nottinghamshire. I was soon the Secretary of the Newark Scout District and became heavily involved in local history research, in particular the old yards and courts of the town. It quickly became apparent that I would have no time to return to work!

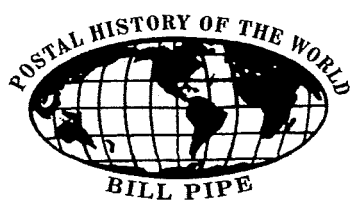
In 1997 I signed up for a three-year part-time course with Nottingham University (another arm-twisting exercise) which culminated in my being awarded the Advanced Certificate in Local History with Distinction. Along the way I have joined both the Newark Civic Trust (I currently serve on its Planning Committee) and the Nottinghamshire Environmental Association, of which I am a past President and currently Treasurer of the Eastern Branch. For some years a friend and I ran WEA local history courses and I continue to give talks and take groups around Newark to raise money for our local hospice.

I joined the Society in the autumn of 2004 after providing information for the Mileage Marks book and arm-twisting yet again by two members who shall remain nameless. From the outset I made a conscious decision to make the effort and attend meetings and have done so. I have benefited from these and the members' interest meetings have proved just the incentive I needed to start me on the job of 'writing up' some 30+ years of collecting. It is proving a long, hard task but an extremely good discipline.

With a clear need for more than 24 hours in each day, I hope that I prove to be a worthy successor to Mel Matthews.

Mick Gill

May 2008

 THE MAGPIE <i>POSTAL AUCTIONS & LISTS POSTCARDS & EPHEMERA PAPER COLLECTABLES POSTAL HISTORY</i>	W.T. PIPE 7 Richard Close Upton, Poole Dorset BH16 5PY Tel: 01202 623300 Fax: 01202 631149 Web: www.magpiebillpipe.com Email: magpiebillpipe@free.uk.com
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THE SOCIETY'S OLDER PUBLICATIONS

Those members who were at the AGM will know that brief mention was made of the Society's older publications, in popular terms the 'UDC' book, the 'straight line' book and the 'local posts' book, each of which was produced on a typewriter. (There is also our book on the posts of Leicestershire but that was solely the work of John Soer, not a collaborative project, and can safely be left in his hands.) Our UDC book, originally published in 1985, reached its 4th edition in 1996 and, most recently, updates of the usage information have appeared in 'Midland Mail'. The 'straight line' book may be less well known to many members because it was published in 1988 and a second edition has never been produced. The 'local posts' book was published in 1993 and, apart from its lack of an Oxfordshire section, is still relatively up-to-date. Descriptions of the Oxfordshire local posts are now appearing in successive numbers of 'Midland Mail' and can eventually be incorporated into a second edition.

Our new Co-ordinating Editor for publications, Chris Jackson, is concerned with the compilation and publication of a 'Midlands British County Catalogue'. This is intended to draw all the Midland Counties currently in the five Volumes of Willcocks and Jay's 'British County catalogue of Postal History' into a single updated volume. This project had the full blessing of Professor Barrie Jay before his untimely death and is expected to retain the format of the original volumes. The Co-ordinating Editor is calling a County Editors' meeting at the end of June to launch the project and members will be asked for new information in due course. It is anticipated that publication of a Midlands 'BCC' may be four years away if previous experience of collaborative Society projects provide any guide.

In the meantime, we are looking for a computer-literate member to assume some responsibility for the earlier books. As mentioned above, these books were all produced on a typewriter of early 1970s vintage that boasted the then-remarkable feature of memory disks. These were/are non-standard items, just two and a half inches in diameter, each side of a disk storing up to three A4 pages of typed data. Even Brother, the manufacturer, is apparently unable to transfer the data from the disks to any other format.

If new editions of the books are to be produced, they clearly need to be produced on a computer. Limited experiments have been carried out into the scanning of printed pages of typed data (without illustrations) and it is apparent that this can be done very successfully, subject to checking. (For example, a date of c1846, or of DEC46, instead of 28DEC46 may fool the program but the confusion can easily be corrected.) What is needed is a member who will begin this task, experiment with programs and methods, and come up with a viable procedure. The starting point may be the 'straight line' book or, to give it its complete title, 'The Undated Straight Line and Numbered Receiving House Marks of the Midland Counties, 1840-1860'. If the title is long, the book is not – only 68 pages. Once the book has been successfully transferred to a computer memory, we can begin to update the information in it.

Putting two and two together, any member contemplating this interesting task may have appreciated they are unlikely to be under any pressure to complete it in short order. The Society's priority must be the Midlands 'BCC' but the tasks can progress in parallel so that, once the new book has appeared, we are in a position to update the older books quite rapidly. For the moment, the retired co-ordinator is keeping track of amendments notified by members over the years (and also retains a mass of 'historical data' relating to the production of the original books).

If you feel able to undertake the work and likely to develop an enthusiasm for the project, please contact John Calladine (01249-758148) or Mick Gill, our new Secretary (01636-672868).

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND AUCTION

Our AGM was held at St Germain's Church Hall, Birmingham on 26th April with, in the absence of our Chairman somewhere at sea, Chris Jackson in the chair.

After apologies had been recorded and the minutes of the last AGM approved, Eric Lewis, in the absence of Elizabeth, took us through the Treasurer's Report, a copy of which is enclosed with this issue. (I am sure that members will join me in hoping that Elizabeth will have soon recovered.) The drop in income compared with the previous year was due to the fact that in the year ending 2007, the auction had included much material donated to the Society by Mrs Beaver. In view of the healthy state of the finances Society it was proposed that the annual subscription remain at £10. This was approved unanimously.

The Editor thanked all those who had contributed articles to Midland Mail in the last year. However, he did point out that the number of contributors was a disgracefully small percentage of the membership. He mentioned that colour had been used in some issues and that it was hoped to repeat this at intervals. Particular mention was made of the large amount of work done by Eric and Sharon in the printing and distribution of Midland Mail. Our retiring Co-ordinating Editor reported the sale of two of the maps and four copies of our latest book.

At the moment, we have no MPF representative but a number of our members attend meetings as representatives of other societies. Our ABPS representative, Alan Godfrey reported that a brochure had been published outlining what ABPS does for its members. He also said that the 2009 National Competitions will be held at Stampex.

We then came to the election of the Officers of the Society. Our President for the next three years will be Derek Smeathers who thanked Eric Lewis for all that he had done for the Society in the last three years. Mick Gill was elected as our new Secretary replacing Mel Matthews who was thanked by Chris Jackson for keeping the Society moving forward during the previous five years. The meeting agreed that the work of the Secretary should be divided up and a post of Programme Secretary created. Richard Farman was elected to this post. Alan Godfrey was reappointed as Accounts Examiner. (Unfortunately, at the moment, David Hardwick who filled that post for a number of years is not well. We wish him a speedy recovery.)

Details were given of provisional dates for next years meetings. They were:

20 th September - Cranham,	18 th October - Warwick	15 th November - Carr's Lane
13 th December - Burton area	17 th January - St Germain's Church Hall	14 th Feb - Black Country Museum
7 th March - Great Barr	25 th April - AGM and Auction	

Full details will be included with the next issue of Midland Mail.

Finally, the Jon Baker trophy for the best article appearing in Midland Mail during 2007 was awarded to our new President, Derek Smeathers.

We then came to our annual auction. If only our normal meetings were so well attended! There was some very spirited bidding and 84% of the lots were sold with a number exceeding their estimate by a wide margin. This surely reflects the quality of the material on offer. Our auctioneer, Chris Jackson, conducted proceedings in his usual professional manner, keeping everyone in order and moving things along at a good rate.

The Registered Postal Stationery envelopes used at Birmingham sub-offices proved to be popular. Lot 169 raised £65 (estimate £40), lot 170 - £50 (£30), 171 - £75 (£40), 172 - £50 (£30) and 173 - £60 (£32). A Corsini Letter (lot 214) went at £80 (£20) and a collection 100 Leicestershire sub-office postmarks on CoPs (lot 217) realised £30 (£11). There was a lot of competition for a Henwick Parcel Post label (lot 79) which was eventually knocked down at £48 (£10). Other lots of Parcel Post labels also attracted bids well above estimate: Tewkesbury sub-offices (lot 337) £40 (£28), Stourbridge (lot 338) - £34 (£18), Droitwich - £28 (£9) and Stour port (lot 340) - £24 (£8). UDCs also seemed to be very much in demand. Lot 61 - Tideswell raised £28 (£15), Pensnett (lot 69) - £26 (£15), Wootton-Walwen - £46 (£26), lot 256 Shipston on Stour £22 (£6) and Hoton (lot 292) - £34 (£10).

Our thanks are due in particular to Eric Lewis for the considerable amount of work that he does in getting in the material, describing the lots, dispatching 'winnings to postal bidders, and sending out cheques to the sellers. It provides us all with an excellent opportunity to dispose of surplus material and to add to our collections.

