

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

President: Derek Smeathers

Chairman:
Paul Bradshaw FRPSL
(01604 586282)

Treasurer:
Eric Lewis
(0121 4291222)

Secretary:
Mick Gill
(01636 672868)

Programme Secretary: Richard Farman (01283 566515)

Number 160, June 2009

The observant will have noticed that we have a new Treasurer, an appointment which was ratified at the AGM. The Society is greatly indebted to Eric Lewis for covering this post during the last few months. Eric fully deserves the Honorary Life Membership which was granted at the AGM

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Roy Summers who has been awarded an ABPS Certificate of Merit after being nominated by the Midland Philatelic Federation. Roy was the secretary of the Womborne Philatelic Society for thirteen years and treasurer for eight years. In addition to giving many displays around the Midlands he has done a lot of work for the Czechoslovak Society as well as producing the book on the postal history of Wolverhampton.

INDEX to MIDLAND MAIL, ISSUES 1 to 150.

This is now available and comes in the form of 14 unbound pages on high quality paper. The cost to members is £1 if collected at a meeting. It is available from the Editor by post at a cost of £1.50 if sent in an ordinary A4 envelope but £2 if sent in a card backed envelope. It will of course be available at Midpex, so come along and pick up a copy there.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

On 19th - 20th June the Stafford Stamp Show 2009 will be held at the Staffordshire Showground, Weston Road, Stafford ST18 0BD. This event which is being held in conjunction with the Midland Philatelic Federation's Spring Convention & Inter-Society Competitions will be attended by 50+ dealers on both days. The times of opening are Friday - 11am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm.

Midpex 2009 will be held on 11th July from 10am to 5pm at the Xcel Leisure Centre, Canley CV4 8DY. A leaflet giving full details should be enclosed with this issue. Please note that there will be a shuttle bus operating between the venue and Canley station. The Society will have a stand so do pay it a visit.

Please make a note in your diaries that we will hold an all day meeting at Northampton on Saturday 12th September. Also note that this is a different date from that given in the 2008-2009 programme. The change has been made so as to avoid a clash with Autumn Stampex. Full details of that meeting and the rest of the programme will be distributed with the next issue which is scheduled to appear in early August. There is a need for more articles for MM161 which should be sent to:

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

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND AUCTION

The Annual General Meeting was held on 25th April at St Germain's Church Hall. After the usual preliminaries had been completed our Chairman reported that, thanks to Richard Farman, we had enjoyed an excellent and varied programme in the last year. He thanked all those who had brought material along so making the meetings very successful. Paul also thanked the committee for all their hard work. He reported that the Rules of the Society needed to be brought up to date and that was being worked on, and that a proposal would be put to the next committee meeting and then next year's AGM.

Our Acting Treasurer distributed copies of the balance sheet for the year ending 31st March 2009. There was an excess of income over expenditure of £468.26 compared with £644.98 in 2008. This was due largely to a reduction in income caused by lower commission from the Annual Auction, reduced interest from the building society account and less income from the sale of books and maps. The only significant increase in expenditure was the cost of producing and distributing Midland Mail (up by £50). He proposed that the subscriptions remain at £10. Eric was thanked for so ably stepping in as Treasurer.

The Editor of Midland Mail said that there had been as usual five copies of Midland Mail in the last year with some pages in colour, a feature which he hoped to continue. At the last AGM the possibility of reducing the number of issues to four each year but with more pages in each issue had been raised. It had been found that there was nothing to be gained by this so five issues would be published each year. He thanked all those who had contributed articles but especially John Calladine and Alan Marshall and went on to say that Eric and Sharon put a tremendous amount of effort into getting Midland Mail printed and put into the post. He pointed out that he had held this position now for twenty-three years and that he intended to resign in two years time so as to allow someone with fresh ideas to take over. Finally, he announced that the Jon Baker trophy awarded to Alan Marshall for his article on early Nottingham postmarks.

Our Publications Manager reminded the County Editors that if we were to have the updated version of the County Catalogue ready for London 2010, then it was essential that the data for each county was submitted as soon as possible. There was little remaining stock of books and maps.

Alan Godfrey, our ABPS representative, said that an ABPS Award of Merit had been given to one of our members, Roy Summers. Kenilworth would be the venue of the 2010 Congress. In some ways the last twelve months had been a difficult year but few societies had resigned when the affiliation fee had been raised from 60p to £1 per member. This had helped to put the Association on a sounder financial footing.

We then came to the election of officers. Eric Lewis was elected as Treasurer; all the other officers were re-elected. Alan Godfrey was appointed as Examiner of Accounts.

In proposing that Honorary Life Membership be awarded to Eric Lewis, Paul Bradshaw said that together Eric and Elizabeth had provided the rock on which the success of the Society had been forged. All those present were very much in favour of this proposal.

Richard Farman then outlined the programme for next year. Full details will be circulated with the next Midland Mail.

Under the heading of Any Other Business, the Secretary reported that he had written to Mrs Hardwick asking her to thank David for all his work on behalf of the Society. This had been much appreciated.

The AGM closed at 1.23 pm, so giving a short break before we proceeded to the Annual Auction, the results of which appear below. Total sales came to about £6100 and over 91% of the lots were sold. It is doubtful if many societies manage to achieve such a high percentage in their auctions.

A	10.00	B	7.00	C	1.00	D	3.00	E	5.00	F	30.00
G	3.00	H	7.50	J	16.00	K	1.00	L	10.00	M	1.00
N	6.00	O	10.00	P	5.50	Q	3.00	R	1.00	T	7.00
U	5.00	V	7.50								
1	220.00	2	110.00	3	30.00	4	65.00	6	32.00	7	16.00
8	16.00	9	4.00	12	75.00	13	46.00	14	380.00	15	8.00
17	5.00	18	15.00	19	22.0	20	18.00	21	17.00	23	26.00
24	7.00	25	10.00	26	10.00	27	4.00	28	8.50	29	3.50

30	9.00	31	9.00	32	4.00	33	5.00	34	4.00	35	28.00
36	14.00	37	8.50	38	9.00	39	24.00	42	10.00	43	7.00
44	7.00	46	9.50	47	12.00	49	9.00	50	7.50	51	4.50
52	7.00	53	14.00	54	4.00	56	11.00	57	5.00	58	7.50
59	11.00	61	4.00	62	18.00	63	13.00	64	6.50	65	15.00
66	12.00	67	15.00	69	24.00	70	15.00	71	13.00	72	12.00
73	19.00	74	14.00	75	17.00	76	5.00	77	9.00	78	7.50
79	11.00	81	4.00	82	20.00	83	9.00	85	7.00	87	7.00
88	75.00	89	28.00	90	10.00	91	13.00	92	15.00	93	7.00
94	10.00	95	9.00	96	22.00	97	13.00	98	7.00	99	6.00
100	11.00	101	9.50	102	3.00	103	3.00	104	3.00	105	4.50
106	5.00	107	36.00	108	11.00	109	5.50	110	9.00	111	6.00
112	10.00	113	7.00	114	12.00	115	11.00	116	8.00	117	7.50
118	10.00	119	10.00	120	8.50	121	5.00	122	16.00	124	10.00
125	9.00	126	32.00	127	12.00	128	6.50	129	17.00	130	11.00
131	3.50	132	7.00	133	17.00	134	7.50	135	12.00	136	6.50
137	26.00	138	22.00	140	5.00	141	24.00	142	8.00	143	12.00
144	34.00	145	36.00	146	22.00	147	18.00	148	8.50	149	7.50
150	3.00	151	12.00	152	9.00	155	6.50	156	26.00	157	5.00
158	3.00	159	7.00	160	12.00	161	7.50	162	15.00	163	3.00
164	7.00	165	22.00	166	13.00	167	9.00	168	8.00	169	24.00
170	9.00	171	6.00	172	3.50	173	9.50	174	17.00	175	3.50
176	9.00	177	28.00	178	15.00	179	38.00	180	15.00	181	4.50
182	8.00	183	7.50	184	17.00	185	3.50	186	6.00	187	22.00
188	4.50	189	6.50	190	5.00	191	8.00	192	5.50	193	8.50
194	13.00	196	4.00	197	12.00	198	12.00	199	26.00	200	14.00
201	38.00	202	11.00	203	48.00	204	22.00	205	12.00	206	11.00
207	6.50	208	16.00	209	13.00	210	3.00	211	10.00	212	3.00
213	3.00	214	3.00	215	7.00	216	14.00	217	9.00	218	10.00
219	3.00	221	5.50	222	3.00	224	3.00	227	8.50	228	8.50
229	28.00	230	7.00	231	11.00	232	5.00	233	6.00	234	4.50
235	11.00	236	160	237	12.00	238	6.50	239	2.00	240	28.00
241	16.00	242	7.00	243	50.00	244	32.00	245	24.00	246	40.00
247	28.00	248	32.00	249	26.00	250	16.00	251	13.00	252	3.00
253	3.00	254	16.00	255	18.00	256	12.00	257	5.50	258	9.50
259	13.00	260	10.00	261	2.00	262	5.50	263	4.00	264	6.00
265	6.00	267	5.00	268	6.50	269	26.00	270	7.50	271	7.50
272	7.00	273	13.00	274	6.50	275	15.00	276	9.00	277	16.00
278	9.00	279	16.00	280	13.00	281	10.00	282	18.00	283	15.00
284	32.00	285	28.00	286	9.50	287	9.50	288	16.00	289	42.00
290	16.00	291	24.00	292	16.00	293	20.00	294	28.00	295	20.00
296	15.00	297	30.00	298	34.00	299	6.00	300	22.00	301	10.00
302	17.00	303	12.00	304	13.00	305	9.50	306	3.00	307	3.00
308	26.00	309	22.00	310	12.00	311	20.00	312	15.00	313	16.00
314	7.50	315	4.50	316	3.00	317	6.50	319	9.50	320	4.50
321	7.50	322	6.00	323	12.00	324	12.00	325	6.50	326	6.50
327	5.00	328	8.00	329	5.00	330	15.00	331	20.00	332	22.00
333	20.00	334	9.00	335	26.00	336	20.00	337	2.00	338	24.00
339	60.00	340	12.00	341	17.00	343	9.50	344	11.00	345	9.00
346	6.50	347	34.00	348	9.00	349	8.00	350	3.00	352	22.00
353	38.00	354	5.00	355	22.00	356	10.00	357	22.00	359	13.00
360	18.00	361	3.00	362	7.50	363	13.00	364	3.00	365	32.00
366	36.00	367	22.00	368	3.00	369	3.00	371	3.50	373	3.00
374	6.00	375	9.00	376	42.00	377	5.00	378	5.00	379	5.00
380	7.00	381	4.00	382	28.00	383	13.00	384	7.50	385	30.00
386	32.00	387	13.00	388	26.00	389	10.00	390	12.00	391	4.00
393	5.00	394	32.00	395	30.00	396	12.00	397	36.00	398	44.00
399	32.00	400	26.00	401	50.00	404	6.00	407	8.50		

