



MIDLAND MAIL

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



Chairman:

Elizabeth Lewis
27 Rathbone Road
Smethwick
Warley
West Midlands B67 5JG
Phone 021-429-1222

Treasurer:

Trevor Clewley
127 Queslett Rd East
Streetly
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands B74 2AJ
Phone 021-353-4491

Secretary:

Richard Farman
124 Henhurst Hill
Burton on Trent
Staffs
DE13 9SY
Phone 0283-66515

Number 38, January 1985

Showing the Way

Did you visit Stampex? Do you prefer BPE? Perhaps you visited both or perhaps you have never set foot in either. It is said we buy at Stampex and look at BPE. If that is an unfortunate myth, it is certainly true that, in financial terms, BPE has been less successful. In absolute terms, neither exhibition attracts large crowds.

This year the threat of an 'Autumn Stampex' led to a joint Stampex/BPE autumn show with better publicity and more dealers but with BPE's traditional competitive exhibits retained, albeit in a second building. Presumably BPE now has a more secure future. On the debit side, BPE moved to the Horticultural Halls, the yearly venue of Stampex, and all the signs are that it will stay there. There are probably more depressing venues for a major philatelic exhibition; hopefully they can be counted on one hand. In the recent past, BPE has been staged at the Wembley Conference Centre and the Cunard Hotel, Hammersmith, neither ideally located for the visitor to London but far removed from the concrete and sawdust image of so many philatelic exhibitions. It must be clear that London still lacks a modern exhibition hall of affordable size and it is sad that the present choice of venue reminds one of the football ground of a Third Division club that has seen better days but failed to recognize that the fans provide its bread and butter, let alone the chairman's champagne.

If attendances are to improve and youngsters attracted to the hobby, something better has to be devised. Perhaps this is the chance for postal history enthusiasts to promote a national exhibition where stamps take a back seat and where some real innovation is attempted. Would not the exhibits come to life if the exhibitors were there to answer questions and explain their interest to visitors? Could not schools be approached to encourage parties of young persons to attend if it were evident that the exhibition was truly educational? Might it not fare better if it moved its location to meet the collectors rather than rely, forever, on London where no suitable venue apparently exists? The answers to such questions may not be an unqualified 'yes' but there are many reasons why a change is needed. A new national postal history exhibition could do a great deal of good for collectors, dealers and even, maybe, for the general public who pay at the turnstiles - or might if they could be persuaded that it was worth doing so.

The Society Auction

Our Annual Auction will be held on Saturday afternoon 27th April. It may seem a long time ahead but details of Lots that you may wish to enter are required by

mid-February at the latest so that a catalogue can be produced and despatched with the next 'Midland Mail'. Please send a brief but clear description of each item and please base your assessment of condition on the terms 'poor', 'good', 'fine' or 'superb'. The descriptions of the Lots, together with a realistic market value AND your reserve, should be sent to:

Mrs E. Lewis, 27 Rathbone Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B67 5JG
The Lots themselves should not be sent but taken to the meeting on 27th April.

Last year the Committee was delighted to receive some Lots to sell entirely for the benefit of Society funds. If you have one or two Lots to donate this year, they would again be most welcome.

Forthcoming Meetings

The next meeting will be at Dr Johnson House, Bull Street, Birmingham (next to Lewis' bakery shop) on Saturday 19th January at 2pm. After the entertainment at Burton, it is the members' turn to take the floor again with a maximum of 9 sheets of Instructional Marks (including manuscript marks). No member need feel reluctant because his material is modest or does not fill nine pages. (Every cover is unique and we all learn from what we see.) The idea of a nominated topic for the 9 sheet display is not to restrict the members' choice but to provide a coordinated theme that gives us a chance to see a wide selection of items appropriate to it. The January meeting will be preceded by a Committee Meeting at 1pm sharp.

The meeting on Saturday 23rd February will also be at Dr Johnson House at 2pm. This will be the occasion of the Annual Competition or, to be more precise, competitions because this year, for the first time, there is to be one class for material (primarily) pre-1840 and another class for items (primarily) post-1840. Each member is permitted one entry of nine sheets in EACH class which should have a title and an indication of the class in which it is to be judged if that is not self-evident. The Society has, as yet, no published competition rules but judging will take into account postal history knowledge (particularly original research), material relevance and display presentation and not just the quality and rarity of the marks shown. In the past, success has come to those whose nine pages have 'told a story' in the clearest and most attractive manner.

DAVID SHAW

Specialist in Scottish Postal History.

47 ELM GROVE - NAIRN - SCOTLAND - IV12 4SL

TELEPHONE (0667) 54278

A selection of MIDLANDS postal history can be found on our monthly lists - send SAE for a sample listing. Here are a few more items from stock:

- | | | |
|------|---|--------|
| 1812 | E/L, a little discoloured at left hand side, good <u>red</u> DERBY 126 boxed mileage on obverse, an interesting farm valuation. | £6.00 |
| 1819 | E/L with fine NEWARK 121 mileage between lines, well placed on obv. | £7.50 |
| 1822 | E/L, good ASHBOURN 139 mileage between lines on reverse. | £7.50 |
| 1830 | E/L showing good-fine <u>blue</u> SHIFFNAL on rev, possibly mileage erased. | £7.50 |
| 1832 | E with fine undated circular MARKET HARBORO 83 mileage on reverse. | £7.50 |
| 1852 | Mourning E/L with good =75= and fine cds of Birmingham, both in <u>blue</u> . | £12.00 |

Please add 20p under £20 and 40p over this for post and insurance in transit. Refund instantly for any item not to your satisfaction if returned within 10 days.

The December Meeting

This year's gathering at The Bass Museum on 15th December attracted the largest attendance at any meeting of the Society since it was formed in 1975. Thirty members and guests assembled for the very enjoyable lunch arranged by Richard Farman and one or two more were present by the time we settled down to enjoy Bill Sedgewick's display in the early afternoon. A display better suited to the occasion would be hard to imagine since it encompassed a truly vast range of interests and Mr Sedgewick let his pages do the talking.

He opened with a flurry of Early Letters. Since they began with a merchant's letter of 1423 and letters of 1429, 1589 and 1599 followed, there was no disputing that they were early. Mr Sedgewick had noticed that the merchants' marks drawn on the front of such letters were reproduced in miniature on the seals, a point that does not seem to have been picked up in the recently-publicised Corsini correspondence. A 1665 'plague letter' spoke of "little Martha having the sickness" and a 'Kent Road letter' was the kind of spectacular postal history item many of us have never seen. There were very early Bishop marks of London and Edinburgh including, appropriately enough, what are probably the earliest known franked letters written to a bishop. The early letters were followed by Handstruck Marks with handstruck '4's of Scarborough, Wakefield, Catterick (in blue) and Worcester, '1's of Hereford and Aberystwyth, and among the '2's, the Edinburgh 'dated 2': a remarkable selection. Mr Sedgewick is well known for his 'Additional ½d' marks and the display of these was a study worth an afternoon of its own. There was a 'Free' letter which, because it was overweight, was charged 4/8½d and a letter sent to Dundee by sea thereby attracting a charge of only 8d and avoiding the imposition of the additional ½d.

The fourth section of the display featured Registered Mail, early examples from Shrewsbury and Oswestry attracting the Salop members while red 'Registered/Edinburgh' handstamps caught other eyes. The registered items were followed by Early Machine Cancels and here members had an opportunity to see a number of different segments of the early Azemar cancel. There was a section of Railway Interest featuring letters with adhesive railway letter stamps including, inevitably, some prize examples of Mr L'Estrange Ewen's enterprise without whose pioneer efforts so little would have survived.