A		B		C	5.00	D	7.00	E	15.00	F	3.00
G	8.00	H	16.00	1	230.00	2	50.00	3	100.00	4	140.00
5	46.00	6	36.00	7	85.00	8	11.00	9	100.00	10	8.00
12	11.00	13	26.00	14	3.50	16	3.00	17	4.50	18	11.00
19	6.50	21	3.50	22	9.50	23	9.00	24	6.50	25	28.00
27	9.50	28	9.50	29	9.50	30	9.00	31	9.50	33	38.00
34	20.00	35	32.00	36	9.50	37	9.00	38	4.50	41	4.50
42	9.00	43	11.00	44	24.00	45	3.00	47	6.00	48	3.00
49	13.00	50	26.00	51	38.00	52	36.00	53	9.00	54	26.00
55	4.50	57	19.00	58	20.00	59	8.00	60	5.00	61	28.00
63	4.50	65	7.00	66	9.00	67	9.00	68	36.00	69	26.00
70	50.00	71	9.00	72	38.00	74	9.00	75	5.00	76	12.00
79	48.00	80	10.00	81	5.00	83	5.00	84	24.00	85	14.00
86	4.50	87	22.00	88	46.00	89	4.50	90	9.00	91	9.00
92	18.00	93	14.00	94	13.00	95	24.00	96	15.00	97	7.50
98	3.50	99	6.50	100	7.00	101	4.50	102	6.00	103	6.00
104	5.00	105	7.00	106	13.00	107	36.00	108	6.00	110	16.00
111	16.00	113	12.00	114	7.00	115	4.50	116	4.00	117	14.00
118	6.00	119	11.00	120	5.00	121	14.00	122	16.00	123	5.50
124	9.00	125	28.00	126	7.00	127	22.00	128	7.00	129	13.00
130	8.00	131	11.00	132	5.00	133	8.50	134	11.00	135	6.50
136	3.00	137	7.50	138	6.50	139	5.00	140	5.00	142	5.50
143	5.00	144	8.00	145	2.00	146	11.00	147	4.50	149	12.00
150	6.00	151	7.00	152	6.00	153	5.00	154	4.50	158	13.00
162	16.00	163	9.50	164	36.00	165	4.50	166	15.00	167	9.50
168	18.00	169	65.00	170	50.00	171	75.00	172	50.00	173	60.00
174	4.00	175	10.00	176	8.00	177	8.00	178	3.00	179	9.00
180	11.00	181	14.00	182	3.00	183	2.50	184	5.00	185	3.00
186	10.00	187	4.00	188	6.00	189	10.00	190	18.00	191	8.50
192	8.00	193	9.00	195	12.00	196	8.50	197	3.00	199	9.50
200	3.50	202	6.00	204	7.50	205	11.00	206	5.50	207	3.50
209	5.50	210	6.50	212	5.00	214	80.00	215	34.00	216	11.00
217	30.00	218	5.00	219	5.00	222	5.50	223	4.00	224	3.00
225	20.00	226	20.00	227	10.00	229	32.00	230	46.00	233	3.00
234	7.00	235	16.00	236	8.00	237	4.00	238	6.00	241	17.00
242	7.00	243	6.00	244	6.00	245	19.00	246	7.00	248	80
249	20	250	8.00	251	24.00	254	18.00	256	22.00	257	5.00
258	6.00	259	11.00	260	26.00	261	30.00	262	34.00	263	17.00
264	38.00	265	26.00	266	8.00	267	9.00	268	6.50	269	5.00
270	8.00	274	4.00	275	7.50	276	4.50	277	5.50	278	5.50
279	46.00	281	14.00	282	13.00	283	13.00	284	4.50	285	5.50
286	8.00	287	4.00	288	38.00	289	8.50	290	5.50	292	34.00
293	4.00	294	4.00	295	5.00	296	6.00	298	34.00	302	7.50
303	8.00	304	8.00	305	8.00	306	6.00	307	6.50	308	5.00
309	8.00	310	6.00	311	22.00	312	14.00	313	11.00	314	15.00
315	4.00	316	7.00	317	8.50	318	8.00	319	5.00	320	13.00
321	3.00	322	15.00	323	3.00	324	4.00	325	5.00	326	40.00
327	4.50	328	5.00	329	7.00	333	15.00	334	8.00	335	16.00
336	8.00	337	40.00	338	34.00	339	28.00	340	24.00	341	15.00
342	15.00	343	15.00	344	10.00	347	20.00	349	12.00	350	8.50
351	8.50	352	8.00	353	12.00	354	20.00	355	80.00	356	28.00
357	12.00	358	6.00	359	4.50	360	16.00	361	20.00	362	38.00
363	44.00	364	3.50	367	22.00	369	24.00	370	26.00	371	28.00
372	55.00	373	26.00	374	16.00	375	15.00	376	10.00	377	36.00
378	16.00	381	5.00	383	6.00	384	30.00	385	20.00	386	24.00
387	14.00	388	26.00	389	24.00	390	19.00	391	55.00	392	32.00
393	26.00	394	22.00	395	3.00	396	5.00	397	10.00		

THE MAY MEETING

When we met at Oldbury Park Primary School, Worcester on 10th May, the subject for members' one board displays was "*Unusual or misspelt Handstamps*". Alan Marshall began the proceedings with material from Nottinghamshire, including 'NOTING/HAM' handstamps used in 1720 and 1765. The circular datestamp of the same city had the year omitted when struck on a letter of 1833. A cds of Beeston had the 'T' missing while the handstamp used in 1928 at the Royal Show had the 'W' of 'SHOW' inverted.

Chris Jackson began in Warwickshire (I am sure there was a good reason for this aberration) with an 'AULCESTER' of 1788. Normal service was then resumed when Chris took us into Worcestershire. Handstamps inscribed 'BEWDLY' were used in 1725 and 1767. These were followed by a mark 'AVER/SHAM' used in 1732 and a 'STOURBRIGDE'. Two penny post handstamps with misspellings were '*Shipstone on Stour/Penny Post*' (1831) and '*Kinvar/Penny Post*' (1831). Finally, we saw the UDC of Sedgley with a gap between the 'G' and the 'L'.

Eric Lewis can always be relied upon to produce an esoteric selection of material; we were not disappointed. Eric began with a postcard showing a cds in which the name of the post town was missing. This item is described elsewhere in this issue. Next came a 'LEWIS' of 1801 from the town of Lewes, and the same error cropped up in a cds of 1853. Another 'AVER/SHAM' was followed by various 'LITCHFIELD' accompanied by a letter to Freeling suggesting the omission of the 'T'. Apparently the Post Office acted upon that request. Eric also showed us marks from Rugeley, a '*Brannston*' from Braunston in Northamptonshire, and the UDC 'WINSTANTOW' of Wistanstow in Shropshire. A 'MANS/FIELD' of 1736 attracted the attention of our Nottinghamshire members.

Leicestershire was the next county to be visited. John Soer began with three UDCs - 'WIMESWOULD' of Wymeswold, 'MOUSLEY' of Mowsley, and 'SHEEPSHED' of Shepshed. He then showed us a 'WILLOUGHBY/WATERLEYS' cds as well as a cds of Western Avenue of Market Harborough without the name of the posttown.

One town which surely had more different spellings than any other place in its handstamps was surely Stourbridge. John Calladine produced 'STOUER/BRIDG' (1733), 'STOWER/BRIDGE' (1781) and the circular three-line 'STOW/ER-BR/IDGE'. Also from the Stourbridge area came copies of the '*Brittall Lane/Penny Post*' of Brettell Lane used in 1842 and 1843. John then took us into Gloucestershire from where we saw marks such as 'TEDBURY' (1721), 'TEWSBURY' (1800) and 'WOOTTENUNDEREDGE/114' (1815).

Roy Summers produced material of a different nature, illustrating the discrepancy between what a postmark should have been and the actuality. We saw machine marks with the dater die transposed and inverted and dater dies with the slugs for date, time and year in the wrong order. Other errors included machine cancellations in red ink used on 2nd January 1990, when that colour should not have been used until 5th January; black ink used when red should have been used; and the slogan 'PASS ON YOUR/POSTCODE' struck in green ink. Roy ended with a form for an undeliverable item held at Wombourne Delivery Office which was to be found in an 'Enterpeise Park'.

The first three items in Mick Gill's display postcards sent from Holland or France to Newark, Nottinghamshire which had gone to Newark, New Jersey. A strike of the cds used in the mobile post office at Newark show in 1960 was dated 1909. The same error on another item showed the error corrected in manuscript. A 'paid' letter sent from London apparently on the 24th March 1845 arrived in Newark on 25th March 1848. However, as Mick pointed out, the type of 'PAID' handstamp struck on the letter was that used in 1848. Finally, Mick took us into Lincolnshire from where we saw, among others, a 'MARKET RAISIN' of 1791.

Colin Fountain's first item was a cover showing a strike of the '*Frampton on Seveon/Penny Post*' handstamp. This was followed by a letter sent from London in 1832 struck with the '*Moreton in Mush/Penny Post*' handstamp - two errors for the price of one. The datestamp used in 1843 had the name spelt correctly - 'MORTON-IN-MARSH' but the '3' was missing from the date. In 1788, the county town used a 'GLO'STER' handstamp but by 1790 this had been replaced by a 'GLOCESTER'. A mark from a modern self-inking datestamp carried the name 'STRATTON CIRCENCESTER'. However, this office faces closure so that mark is probably no longer in use.

