



MIDLAND MAIL

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



President: Mr. W.S. Chester

Chairman:
Richard Farman

Treasurer:
Trevor Clewley

Secretary:
Elizabeth Lewis

NUMBER 56, AUGUST 1988

Due to holiday dates and other commitments this issue is earlier than is usual, but I prefer to give adequate warning of the date of the first meeting. I do hope that as many of you as possible will try to get along to some of the meetings. Your committee has arranged a varied and interesting programme which deserves support. If you are coming to one of the nine sheet meetings, please do not feel restricted by the chosen topic. If you have nothing relevant to that theme feel free to bring along other material.

Please note the changes of venue and time listed below.

THIS YEAR'S PROGRAMME

September 24th - at Carrs Lane, Birmingham. Recent Acquisitions - nine sheet displays by members. Members are allowed to put their own interpretation on the word "recent".

October 29th - at the Birmingham and Midland Institute. "A Question of Knowledge" - Mr. & Mrs. E. Lewis. This meeting coincides with the fair organised by the Birmingham Philatelic Society.

December 10th - Bass Museum, Burton-on-Trent. "Beer" - Mr. Richard Farman.

January 14th - Carrs Lane, Birmingham. "Postmen and Postcards" - nine sheet displays by members.

February 18th - Carrs Lane, Birmingham. Annual Competitions.

March 11th - Carrs Lane, Birmingham. "The Roadside Letter Box" - Mr. R. Hall of Leamington.

April 29th - St. Johns College, Henwick Road, Worcester. A.G.M. and Auction. Please note the change of date and venue for this meeting which will now be held at the Three Counties Federation Annual Fair.

All meetings commence at the new time of 1.30 p.m. with the exception of the Burton meeting which will remain at 2 p.m.

The September, January and April meetings will be preceded by a Committee meeting at 1 p.m. prompt.

LETTERS

Elizabeth and Eric Lewis write:

As collectors of Birmingham Postal History we were naturally interested in the item illustrated in MM55/7, namely the cover addressed to Captain Walpole of the Rifle Brigade at Birmingham. We are inclined to agree with Bob Flamank that the detachment was at Birmingham in connection with the Chartist Riots, and illustrated below is a letter from the Treasurer of Warwickshire as a sequel to Bob's item.

Enclosed with the letter were cheques to the value of £477.12.10 and £681.18.11 being compensation for "Damages, costs and interest by the rioters at Birmingham" to two of the victims.

In actual fact a total of £15,000 was eventually paid out for damages caused by a mass attack on a dozen shops, in the Bull Ring on 15th July 1839, most of which were destroyed by fire.

1124

Coventry Sep^r 30th 1840

To

I send the above and enclosed cheques, being the respective amounts awarded to your Clients, Elizabeth Martin and Morris Banks for damages, costs and interest by rioters at Birmingham - I request you to acknowledge the receipt -

Elizabeth Martin £477-12-10

Morris Banks 681-8-11

*James Webb Treasurer
of Warwickshire*

*Yours &c
James Webb*

Mr. O. de Rousset-Hall commenting on the piece "Last of the Thimbles" in the last issue writes that Great Bowden's single circle (21 mm) survived the war - his latest is 1st August 1946. He also has Tongwynlais (Cardiff) 29 December 1945 and Dingley 2 June 1935, both of which outlived Countesthorpe.

He also mentions that RMSD stands for Royal Mail Special Delivery. The colour purple is standard for "Express" style items; it is also used for Swiftair.

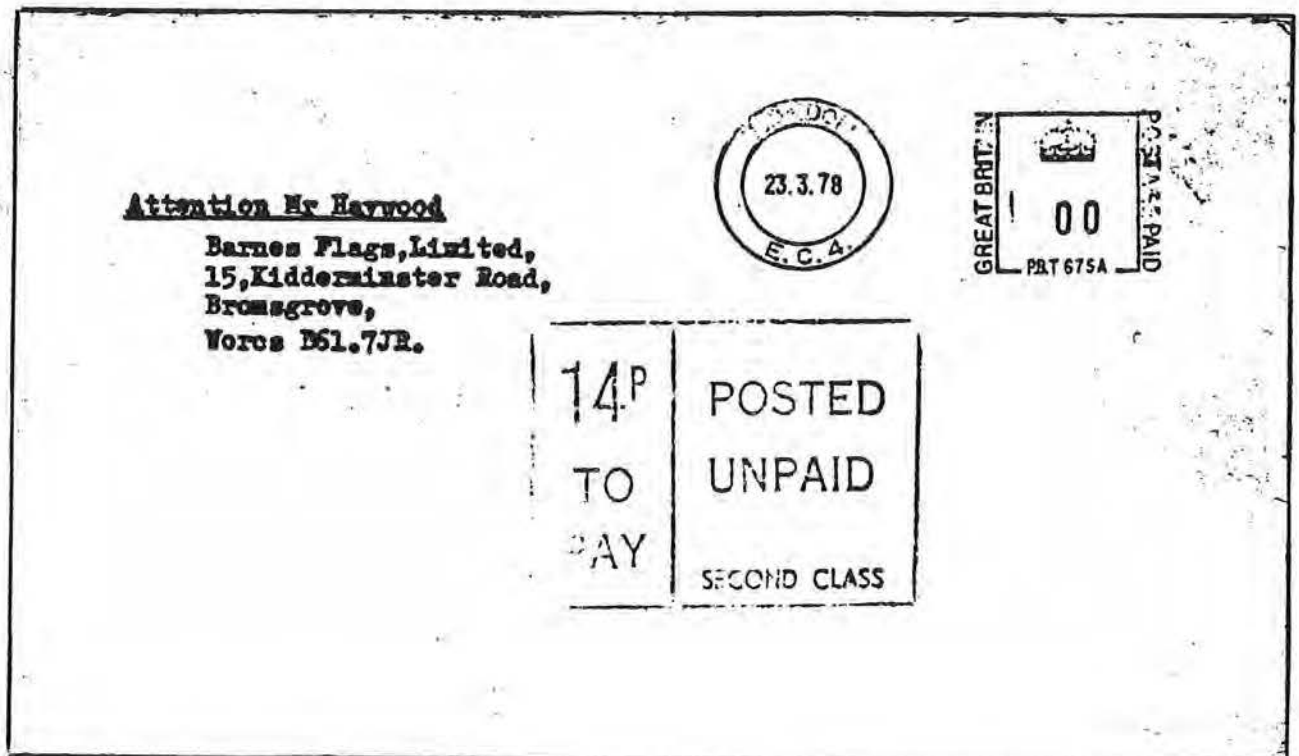
Mr. Fieldhouse has sent the following cutting from the Birmingham Post of 23rd. May last. He presumes that the town referred to is Birmingham, but if not, no doubt some member will advise in which town the Castle Inn was to be found.