THE MAY MEETING

There was a slightly smaller attendance on 9th May than is usual for the meeting at Worcester held in conjunction with the fair organised by the Worcester Philatelic Society. However, as our cChairman commented at the end one is amazed at the range and quality of material produced at these meetings. In this case the material consisted of '*Recent Acquisitions*'. Sadie Cole began the proceedings with two delightful stamp boxes. One was made in 1904 by Grisford & Norris of Birmingham; the other featured R.M.S. Canopic of the White Star Line.

There was the usual eclectic display that we have come to expect from Eric Lewis whose first items were on the postmark of Greenhill Lane that did not show the post town. (See MM155/16). Then came a cover on which the adhesives contained seven colours and which is illustrated on the next page. We also saw a 1\$ stamp of Montserrat which featured Stanley Gibbons and Charles Phillips who founded the Birmingham Philatelic Society and who purchased Gibbons' business in 1890. Eric ended with a display of all the types of stamp produced by the National Telephone Company.

A receipt for a registered letter sent from Lydney, obtained for a small sum on e-Bay was Colin Fountain's first item. He then showed a two-line mark of Northleach from 1775 which was followed by a letter of 1835 from Upton-on-Severn showing a straight-line mark of Tewkesbury in red along with a manuscript 'py Post'. Among other items of interest were two different handstamps 'GLOUCESTER/111' from 1809 and 1813; an unrecorded Tetbury mileage removed mark from 1830; an unrecorded three-line 'WOTTON/UNDER/EDGE' from the early 1760s; and a rubber skeleton of Cranham used in November 1906.

Alan Godfrey produced a large number of parcel post labels from a range of villages in Warwickshire, the adhesives producing a colourful display. The adhesives on a label from Wootton Wawen were cancelled with a Birmingham roller cancel. We also saw labels from sub-offices of Coventry, Leamington, Rugby, Shipston-on-Stour, Stratford and Warwick. Alan ended with sent from Manchester in January showing the mark with wavy lines under the name produced by a trial machine.

'Newly mounted' was Chris Jackson's description of his material. However, the first item a letter sent in 1719 from Lichfield to Worcester via London. A charge of '4' was crossed out and replaced by 'in all 8'. Next came a 'BROOMS/GROVE' of 1772 on a letter to London. Mileage marks of Stourport in 1812 showed the '3' of '134' with rounded and flat tops. Chris then went on to show us a number of UDCs such as Hartlebury, holt, Dumbleton, Birlingham (the only known copy in red ink), Cropthorne in blue ink and Wyre Piddle used on 19th June 1854.

John Soer began with a traveller of Ashby-de-la-Zouch from 1840 which was followed by a number of UDCs such as Seagrave (usage previously unrecorded), Earl Shilton (previously unrecorded in red ink), Burbage (usage previously unrecorded). John compared these to London buses. He finished with two covers sent from this country through Belgium to Sweden and Holstein.

Alan Marshall began with a number of covers illustrating the 'Late Fee' system. These included a letter of 1807 sent from London to Nottingham which showed the rectangular datestamp applied to such letters, and one sent in 1840 from Nottingham to Leicester. A letter sent in 1814 from Nottingham to Bolzano and with a manuscript 'Patterns only' had an initial charge of 1s 6d increased to 3s 4d. A Bishopmark DE/24 was to be seen on a letter sent from Nottingham to London in 1679. Alan ended with two skeletons - 'DERBY/5' from 1847 and 'LOWDHAM/NOTTINGHAM' from September 1926.

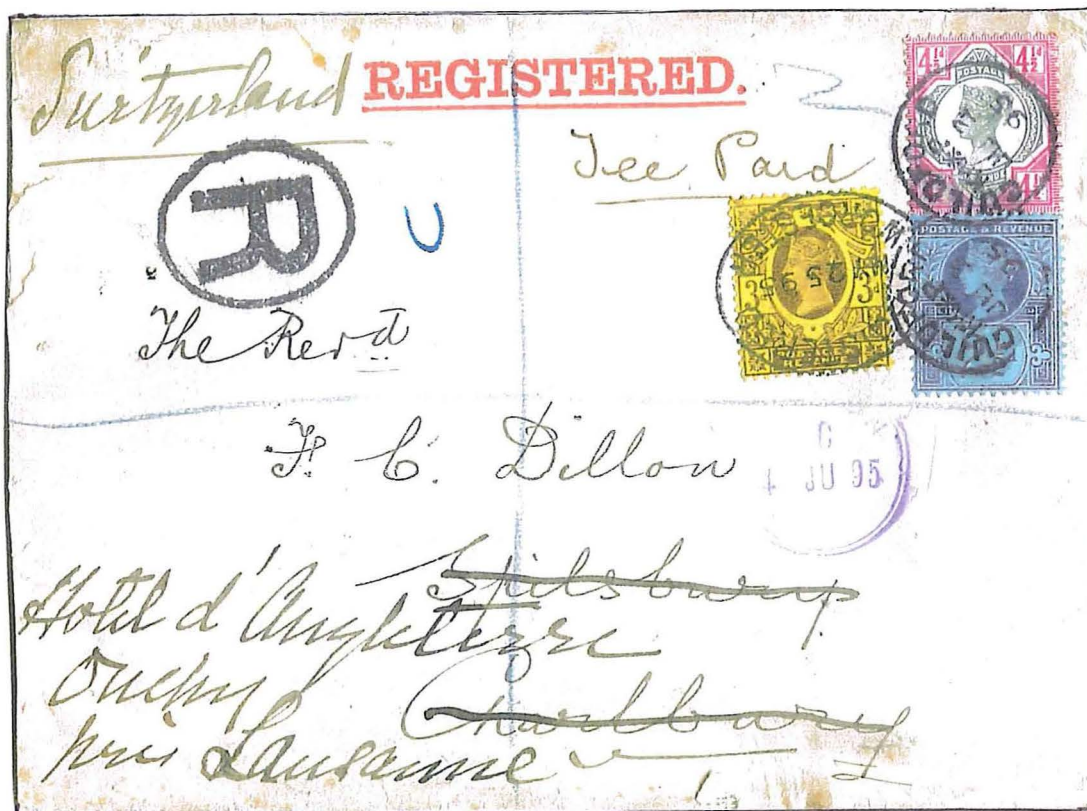
'Thos Wilson Seal Street/New Row Next/door but one to/Mr Phillips/Dirt Washer/Birmingham' was the fascinating address on a letter sent from Newark in 1837 and which was Mick Gill's first item. A part letter of 1848 carried five twopenny blues - a strip of three and a pair. A letter sent from Newark to Retford in 1861 was endorsed 'Not Found', then sent to the returned Letter Branch from where it was returned in a 'Returned Paid Letter' envelope. A Tuxford mileage mark of January 1823 had no lines above or below the '137'. We also saw a Workshop skeleton from 1853 and a 'SOUTH/MUSKHAM/NEWARK' rubber skeleton from 1913.

Richard Farman's 'newly mounted up' material was on 'Peculiar Usage of the Registered System'. There were examples of the handstruck '8' - double the 4d rate - used when coin was found in a letter. A registered Book Post item sent from Worcester in 1881 had the 918 struck in blue. The compulsory registration of letters containing coin was illustrated by a letter carrying label M - No56 - "Valuable enclosures should never be forwarded in unregistered Postal Packets ..." We were shown a range of material on the 'Advice of Receipt of a Registered Letter' system. In 1895, the RLB in Manchester used a 'Returned Paid Book Packet' envelope to return a registered letter to Wigton, Carlisle.