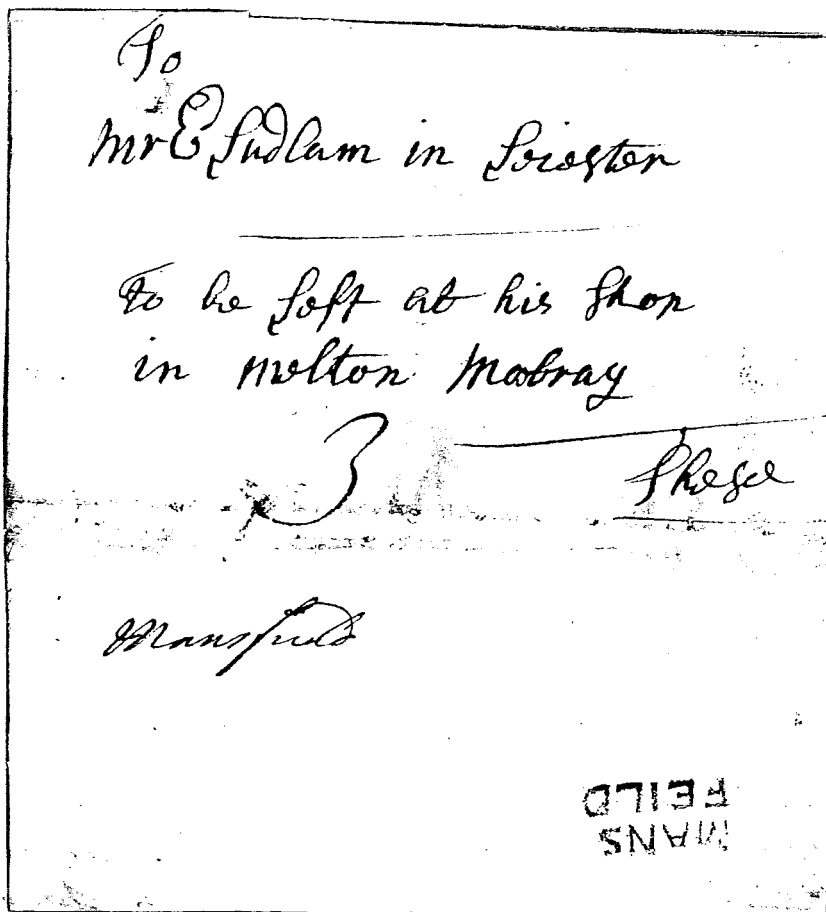
There was then time for three members to display more items. Among Alan Marshall's material were two Ride Letters, carrying the mark 'R-L'. Chris Jackson produced a number of items from Bromsgrove, but with the name spelt as 'Brooms Grove'. Among Eric Lewis' miscellany were various marks of Shifnal such as 'SHEFNAL' (1792).

SOME ITEMS FROM THE MAY MEETING

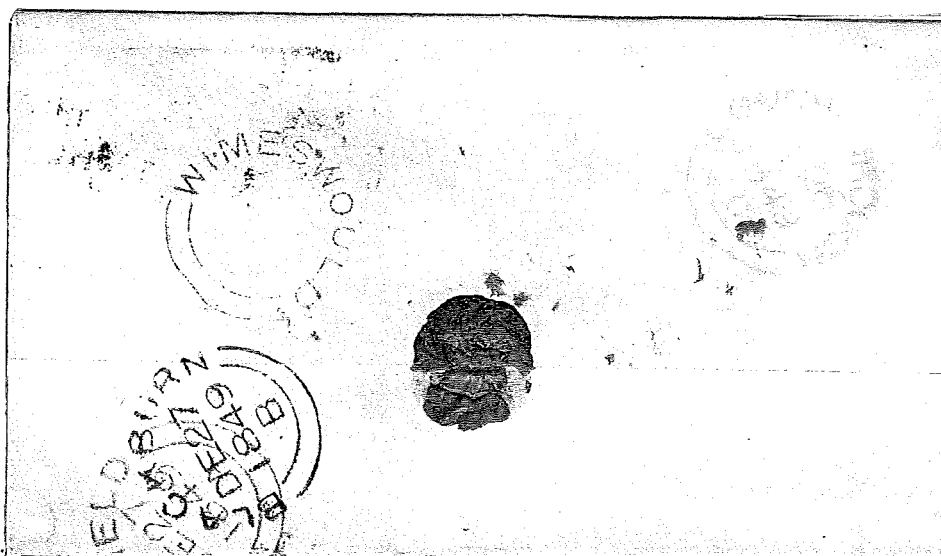
'MANSFEILD' - A Misspelling of Mansfield on a letter dated 1736.

This item is not recorded and predates all recorded Mansfield handstamps by thirteen years.

My thanks to Eric Lewis for sending a copy of this cover.



'WIMESWOULD' of Wymeswould used in December 1849.



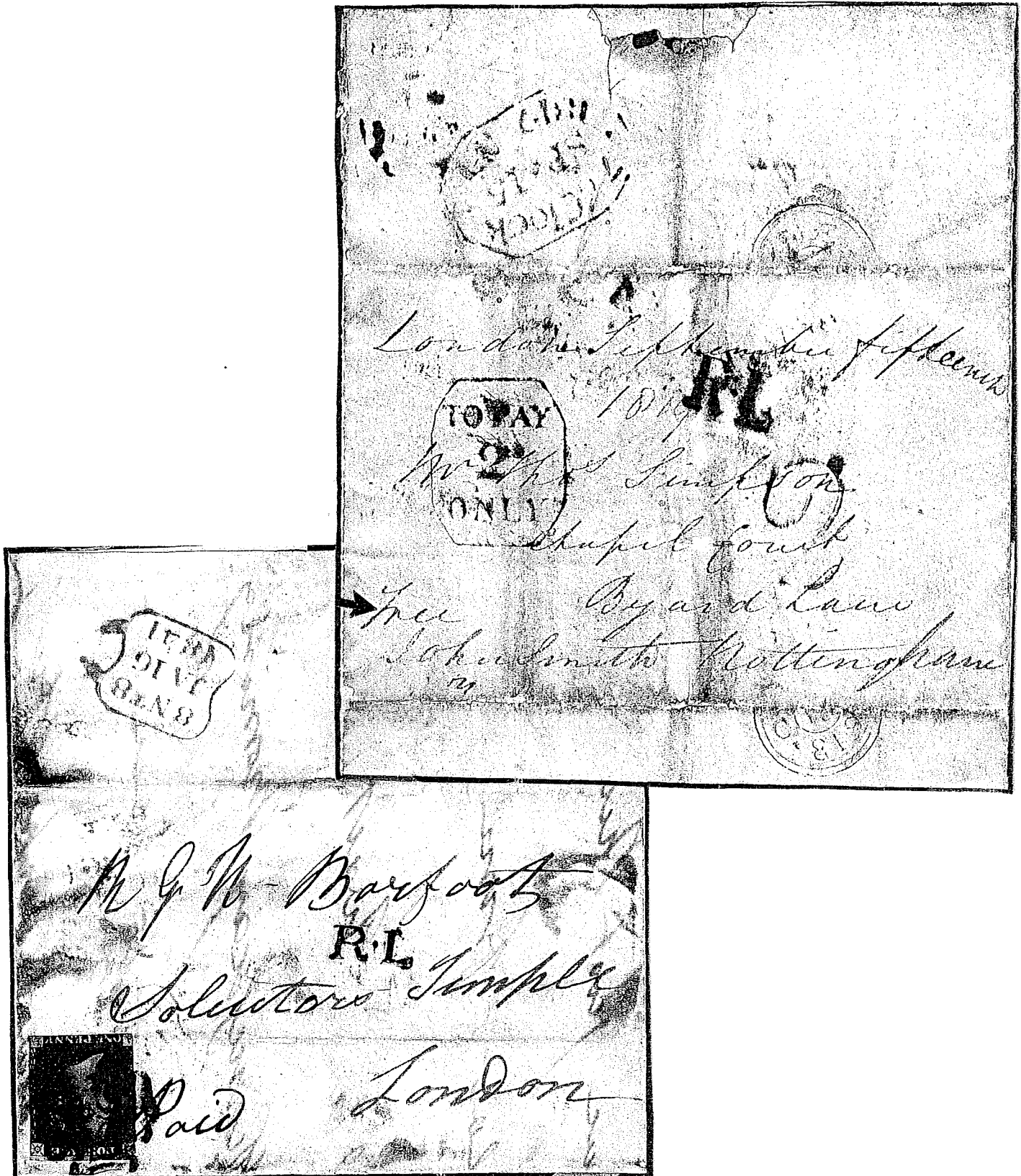
ITEMS FROM THE MAY MEETING (contd)

I am indebted to Alan Marshall for the two illustrations below.

The 'R.L.' shown on both covers denotes a 'Ride Letter' - that is a letter which was handed to a letter carrier instead of being handed in at a receiving house.