200 YEARS AGO

A post horn will be blown, starting on Monday of next week in the forenoon, when the London mail coach does arrive on the outskirts of this town on its way to the Castle Inn. The town commissioners have been requested by townspeople for this to be done as they wish to have early warning of the coach's arrival from the metropolis. — *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, May 1788.

Another Meter Mail Irregularity

Illustrated below is an item which I came across recently which is an addition to the article in MM50. I do not know if the handstamp was applied (in green) in London or at Bromsgrove.



"AT CHRISTMAS NEXT"

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

The people of Birmingham would not have been as doubtful about when their six-day post with London would begin as was suggested (MM34/8). John Wilson's announcement of 9th. December 1748 stated it would commence at "Christmas next" and the townsfolk knew on which three days their post already went off to Coleshill to join the rest of the London-bound mail on the Chester Road. They would soon realise, if they did yet know, that the G.P.O. was now handling incoming and outgoing mail on every day of the week, but neither on Sunday.

For convenience in accounting it was usual to start a newly-contracted service at the beginning of a quarter and to require three months notice of termination. Until 1752 Lady Day was New Year's Day (according to the old reckoning, which had been abandoned for some purposes) and the other quarter-days were St. John Baptist, Michaelmas, and Christmas Day; that is 25th. March, 24th. June, 29th. September and 25th. December.

There is not much doubt that what Wilson led people to expect was confirmed by a notice in Birmingham Post Office. Herbert Joyce's History of the Post Office (1893) is remarkably accurate and detailed. Would that sources were referred to ! There it is precisely given that Ralph Allen's thrice-weekly mail between London and Birmingham through Oxford began on 26th. December 1748. Assuming a London source for this date, it would mean it first left the G.P.O. that Monday night, the first bye-night after Christmas. However since the "Account of the Post at Birmingham" (MM51/7) shows this post as leaving Birmingham in 1751 on "Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays at Six at Night", it is reasonable to suggest the up mail actually set out on Christmas Day itself.

It may not have registered why the tax year begins on 5th. April. It should be 25th. March, but to correct the calendar to fit the terrestrial year Britain omitted 3rd. to 13th. September in 1752, and quite naturally nobody expected to pay or be paid for these eleven missed days. So business including Post Office contracts thereafter generally became effective from the new fiscal quarter-days or the beginning of the next working week. Annual accounts were drawn up to 5th. April and quarterly ones to 5th. July, 10th. October 5th. January as well. Later, it would appear, the oddity seemed pointless and October was altered.

The fiscal year is never likely to be made to coincide with the Calendar year and end on 31st. December. Nor for that matter are the names of the months of September to December going to be altered now. We ignore what these words signify as readily as we fail to associate the other months with the Caesars and their gods or the days of the week with nordic deities.

A SECULAR DIARY

The "perpetual calendar" shown on the opposite page has kindly been submitted by Steph Stobbs. From this it appears that Christmas Day, 1748 was on a Sunday.

A Secular Diary

FOR ASCERTAINING ANY DAY OF THE WEEK OR MONTH,

IN EITHER THE OLD OR NEW STYLE,

COMMENCING 1601, AND CONTINUED UP TO THE YEAR 1900.

BY D. BARSTOW.

YEARS—OLD STYLE.																MONTHS.														
1601	1607	1618	1629	1635	1646	1657	1663	1674	1685	1691	1702	1713	1719	1730	1741	1747	Jan. 31.	Feb. 28.	March 31.	April 30.	May 31.	June 30.	July 31.	Aug. 31.	Sept. 30.	Oct. 31.	Nov. 30.	Dec. 31.		
1602	1613	1619	1630	1641	1647	1658	1669	1675	1686	1697	1703	1714	1725	1731	1742		4	7	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2		
1603	1614	1625	1631	1642	1653	1659	1670	1681	1687	1698	1709	1715	1726	1737	1743		5	1	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5	1	3		
1605	1611	1622	1633	1639	1650	1661	1667	1678	1689	1695	1706	1717	1723	1734	1745	1751	6	2	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4		
1606	1617	1623	1634	1645	1651	1662	1673	1679	1690	1701	1707	1718	1729	1735	1746		2	5	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7		
1609	1615	1626	1637	1643	1654	1665	1671	1682	1693	1699	1710	1721	1727	1738	1749		3	6	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1		
1610	1621	1627	1638	1649	1655	1666	1677	1683	1694	1705	1711	1722	1733	1739	1750		7	3	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5		
																1	4	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6	2	4	7
																Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.			
																7	3	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6	2	4	7
																5	1	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5
																3	6	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3
																1	4	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7	3	5	1
																6	2	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5	1	3	6
																4	7	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5	1	3	6	1	4
																2	5	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1	4	6	2
																LEAP YEARS, FEB. 29 DAYS.														
																1604	1632	1660	1688	1716	1744	7	3	4	7	2	5	7	3	5
																1608	1636	1664	1692	1720	1748	5	1	2	5	7	3	5	1	3
																1612	1640	1668	1696	1724	1752	3	6	7	3	5	1	3	6	2
																1616	1644	1672	1700	1728		1	4	5	1	3	6	1	4	7
																1620	1648	1676	1704	1732		6	2	3	6	1	4	6	2	5
																1624	1652	1680	1708	1736		4	7	1	4	6	2	4	7	3
																1628	1656	1684	1712	1740		2	5	6	2	4	7	2	5	1
																Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.			
																4	7	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3
																5	1	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4
																6	2	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4	7	2	5
																2	5	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7	3	5	1
																3	6	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1	4	6	2
																7	3	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5	1	3	6
																1	4	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6	2	4	7
																Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.			
																7	3	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6	2	4	7
																5	1	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5
																3	6	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3
																1	4	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7	3	5	1
																6	2	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5	1	3	6
																4	7	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5	1	3	6	1	4
																2	5	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1	4	6	2
																LEAP YEARS, FEB. 29 DAYS.														
																1764	1792	1804	1832	1860	1888	7	3	4	7	2	5	7	3	5
																1768	1796	1808	1836	1864	1892	5	1	2	5	7	3	5	1	3
																1772		1812	1840	1868	1896	3	6	7	3	5	1	3	6	2
																1776		1816	1844	1872		1	4	5	1	3	6	1	4	7
																1780		1820	1848	1876		6	2	3	6	1	4	6	2	5
																1784	1784	1824	1852	1880		4	7	1	4	6	2	4	7	3
																1788	1788	1828	1856	1884		2	5	6	2	4	7	2	5	1
																Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.			
																4	7	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3
																5	1	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4
																6	2	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4	7	2	5
																2	5	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7	3	5	1
																3	6	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1	4	6	2
																7	3	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5	1	3	6
																1	4	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6	2	4	7
																Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.			
																7	3	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6	2	4	7
																5	1	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5
																3	6	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3
																1	4	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7	3	5	1
																6	2	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5	1	3	6
																4	7	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5	1	3	6	1	4
																2	5	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1	4	6	2
																EXPLANATION.														
To ascertain any day of the week or month in any year of the above periods, first look in the table of YEARS for the year required; under the MONTHS are figures which refer to the head of the column of days for the whole month.																														
For example:—To know upon what day of the week King William the Fourth was born, look for the year 1765, and under the month of August you will find the figure 4, which directs you to column 4, where you perceive the 21st was on a Wednesday.																														