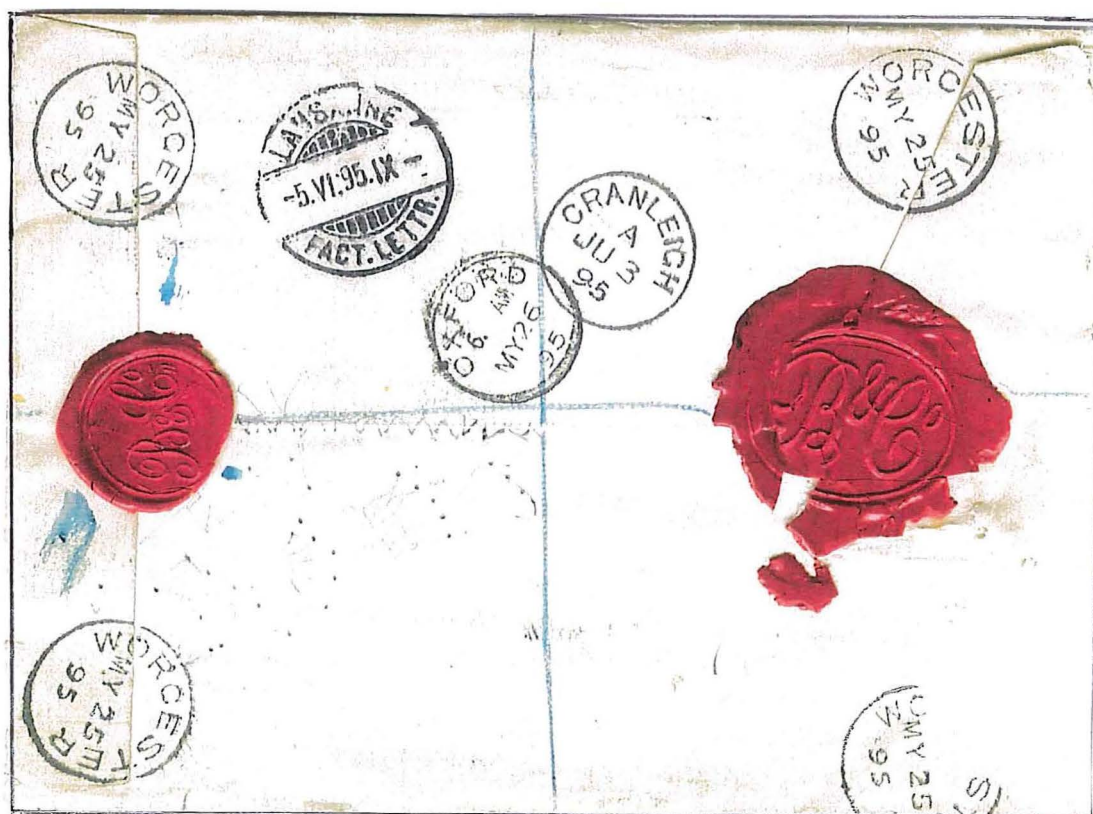
IS IT A SIX COLOUR OR A SEVEN COLOUR FRANKING?

by Eric Lewis

It is a six colour franking when the colour of the paper of the 2½d and 3d adhesives is included, or seven colour if the white on the 4½d is included.



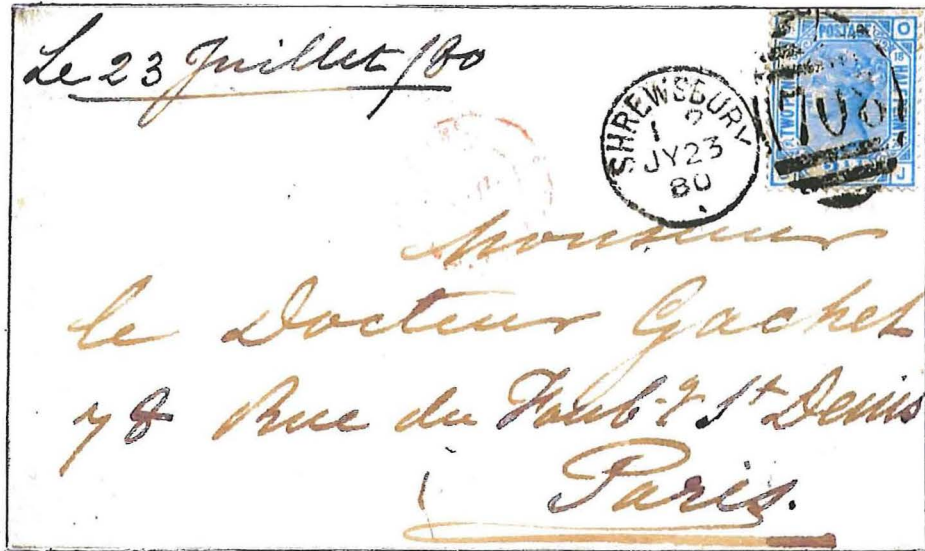
The item was posted at Worcester with the 3d adhesive to include registration to Spelsbury, Charlbury, Oxon. It was then taken a week later by hand to Cranleigh where it was redirected and posted to Switzerland, the 2½d and 4½d adhesives being applied to cover the sevenpence overseas postage i.e. five pence for over one ounce plus twopence registration fee. The adhesives were cancelled at the Head Office in Guildford.



SHREWSBURY TO Dr. GACHET, VINCENT van GOGH'S DOCTOR

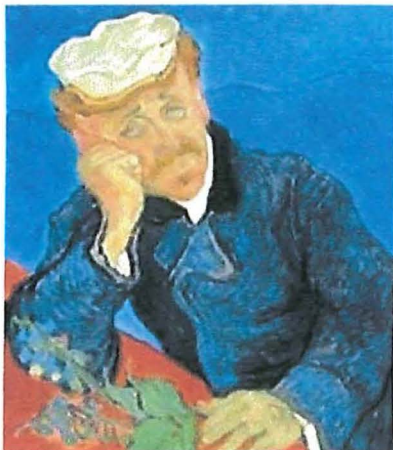
by Brian Atkins

I don't really believe in coincidence but two recent events might make me change my mind! The first came soon after publication of Shropshire to France for MM159, when the cover below was offered to me, though the overseas dealer could not have known about the article. The cover was mailed from Shrewsbury on 23rd July 1880, with the 2½d blue (SG 142, plate 18) paying the UPU rate and cancelled by the SHREWSBURY duplex issued on 22nd NOV 1878, recorded from 14JAN1879 to 5DEC1880 using codes Cside2, H2 and I2. A light red ANGL./AMB CALAIS TPO mark on the front and an equally light Paris receiver on the reverse have unreadable date information.



1880 cover from Shrewsbury to Dr. Gachet Paris

The second "coincidence" involved a discussion of the dreaded Jackson Pollock just prior to receiving the cover, during which van Gogh's portrait of Dr Gachet was mentioned. The cover is addressed to no less a person than that very doctor. But who was writing to Docteur Gachet from Shrewsbury and who is Gachet? Sadly there are no contents, so unless other correspondence turns up it is unlikely we shall ever know the answer but we know a lot about Dr Gachet. Paul Ferdinand Gachet, physician, artist and art lover, was born in Lille in 1828. After studying medicine in Paris and Montpellier, he opened a practice in the Rue du Faubourg, Saint-Denis in 1863, where he specialised in "nervous diseases", which would be appropriate for treating Vincent van Gogh for treat him is exactly what he did. Gachet befriended several painters of the day notably Cezanne, Pissarro, Monet, Renoir. It was Pissarro who recommended to van Gogh's brother, Theo, that the troubled Vincent should be sent to live near Dr Gachet in Auvers-sur-Oise after he emerged from hospital in May 1890. Quite appropriate that Gachet is holding a digitalis plant. The portraits which van Gogh painted of Gachet have become world famous; the one below (painted in 1890) selling in 1990 to a Japanese gentleman for the then record price of \$US82.5 million. van Gogh painted two portraits of the melancholy doctor, the record one being the second version. Gachet is known to have copied many of van Gogh's works and there is an opinion in the art world that he may even have painted the second portrait himself (see Independent article - <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/arts-no-cachet-in-a-gachet-1068811.html>).



A LETTER TO FREELING

This is taken from Eric's display in January

of any other, and I believe I should not exceed the truth were I to add of all the rest put together! I submit to your consideration — whether it is not the duty of the Post master to convey the papers in such a manner, as that they shall be secured from the Elements: As I have not nearly so many papers go the northern Road as two years since, the bag need not be a large one. I am willing to follow implicitly any directions you may give me. If it is my duty to provide a bag, I will do it, but I do conceive the Huntingdon Post master should have informed me, and not have exposed me to risk of & if not the certainty of having the papers spoiled, the directions mutilated, and parcels lost, because, & the night "being very wet," the papers are got so much wet, that a number of the directions are with difficulty made out."

I remain

for Very Respectfully yours

Benjamin Flower
 & Mr. Fishby's
 Old Bailey.

J. Freeling Esq^r

May 29. 1799.