The first cover was sent in 1819 from London to Nottingham. It clearly passed through the London Twopenny Post and as a 'Free' was only charged two pence.

The second was sent from Hendon to London in January 1841.



THE 1s 5d PROBLEM

by Eric Winter

At a meeting of the Birmingham Philatelic Society Eric Lewis asked me if I could come up with a solution to the 1s 5d problem in *Midland Mail* 154.

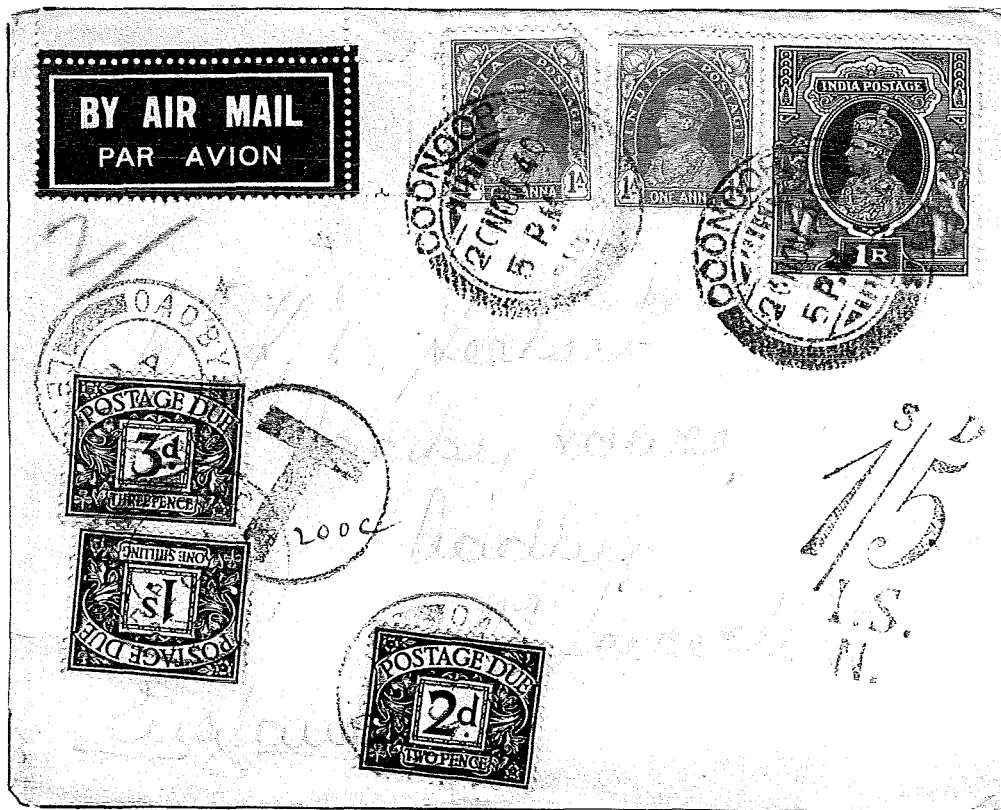
When I arrived home, I went straight to my bookshelf and picked up “*Indian Air Mail Postage rates until 1956*” by Jeffrey Brown as the most likely source of an answer. I was not disappointed; all the relevant information was there. The following information has been extracted from this book.

In November 1940, the fee for an Air Letter from India to Great Britain was 14 annas per ½ ounce - as part of the Empire Air Mail Service. The manuscript “2” was applied in Great Britain and indicates that the letter was in the second weight stage, i.e. between ½ and one ounce. The fee for the letter was, therefore, 28 annas, i.e. 1 rupee 12 annas. The deficiency was therefore 10 annas. In accordance with the UPU rules, the Taxe-mark was applied in India and the manuscript 200c indicates that the amount to be collected was 200 gold centimes, calculated as twice the deficiency converted to gold centimes at 10c per anna. It would, therefore, seem at a first glance that converting the 200c into sterling at 10c per penny would require that a surcharge of 20d (1s 8d) be levied.

However, UPU rules allowed groups of member countries to form smaller postal unions and to operate different rules for postage dues. Great Britain & Northern Ireland, its Empire and Associated Countries formed such a Union.

The rules for postage due were that the deficiency be doubled and then converted into sterling using the information in form 114. From December 1940 the conversion rate was 3d per 3½ annas. Thus the surcharge was $(10 \times 2) \times (3 \div 3\frac{1}{2}) = 17.14\text{d}$ rounded to 17d, i.e. 1s 5d.

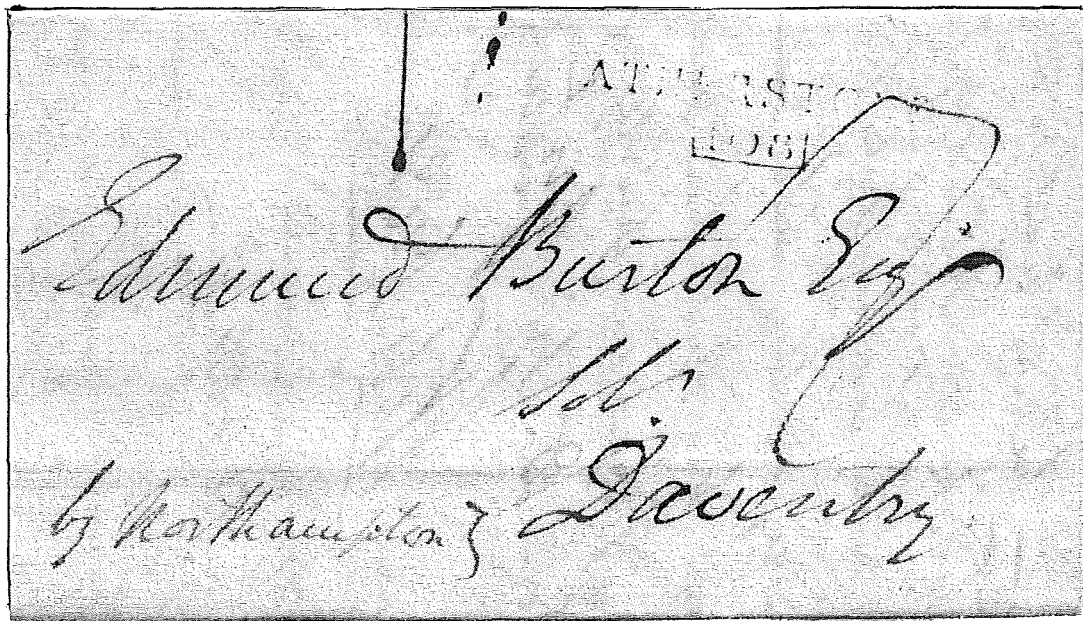
I would recommend anybody wishing for more detailed information to check out Jeffrey Brown's book themselves.



COVENTRY TO DAVENTRY

Ian May writes,

"In the January issue of Midland Mail you give an extract from Post 96/20 regarding mail sent by circuitous routes. In it you argue that mail to Coventry from Atherstone/Hinckley would have gone via Litchfield. I have a cover, copy enclosed, which is admittedly a little later, March 1809, than the list, that was sent from Atherstone to Daventry and is endorsed 'by Northampton'. It is rated at 7d - in less than twenty years rates had virtually doubled! I had assumed that mail for Coventry would have followed the same route.



"Interestingly, not long afterwards Atherstone and Coventry both had penny posts which had Nuneaton as a receiving office. A sensible route would have been to use both penny posts - charge 2d.

"I am also intrigued by a comment in the introduction to the Warwickshire section in the 1st edition of the County Catalogue - 'In 1834 an order from the GPO in London said that all letters passing from Atherstone to Coventry and Coventry to Atherstone had to go via Northampton and were charged 9d.'

Editor's Note: In MM68/14 there is a short article titled '*Varying Routes and Rates*' which, among others, deals with mail sent between Atherstone and Coventry in the early part of 1835. Since a number of members may not have a copy of that issue I will summarise the main points.

The surveyor reported that there were two routes from Atherstone to Coventry. The first left Atherstone at 7.51 a.m. by way of Lichfield and Birmingham, giving a distance of 50 miles and a postage of 8d. The letters arrived in Coventry at 9.46 p.m. but were not delivered until the following morning along with those arriving by the second route which left Atherstone at 6.52 p.m. and went via Northampton and Towcester reaching Coventry at 5.18 the next morning. The distance by this route was 82 miles and the postage 9d. The surveyor said that most letters were sent that way. No doubt, the evening departure had something to do with this.

In the opposite direction there were three possible routes. The first left Coventry at 5.18 a.m. by way of Litchfield, reaching Atherstone at 6.52 p.m. The distance was 43 miles and the postage 7d. The second via Hinckley left at 10 a.m. and reached Atherstone at 7.51 a.m. the next day. The distance was 21 miles for which 6d was charged. The third route was by way of Northampton. It left Coventry at 9.46 p.m. and arrived also at 7.51 the next morning. Although the charge was 9d, it was the route by which most letters were sent.

The surveyor proposed that the penny post ride from Coventry to Nuneaton be extended to Atherstone.