SOME THOUGHTS ON MILEAGE MARKS
AND RELATED MATTERS

A number of articles in recent years have reflected the enormous interest that these mileage marks arouse. In Postal History No. 233, John Harrison put forward the theory that mileage marks were issued as a public relations exercise, and were not intended for the rating or for checking the rates on letters.

I would like to make another suggestion, which is that they were intended to facilitate the checking of rates in the Inland Office in London. These marks can have been of little use to postmasters unless a letter originated from a place which was on the same road to London. For instance the Birmingham post office would not have found it much use to know the mileage, from London, of say Derby and Bristol.

There are a number of entries in Posts 14 and 15 which seem to imply that the President of the Inland Office was responsible for ordering handstamps for offices in the country as well as those in the London postal area. In Post 15, Ref 7 there is a letter dated 22nd. July 1802 from Daniel Stowe to Francis Freeling:

Dear Sir,

Many of the Scotch Post Town Stamps being almost illegible, and few having the distances to them, I beg to know if you are of opinion that they should be generally provided with new ones in the same manner as the Post Towns in England have been.

In consequence of your ordering the distances not to be added to the Sub Town Stamps, Mr Brooks was desired to discontinue making them, but previously he had completed all the places on the alphabetical List of Towns as far as N, and I wish to be informed if they are to be forwarded in their present state, or, if I shall give directions for the distances being taken off and then sent.

I am sir...

I hope to return to the subject of the mileage stamps of some sub-offices in the next issue. For the moment it is probably sufficient to say that the distances were not erased. Then in August 1826, Stow again wrote to Freeling on these stamps.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 9th. inst. suggesting whether the distances which are affixed to every Country Stamp might be discontinued, the routes of the Post so constantly changing, that these distances must become incorrect & consequently misleading & that the omission would be some saving of expence in the Stamps and diminish the risk of the letters being defaced, on which you desire my opinion.

I beg to acquaint you that I have consulted with the Presidents & some of the most experienced Officers on the subject, & we are of opinion that the distances as now annexed to the Country Stamps is of general convenience in as much as affording an immediate reference on every particular case of complaint & not infrequently enables us to decide when the name of the town may be indistinctly stamped at what office such a letter may have been put in. The distance as now annexed is also of great convenience to the Insp'r of Franks in charging letters. In respect of the clerks who charge the letters passing through London, I fear that Duty would not be so well performed if reference was to be made to lists, certainly it would take more time to go through, because they have only to turn each letter to make out the distance, & I cannot help thinking that the saving in expence of cutting the stamps will not counterbalance the delay & inaccuracies that the omission of the distance might lead to, for however accurate the list may be to be referred to it must cause delay and inconvenience, but I state these observations with great deference to your better judgement.

I am

Whilst the above does not prove that the idea for mileage marks originated in the Inland Office, it does indicate that the staff there were in favour of retaining them. Also it is difficult to see anyone else who could have found them of use.

Much has been made of the discrepancy, on a number of stamps, between the mileage shown and the actual distance the mail was carried to London. I submit that in most instances that this did not matter since the system of rating consisted of a series of bands of distance. In a list compiled in 1829, showing the cases where there was a difference between the mileage shown and the actual distance, the variation was only a few miles for most towns, and in very few instances would there have been a discrepancy between the charge levied for carriage to London and the distance shown; one example was Buxton for which the distance shown was 178 miles but the actual distance was 166 miles. I think that it must be significant that when the route of the London mail to Ashby de la Zouch was altered in 1815, 1817 and 1823, each change involving a new mileage on the opposite side of 120 miles, a handstamp showing the correct distance was in use two to three weeks after the change.

Most readers will be aware of the fact that most unpaid letters passing through London were rated by the dispatching office to London only; the overall charge was applied at the Inland Office. Possibly this was a relic from the days when all letters between places on different post-roads had to pass through the capital. The practice was discontinued in May 1837. It is possible that as a result of a small discrepancy, an error in charging could have resulted on letters sent through London when they were re-rated at the Inland Office.

CIRCULAR.

Oswestry, 1st of May, 1837.