"They have to return you my sincere thanks for your respectful notices of my late communications. Will you indulge me with your attention to a remark on the letter from Huntingdon, the copy of which I enclose. The Clerk of the Huntingdon Post Office observes "But last Saturday morning, it was very wet and the papers got wet in coming, so much so, that a number of directions were with difficulty made out." This acknowledgment but too well accounts for the many complaints I have of papers on the Northern road, miscarrying, never arriving, and being frequently torn almost to pieces; it further accounts for one instance, in which a number of papers were perished upon the road. It now appears that instead of the parcels being put into a leather bag, they are conveyed in some careless manner and exposed, so many might be exposed to the wet. What the fate of the papers, altho' in addition to the usual cover, tied up in brown paper, must be, when Huntingdon is only in the first stage, may be very well conceived, and I now cease to wonder that the complaints I have had, and the types of customers I have procured on the northern road, exceed that

Mail between Shropshire and the United States illustrating the Anglo-US Treaty of 1849 and the Anglo-US Convention of 1868, which followed.

by Brian Atkins

Without going too far back, I should briefly explain what was happening prior to the 1849 Treaty. A Post Office Directory of March 1839 reduced the packet rate to the US to 1/-, confirmed by a similar directive of 1843. The British & North American Royal Mail Steam Company (Cunard Line) had negotiated a seven-year contract with the British Admiralty to convey the mails by packet from the UK to North America beginning on 1st July 1840. Furthermore as a result of the 3rd March 1845 Act of Congress, the Ocean Steam Navigation Company (Ocean Line) was formed to carry mails by packet from the US to Europe, the first such contract negotiated with the US government. The trouble was the British didn't like this new contract and imposed a 1/- surcharge on incoming US mails carried by the Ocean Line. The US "retaliated" by passing an Act imposing an extra 24 cents (or 1/-) on incoming British mail! "Retaliatory rate" covers can be found between the US and UK from July to December 1848 – I do not have one to or from Shropshire!! Wiser heads prevailed and the old rates were restored for 4 voyages from the UK between 30th December 1848 and 10th February 1849 (plus 3 return voyages from the US), while the 1848/9 Anglo-US Postal Treaty was being ratified (no "restored rate" covers known to or from Shropshire either). In fact the treaty was ratified on 23rd January and proclaimed on 15th February 1849. For the first time this treaty set a paid-to-destination rate of 1/- (24 cents) for the first ½oz, split UK inland 1½d (3 cents); US inland 2½d (5 cents) and sea postage 8d (16 cents), this to go to the country providing the packet. The rates applied to all inland US except California and Oregon, for which the inland charge was 40cents, totalling 59cents or 2/5½ (one cover seen at this rate, not from a Midland county). The transatlantic rate for California and Oregon reduced to the same as the other states on 1st July 1863. Under the 1849 Treaty letters could be sent paid, with or without stamps at first, or unpaid. However, in the *Maritime Postal History of London*, Robertson states that "The use of adhesive stamps on letters leaving the country was not made compulsory until 1853". He does not give a precise date but it must be after late April 1853, see cover fig 1.

All accounting was done in cents and marks were applied to show the sum owing to one country from the other. The table below (from Tabcart) provides an overview of the possible marks together with the colour of ink used. Unpaid letters were struck in black, paid in red. Heavier letters were multiples of the marks, the highest seen being 76 cents (Tabcart). Progression was one rate to ½oz, 2 rates to 1oz, 4 rates to 2oz.

Unpaid letter UK to US by British packet	19 cents (black) due to UK
Ditto by US packet	3 cents (black) due to UK
Prepaid letter UK to US by British packet	5 cents (red) due to US
Ditto by US packet	21 cents (red) due to US
Unpaid letter US to UK by British packet	5 cents (black) due to US
Ditto by US packet	21 cents (black) due to US
Prepaid letter US to UK by British packet	19 cents (red) due to UK
Ditto by US packet	3 cents (red) due to UK

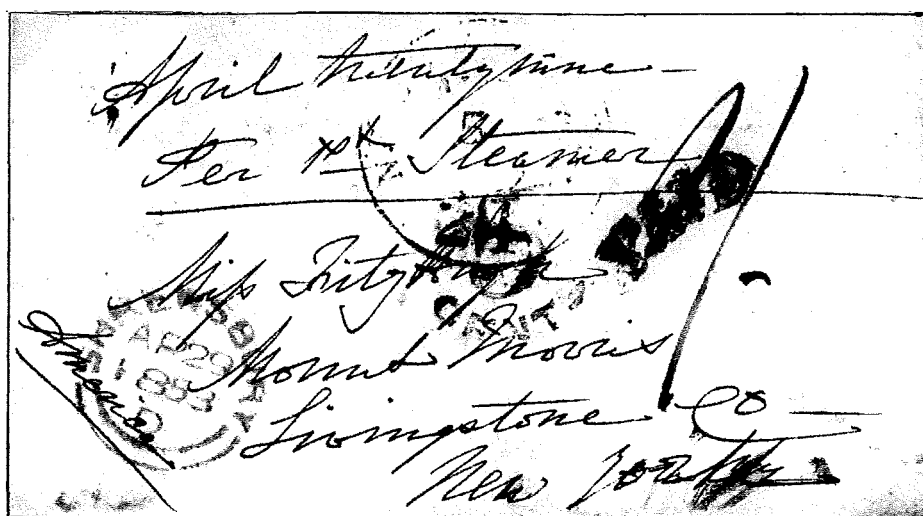


Fig 1, 29th April 1853 stampless cover from Shrewsbury to Livingstone County, New York

The cover at Fig 1, is from Shrewsbury to New York, dated 29th April 1853 and paid the treaty rate of 1/- (ms in red right) in cash. 5CENTS (red, centre) was applied at Liverpool to show the credit to the US for their inland delivery and PAID (red) in New York. The partly struck red NEW YORK date stamp shows 24, the total amount paid in cents. The letter was carried by a British packet, the Cunard *Cambria* which left Liverpool on 30th April 1853 and arrived in Boston on 13th May, the letter transferring to in a closed bag to New York. The UK kept 19cents (9½d) as its share of its inland rate (1½d) and the packet rate (8d).

The 1/- embossed stamp was issued in September 1847 to pay the prevailing packet rates to the US and to India from Southampton. The cover below shows an example used from Ironbridge dated 11th May 1854 cancelled 406 of Ironbridge, paying the treaty rate to Onida County, New York. Carried by a British packet, the Cunard *America*, which left Liverpool on 13th May and arrived at Boston on 25th May. For accounting purposes the red BOSTON date stamp reads BOSTON 24 B^R PK^T PAID 25 (British Packet and 24cents paid; 25 is the date, the 5 looks like a 6 but is over inked). 5 cents credited to the US for inland postage.

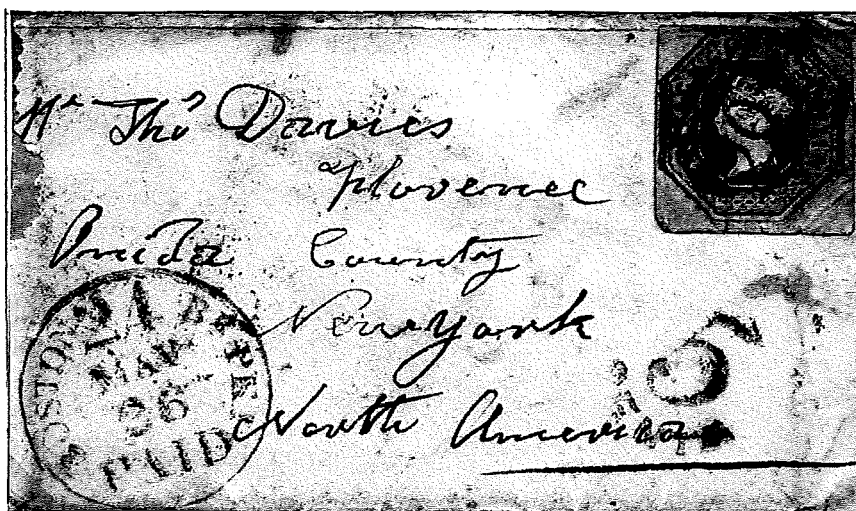


Fig 2 Cover from Ironbridge to Onida County, New York

The surface printed 1/- green stamp was introduced on 1st November 1856 to replace the embossed issue, which was cumbersome to produce, had to be cut and was unsuited for perforation. The plate 1 example below on an entire letter from Ellesmere is cancelled with the SHREWSBURY spoon dated Christmas Day 1857; Ellesmere was a sub office of Shrewsbury at that time. The letter was carried in a closed bag to Philadelphia (made an exchange office on 1st Jan 1854) by the Cunard *Africa*, departed Liverpool on 26th December 1857, arrived New York 10th January 1858. Again 5 cents credited to the US for inland postage.