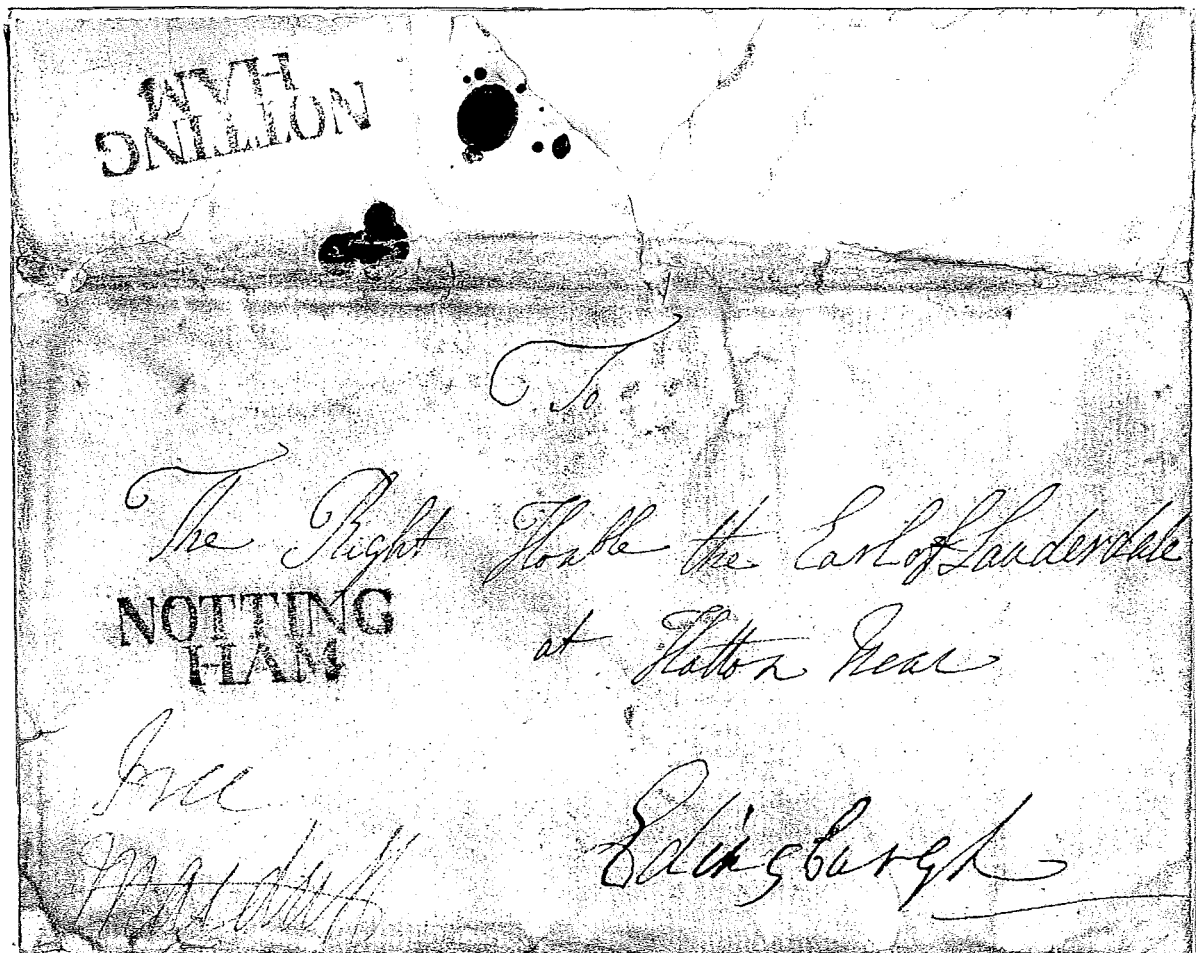
ANOTHER DOUBLE STRIKE

by Alan Marshall

Members may recall my previous articles concerning the double strikes on the Tempest/Plumbe correspondence from Nottingham during the period 1760-65. My final conclusion as to why being one of endorsement by the postmaster of the counter clerk allowing fraudulent 'Free' letters of a well known young lady of the town to pass through without charge.

It is interesting to have located another example of a double strike of NG132 during the same period of time but associated with a different local family. The letter within the wrapper, dated 3rd March 1763, is addressed to 'The Right Honourable Earl of Lauderdale' in Edinburgh. Both the sender and the recipient qualified for the 'Free' privilege, but the cover did not conform to the rules of the system.

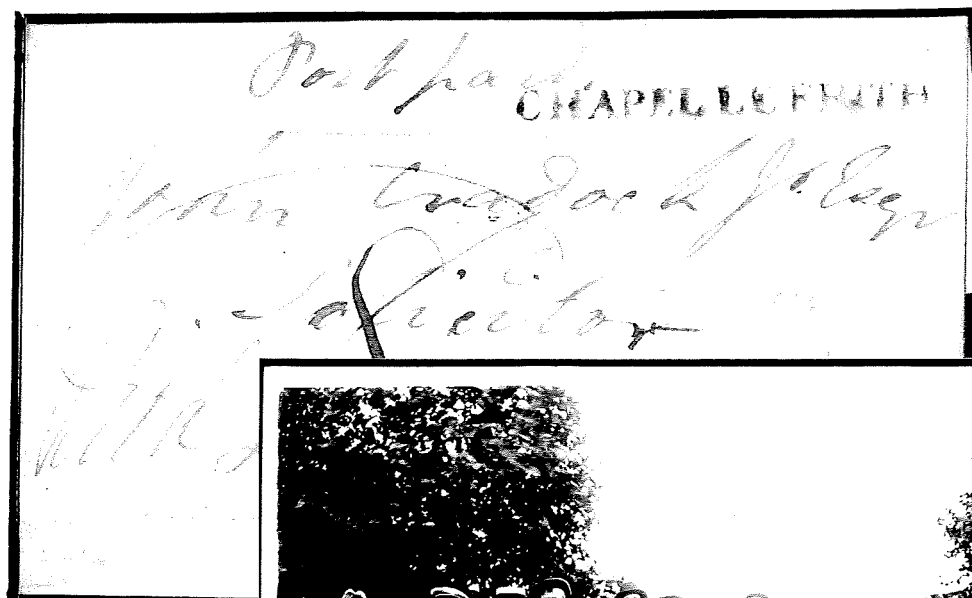
The town of origin and the date are not in place as they should have been. Furthermore, the 'Free' signature is not recognisable as being that of the sender. This was Sir Gervase Clifton the son of Sir Robert Clifton (Bt) of Clifton Hall near Nottingham who had recently died.



Clifton Hall mentioned in the Domesday book remained in the hands of the family of Sir Gervase de Clifton until mid-twentieth century before becoming a girls' school, and finally, in 2007 being split into two private residences

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Contact James Grimwood-Taylor or Ken Baker