Sir,

THE Postmaster-General has decided that the practice of charging Unpaid Letters, circulating through the London Office, with the rate to London only, shall be discontinued; I am therefore to desire that you will tax all Letters passing through London with the *Full Postage*, as you already charge Paid Letters. This Regulation is to commence with the Letters which will reach London, on Tuesday, the 16th Instant.

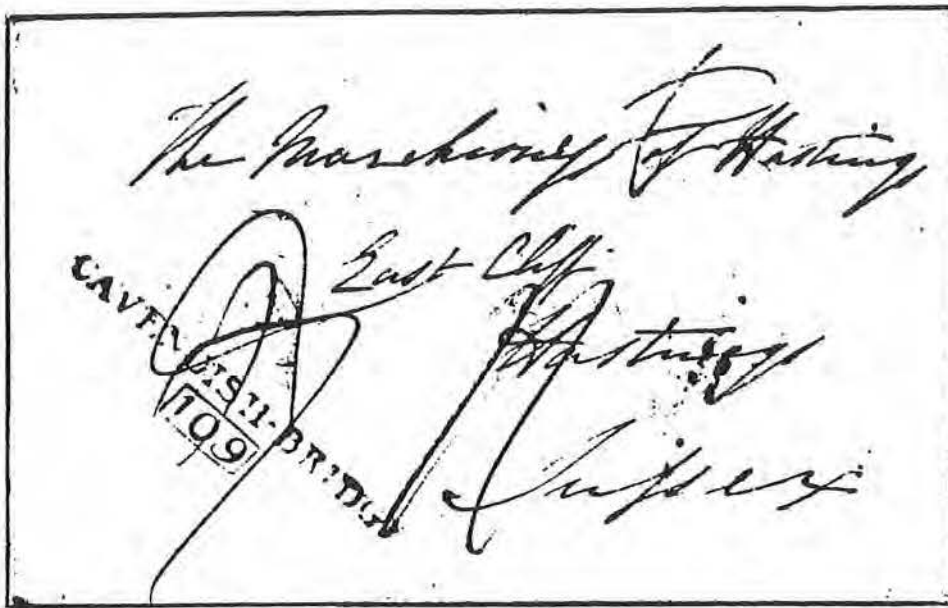
I am,

Your most obedient Servant,

B. CHURCHILL,

Surveyor-General Post Office.

A cover of 1827 rated 9d. to London, but altered there to an overall charge of 11d.



In MM55 Chris Beaver mentioned the difference, in some instances, between the distance shown on time-bills and that for which the contractors were paid. The following comment of Freeling on a complaint, made in 1831, that letters from Melton to Leicester (15 miles 4 furlongs in the sixth edition of Cary) were charged 4d. whereas those from Market Harborough to Leicester (14 miles 5 furlongs in Cary) were charged 5d., might be of interest in this context.

I cannot say the Mailcoach Time Bills are an authority to decide the rates of Postage when disputed. A Surveyor has the same means to ascertain a distance as I have, that is to count the Mile Stones & have the fractional parts to the Post Offices measured or guessed at by walking them.

With respect to Harboro' and Leicester I find the 11th Edition of Cary gives 14.5 from the Market House to the Three Crowns Inn (Leicester). The Time Bill is 14.4 and the contractor has acquiesced in it, so I suppose it is the distance between the stables. I do not believe the distance can be 15.

With all the fast Mails pains have been taken to get the distances true to furlongs between the changing places. I cannot say so much for other Bills, and very probably the distance from Melton to Leicester was put down at 15 as it is generally understood to be. I do not think the Surveyor should depend on the GPO for distances, but ascertain them independently, as they have the best means of doing by their own local knowledge & such measurements as they can get. In local rates they want to know the distance from office to office but I want to know it from one changing place to another which shows that Time Bills will not decide a disputed question. I have no doubt the totals of the principal Mail Time Bills are very near the truth.

FROM THE RUGBY RECORDER

Gay Parker has sent the following extracts from the Rugby Recorder. First of all from 1845:

Since the opening of the London to Birmingham railway in 1838 we have seen a great deal of change in the town and none more marked than in the almost revolutionary changes wrought in the postal services.

The speed with which letters are now communicated via the nation-wide system of railways is already taken for granted; as is also the universal penny post.

Many readers will still recall the endeavours of our late post-mistress, Mrs. Miller and her son who, come rain or shine, sorted and delivered all letters to and from the town and out-lying villages. Mrs. Miller, operating her postal services until after she became seventy, received no salary from the Post Office. The half-penny charge on each letter must sometimes have seemed small recompense for their efforts. Posting a letter of whatever weight would cost ninepence to travel from Rugby to London and could take several days to reach its destination whether by road or the so-called Special Express Mail Boat. The rate of progress of the latter was a "racey" six miles hours per hour in ideal conditions. However, due to the circuitous canal system in this area together with "unforseen circumstances" it was commonly observed that a canal boat beginning at 6 a.m., "Would not be out of the sound of Newbold church clock striking six in the evening, when travelling towards Hillmorton".

During the time of the Peninsular Wars, the son of Mrs. Miller would announce a new victory by bedecking himself in ribbons of many colours. It became custom that the boys from the school would set a lookout to watch for the arrival of our intrepid letter carrier as he made his way from the post town of Dunchurch. The boys would meet him with a sleigh and convey him triumphantly into Rugby town."

As Gay points out there are probably a number of inaccuracies in this extract. It would certainly have been illegal for a letter to have been carried by canal boat to London. Then from February 1890:

Half-a-dozen post cards, dated 1874, and two or three letters - one of which appears to be dated 1873, though it has been partly consumed by mice - have been found at Rugby Post Office. During the recent alterations, the stray missives were discovered in a small crack created by shrinkage of wood. Needless to say, the correspondence has been forwarded to the intended recipients. It would be interesting to know whether these communications actually arrived with the people for whom they were intended, and whether the news they should have received sixteen years ago would have caused any changes to their lives."