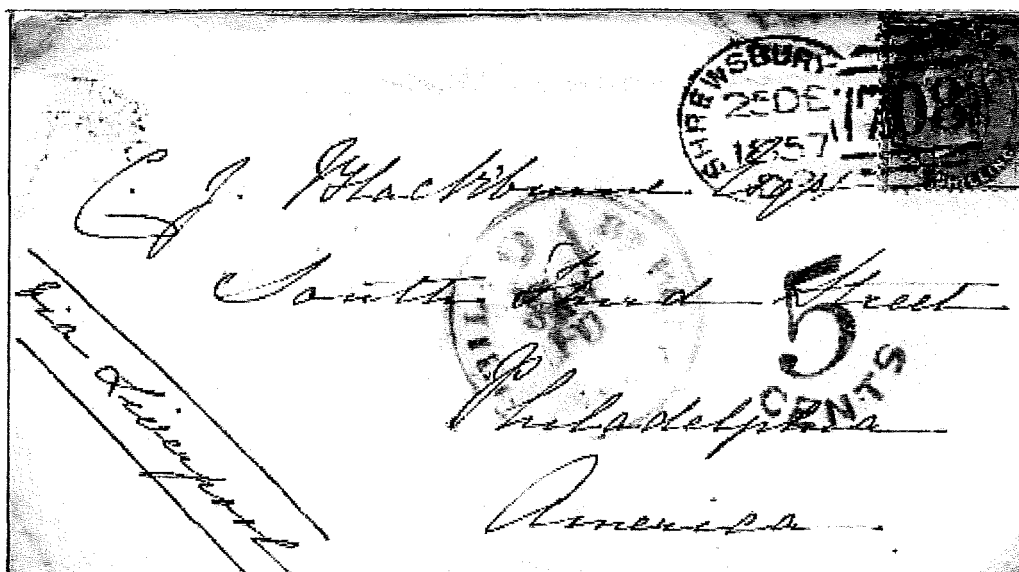


Fig 3 1857 entire from Ellesmere to Philadelphia

The letter is from Caroline Blackburne to her brother and sister wishing they were able to share the festive season; she described her mother as "only pretty well today, her spirits have sunk very often". Edward Blackburne was a solicitor and clerk to the magistrates in Ellesmere. (from Bagshaw, History of Shropshire, 1851).

The original exchange offices were London, Liverpool and Southampton (closed bags were sometimes put on or taken off at Cowes) in the UK and Boston and New York in the US but a number were added later. San Francisco was added for receipt of mail only on 1st July 1863 (see Figs 5 & 6). An exchange office could make up a sealed, separate bag for an exchange office abroad, from where the mail was distributed.

The cover at Fig 4 differs in that it was sent on an American packet. It was mailed from Shrewsbury on 24th March 1856 and went via Liverpool (24th March 1856) to New York (no arrival stamp, not usual but other covers seen without arrival date stamps). 21CENTS (red) total credited to the US for the packet and delivery and PAID (red) struck at New York over the written "States". The letter had to wait for the Collins Line *Baltic*, which left Liverpool on 2nd April and arrived in New York on 17th April 1856. The first issue SHREWSBURY spoon (SB260) cancelling the 1/- embossed shows the only code B recorded by the Shropshire society for that spoon.

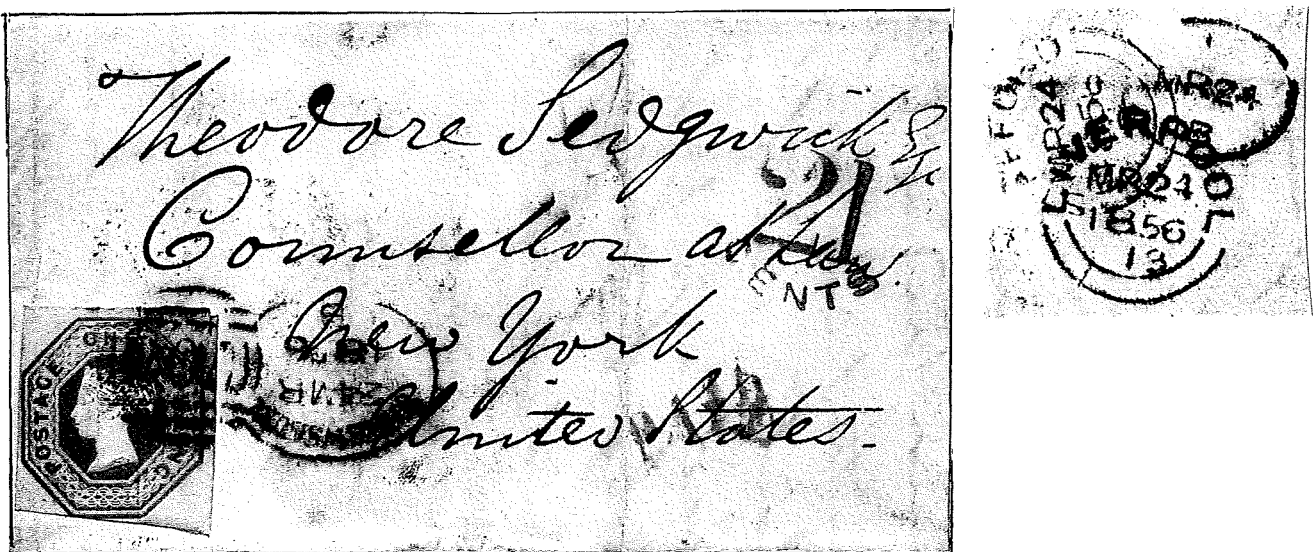


Fig 4, 1856 entire letter from Shrewsbury to New York

A paid double-rate cover (between ½oz and 1oz) put into the mail at Ludlow on 17th February 1852, forwarded to London (18th Feb 1852) was also sent on an American packet (Fig 5).

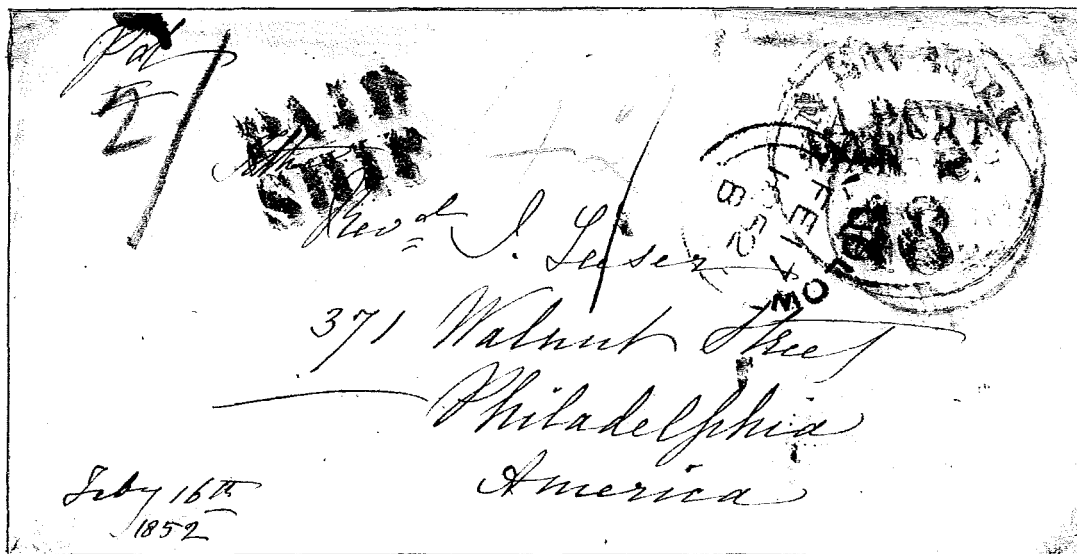


Fig 5, 1852 cover from Ludlow to Philadelphia

It was charged 2/- (red ms upper left) and endorsed PAID SHIP (red) at New York. 42 cents (red ms upper centre) credited to the US (16 x 2 cents for the packet and 5 x 2 cents for inland delivery). It was carried on the American New York Steam Navigation Company (or Havre Line) *Franklin*, which sailed from Le Havre to Cowes on 18th February, leaving Cowes the same day to arrive in New York on 2nd March. The Havre Line made monthly voyages with US contract mails, putting off or taking on British mails at Cowes.

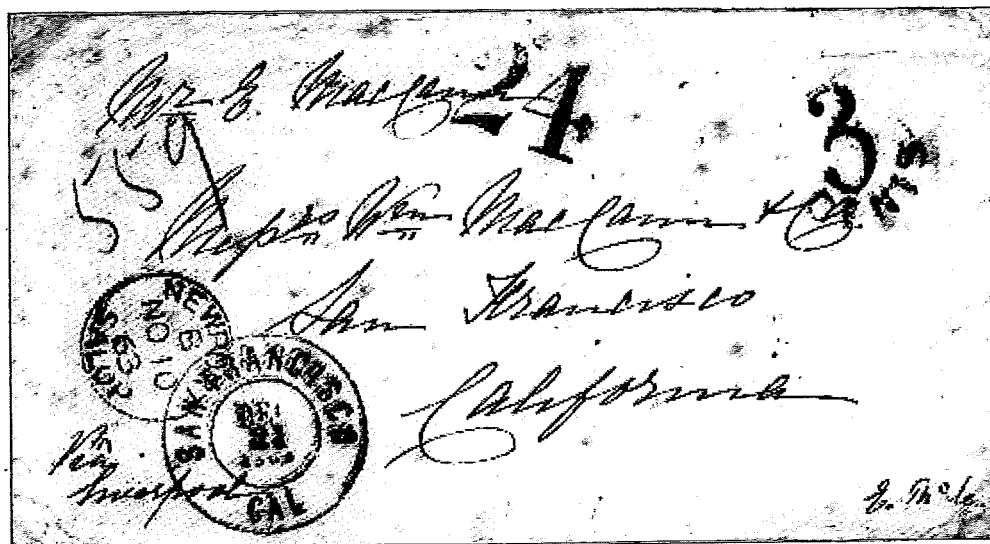


Fig 6, Unpaid 1863 cover from Newport, Salop to San Francisco

The typical unpaid cover above has 3CENTS (black) debited to the US for British inland postage and 24 cents (black) to be collected on delivery. The 3 cents debit marking indicates the letter was carried on an American-contract packet. The *City of Baltimore* of the Inman Line left Liverpool on 11th November 1863 and arrived in New York on 24th November, the closed bag arriving in San Francisco on 21st December.