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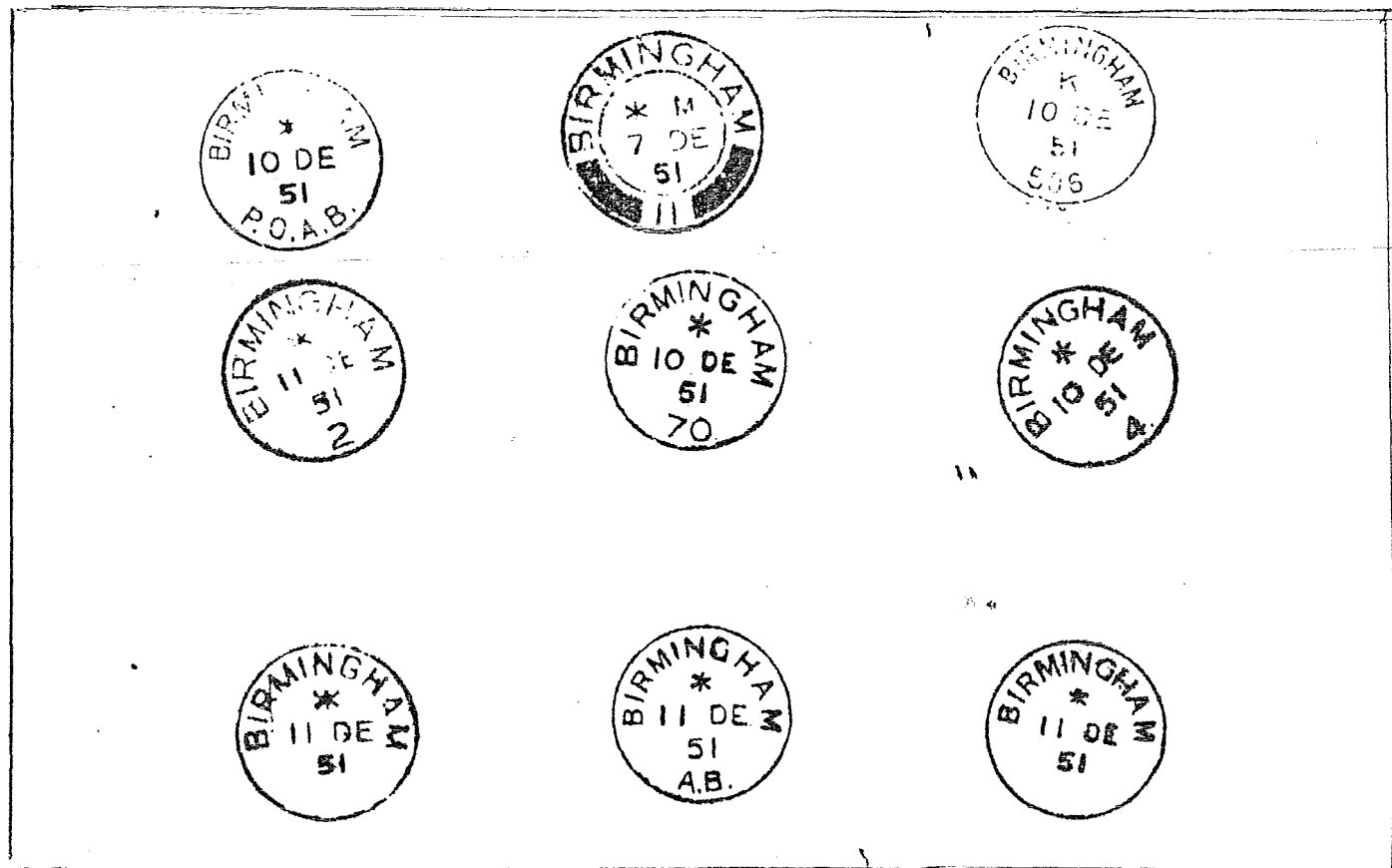
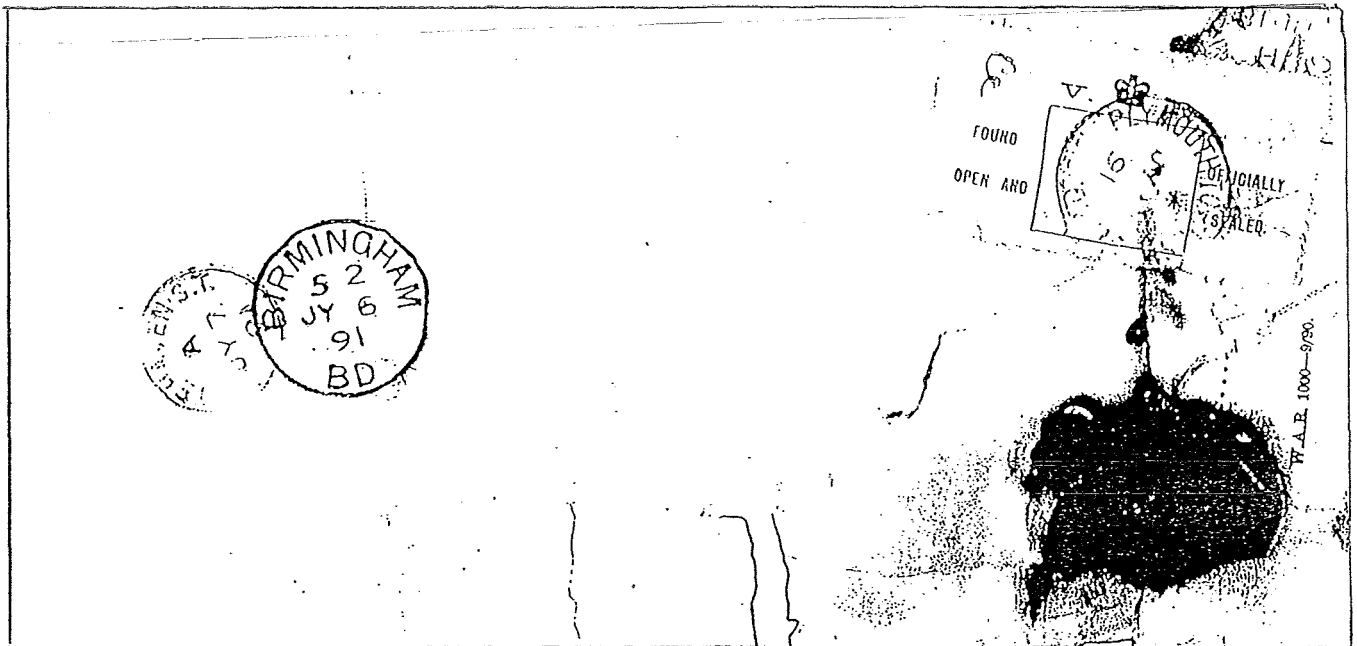
ABBREVIATIONS 'BD', 'P.O.A.B.' AND 'A.B.'

by Ian Baker

Below is a photocopy of part of a long envelope from Cape Town, South Africa to Whitehaven posted in June 1891. On arrival in Plymouth it was transferred to the 'Plymouth to Bristol TPO' and was in transit at Birmingham on July 6, before being carried on the 'Whitehaven S.T.'

Does anyone know the meaning of 'BD' at the base of the Birmingham handstamp? Is it specific to items of TPO mail or a more general abbreviation. The item was originally published in the TPO & Seapost Journal in 1995 as part of an article by Harold Wilson.

Also does anyone know the meaning of 'P.O.A.B.' and 'A.B.' on the enclosed copy of handstamps used at the Birmingham sorting office in 1951. One idea for 'A.B.' is Army Bag!

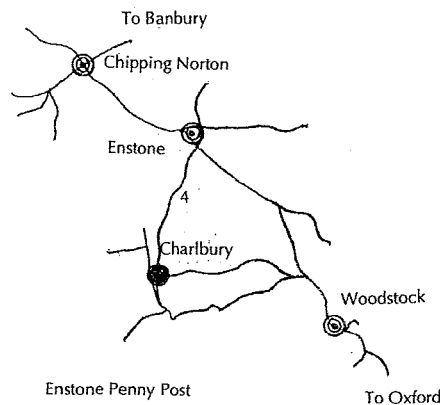


ENSTONE PENNY POST

1810 - 1840

The Enstone Penny Post was established on 6th July 1810, notwithstanding a major procedural irregularity. The Surveyor, Mr Woodcock, had obtained the agreement in principle of Francis Freeling, Secretary to the Post Office, to his proposal to try a Penny Post at Enstone but had not then made a formal report of the projected expense. In fact, it was 24th September before he did so, probably because he wanted to see if it had come up to expectations. He had to report that it had not done so but that he expected it to improve. He believed it to be worth at least a twelve months trial.

The new post ran between Enstone and the village of Charlbury, a distance of about four miles. The duty was to be performed daily on horseback at a cost of 2/6d a day (17/6d a week, £45-12-0d a year). To that was to be added a salary of £10 a year to the postmaster at Enstone, which had apparently already been agreed. According to Mr Woodcock, a receiver at Charlbury was already being paid £6 a year by the postmaster of Woodstock and he proposed it should simply be transferred to the Enstone account. The c1770 map of the English postal system does indeed show an office at Charlbury, exclusively served from Woodstock. However, all letters seen, dated between 1779 and 1808, from Charlbury were routed through Enstone, whether going north or south.



The Surveyor admitted the new Penny Post was not without its teething problems. A Mr Stratton of Rangers Lodge received numerous letters and parcels for himself and his visitors and he said he would either send his servant to Enstone to collect them or proceed with a previously agreed arrangement he had with the receiver at Charlbury, who would bring them to him for a payment of five guineas a year. These were early days for provincial penny posts and Mr Woodcock was seeking guidance as to whether Mr Stratton would be allowed to continue avoiding payment of penny postage, now that he could be served by an official post. He also pointed out that the Duke of Beaufort had a hunting lodge less than a mile from Charlbury and yet sent to Woodstock for his letters. A letter would be sent to the Duke to advise him that he "had better have his letters by the Penny Post".

Freeling wrote to the Postmasters General on 28th September, excusing the procedural lapse as being due to Mr Woodcock "not being much used to such establishments". He recommended the establishment of the Enstone Penny Post, even though the receipts appeared a little less than the expenditure, which he said would be £49-12-0, thereby indicating that he believed the £6 to be paid to Charlbury would be included in the £10 paid to Enstone. In this he was mistaken. He said it was in the nature of penny posts for them to improve.

On 19th April 1812, Mr Woodcock reported on the progress of the Penny Post in its first year of operation. The total received for inward and outward letters had been £51-4-0. He described this as "not much under the estimated expense of the establishment", which he quoted as £55-12-0, thereby confirming that the sum of £6 paid to Charlbury was, indeed, additional to the £10 paid to Enstone and not part of it. When Freeling conveyed the content of the surveyor's report to the Postmasters General on 22nd April, he noted that almost every penny post had made a profit but Enstone was an exception. However, with the proceeds and expense being so nearly equal, he felt sure their Lordships would not hesitate to continue the post, subject to an annual report on its progress. The Enstone Penny Post ran successfully through to 1840. Up to 1838 at least, It does not appear that the pay of the messenger or of the Charlbury receiver was ever increased.

Two handstamps are known at Enstone. There was no handstamp at Charlbury; as the sole receiving house, it was unnecessary.