Then it was time for Spoon Cancels and we were not to be disappointed because rarities such as the Cheltenham 'spoon' were there alongside 'spoons' of Birmingham, Bridgnorth, Burton, Kidderminster, Leamington, Northampton, Rugby, Stafford, Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton and Worcester. Mr Sedgewick had said, at the beginning of his talk, that he planned to include something from all the Midland counties and he was as good as his word. To gild the lily, one re-directed letter had separate fine strikes of both the Oswestry and Shrewsbury 'spoons'. From 'spoons' we moved to Missent Marks with different frames and settings. There were letters 'Missent to' Northampton, Leicester, Shrewsbury and Worcester but your reporter particularly liked a 'Misdirected to SELBY' of 1843 in red and a framed 'MISS-DIRECTED' of Goole (1842). There was a section of Other Instructional Handstamps of considerable variety which included a Worcester 'Too Late' in green, a Waghorn (Suez) forwarding cachet and a ½d stamp on a postcard of 1910 cancelled inexplicably (and probably illegally) with a Royal telegram mark, 'Kings Special Wire'.

The final topics were Miscellaneous and Late Fee letters, the former encompassing an attractive advertising envelope from Wem, a letter recovered from the wreck of the Colombo, an 1854 SG17 1d star cancelled (very likely pre-cancelled) with a 'Maltese Cross' and a particularly nasty Valentine - miscellaneous indeed. Of the Late Fee letters, one picked out a 6d late fee on an inland letter posted in the Euston Station late box and a later letter with the same late fee reduced to 2d.

Proposing the vote of thanks for such a wealth of fascinating and scarce material was judged to be beyond our capabilities so our ever-resourceful lady Chairman seized

upon an honoured guest - Dr Frank Bottomley of SPH and WBA fame - to save our faces. Dr Bottomley admitted to knowing Bill Sedgewick as long as he had known any postal historian and he said he knew him, too, as one who played down his subject. In that context, he emphasised the importance of some of the items we had seen and graciously thanked Mr Sedgewick for a very fine afternoon's entertainment. The meeting gave the speaker a deserved ovation and it would be churlish not to add a further ovation for our Secretary who made the day's proceedings possible.

Book Review

Just a year ago, Richard Farman and Geoffrey Sowerby published their book 'Burton upon Trent and District on Old Postcards'. If you wanted a copy today, you would probably have to pay a premium in a second hand bookshop. In view of its success, it is hardly surprising that the same team has followed with 'Second Collection - More Old Postcards of Burton upon Trent and District'. Its 90 pages include not only a fascinating selection of black and white reproductions but four pages in full colour. It brings back an era when 156 trains a day stopped at Burton station, Allsopp's Lager Beer sold at 3/6d per dozen pints and the local football team was in the Second Division. Naturally Richard has made sure that interior and exterior views of the post office take their rightful place and, at just £3-95, the book will need no further recommendation to anyone with interests in the area. It may turn out to be another 'premium investment' by this time next year so contact Richard soon if you want to reserve a copy.

Books that may (also) interest you - 12.

PARMENTER John C. 'District and Branch Cancellations from December 1856: Branch Offices'. Second reprinted edition, 20 pages, illustrated. Available from the London Postal History Group, 24 Dovercourt Road, Dulwich, London SE22 8ST. Price £1-65.

PASK Brian and PEACHEY Colin G. 'Twenty Years of First Day Postmarks'. 194 pages. British Postmark Society, 19 Moorland Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 1NH. £3-50.

RUTLAND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY. 'Volume 5 - Turnpikes and the Royal Mail in Rutland'. 193 pages, 130 illustrations, December 1982. Spiegl Press, 4 St Mary's Place, Stamford, Lincs. Price £5-25.

SCOTT J.G.S. 'Official Franking, 1800-1840'. 80 pages, 17 illustrations, July 1983. The Postal History Society, £5-00.

TRINDER Ivan F. 'The Postal History of the Internal Couriers (Felixstowe) Ltd: the Felixstowe Local Post'. 1983, illustrated. Ivan F.Trinder, 337 St John's Road, Clacton on Sea, Essex CO16 8DF, £1-00.

REYNOLDS Mairhead. 'A History of the Irish Post Office'. Illustrated, 1983. From MacDonnell Whyte Ltd, 102 Leinster Road, Dublin 6, Eire. Paperback £4-50; hard - back £7-95. (Postage may be extra.)

EWEN H.L'Estrange (compiler). 'Priced Catalogue of the Newspaper and Parcel Stamps of the United Kingdom, 1855-1906'. Available from Tim Clutterbuck & Co., PO Box 2, Kington, Herts HR6 3DJ at £5-50. A note of caution here because this is a reprint of a catalogue that first appeared in 1906 and prices are in pence instead of pounds !

BRITISH PRIVATE POST STUDY GROUP 'The Private Post, Number 7 - 1984'. A bibliography of nearly 200 articles published in 1982 on British private postal services including one on the results of research into the stamps of Globe Express Limited of Birmingham. The Cinderella Stamp Club (for the British Private Post Study Group), 35 Smith Street, London SW3 4EP, £3-00 post free.