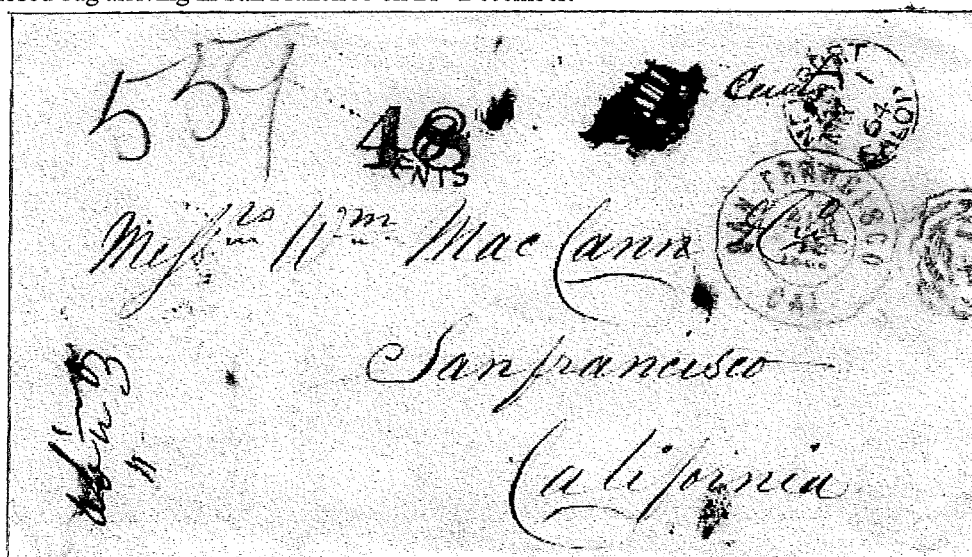


Fig 7 Unpaid 1864 double rate cover from Newport to San Francisco

An unpaid double-rate cover from the same correspondence from Newport to San Francisco is dated 1st March 1864 and endorsed "above ½oz" (lower left). 48 cents (black) to be collected is struck over a 6CENTS (black) to denote the debit to the US for double inland UK postage. The cover was carried on the Inman Line *Edinburgh*, which left Liverpool on 2nd March 1864 and arrived in New York on 17th March. The closed bag arrived in San Francisco on 18th April 1864. Because of the American Civil War the southern mail route to San Francisco operated by Butterfields was terminated and the contract given to Wells Fargo via St. Louis and Salt Lake City (also applies to the unpaid 1863 cover above). On 1st January 1862 the US contracted the British Inman Line to weekly sailings, as US steamers were withdrawn from ocean service due to the Civil War. By December 1867 the Inman Line had a contract with the British Post Office to carry British mails, sailings beginning on 1st January 1868.

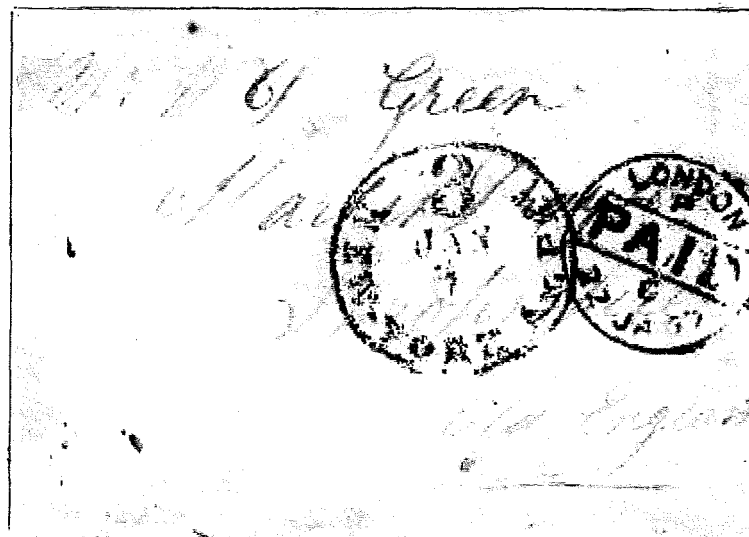


Fig 8 Paid cover from New York to Market Drayton 5th January 1867

A cut-down paid cover from the US to Market Drayton, Shropshire, "Old England", shows a red 3 / NEW YORK A^M PK^T / JAN / 5 and, on the reverse, a MARKET DRAYTON arrival date stamp for 23rd Jan 1867. The figure 3 in the New York date stamp indicates 3 cents (1½d) credited to the UK for inland delivery. The cover was carried on the American packet *Allemanina* of the Hamburg-America (HAPAG) Line, which left New York on 5th January 1867 and arrived off Southampton on 22nd January 1867.

The 1849 Treaty was superseded by the Anglo-US Convention of 1st January 1868, when all mail was reduced to a flat rate of 6d (12 cents) per ½oz, prepaid, whether sent by packet or private ship; unpaid mail was fined. The number of exchange offices increased with Dublin, Cork, Londonderry, Glasgow, Baltimore, Portland (Maine), Chicago and Detroit being added. This convention placed the responsibility of dispatching mails separately on each country and no credits or debits were needed.

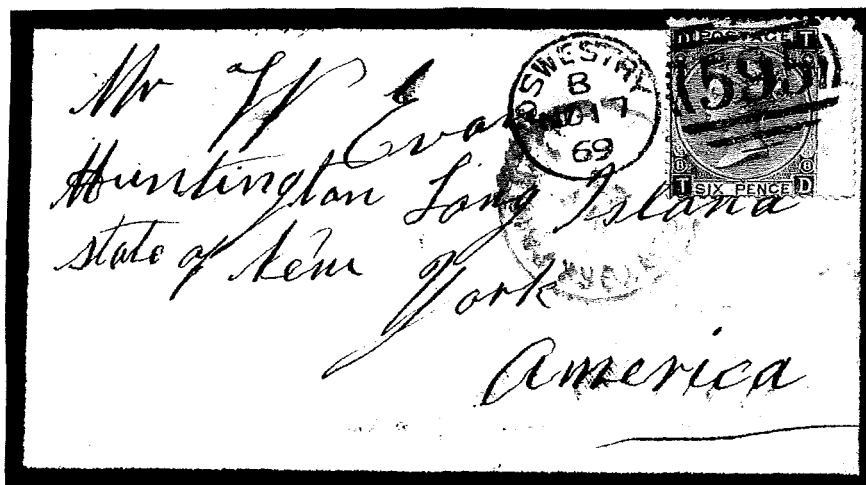
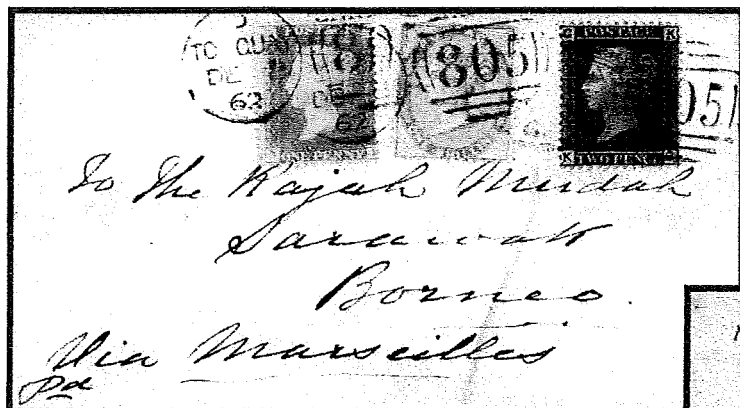


Fig 9, Mourning Cover from Oswestry to Long Island, New York dated 17th November 1869