References

Post 40/86S/1810

Post 40/102/1812

Post 9/132

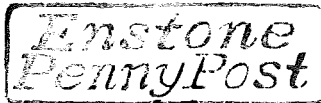
HANDSTAMPS OF THE ENSTONE PENNY POST

Post town: Enstone

Receiving house: Charlbury

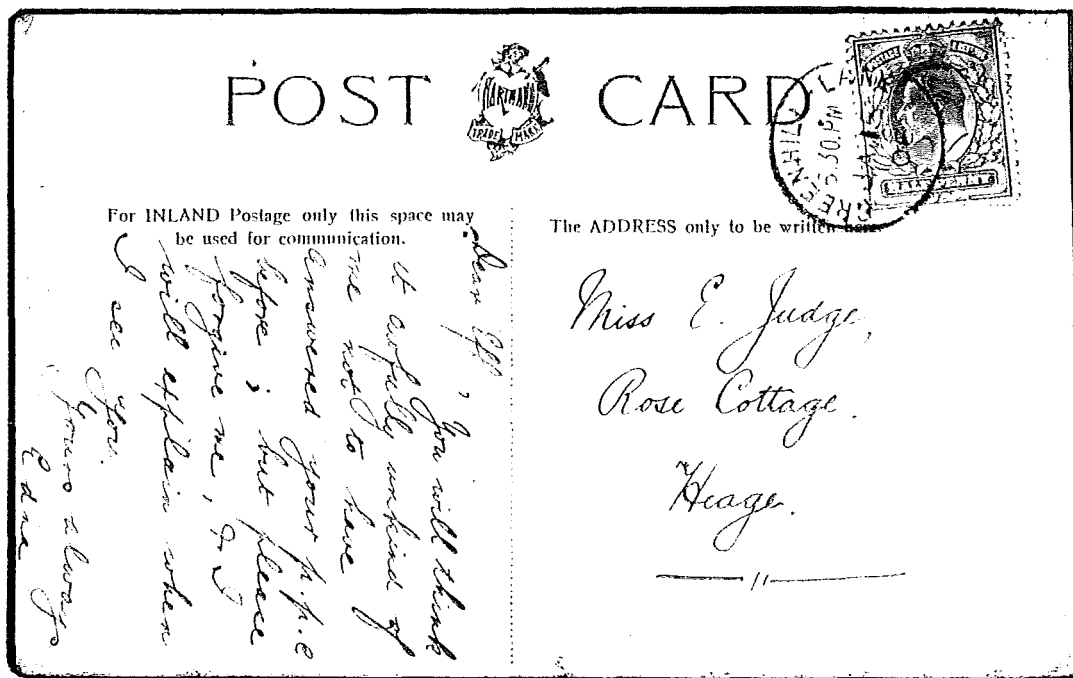
ENSTONE
Penny Post

MLP1108 B (18)14-13JUL34 B



MLP1109 B 27DEC37-14MAR42 C/C

A LESSON TO BE LEARNED



In 1873, Ivor Purden, who was a member of the Birmingham Philatelic Society, noticed that the handstamp used to cancel the adhesive on a picture postcard (illustrated above) did not contain the name of the posttown in which the sub-office - Greenhill Lane was situated.

His first line of enquiry was to approach Post Office Records (now the British Postal Museum and Archive) who at least identified the posttown but made no reference to his query as to why the posttown did not appear in the postmark. Having found that Greenhill Lane was under Alfreton, Derby, Ivor then wrote to the Head Postmaster of Derby with the same query. The reply was rather feeble, stating that the impression on the postcard may have failed to pick up the post town.

As he was a very thorough philatelist and postal historian Ivor was not happy with the above, and using the information given by the Derby postmaster, he tracked down Mr Lee, the sub-postmaster of Greenhill Lane who by 1973 had retired to Paignton, having been a sub-postmaster at Riddings in Derby and at a post office in Gloucester. A portion of the reply from his wife is shown alongside a transcript of her letter which confirmed that the Greenhill Lane handstamp had not shown the name of the posttown.

23 Broadsands Avenue,
Paignton

2nd October 1973

Dear Mr. Purden,

I am writing on behalf of my husband who was most interested in your letter.

He was sub postmaster of Greenhill Lane for a few years before being appointed to Riddings, when Greenhill Lane office was closed.

Greenhill Lane was a hamlet in those days, but adjoining Riddings village.

The Crown office was Alfreton and as such had supervision of Riddings area.

My husband says the Town name was never on the date stamps.

Hoping this information will help you.

We are living retired here after leaving a busy Town Post Office in Gloucester.

All good wishes.

Yours faithfully,

Dorothy Lee.

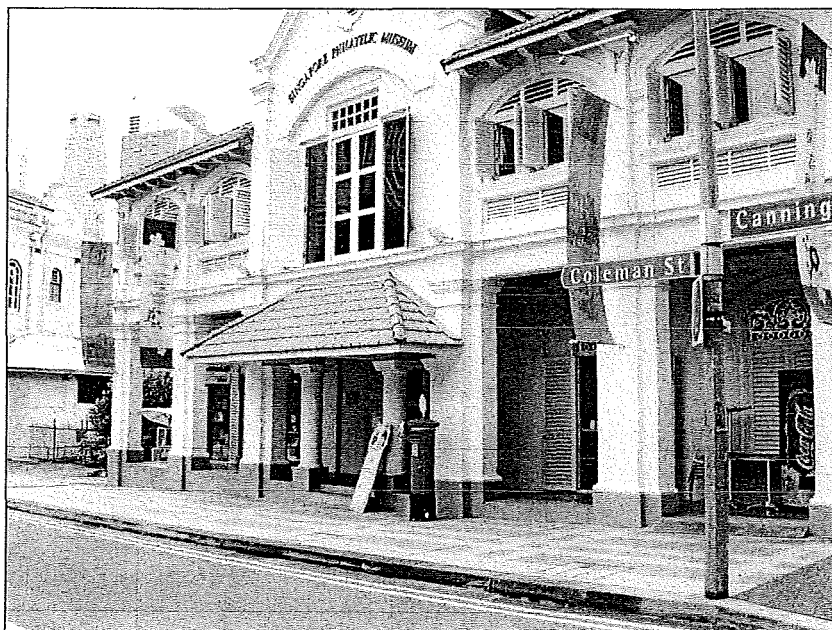
My husband says the town name was never on the date stamps.

Hoping this information will help you.

We are living retired here after leaving a busy Town P.O. in Gloucester.

SINGAPORE PHILATELIC MUSEUM

by John Calladine

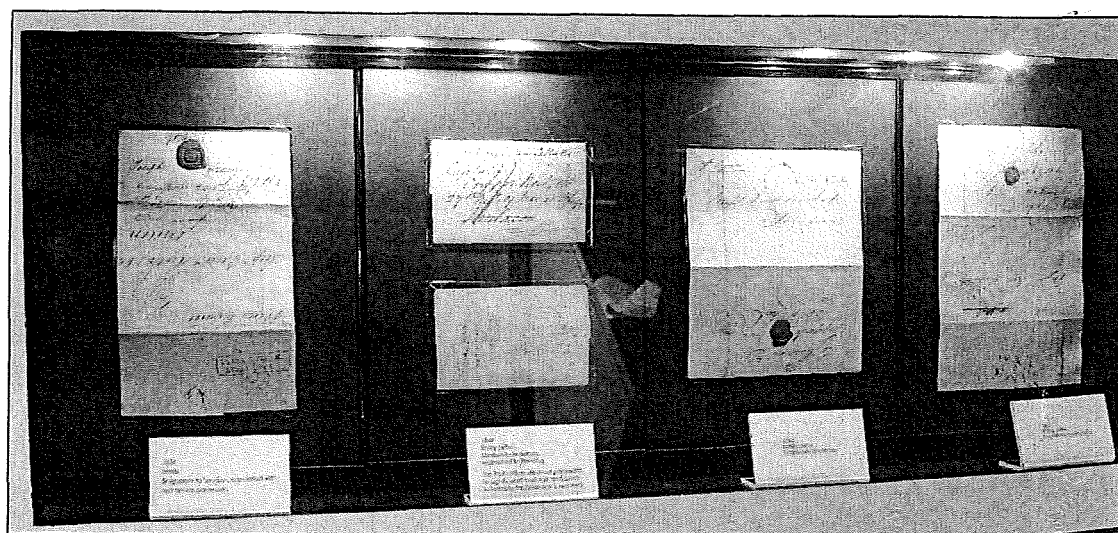


Once in a while, articles have appeared in "Midland Mail" about postal or philatelic museums around the world. There was an intention to write one about the museum in Buenos Aires, which was visited a couple of years ago, but it came to nothing. On that occasion, the museum, attached to the main post office, was opened especially for your correspondent's benefit and some pride was taken in pointing out their prize exhibit, the Argentinian flag that flew over the so-called 'Malvinas' post office at Port Stanley during the brief and ill-fated occupation of the Falkland Islands.