Newcastle-under-Lyme

PRIVATE, 5th CLAUSE & PENNY POST PROVISIONS

by The Reverend Christopher M. Beaver

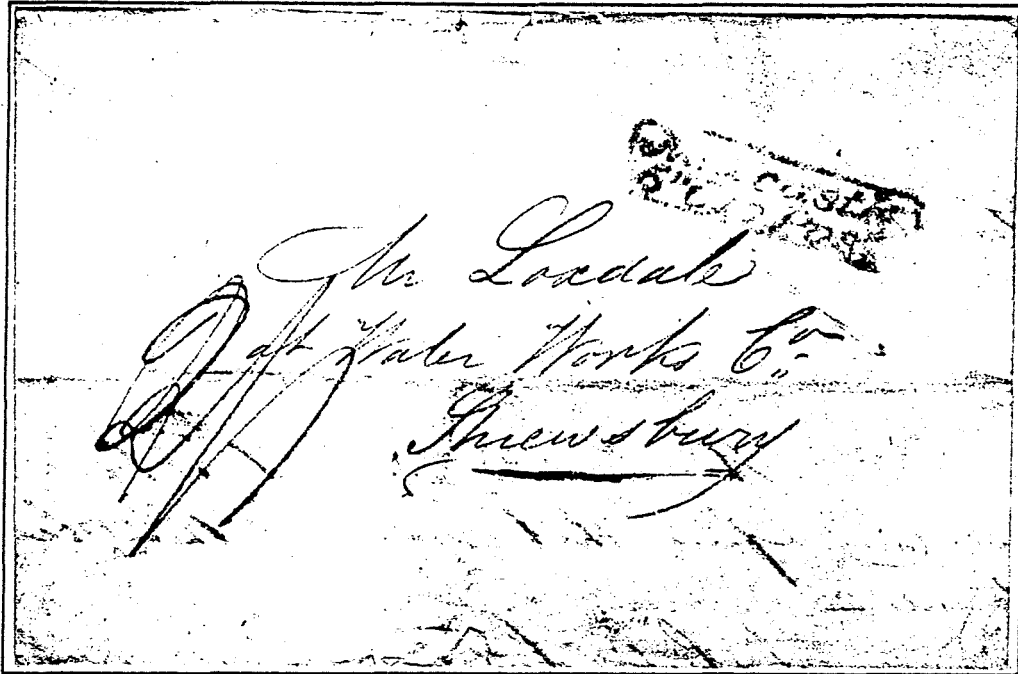
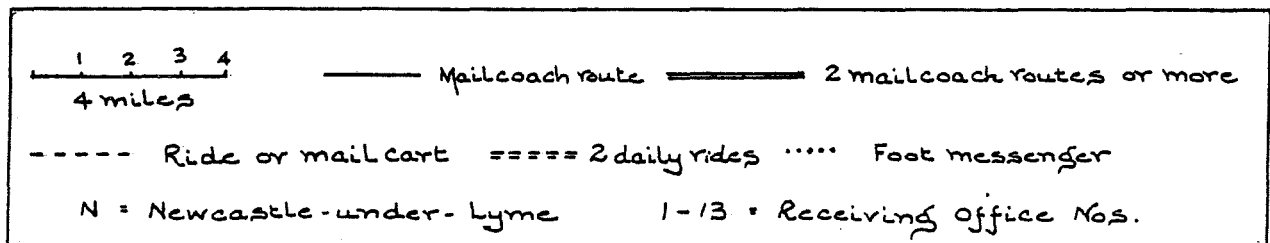
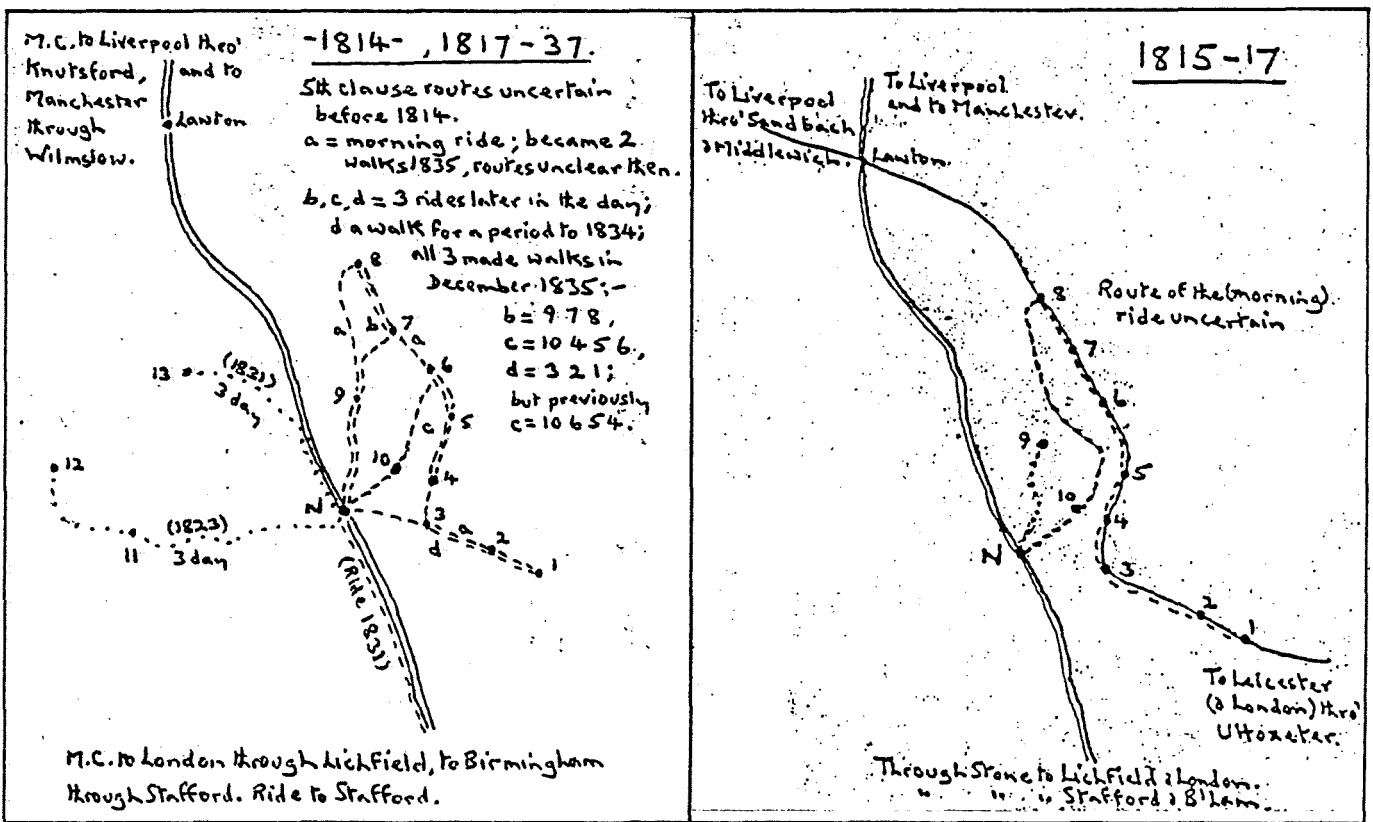


Figure 1. 1830 Oxley 5th Clause stamp Type FC7
not previously recorded for Newcastle.

In 1801, making use of the clause of that year's Postage Act empowering the PMG to 'collect or deliver letters to places not being Post Towns at such charges as are agreed with the inhabitants', the Potteries area negotiated the first official local post beyond the five chief cities of England. This continued as the largest and most profitable of 5th Clause Posts almost, if not quite, until the advent of Uniform Penny Postage in 1840. The charge, in the twice daily private post organized by the Newcastle Deputy before 1801, had been 2d a day for any number of letters received by any one 'house'; there had been no charge for sender or addressee to pay for outward letters, which meant there could be 'open boxes' at the Receiving Houses. That system was taken over, regularized and quickened as an official post, the only specified alteration being that '2d and 3d' was charged - presumably 3d if a house received letters twice in a day. It entailed detailed recording at Newcastle before inward mail could be forwarded to the R.O.s. This peculiar arrangement continued until 1815. Manufacturers and large users naturally resisted change other than speedier accommodation without additional charge!

Two mail coaches, the London-Liverpool (1785-1837) and the Birmingham-Manchester (1800-37), passed through Newcastle, which remained the Potteries' Post Town until 1854. Nothing could persuade the GPO to divert one through the populous industrial 'villages'. Despite expectation of damage to the viability of existing coaches, the Post Office, in 1815, negotiated to introduce a Leicester to Liverpool coach linking at Leicester with the Manchester to London route and passing right through the Potteries but not Newcastle. One condition was that the inhabitants accept a local charge of 1d a letter (regardless of the number of sheets) both inward and outward. Since 'open

boxes' remained, to indicate the reason for the 1d added to the General Post charge due from the addressee, for the first time anywhere '5th Clause' handstamps were introduced for use on unpaid outward letters. Newspapers and 'Franks' were always free in 5th Clause posts and competition was legally permissible, all in contrast with local Penny Posts. To avoid the expense of upgrading one or more of the ten Receiving Offices (all but Etruria and Longport on the line of the coach) and consequent compensation for the Newcastle Deputy, all ten were made R.O.s of Uttoxeter (Penny Post) and of Middlewich (5th Clause), as well as of Newcastle since one daily ride continued from there. Bags were made up for the R.O.s once daily at all three places. There was no Post Town on the new mail coach route between Uttoxeter and Warrington. Middlewich was allocated the additional duty because it had a capable person, as Lawton and Sandbach did not. The Leicester-Liverpool mail coach (2nd class) ran only from October 28/29th 1815 to April 5th 1817; due to lack of passengers and huge increases in the price of fodder, the contractors lost heavily and withdrew. The previous arrangements were then reinstated except that the 1815 agreement on charges and, with it, use of the handstamps continued thereafter.



From July 4th 1837, when the railway from Birmingham to Liverpool etc opened, a mail cart plied between Whitmore Station and Newcastle. No great changes were needed in arrangements for the local posts though an additional mail cart to Leek through Etruria, a ride to Lawton and another the next year to Trentham, which was made a Penny Post, provided extra work at Newcastle connecting places previously

on mail coach routes with the railway. One of the earlier Penny Post Receiving Offices, Madeley, itself had a convenient station but foot messengers served Betley and Audley as before. The GPO decided, in February 1839, to convert Newcastle's 5th Clause Post into Penny Posts, without consulting the inhabitants. Mail passing through Newcastle from the Potteries (only) continued to receive '5th Clause' strikes so perhaps the change could not be implemented by fiat and the matter was quietly dropped. Official local charges and the franking privilege ceased on January 10th 1840 and the ten former 5th Clause offices were quickly sent undated double arc stamps to replace their old office numbers on January 23rd.