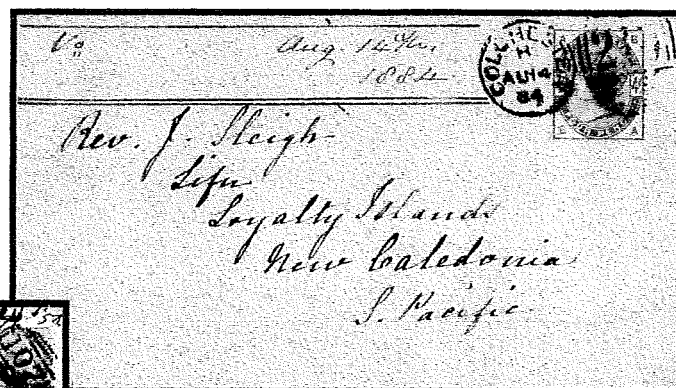
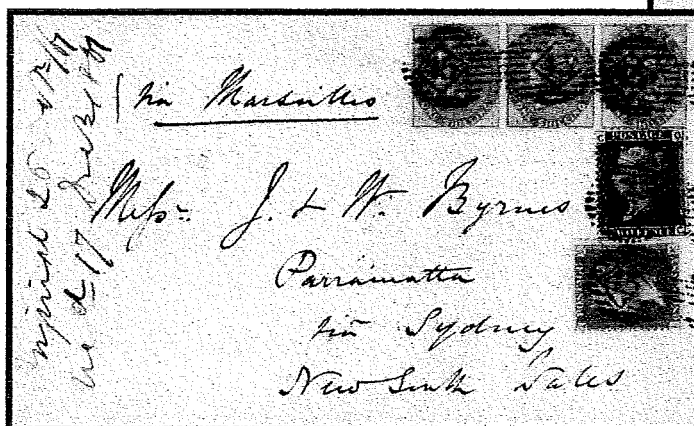
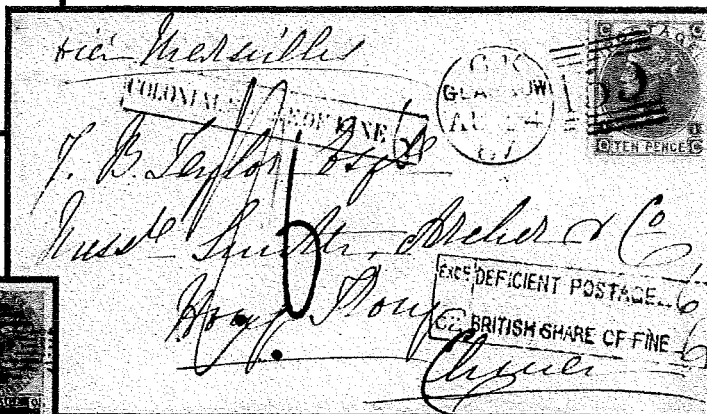
Under this convention the rate for the Oswestry cover was paid by the 6d mauve, plate 8 (SG 108) and the cover carried on the Inman Line *City of Brussels*, which left Liverpool on the 18th November 1869 and arrived in New York on 27th November 1869. The 6d rate was relatively short lived as it was reduced to 3d on 1st January 1870.

References: North American Mail Sailings 1840 to 1875, Hubbard and Winter, US Classics Soc 1988.
UK Letter Rates Inland and Overseas 1635 to 1900, Tabcart, HH Sales 2nd Edition 2003

The Gilbert Wheat FRPS Collection - Wednesday 10 June



Over 700 lots of Exhibition Quality to almost every corner of the World inc. the Pacific, China & the Far East, India, Australasia, Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East. Featuring Registered, Late Fees & Postage Dues, Maritime, Military mail etc., and with almost every GB QV Surface Printed issue in combinations, Blocks, etc.



For further details, catalogues, or scans, please contact James Grimwood-Taylor, Ken Baker or Nick Wraith, and visit us online at our new website -

www.cavendish-auctions.com

Ph: +44 1332 250970

Cavendish House, 153-7 London Road, Derby, DE1 2SY, U.K.

Fax: +44 1332 294440

Email: stamps@cavendishphilauc.demon.co.uk



A NEW MAIL CENTRE AT NORTHAMPTON

by Derek Smeathers

A new Head Post Office Complex was opened in Northampton in October 1981 providing all facilities on one site - including motor garage and workshops, vehicle loading parks and washing bays, as well as all modern electronic equipment for sorting, cancelling and dispatching mails, not to mention a new post office - the whole covering several acres. In September 2003 there was a burglary followed by a serious fire - allegedly started deliberately - which damaged much machinery in the lower part of the building. (See MM133/2). At first, Royal Mail said the damage would take some weeks to repair, but they were soon saying it was more serious than at first thought. The exterior showed little sign of any damage but the Post Office insisted it was very extensive. Sorting and other necessary works were transferred to three different (temporary!) locations across the town, where staff worked in almost impossible conditions. One such was a former garage building at Crow Lane, Great Billing where nearly one hundred people worked with inadequate administrative facilities, refreshment and toilet provision. The postmarking of mail stopped for several weeks and ever since has been almost illegible and sometimes totally absent. Handstamps have been used for special purposes such as surcharging underpaid items, and these have been the only clear postmarks available. Finally, the Post Office declared the damaged building irreparable and said a new complex would be built on the edge of Northampton. We waited, but we didn't hold our breath! Then they said a new complex was to be built near the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal some twelve miles from Northampton - a little too far for a Head Post Office one would have thought! Other schemes have been rumoured as the years went by, and meantime the public have to go out to Crow Lane, about four miles from the Town Centre, for undelivered mail etc. People became hardened to the idea of a third-rate postal service, now with three "temporary" service centres around the perimeter of the Town.

In September 2008 the very first handstamp to show CROW LANE appeared (fig. 1) in the form of a large rubber surcharge stamp. I thought the letter might stand for 'District Office' or perhaps 'Duty Officer', but an employee tells me they actually stand for Distribution Office. Shortly before this, local newspapers had reported that a new Royal Mail complex was to be built on the western edge of Northampton and would be a massive Distribution Centre covering the whole of Milton Keynes, Coventry and Northampton Districts - as well as replacing the current Crow Lane "office". It is pleasing to report that on 19th January 2009, the first sod was turned in this project which is planned to open in March 2010. There will be hundreds of jobs in its construction and a staff of eight hundred on its completion. It will mean the closure of the current Distribution Centres at Milton Keynes and Coventry, as well as Crow Lane, but another of the "temporary" offices from 2003 will remain as a town delivery office. The new complex will cost "just over" £71 million, and is situated in the Swan Valley Business Park not far from Junction 15A of the M1 motorway. Meanwhile, the old Head Office Complex quietly moulders away, (fig. 2) empty and apparently forgotten.

fig. 1

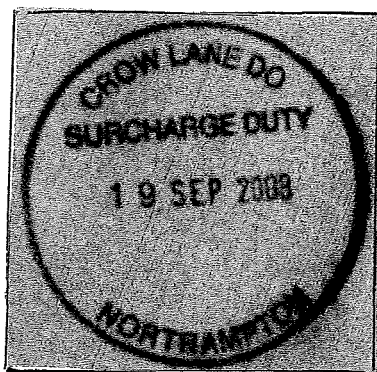


fig. 2

CHIPPING NORTON PENNY POST

1835-1840

The petition for a penny post between Chipping Norton, a post town in Oxfordshire, and Long Compton, a village in Warwickshire, originated in a letter from a Mr William Willmot, a resident of that village. Mr Willmot was a General Surveyor of Roads, probably a position of some authority and of higher status than a normal turnpike trust surveyor. In modern parlance, he would have been a consultant civil engineer and he probably worked for several turnpike trusts in Warwickshire, directing the construction of new roads and supervising improvements to the road bed of existing highways. His first letter was sent to the Post Office Surveyor, Mr Rideout, on 19th December 1834 but was quickly followed by a letter to Sir Francis Freeling, Secretary to the Post Office, on 8th January 1835.

UNOFFICIAL ARRANGEMENTS

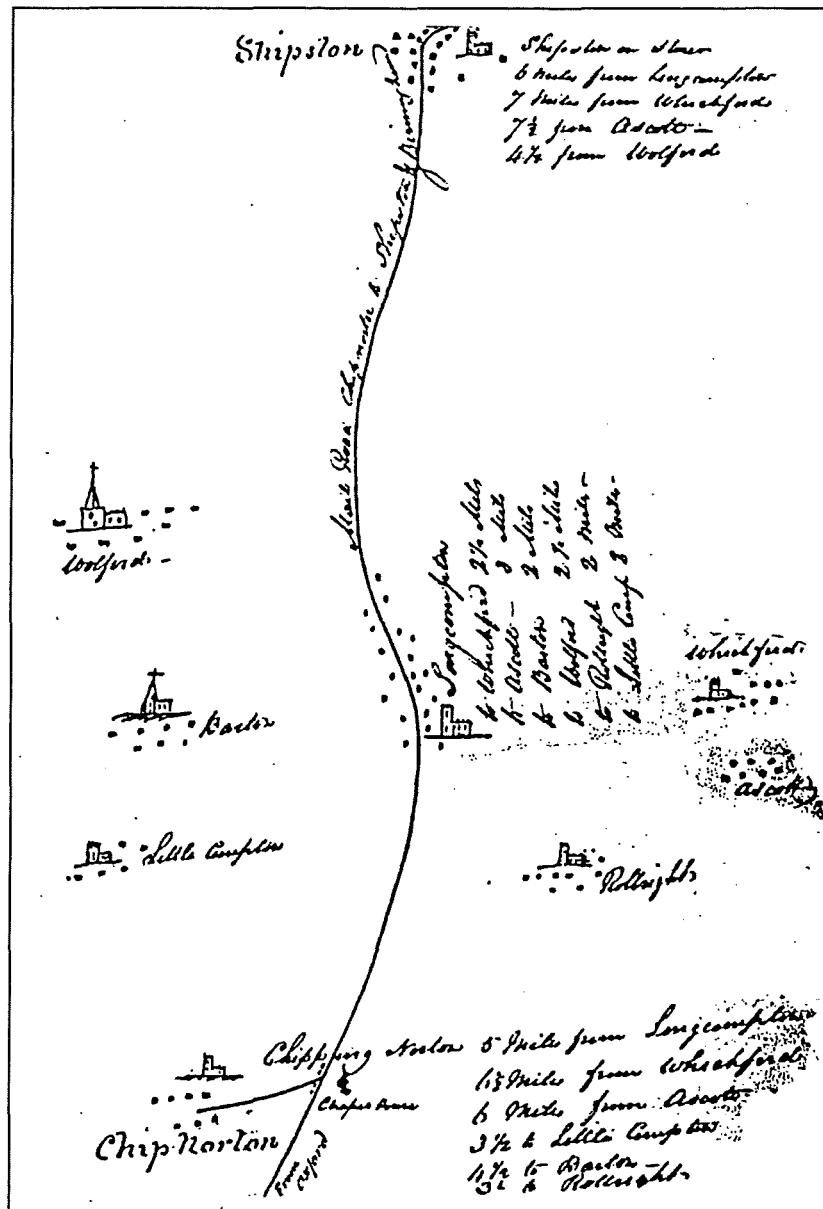
From these and two later letters, one from Mr Willmot to Freeling dated 8th February 1835 and the other from Mr Rideout to Freeling dated 6th March 1835, we are given a full picture of the postal arrangements then prevailing at Long Compton. Long Compton lay on the route of what the surveyor described as the "important horse post from Chipping Norton to Stratford on Avon", five miles from Chipping Norton and six miles from the subsequent post town on the road, Shipston on Stour. The mail was conveyed in a single-horse mail cart accompanied by what Mr Willmot dismissively described as "a lad". The mail cart left Chipping Norton immediately after the arrival of the Worcester Mail from London and, so important was it for letters to reach Shipston and Stratford without delay, that there was said to be no time to detain the ride at Chipping Norton while letters were sorted for Long Compton. Consequently, although the ride passed through Long Compton at 6am (and was said to stop there for ten minutes), the London letters for Long Compton were carried on to Shipston. They were then returned to Long Compton by the postmaster of Shipston, who charged 1d a mile, i.e. 6d, for his trouble in addition to General Postage from London to Shipston, another 9d. Although the letters sometimes reached the village at 10am, never before, it was often 12 o'clock when they were delivered. Clearly, a penny post from Chipping Norton would not only greatly reduce the cost of London letters but would ensure they reached Long Compton several hours earlier.