The visit in January this year was less controversial. The philatelic museum in Singapore opened on 19th August 1995 in what was once part of an Anglo-Chinese School built in 1904. It later became the Methodist Book Room. Located on Fort Canning Rise, it is not far from the evocative 'Battle Box' bunker that was the underground Headquarters of British Malaya Command up to the moment, on 15th February 1942, when General Percival made the fateful decision to surrender Singapore to the invading Japanese. The Telecommunication Authority of Singapore, largely through its Singapore Post subsidiary, spent some £2 million to set up the museum.

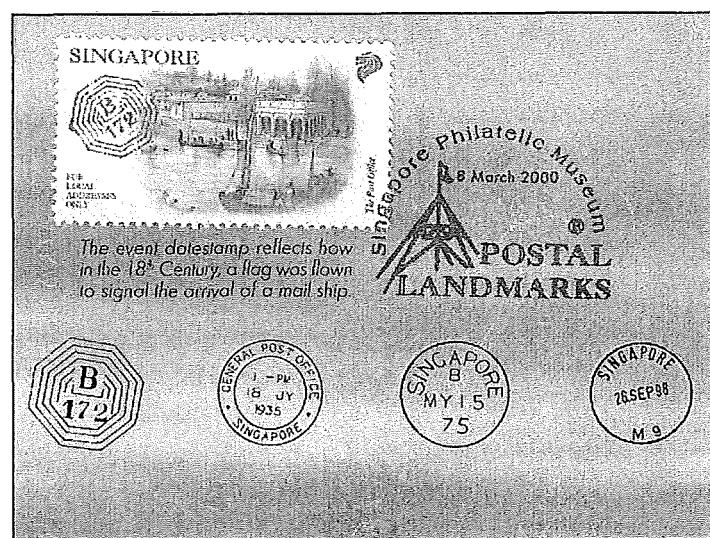
To our eyes, the museum is unusual in that the reception area hosts what is effectively a stamp shop and a working post office. Letters can be posted in a traditional British-style red pillar box outside the front of the building. It is the last survivor of these colonial era boxes, first introduced into Singapore in 1873, and replaced by rectangular boxes in 1971 following Singapore's independence. The museum has a friendly feel and photography is allowed without restriction.

As might be expected, the stated purpose of the Philatelic Museum is to promote an interest in and an appreciation of Singapore's history and heritage in philately and that includes its postal history as well as its postage stamps. There are five permanent galleries, and a further gallery featuring visiting exhibits. At the time of this visit, the visiting display was by the Korean postal authorities. The first of the permanent galleries was described as an 'Introduction to Philately' and, like much of the museum, geared to encouraging youngsters to take-up stamp collecting. It dealt with everything from the origins of the Penny Black to 'how to soak stamps off paper'. A second gallery covered Stamp Design and Printing while a third gallery was, perhaps surprisingly, devoted to Famous Stamp Collectors. There was nothing parochial here and it included such notables as Von Ferrary and King George V. Probably the most interesting gallery, to a foreign visitor, was the 'Room of Rarities'. Noted among its contents were letters of the 1830s and 1840s from Singapore to London, some with B172 cancellations, and an 1859 letter from Singapore to Calcutta bearing a bisected 4 anna stamp. Elsewhere, there were pull-out frames of Singapore stamps and also frames for each country of the UPU, with a selection of their more recent issues. A second temporary exhibition covered the ASEAN countries and highlighted what they had in common. Although this included their stamps, it went further and included artefacts from each of the ten countries (e.g. their different coolie hats!) and interactive exhibits aimed at attracting the interest of young visitors.



Frames in the 'Room of Rarities'.

A few months before the museum opened, the Chairman of the Museum remarked to one of its board members, Rear Admiral Kwek Siew Jin that he had once committed himself to building the “best little navy in the region”. He was now invited to make the Singapore Philatelic Museum, “the best little museum in town”. I doubt he could have done much better. One might reflect on the fact that the first seed of commitment to such a museum was planted in April 1992 and, little more than three years later, a splendid museum, in a handsome building, in a convenient location was opened to the public. Some might wish to contrast that with the nonsense that has surrounded the establishment of a permanent National Postal Museum in London.



The Postal Landmarks stamp issue of 8th March 2000 was launched at the Singapore Post Centre by the Minister for Communication and Information Technology. The Philatelic Museum had its own postmark.

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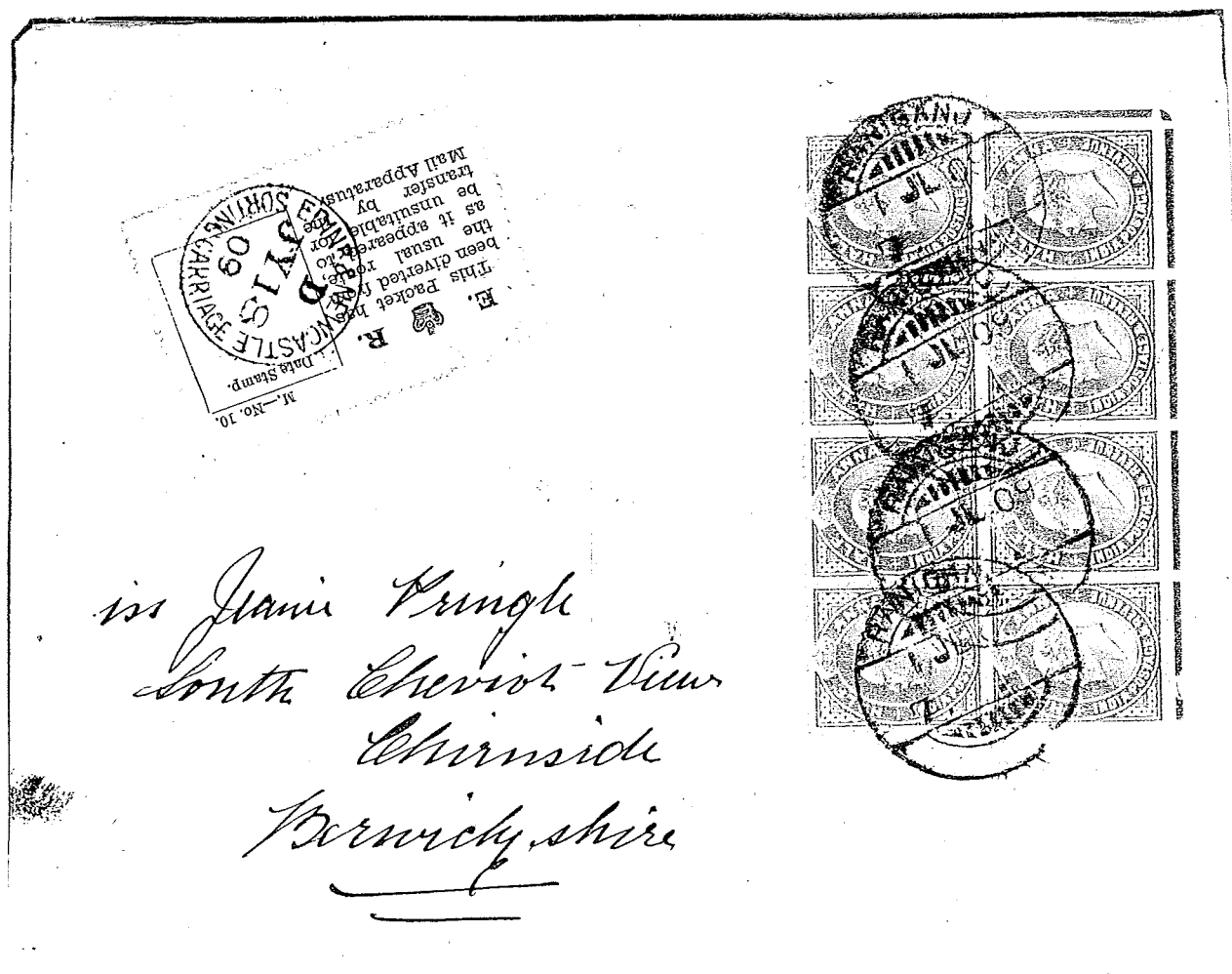
I specialise in Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Cheshire.

Other areas and theme lists are also welcome.

Any suitable material available is sent on a no obligation approval.

A PACKAGE UNSUITABLE FOR TRANSFER BY THE MAIL APPARATUS

I am indebted to Eric Lewis for the cover shown below and the article on page 16. The illustration is of a portion of a parcel sent from India in 1909 and which shows that the parcel was unsuitable for transfer by the lineside apparatus. It had to be taken to the next posttown for delivery through the normal channels.



SOME NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COVERS

The first cover from Alan Marshall's display at the March meeting is a letter sent in 1911 from Sweden to Grimsby and shows a strike of the cds 'RETURNED LETTER BRANCH/NOTTINGHAM'

The other two illustrations are of a mourning cover which was struck on both sides with the UDC of Radcliffe on Trent. This is the only recorded example of this handstamp being struck in green ink. There is a clear distinction between the green of the UDC and the blue of the datestamps of Nottingham and Loughborough.



THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

It is intended that this should appear by the middle of August. It will be accompanied by the programme for the next season. There is an urgent need for articles to be sent to:

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