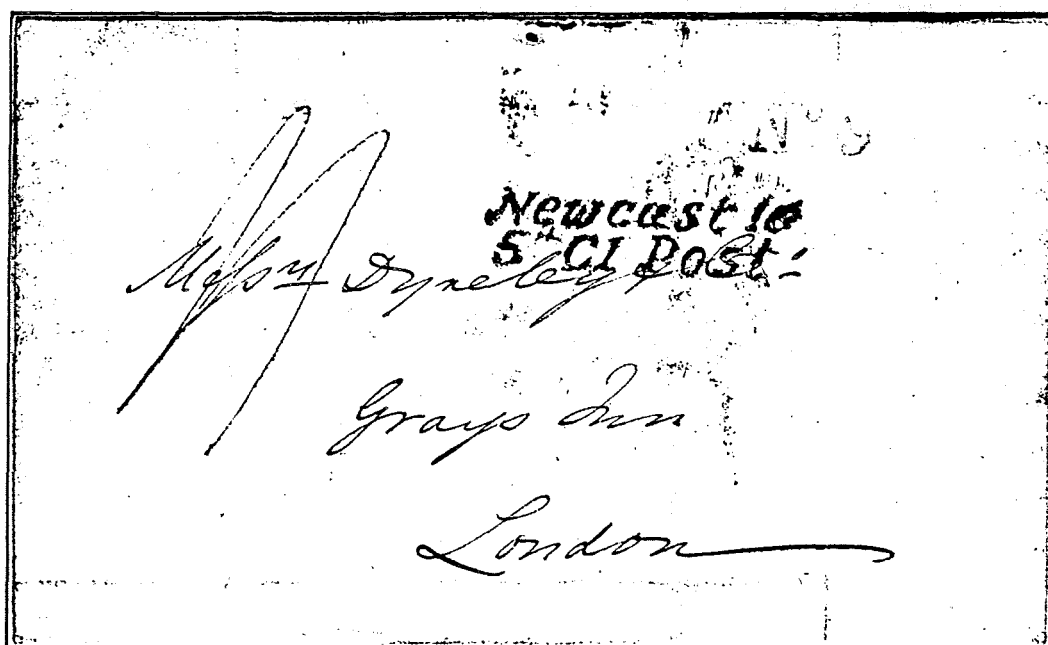
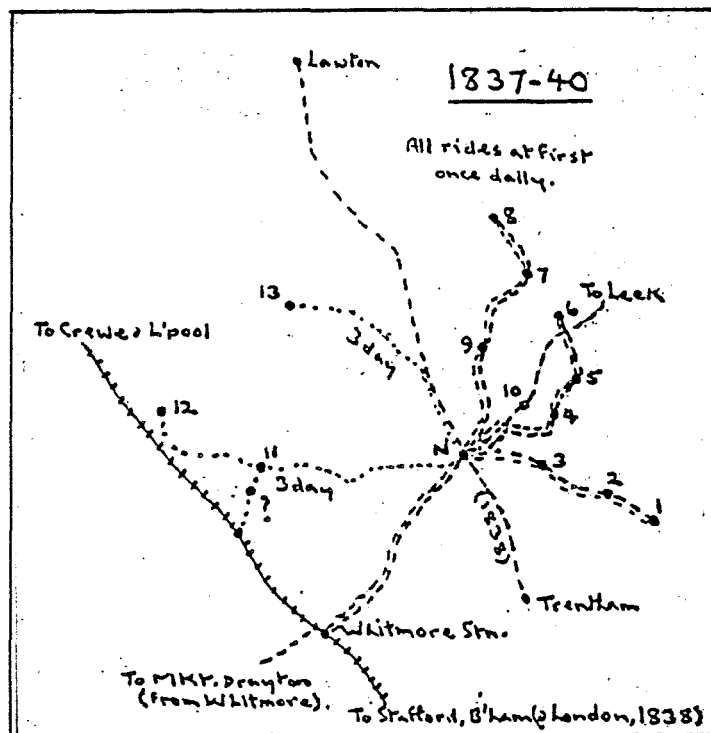


Figure 2. October 2nd 1838. Receiving Office No.9 in red (Oxley Type 14) for Longport and 5th Clause stamp (Type FC8) in black - the earliest example of this colour. 11d to be paid includes 5th Clause charge of 1d.

Oxley Updated

<u>Receiving Offices</u>	<u>Private Post</u>	<u>5th Clause Post</u>	<u>Penny Post</u>	<u>R.O. No.</u>
Lane End	Estd: 1790*	3.11.1801	Intended 2.1839	1.
Lane Delph	1796*	3.11.1801	"	2.
Stoke	1793*	3.11.1801	"	3.
Shelton	1793*	3.11.1801	"	4.
Hanley	1793*	3.11.1801	"	5.
Cobridge	1796*	3.11.1801	"	6.
Burslem	1793*	3.11.1801	"	7.
Tunstall	1793*	3.11.1801	"	8.
Longport		2.1814*	"	9.
Etruria		2.1814*	"	10.
Madeley (Footpost Tues, Thurs, Sat until 1837)+			1823	11.
Betley (Footpost Tues, Thurs, Sat continued to 1840)			1823	12.
Audley (Footpost, under guarantee, Tu, Th, Sat to 1840)			1831(Apr)	13.
Trentham (Horse post, under guarantee, prob. daily to '40)			1838	

N.B. * = in or before.

+ Continued as R.O. under Newcastle but possibly served from Madeley Station.

<u>Top line of stamp</u>	<u>Oxley type</u>	<u>In use from</u>	<u>to</u>	<u>Colour</u>	<u>Rarity</u>
Newcastle S	FC1	1816	1824	Red	Scarce
Newcastle	FC2	1825	1826	Orange	V.Scarce
		1827		Blue	Rare
		1827	1828	Orange (resumed)	
Newcastle	FC7	1829	1830	Orange	V.Rare
Newcastle S	FC2	1831	1835	Orange	Scarce
Newcastle	FC8	1835	1838	Orange	Scarce
		1838	1839	Black	Rare
Newcastle	2	1826	1830	Orange	Rare
		1839		Black	V.Rare

¢ No doubt blue used for a few months in 1827 but awaits discovery: orange to 1838.