MAILCOACH TIME-BILLS

In his book "Mail Coach Men", Edmund Vale incorrectly listed the London - Hastings and London - Steyning mails as being operated by mailcoach. He probably confused a mailcoach time-bill with that for a mailcart. The mailcoach time-bills were of a standard layout and were signed by the Superintendent of Mailcoaches. Reference was made to the time-piece, part of the guard's equipment. On the time-bills for mailcarts, there was no mention of a time-piece, and they were signed by the appropriate surveyor. The difference can be seen on the two following examples.



General Post-Office,

The Earl of CHESTERFIELD,
AND
The Earl of LEICESTER,

} Postmaster-
} General.

Ludlow to Worcester Time-Bill.

	Miles.	Time allowed		Dispatched from the Post-Office, Ludlow, the		of
		H.	M.	at		
				at	7	in the Morning
Dukes	9	1	20	Arrived at Tenbury at		
				} With a Time-Piece safe N ^o to		
Knowles	23	3	40	Arrived at Worcester, the		
	32	5	0	at		
				} Delivered the Time-Piece safe N ^o to		
				To arrive at Worcester at Twelve o'Clock at Noon		
Returned						
				From the Post-Office, Worcester, the		of
				at		in the Afternoon
				} With a Time-Piece safe N ^o to		
Knowles	23	3	40	Arrived at Tenbury at		
Dukes	9	1	20	Arrived at the Post-Office, Ludlow, the		
	32	5	0	at		
				} Delivered the Time-Piece safe N ^o to		
				To arrive at Ludlow at Seven o'Clock in the Evening		

The Time of working each Stage is to be reckoned from the Coach's Arrival. Five Minutes for coupling four Horses, is as much as is necessary, and as the Time whether more or less, is to be fetched up in the Course of the Stage, it is the Coachman's Duty to be as expeditious as possible, and to report the Horse-keepers if they are not always ready when the Coach arrives, and active in getting it off.

By Command of the Postmaster-General,

T. HASKER



General Post-Office.

The Earl of CHESTERFIELD,

A N D

The Earl of LEICESTER,

} Postmaster

} General

Hereford and Worcester Way-Bill.

	Miles.	Time allowed.		Dispatched from the Post-Office, Hereford, the	of
		H.	M.		
				179 at 7 o'clock in the Morning	
Mr. Wilson Postmaster Hereford.	16	2	40	Received at Ledbury, at 9.40	
	16	2	40	Sent away at 9.55	
				Arrived at Worcester, at 12.35	
Returned					
				From the Post-Office, Worcester, the	of
				at 12.40	Per
Postmaster Hereford.	16	2	40	Received at Ledbury, at 3.20	
				Sent away at	
	16	2	40	Arrived at Hereford, at	

N.B. This Mail must be conveyed at the Rate of Six Miles in the Hour at least, and the Way-Bill truly and exactly dated at each Stage. Every Deputy or Contractor will be responsible (at their Peril) for the regular Performance of their Riding Duty. And if any Post-Boy or Rider, carrying this Mail, is found loitering on the Road, he will be committed to the House of Correction, and confined to hard Labour for one Month.

Return each Way-Bill (by the first Post) to

S. Woodcock,
Surveyor, Gloucester.

OF INNS, PUBS AND POST OFFICES

The link between early postmasters and innkeepers has often been the subject of comment. In a minute of 1792, reproduced in MM33, the reasons for the Postmasters General favouring the appointment of innkeepers as postmasters are set out. Amongst the reasons were:

- i) they did their own rides and kept their own horses so if one was lame another was ready thus avoiding the expense of the postmaster hiring another;
- ii) they could do the duty for a smaller salary since it brought them much more custom;
- iii) it gave the PMGs an opportunity of employing mail coach contractors as postmasters so providing an additional inducement for them to conduct the business efficiently.

However Freeling was not in agreement with their Lordships. So he wrote to all the surveyors, enclosing a copy of the minute, mentioning that he had often discussed the matter with Lord Walsingham, and asking for their opinion. He said that it had always appeared to him to be good policy to appoint "almost any other description of persons to be postmasters than innkeepers." Whilst there were good grounds in virtually all cases, he confined his objections to the more important offices.

All of the surveyors replied that they agreed with Freeling. Mr. Western's reply went into the historical reasons for the employment of innkeepers as postmasters but went on to say that these no longer applied:

"It is true that about 50 or 60 years ago the post offices were very much in the hands of Innkeepers, but it must be considered that at that time the Post Office was by no means such an object of revenue as it now is. One of the principal businesses of a deputy postmaster seems to have been to provide horses for travellers, which was even ordered and regulated by Act of Parliament. But of later years the system is completely altered. The Bye & Cross Posts have been established with a train of vouchers, forward letters etc & the increase of London bags. The extension of correspondence, with the variety of rates of postage, have made the business so very complicated that few Innkeepers have either leisure or inclination to pay sufficient regard to it. ...the very nature of the business of an inn is attended with so much confusion, hurry and irregularity, that it very much disqualifies the keepers of them from doing business in that regular, punctual method so indispensably necessary for the management of any office of any moment."

He went on to point out that in his district the coaches from London to Derby and from London to Nottingham were both worked by persons who were not innkeepers, and that, in his opinion, proprietors who did not keep inns were at least equal to those who did. Also he said that postmasters and mail contractors were very good checks on one another, as they were always complaining if the other lost time. Mr. Lott also made this point as well as stating that innkeepers always used their worst horses for carrying the mail, and that the letters were often exposed in the bar or kitchen. Mr. Woodcock wrote that the business was often left to the servants, who since they were frequently changed, had little idea. Although he had given orders for an office to be fitted out solely for post office duties, the business was often done in a public bar open to "the observation of all sorts of gazers."