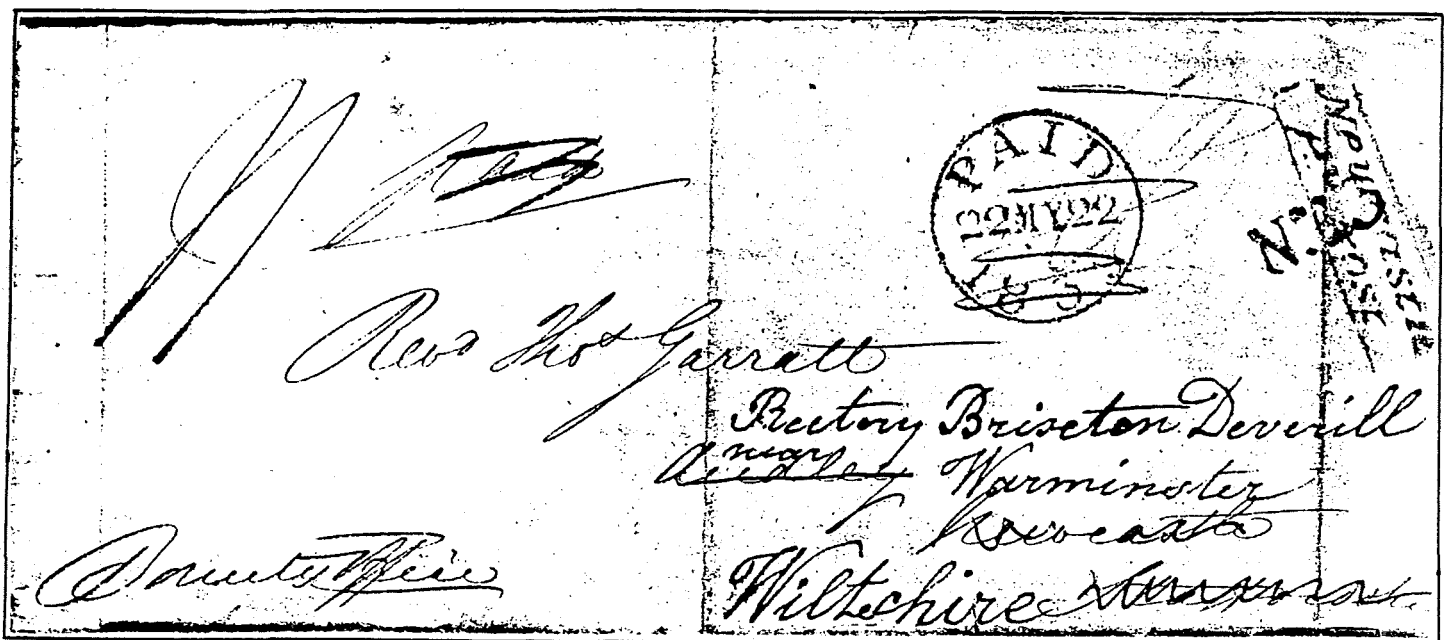


Figure 3. May 22nd 1839. Receiving Office No.13 (Oxley Type 14) for Audley and Penny Post stamp (Oxley Type 2) of Newcastle (neither previously recorded).

Sequence and Sources

- 1669 Newcastle on bye-mail route from the Chester Road at Stone to NW England. (PRO State Papers 29/263 - copy in PO Archives).
- 1734 Newcastle PO at Swan Inn. (Victoria County History of Staffordshire).
- 1771 Earliest record of name of Deputy Postmaster at Newcastle. (VCH and POR town files).
- 1782 Mail received and despatched 6 days a week. (PO list in Ogilby & Morgan Book of the Roads 1785).
- 1785 London-Liverpool mailcoach (MC), through Newcastle, established March 25th. (England 474K(1814) - List of MCs; copy in PO Archives).
- 1790 Earliest ref to a Potteries R.O. (Lane End) by 1790 (VCH).
- 1793 Newcastle after 6am, after 6pm → Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Lane End, all c7am, c7pm, Tunstall 9am, 8pm, Shelton 11am, 8pm. Shelton 1pm, 9pm, Tunstall 2pm, 9pm, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Lane End, all 3 to 4pm only → Newcastle. Earlier times 'North mail', later 'London' or 'South'. (Univ. Br. Directory 1793).
- 1796, 1801, 1808. Applications for MC through Potteries considered. (Post 42/20/276, 443; 12/320; 27/684).
- 1796, 1800* First names of the Receivers, their addresses and other occupations. 'Cross Post through the Potteries twice a day'. Each book includes times of only one MC so their (differing) post details earlier than following entries. (Chester & Mort, Staffordshire Pottery Directory 1796; Allbut, SPD '1802').
- 1800 Birmingham-Manchester MC, through Newcastle, established October 10th. (England 474K (1814)).
- 1801 Official Potteries posts established, under 5th Clause of 1801 Postage Act, November 3rd. (Post 42/20/275; 443, 569; Post 35/21/357; Post 40/31G).
- 1811 London mail arr. Newcastle 6.10pm, desp. 5.50am; arr. Burslem 8pm, desp. 10pm. (Paterson, Road Book 15th Edition, Preface and appendix; cf Cooke, Description of Staffordshire c1810).
- 1814 Routes specified and illustrated: one morning ride to Potteries but 3 evening rides. (Post 10A/11, Mr Godby's District).
- 1815 before changes. Morning ride carries letters from Manchester and Liverpool, evening rides from London. (Post 40/47 (1817)).
- 1815 Leicester-Liverpool MC established, serving Potteries with London and Liverpool letters, also with Birmingham and West letters via Burton ... Middlewich 1am, Burslem 4am, Uttoxeter 7.20am ...; ... Uttoxeter 4.45pm, Burslem 8.30pm, Middlewich 11.15pm. Bags made up at Middlewich and Uttoxeter, if as proposed for Burslem, Hanley, Stoke and Lane End. Morning ride from Newcastle to Potteries for letters from Manchester. All returns by same routes. (Post 42/32/48, 88, 90, 111; Post 40/170).
- 1816 Longport walk added. (Post 42/47 (1817) cf Post 42 index p745).
- 1817 Leicester-Liverpool MC abolished. Morning ride established for Liverpool as well as Manchester letters; 3 evening rides leaving Newcastle after despatch of MCs, to Lane End, Shelton and Tunstall, with London (? and Birmingham etc) letters; to wait to return by same specified routes until 10pm. Longport walk discontinued. (Post 40/6 and 47; Post 35/29/217, 248, 282).
- 1817 Allowance for a letter carrier to environs of Newcastle. (Post 42/33/14).
- 1818 'Cross Post twice a day'. Arr. at the Potteries 'from the North' 7.30pm, desp. 'early in the afternoon'; 'from the South' 3.45am, desp. 'late in evening'. (Parson and Bradshaw Staffordshire General & Commercial Directory 1818).
- 1823 Newcastle-Madeley-Betley walk established, 3 times a week. (Post 42/38/161).
- 1823* Birmingham-Liverpool MC operating. (Post 10A/16; cf later Directories cited).
- 1823 All Potteries routes apparently served by Footposts. 'Open boxes' and 1d 5th Clause charge outwards confirmed, as in 1815 and 1817 inward and outward. (Post 10A/16).
- 1828 Newcastle 6am, 2pm → Stoke 7.30am, 3pm, Lane End 8am, 4pm; Hanley, Shelton 9am, 3.30pm; Burslem 8am, 3pm, Tunstall 8am, 4pm. Tunstall 10am, 7.30pm, Burslem 10.15am, 7.45pm; Shelton, Hanley 10.15am, 9pm; Lane End 9.30am, 8pm, Stoke 10.30am, 9pm → Newcastle 11am, 9pm. Letters from Betley, Madeley, Keele 'arr. at Newcastle every night at 9pm, 'desp. every afternoon at 2pm (but was it daily in fact?). (Pigot National Commercial Directory 1828/29).

- 1829 Newcastle and Potteries mail rider armed. (Post 42/48/205).
- 1831 Newcastle-Audley walk established under guarantee, 3 times a week. (Post 42/53/414).
- 1831 Newcastle and Stafford ride established. (Post 42/53/142; 54/259).
- 1834 Foot-posts to Lane End, other Potteries route(s) horse-post. Birmingham letters arr. and desp. with 'North' letters. Times leave routes uncertain; the earlier are 'North', later 'South': Stoke arr 7am, 3.30pm, desp 10am, 8.30pm and 10pm; Fenton including Lane Delph 7.30am, 3pm; 8.30am, 8.30pm; Lane End and Longton 8am, 3.30pm; 9am, 8pm. Etruria, 'Included' under Hanley; Hanley 7.30am, 3.30pm; 9.30am, 8.30pm, Shelton 'As Hanley'; Cobridge, included under Burslem as is Longport; Burslem 7.15am, 3.30pm; 9.45am, 8.15pm; Tunstall 'As at Burslem', Newcastle-Betley as 1828; Newcastle to Audley arr 3pm, desp 5pm. (White, Directory of Staffordshire 1834).
- 1834 Newcastle-Lane End made horse-posts. Second delivery to Potteries with London and South letters made earlier, not waiting for arrival of MC from Manchester. (Post 42/61/410).
- 1835 Second ('Night Mail') Birmingham-Manchester MC. Newcastle 6am, 12 noon ➤ Potteries 7-8am, 1-2pm; Potteries 9-10am, 8-9pm ➤ Newcastle 11am, 9pm. Foot messengers to Betley and to Audley Tues, Thurs, Sat only. (Pigot, National Commercial Directory 1835).
- 1835 Three messengers (for letters from North) to Lane End, Cobridge, Tunstall. (Post 42/64/522. 1st Report of the Committee on Postage 1838, 508).
- 1837 On opening of railway, Stafford ride abolished, 2 morning rides and 3 footposts replaced by 3 evening 'saddle horses' to Lane End, Cobridge & Tunstall. Became twice daily, probably autumn 1838. (Post 35/40 No.1071X, 1092X; 41/No.304Y. 2nd Report of the Committee on Postage App.E., No.53; Map 3-11(1): Wilson TPO,
- 1837-8 All MCs through Newcastle abolished before March 1st 1838. [p.6,12. (Mail Coaches Report 1841).
- 1839 Decision to convert Newcastle's 5th Clause to Penny Posts. (Post 35/46/287; Post 35 Index 'Penny Posts' 1839).
- 1840 Official local posts ceased January 9th; embraced within uniform 'penny' General Post, 10th.

* * * * *

Send for a copy of my latest list of GB cover material from 1840 onwards. It contains a wide selection of interesting and unusual items - county material, difficult values and rates, from 1840 to date.

All 'Wants Lists' receive my personal attention.



ROGER HUDSON

36 WEST STREET

WARWICK CV34 6AN

Telephone: Warwick (0926) 492326

Subscriptions

There are still one or two subscriptions outstanding for the current season. If you are unsure whether you have or have not paid, please have a word with the Treasurer whose phone number is given on the front page.

The Cleobury Mortimer Postman

by C.W.E.Coles

Between 1931 and 1938, a series of books of broadcast talks and essays which had appeared in local papers were published by Heath Cranton under the titles -

Round About the Crooked Steeple (1931)

At Abdon Burf (1932)

More Tales from Round About the Crooked Steeple (1935)

Shropshire Days and Shropshire Ways (1938)

The author, Simon Evans, was brought up in Manchester. He had been gassed in the First World War and wanted to live in the country for the benefit of his health. In his first book he writes "A rural postman was required in South Shropshire. His headquarters would be the old village of Cleobury Mortimer and his 'round' was the Rea Valley. Now I am that postman and I walk the Valley of the Rea from Walfords Bridge to Dudlick Mill."

His books give a vivid picture of rural life in and around Cleobury Mortimer between the Wars. In his first and third books, he writes about his life as a rural postman in sufficient detail to enable one to trace his 'walk' on a map and the description is best given in his own words:-

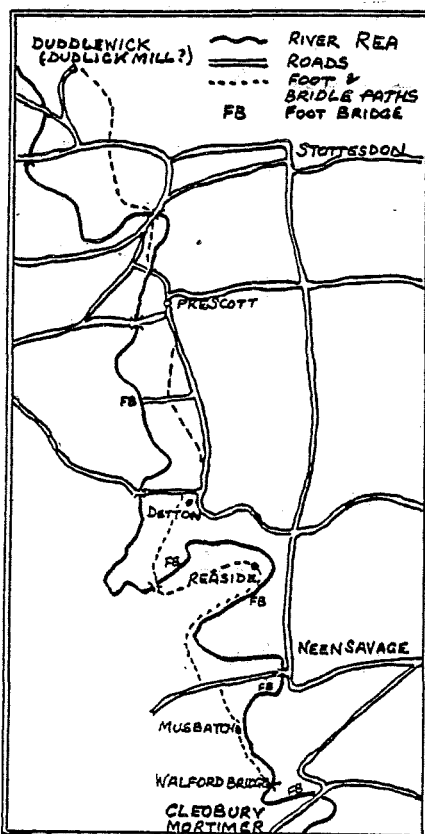
From 'Round About the Crooked Steeple'

"The local grocer is also the local postmaster, and soon after six o'clock each morning in the little room adjoining his store, my comrades and I prepare our day's work.

The nature of the country with its hills and dales, the winding River Rea with its many tributaries, and the position of the farmhouses are all reasons why the postmen of this district perform the whole of their duty on foot.

My outward journey is one of about twelve miles, but my calling places are few, for the Valley of the Rea (my round) is made up, for the most part, of large stock farms. My load is never a big one, ten or a dozen daily papers and a bundle of letters is my usual share.

The village and most of its inhabitants still sleep when I begin my walk by climbing School Hill. From its height I see the village below me nestling half in and half out of the Valley. A few minutes walk from the village brings me to a point where I leave the road and take to the foot-paths ... Now I climb a broken stile and push through Musbatch Coppice to reach the mile-long path to Reaside Farm... and three hours' march to dinner. About this hour of the morning my time-table allows a few minutes for a hasty lunch... At Detton Farm, old Moses Cadwallader gives me a shout of welcome... In Harcourt Dingle, a mile or so nearer my journey's end I find that Boswell, the gipsy, has pitched his camp. His letters I must read at least four times and perhaps write his reply also... After climbing Prescott Bank



SCALE 1 MILE = 1 1/4 INCHES

I like to lean upon the gate and rest awhile... At White Mill farm my journey ends, here I lunch. After a rough but wholesome meal I make my way to the true end of my journey. Half-a-mile away, near the roadside, my distant masters have provided me with a hut which may be called a Post Office until three o'clock, here I am sometimes called upon to sell a postage stamp or I may be given an order for a gun licence... Promptly at three o'clock I begin my return walk. At various points my whistle is brought into use, a warning to the few farmers and cottagers that His Majesty's Royal Mail is about to pass their way. Now I can brook no delay, I collect their few letters... and on I go, for the Mail leaves the old-world village from where I began my journey more promptly than it arrives.

In the space of four years I have walked the Valley of the Rea more than twelve hundred times; not the whole long length of the River but from the old stone bridge below the village to Dudlick Mill (Duddlewick?), maybe six miles as the crow flies, but twelve miles if you follow the twists and turns of those winding waters... In this twelve mile length of the River there are six narrow hump-backed stone bridges over which only one vehicle can cross at a time. There are eight footbridges, narrow wooden structures, so narrow that they are problems for stout men.... I am the postman of the Valley and can count many friends among the scattered population; not least among my friends I name, the 'River'."

And, from 'Shropshire Days and Shropshire Ways'

"While I'm on my walk I sell stamps, postal orders, several kinds of licences; I accept registered letters; in fact, I'm a kind of travelling post office!

I don't think our fellows find eighteen miles a day a great strain; I don't, its just enough. Weight - that's the trouble. Walking's easy if you travel light. Parcels up to fifteen pounds are accepted now; a few of these and you know about it. We're not expected to carry more than thirty-five pounds, but a little less than that for the best part of eighteen miles isn't a picnic.

For more than ten years I have been walking in the valley of the Rea... Now all that is over. Now it has been decreed that I must walk, not up the valley of the Rea, but down the valley I must go, southwards of Cleobury Mortimer. After making allowances for sick leave and holidays, I believe I have walked more than 75,000 miles in and about the valley of the Rea, and now I must leave the valley; my walk is no more. That hideous contraption, that collection of odds and ends, that horrible invention of man, a motor-cycle combination has arrived, and it fills the valley with its infernal chattering. I must make way for an assortment of metal and rubber, a spluttering, wheezy engine on two wheels - and this they say is progress... I shall often think of my old 'walk' in the valley. It has been struck off official lists.....(but) it is still there.

* * * * *

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THE SHIFNAL & IRONBRIDGE PENNY POSTS

By Denis Salt



Part Two

Editor's Note: The first part of this article, which has been adapted by the Author from one published in the final number of 'The British Mailcoach', appeared in 'Midland Mail' Number 37.