From Claybrook, Mr. Saverland wrote:

"I am entirely of your opinion respecting the Impropriety of Post Offices being kept at Inns or Ale Houses, because I find at such places the business very much neglected by its being considered for the most part as a secondary Object to all others, and instead of doing it regularly with a small degree of care and attention, it is seldom thought of till the last minute & then hurried over in the most shameful manner, when letters are improperly charged & missent to the great Injury of the Revenue & Correspondence, & encouragement to Carriers of all descriptions. Innkeepers were formerly employed on account of the Riding Work, but that is so lessened all over the Kingdom by the Establishment of Mail Coaches, as not now to be an object, & persons are always to be found to work Mail Coaches who are not Postmasters; as a proof of which, tho' there are many Innkeepers engaged in the working of the Mail Coach from London to Holyhead, not one of them is a Postmaster; and yet the business is perfectly well performed. "The Post Office" is not of the consequence or recommendation to an Inn which it used to be before the restriction on Franking took place, & a traveller now finding that my Host at the Post Office is deprived of that Privilege, moves over to the Red Lion.

I always insist upon the business being done in a private room, but then, when that is over the letters are brought into the Bar, exposed to the curiosity of every person who may happen to drop in; & I do firmly believe that owing to this custom, more letters, but particularly newspapers, never come to hand than to any other cause, which is one reason amongst many, why the Inhabitants of Towns where Post Offices are kept at Inns, are so generally dissatisfied and suspicious of their letters being opened. I have long considered & made up my mind upon this subject, & therefore do (illegible) give it as my opinion, that if the Postmaster General would be pleased to declare in future that Innkeepers were ineligible to Post Offices, their Lordships would do the most essential service to the Correspondence of the Kingdom."

Freeling expressed his agreement with the last point but felt it would be difficult to effect since so many interests were sometimes exerted to obtain appointments. However he felt it worth a serious thought by their Lordships who "seem determined to be actuated by principles set to the narrow considerations of private interest and to look to the good of the service alone."

Despite this weight of opinion nothing changed. In 1798 Mr. Hodgson reported that the postmaster at Wetherby had become a sober man since he had given up being an innkeeper. Furthermore he did not wish to hear again of an office being given to an innkeeper, and no large office should ever be given to a person with other business interests. Whilst Freeling agreed with the first statement, adding that that the Postmasters General "had felt the force of similar sentiments, but unfortunately there had been considerations which had outweighed them", he could not concur with the second since the cost would have been too high. When the office at Wellington, Salop, was declared vacant in 1824, a Mr. Thomas Turner was nominated. Amongst Mr. Turner's business interests was the public house "The Sign of the Sun", but the surveyor reported that he was willing to provide a room separate from the rest of the inn for a post office. Yet again Freeling reiterated his views on innkeepers as postmasters, but added that there were many innkeepers who held postmasterships and that two had recently appointed at Banbury and Cosham. There are probably many examples to be found in the Midlands. For instance, at Lutterworth the office was at the Denbigh Arms for a number of years up to 1845, although on the appointment of Stephen Mash in 1832, the PMG commented "of course an office must be provided distinct from the Inn." However in the larger towns and cities the increase in the volume of business, as the first half of nineteenth century passed, would surely have made it impossible to combine the two positions.

There appears to have been no change in the official position until 1839, when it came to the notice of the Secretary that a great number of the mail guards kept public houses, a practice which he felt was likely to be injurious to the service since such places were regarded as places of "bad habits and low company". The Postmaster General issued instructions that anyone who kept a public house was to be regarded as ineligible for employment in the Post Office. Employees who already owned a public house were to be given one year to dispose of it or be dismissed. The case of a wife keeping a public house was to be treated as if it belonged to the husband.

However we find in White's 1846 directory for Leicestershire that at least eight of the sub-offices were located in inns. Presumably a similar situation could be found in other counties for the matter was explained by a minute of February 1852 in which it was reported that "by some oversight" the instructions were not promulgated in the country in England, but were restricted to London. So the order was made general but not retrospective - applying only to future appointments. In the circular issued to the surveyors the following qualification was added to the order:

"His Lordship reserves to himself the power of dispensing with the observance of this rule in special cases where he may deem its relaxation necessary and expedient."

Such a case arose in September 1858. The only competent person living at New Inn (Burton on Trent) and willing to take on the duties of sub-postmaster was the innkeeper. Since it was felt to be expedient not to abolish the office, the rule was waived. Over the years, there were a number of similar examples. From about 1890 it was usually stipulated that a separate room with a separate entrance should be provided for the post office.

When the order was drawn up, the Post Office failed to consider the complexity of the licensing laws. They appear to have been "caught out" in December 1854, when it was found that the holder of an "off-licence" had been appointed as a sub-postmaster. The appointment was cancelled but reinstated on appeal, on the grounds that the liquor was sold in bottles for consumption off the premises. The holders of some "off-licences" sold drink in open vessels for consumption off the premises which might be on a bench just outside the door. So by 1860 the rule had been modified to:

"An officer is forbidden to be connected directly or indirectly, with the ownership or management of an inn or any establishment licensed for the sale of drink to be consumed on the premises."

Although it was not stated a sub-postmaster was allowed to hold an "off-licence" on the understanding that the drink was sold in closed vessels. At a later date it was stipulated that whilst it was sometimes necessary to appoint the holder of an "off-licence", no one already employed by the Post Office would be allowed to acquire such a licence except in very special circumstances. In 1897 the sub-postmaster at Knipton (Leics) took out an such a licence. He was called upon to resign his licence or his appointment. Eventually he chose to relinquish the former.

During the 1920s and 30s the rule was relaxed from time to time to allow the appointment of a licensee as an auxiliary postman or allowance deliverer. When a Mr. Dowdeswell, a postman at Redditch, inherited the Rose and Crown Inn at Alcester on the death of his father in 1929, special permission was required for the licence to be transferred to him - a requisite for the disposal of the business. This was granted provided that he took no part in the management of the business.

CIRCULAR.

BY a General Order issued in December, 1839, Persons in the employ of the Post Office are strictly prohibited from keeping Public Houses, including Beer Shops, on pain of dismissal from the Service.

It must be clearly understood that no evasion of this order will be permitted; the wife holding a Public House or Beer Shop will be considered precisely in the same light as if the husband carried it on.

W. BOKENHAM,

Controller.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT,

23rd June, 1856.