In January 1837 approval was given to making Madeley a Penny Post Receiving House, served by the messenger from Ironbridge (7). No stamp appears to have been issued to Madeley at this time but, on 15 February 1838, undated circular stamps with twin arcs were issued to the following offices to replace the boxed receiving house numbers where these had been previously used (9):

IRON-BRIDGE (Fig.12) BROSELEY (Fig.14)
MADELEY (Fig.13) WENLOCK (Fig.15)



Fig. 12.



Fig. 13.



Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.



Fig. 16.

On 3 March 1838 approval was given to Ironbridge being made a Post Town and effect was given to this at the end of March or beginning of April (8). From then onwards Ironbridge had a Penny Post in its own right, with Receiving Houses at Wenlock and Broseley. The Shifnal Penny Post appears to have continued but with a Receiving House at Madeley only until Dawley Green also became a Receiving House for Shifnal in August 1838 (see below). The Postmaster General was at pains to point out to the inhabitants that, by making Ironbridge a Post Town, the minimum General Post rate of 2d would apply to single letters between Ironbridge and Shifnal, instead of the former rate of 1d, and in some cases an increase in the higher General Post rates could also result.

On 21 March 1838 Ironbridge was issued with a new undated circular stamp similar to that issued on 15 February 1838 but with the name spelt as one word without any hyphen (9)(Fig.16). This second stamp was presumably required to meet the increased volume of business now that Ironbridge had post town status. Both the undated circular stamps continued in use until Ironbridge received its first circular date stamp on 4 January 1840. Also, on 21 March 1838, Ironbridge was issued with a new 'Ironbridge/Penny Post' stamp (Oxley Type 5: Fig.17)(9), probably to replace the boxed 'Iron Bridge/Penny Post' stamp which was showing signs of wear.

*Ironbridge
Penny Post*

Fig. 17.

*Dawley Green
Penny Post*

Fig. 18.

Prior to November 1834 the Shifnal Penny Post stamps had been struck on outgoing mail only, as mentioned previously. On the other hand, Ironbridge Penny Post stamps were struck on incoming as well as outgoing mail from the first and, later, Shifnal Penny Post stamps were also struck on incoming mail. Probably both Shifnal and Ironbridge intended to strike their Penny Post stamps on incoming mail from the time when the stamp was first issued to Ironbridge, the object being to help the messenger

who collected the pennies on delivery of the letters to account for them correctly between the offices at Shifnal and Ironbridge.

In April 1838 an application was made for the extension of the Penny Post to Dawley but this does not appear to have been granted (10). But in August 1838 approval was given to establish a Penny Post to Dawley Green with a messenger from Madeley (11) and a 'Dawley Green/Penny Post' stamp (Fig.18 on the previous page) was issued on 15 November 1839 (9). However this was only seven weeks before the introduction of Uniform Penny Post on 10 January 1840 and the stamp is very rare used before that date. It continued to be used after 10 January 1840 but had no significance beyond that of a village mark. The introduction of Uniform Penny Post meant the integration of the Penny Posts into the General Post but the existing Penny Post stamps continued to be used for some years as village marks.



Church Street, Shifnal - the site of the Receiving House - as it is today.

References are given at the end of this article to the authorities for facts stated and an Appendix giving particulars of all Penny Post stamps recorded has also been included. Readers are asked to note that many illustrations in this and the previous part of the article have necessarily been reproduced at a reduced size.



From 1828 to 1834, the Receiving House at Wenlock was in Barrow Street.

References:

- (1) Ralph Allen's Own Narrative, pages 29/30 and Appendix 2. (The Postal History Society, Special Series No.8).
- (2) "A History of Shrewsbury" by Owen & Blakeway, Vol.1, page 519.
- (3) "The Universal British Directory", 1790 (by Peter Barfoot & John Wilkes) gives the times of the posts at Shifnal and Wenlock. The List of the Principal Post Towns and sub-Post Towns, with their Receiving Houses, by John Cary, dated 1 January 1793, gives Shifnal (sic) as a Post Town with Receiving Houses at Wenlock, Broseley and Madeley Wood.
- (4) 5 George III, Cap 25, Sect 11.
- (5) PO Archives, Post 40, Report No.16C/1806.
- (6) "Salopian Journal and Courier of Wales" dated 19 November 1834.
- (7) PO Archives, Post 35, Vol.40, page 154, No.324X.

- (8) PO Archives, Post 35, Vol.42, Nos. 1072Z and 1073Z.
- (9) PO Archives, Stamp Impression Books.
- (10) PO Archives, Post 35, Vol.43, page 215, No.402AA.
- (11) PO Archives, Post 35, Vol.48, page 313, No.493FF.



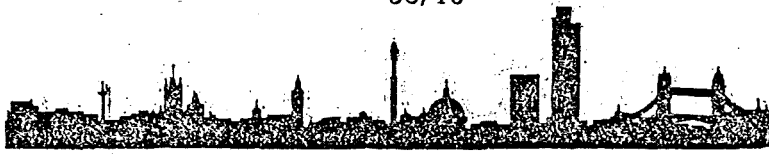
In 1828, the post office at Ironbridge was stated to be "kept by Mr Smith, Bookseller, Market Place" and the same Mr Smith was probably postmaster in 1840. The present post office is in what is now known as The Square and may be very close to the original site.

APPENDIX

Particulars of Penny Post stamps recorded

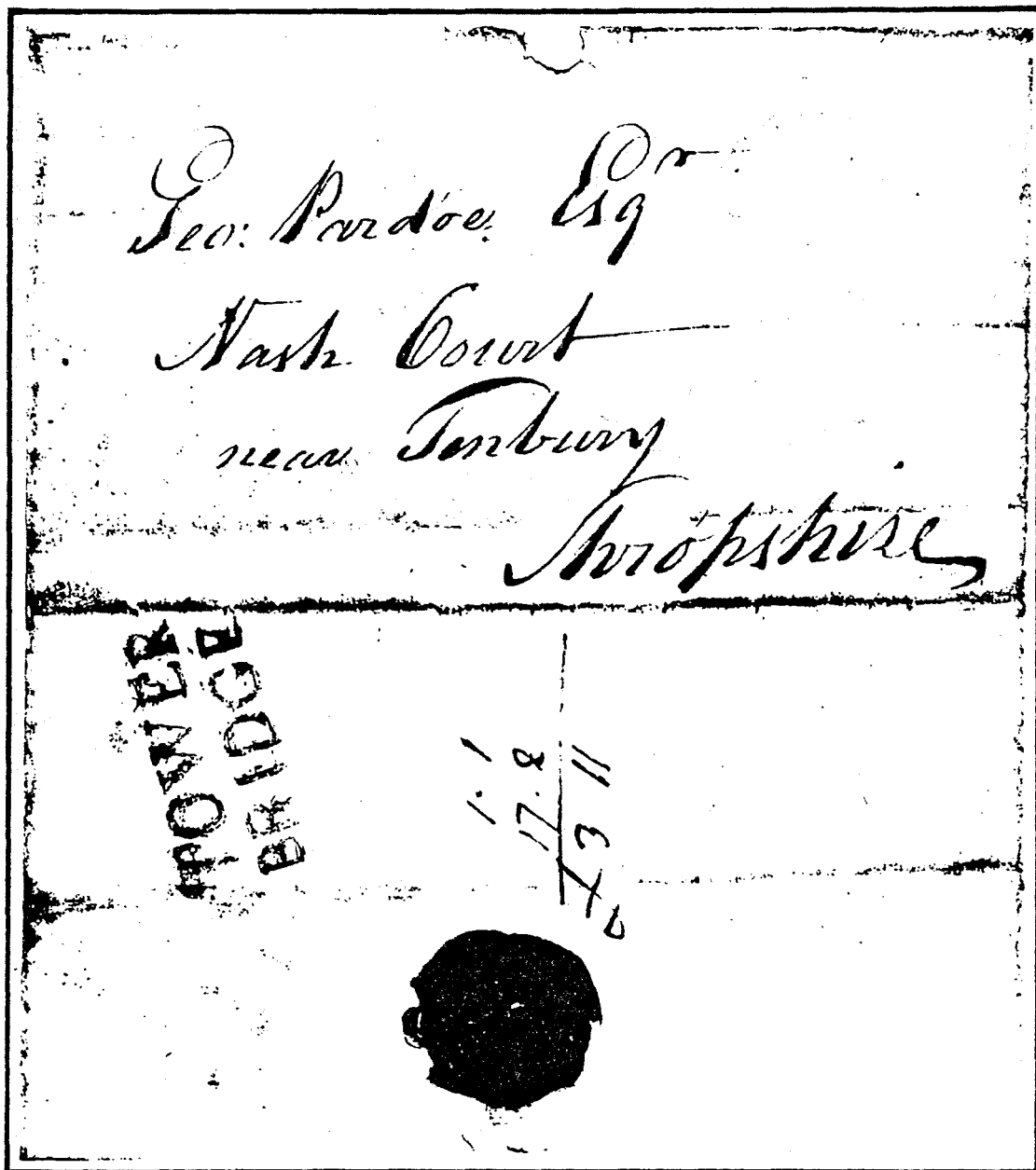
6 October 1806 to August 1811 } None were used, but Receiving Houses had their own stamps.
No Penny Post charges were marked on letters, as the 1d. was paid to the Receiver on *despatch*.