The whole matter was reviewed in 1949 after the application of a publican for a position as a postman at Benson (Oxon) had been rejected. His M.P. took up the case with the PMG. As a result it was decided to remove the restriction on employment of persons connected with licensed premises. There was no relaxation in the rule prohibiting the opening of a sub-office in such premises, but a licensee was not to be debarred from appointment as a sub-postmaster if he could offer accommodation for a sub-office separate from the licensed premises.

I do not know what the position is now. With the disappearance of so many village shops in recent years, the number of people able and willing to provide a post office in rural areas is very limited despite that some are run in the "front room" of a house. Steph Stobbs has described in MM47 the operation, for a few hours on a Friday morning, of a post office in the village inn at Clunton. When the post office at Ab Kettleby (Melton Mowbray) closed at the end of April 1986, the tenants of the Sugar Loaf volunteered to run a part-time office in their public house. By the July the office opened on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. So it is not possible to combine a quick half with buying some stamps.

Finally it occurred to me one day, when we were having lunch (excellent value) at the Denbigh Arms Lutterworth, it would be an excellent piece of practical postal history to seek out all the remaining inns, at which the mail coaches called, on say the Chester Road, and sample the fare. It might be possible to produce a "Good Food Guide" for postal historians. If a sponsor could be found, I would volunteer to do the research for a small remuneration.

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SIX-DAY TOWNS, 1755

Of particular note on the list below is the absence of Coventry, Coleshill and Lichfield - see the articles by Chris Beaver in previous issues.

GENERAL POST-OFFICE.

LONDON, October 25, 1755.

BAGS for the following TOWNS are dispatched every Night, and the Letters delivered in Return every Day (Sundays excepted.)

Abingdon	Epfom	Loughborough	Southall
Amphill	Esher, Surrey	Lowstoft, Lynn	Stafford
Ashburton	Evesham	Maidstone	Stokein Norfolk
Attleborough	Exeter	Manchester	Stone
Bath, Beccles	Farringdon	Middlewich	Sunbury
Beaconsfield	Feverham	Moulsey, Surry	Taunton
Birmingham	Gerrards Cross	Namptwich	Teddington
Bridgewater	Gloucester	Newmarket	Thame
Bristol	Gravefend	Newport Pagn.	Thames Ditton
Bromsgrove	Grays	Northampton	Thanet
Burntwood	Guildford	Northwich	Thetford
Bury St. Edmds	Ham in Surry	Norwich	Tiverton
Cambridge	Hampton Court	Nottingham	Twickenham
Campden	Hampton Town	Oxford	Uxbridge
Canterbury	Hamwick Surry	Petersham	Walfall
Chatham	Hanworth	Plymouth	Walton
Chelmsford	Harborough	Portsmouth	Warrington
Chertsey	Hertford	Prescot	Wellington
Chester	High Wickham	Queenborough	Wells
Chipp. Norton	Ingateston	Richmond	Weybridge
Cirencester	Ipswich	Ripley	Windham Norf
Claremont	Ilfeworth	Rochester	Windfor
Cobham	Kelvedon	Royston	Wingham Kent
Colchester	Kingston	Rumford	Witham
Croydon	Kingston Wick	Sandwich	Witton
Darking	Lalam	Saxmundham	Wolverhampton
Dartford	Leatherhead	Shepperton	Wooburn
Deal, Derby	Leicester	Shiffnall	Worcester
Dover	Littleton	Shrewsbury	Yarmouth
Enfield	Liverpool	Sittingbourn	

Tunbridge Bag every Night from Midsum. to Michaelmas only.

Bags for the following Towns are dispatched Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; and the Returns are delivered Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

Arundel	East-Grinstead	Lewes	Rygate
Brighthelmston	Godalmin	Midhurst	Steyning
Chichester	Haslemere	Petworth	Shoreham

October 10, 1755, Was opened the Communication by Post between Sheffield and the great North Road thro' Doncaster; and between Manchester, Liverpool, Warrington, Chester, Gloucester, South Wales, Bristol, and the whole Cross Road: as well as between Liverpool, Manchester, Wigan, Preston, Lancaster, Kendal, and all Parts of Westmoreland and Cumberland: and between Liverpool, and all parts of Yorkshire, Durham, Northumberland, Scotland, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, and Norfolk.

BAKEWELL RURAL POSTS

Detailed here are two sets of revisions of the posts under Bakewell. The first is dated 24th February 1857; the other is dated 24th. March 1858 and appears to have come into operation on 29th. April. At the time that the first revision was proposed, it had been hoped to provide a mail cart from Sheffield to Castleton but no one could be found to undertake it at an acceptable price.

Part 1Bakewell - Hathersage

Hassop, Calver, Stoney Middleton, Eyam (Foolow, Grindlow, Hucklow), Grindleford Bridge, Hathersage.

Mail Cart daily. Sub-pmr Eyam to deliver at Foolow etc. four days a week.

Bakewell (Hathersage) - Derwent

Sickleholme, Bamford, Ashopton, Derwent. Foot messenger six days a week.

Bakewell (Calver) - Goatcliffe

Curbar, Froggatt, Stoke, Goatcliffe.

By sub-pmr Calver, six days a week.

Bakewell - Castleton

Ashford, Cresbrook, Litton, Tideswell, Castleton.

Mail Cart daily. Delivery by sub-pmrs.

Bakewell (Ashford) - Wardlow

Churchdale, Thornbridge, Great Longstone, Little Longstone, Wardlow.

By foot messenger.

Bakewell (Tideswell) - Wormhill

Wheston, Miller's Dale, Wormhill.

Delivery by sub-pmr Tideswell.

Bakewell (Taddington) - Blackwell

Priestcliffe, Blackwell.

Delivery three days a week by sub-pmr Taddington.

Bakewell (Castleton) - Bradwell

Hope, Brough, Smalldale, Bradwell.

Foot messenger six days a week.

Bakewell (Castleton) - Edale

Edale.

Delivery by sub-pmr Castleton three days a week.

Bakewell - Pilsey

Edensor, Pilsley.

By foot messenger.

Bakewell - Flagg

Over Haddon, One Ash, Money Ash, Sheldon, Flagg.

By foot messenger four days a week.