<i>Dates Recorded</i>	<i>Type of Stamp</i>	<i>Oxley Type</i>	<i>Colour</i>
February 1812 to September 1826 }	"SHIFFNALL/Penny Post"	1	Red-brown or Orange
Nov.-Dec. 1826	"Shiffnal/Py. Post" (boxed)	2	Red
March 1827 to November 1830 }	"Shiffnal/Py. Post" (boxed)	2	Blue
May 1831	"Shiffnal/Penny Post" (boxed)	3	Blue
October 1831 to June 1832 }	"Shiffnal/Py. Post" (boxed)	2	Yellow
August 1832	"Shiffnal/Penny Post" (boxed)	3	Yellow
November 1832 to January 1838 }	"Shiffnal/Py. Post" (boxed)	2	Red-brown or Red
March 1838	"Shiffnal/Py. Post" (boxed)	2	Black
December 1834 to January 1838 }	"Iron Bridge/Penny Post" (boxed)	3	Black
July 1838 to December 1839 }	"Ironbridge/Penny Post"	5	Black
5 December 1839 to 9 January 1840 }	Uniform 4d. Post period. The use of the "Ironbridge/Penny Post" stamp appears to have been replaced by the Ironbridge undated circular town stamp. One exception has been seen, namely a local letter to Willey Park (Broseley) dated 5 January 1840, which has both Ironbridge undated circular and Ironbridge Penny Post stamps on it.		



Handstruck at
Tower Bridge

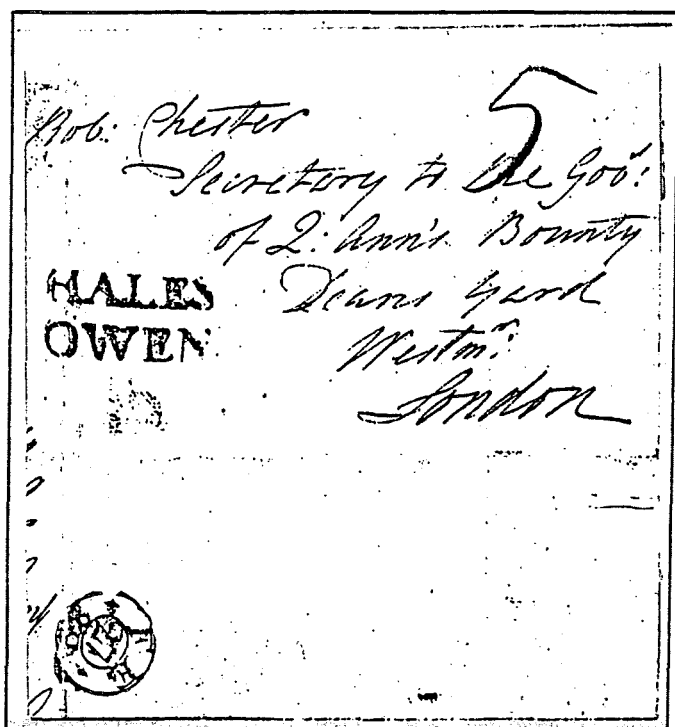
Eric and Elizabeth Lewis have submitted an illustration of a cover, reproduced below, which has recently been lent to them. They hope to solicit your ideas about its approximate date and the purpose of the 'Tower Bridge' mark. The Editor has promised to publish a synopsis of the replies in the next 'Midland Mail' and, as all obvious sources have already been tapped, as many novel ideas as possible are sought in the hope that a consensus may solve the mystery. Please make sure your idea is amongst them



HALESOWEN and its posts.

by Denis Salt

Until 1844, when it was ceded to Worcestershire, Halesowen formed part of Shropshire, though detached from, and about 12 miles from, the main part of the County. John Cary in his List of Post Towns, Sub-Post Towns and Receiving Houses dated 1st January 1793, shows Hales Owen as a Sub-Post Town, and it was under Birmingham. In a letter dated 30th September 1793 from Francis Freeling to the PMGs, Freeling states categorically that Halesowen "was never a Post Town, but always in the delivery of Birmingham, the letters being charged upon that Office, and many years since the then Postmasters General were pleased to allow £20 per year to enable the Postmaster of Birmingham to deliver the letters to that place." (PO Archives, Post 42 Vol 5 p84/85).



A letter dated 26th February 1789 from Halesowen to London is illustrated here. It will be seen that this letter has a two-line HALES/OWEN stamp and reached London on 27th February 1789. This is the earliest town stamp of Halesowen seen by the writer, though earlier ones may well have existed as it appears from Freeling's letter quoted above that the service from Birmingham had existed for many years.

The Birmingham Penny Post was established on 27 August 1793 and Halesowen was among the seven places outside the City where it was proposed to establish a Receiving Office. But the inhabitants objected strongly at being required to pay an extra Penny for every letter and newspaper delivered, and for each item despatched, and Mr Male as Chairman of the Meeting of the Inhabitants wrote a letter accordingly

on 25th September 1793. (PO Archives, Report No.220C/1793). Previously the Sub-Deputy at Halesowen had employed a Messenger to fetch the post from Birmingham daily and ½d was charged for the delivery of each item. A lengthy correspondence then ensued and, in November 1793, the Postmasters General decided to drop the Penny Post and restore the former arrangement, which appears to have continued until the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage on 10th January 1840. The Post Office appears to have been normally (but not always) at the Lyttelton Arms inn at Halesowen.

This item is included by kind permission of 'Shropshire Post' where it first appeared in issue No.12 of July 1984.

MICHAEL A. HARRIS, P.T.S., B.P.F.
PHILATELIST

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It could be a street corner in Leamington or Leominster.
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pillar boxes are evidence of early links between the
English and Portuguese postal authorities.

The Next 'Midland Mail'

The next issue of 'Midland Mail' is due to appear on 12th March. Look out for important - nay, momentous - news of The Great UDC Exercise which has had your County Editors burning the midnight oil for months past. On the same theme, look out too for illustrations of some very unusual covers with more undated circular hand-stamps. If Andrew Watton (the Machin man) can find a spare moment before he becomes a father and has no spare moments, we might learn something of the mysteries of Bengeworth, Worcestershire, and if you thought de-acidification was a cure for tummy upsets or the Truck Act a form of road transport bill, you could have your horizons widened. Its all explained in 'Midland Mail' - the horizon-widening bulletin of the Midland (GB) Postal History Society.

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