Bakewell - Meadow Place

Alport, Youlgreave, Middleton. Meadow Place.

By foot messenger six days a week.

Bakewell - Beeley

Rowsley, Beeley.

By omnibus.

Bakewell - Birchover

Burton Closes, Haddon House, Haddon Hall, Stanton, Stanton Leys, Birchover.

By foot messenger six days a week.

Part 2Sheffield - Castleton

Hathersage, Hope, Brough, Castleton.

In winter by mail cart daily. In summer by mail coach.

Hathersage - Derwent

As in part 1.

Hope - Hazlebadge

Smalldale, Bradwell, Hazlebadge.

By sub-pmr Bradwell to and from Hope daily.

Hope - Booth

Edale, Booth.

By messenger six days a week.

Hathersage - Tideswell

Grindleford Bridge, Goatscliffe, Leam Hall, Calver (Curbar, Stoke, Froggatt), Stoney Middleton, Eyam (Hucklow etc.), Litton, Wardlow, Tideswell.

By mail cart daily. Delivery by sub-pmrs.

Litton - Cressbrook

Cressbrook.

By sub-pmr of Cressbrook who will convey and deliver the letters daily.

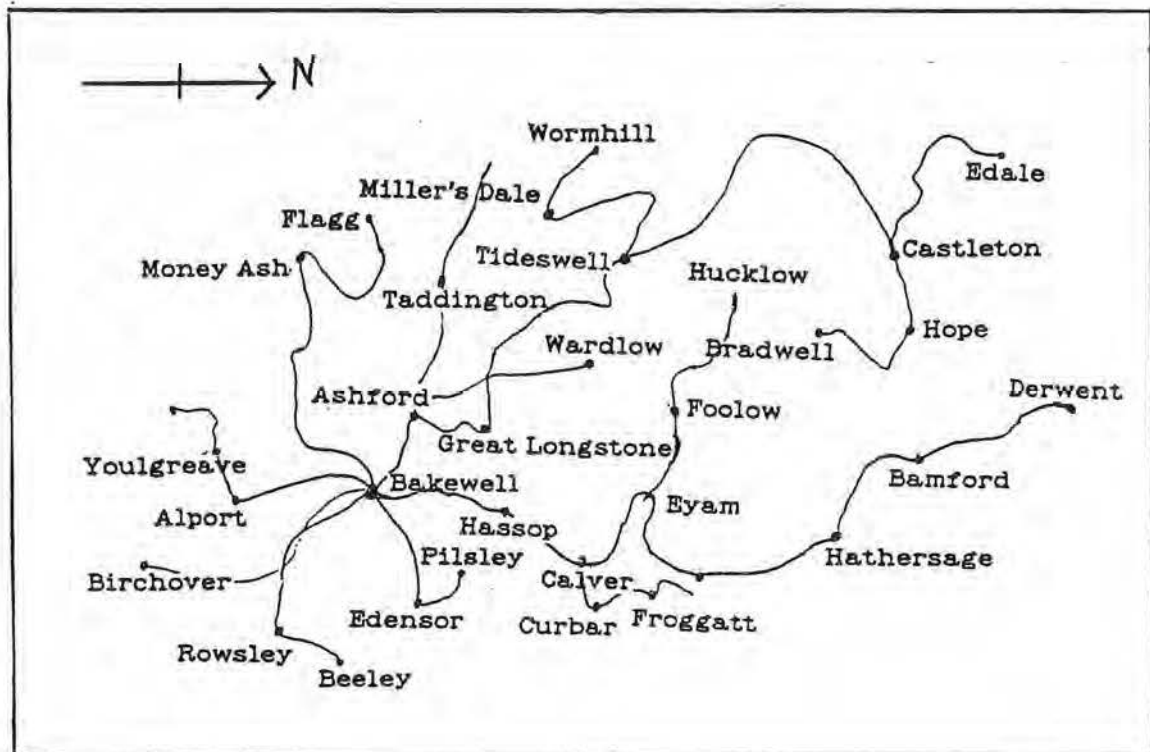
Bakewell - Rowland

Ashford, Churchdale, Thornbridge, Little Longstone, Great Longstone, Hassop, Rowland.

By messenger daily.

Baslow - Pilsley

Chatsworth, Edensor, Pilsley.



LETTER AND PARCEL BILLS

Has anyone else seen an item like the one illustrated below (slightly reduced in size)? I came across it at one of our local stamp fairs. Obviously a large number are used in the course of a day but most are, I imagine, destroyed. If one "escaped", it seems likely that others did so too.

Depatching Office Stamp		No. of any bag containing Parcel Bill	
LETTER AND COMBINED LETTER AND PARCEL BILL			
To (and Authorised Time of Despatch)			
LOUGHBOROUGH TO BIRMINGHAM			
14.00 (SX)			
Total No. of Bags Despatched	Included in despatch Parcel Bags	Empires	
REGISTERED or INSURED POSTAL PACKETS OFFICIAL REMITTANCES and REGISTERED LETTER BAGS			
Remittance Rem. Parcel ... Special Delivery ... and Express ... Inland ... Cash on ... Delivery ... c.o.d.	OFFICE OF POSTING	Registration or Record Number	
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
ONE BAG			
Received (Number in words)	Letters ... Initials of Officer(s) ... Parcel ... transferred		
UNREGISTERED and UNINSURED ITEMS			
Special Delivery and Express	Letters	Night Callers and Editors Letters in Red Covers	
Special Delivery and Express	Parcels	Trade Charge Forms (Inland Parcels only)	1
Telegrams		"C" Dockets	
Depatching Officer		Receiving Office	
56-7567 11/72 MP		P430B	

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A reminder from the Treasurer that, if you have not already paid your subscription for the 1988/89 season, now is the time to do so. Cheques for £4.50 to be sent to Trevor Clewley, 127 Queslett Road East, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield B74 2AJ. as soon as possible please.

NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

This should appear in late October / early November. I have no idea what it will contain since I have a few ideas in my head, but nothing on paper. So add to the profits of the G.P.O. by sending a deluge of articles to:
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