Mr Willmot went further and complained that the mail cart was seen as a very unsafe means of carriage and it seemed the "Bankers, Gentlemen and Merchants" had made many complaints about the lack of security offered to their letters and money parcels. Mr Willmot came up with the rather startling proposition that he and some *respectable inn-keepers* were prepared to pay for the construction of a very light and fast two-horse coach, which he glibly referred to as a "mail coach". It would have a "proper coachman and guard" (probably not provided by the Post Office) and it was claimed that, by using short stages, it would run at a speed in excess of the Post Office's own four-horse coaches! Whether this so-called mail coach was intended to run beyond Shipston to Stratford was not made clear but Mr Willmot did want the consortium operating the coach to be paid the same as the existing mail cart contractor. Perhaps significantly, the surveyor, Mr Rideout, never made reference to this hare-brained proposal.

THE PENNY POST

The surveyor's initial reaction to the request for a penny post at Long Compton was unfavourable. He had carried out a survey of the letters at Long Compton and the surrounding villages and concluded that there was too little mail to justify detaining the ride from Chipping Norton to Stratford on Avon. Attached to one of his letters, Mr Willmot had enclosed a sketch map (see the illustration) showing the villages that would be able to obtain their letters from Long Compton, if a receiving house were established there, but the surveyor pointed out that two of the largest, namely Welford and Barton, were served from Moreton in Marsh, not Chipping Norton or Shipston. Since there was a new ride between Moreton and Tewkesbury that benefited them, he was in no doubt the residents of those villages would prefer to continue their existing service. Taking these two villages out of the calculations, the surveyor believed a penny post would produce just £7-16-0 per annum.

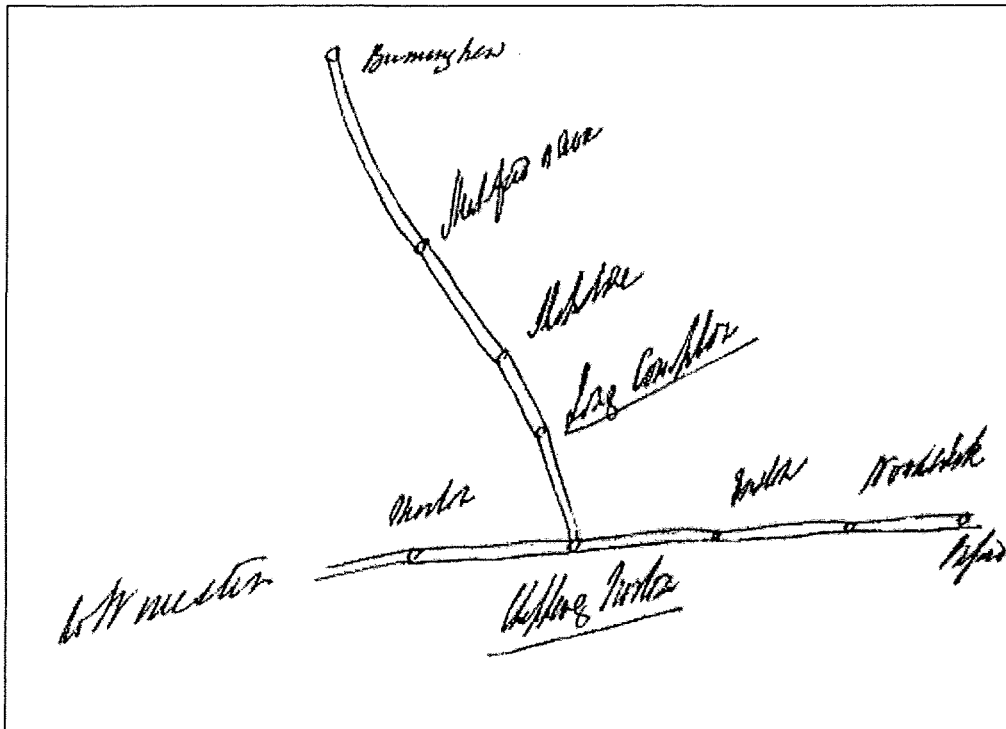
However, at the end of his letter to Sir Francis Freeling dated 6th March, the surveyor commented that he had heard of a plan to establish a mail coach between Chipping Norton and Birmingham, running over the line of road in question, and, if this were to come to fruition, it might be possible to



The sketch that accompanied Mr Willmot's application for a penny post.

sort letters for Long Compton at Chipping Norton because it took a few minutes longer to prepare a mail coach for despatch than it did to despatch a horse post. By 26th March, a decision had been made to establish the new Mail that would leave Chipping Norton at 5.15am and return from Birmingham at 8.18pm. Although the Worcester Mail would reach Chipping Norton sooner, on a speeded-up schedule, and although there would be much for the office at Chipping Norton to undertake, the surveyor still believed it would be possible to sort the Long Compton letters and make up a penny post bag, which he oddly suggested was for Long Compton and Shipston. (Shipston was a post town and would have had a London bag. Whether this was intended to imply that Long Compton would also be linked to Shipston in the existing Shipston Penny Post is unclear.) Mr Rideout therefore asked Freeling to approve a penny post, in which the only additional expense would be £5 for a receiver at Long Compton and, in spite of the small volume of letters, in which there would be a potential annual profit of £2-16-0. (Incidentally, Mr Willmot had already suggested a Mr John Fowler, a grocer, as the receiver.)

Francis Freeling put the proposal to the Postmaster General on 27th March 1835 and the penny post was established on 18th August. It seems that even an annual profit of £2-16-0 was optimistic for the gross revenue was only £5-19-1d in the first year and £6-6-4d in 1837.



The surveyor's sketch of the mailcoach routes.

The list of Allowances to Deputy Postmasters dated 5th January 1838 (and updated at various unrecorded dates to 5th April 1843) shows a continuing payment of £5 to the penny post receiver at Long Compton and, more significantly (in 1838 at least although later deleted), a payment of £210 for a daily ride by cart from Chipping Norton to Stratford on Avon through Shipston on Stour, a distance of 21 miles 5 furlongs. This would suggest that the mail coach was short-lived but the penny post survived.

References

Post 40/183/1835

Post 9/132

1st & 2nd Reports SCP

HANDSTAMP OF THE CHIPPING NORTON PENNY POST

Post town: Chipping Norton
Receiving house: Long Compton

MLP1130

Chipping
Norton
Penny Post

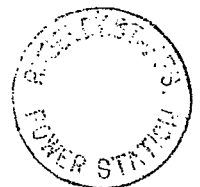
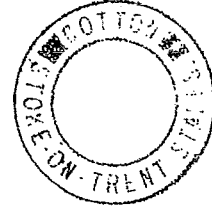
B

6MAR43-25AUG43

-/E

SOME REDUNDANT STAFFORDSHIRE POSTMARKS

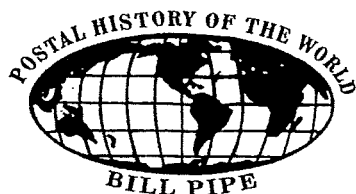
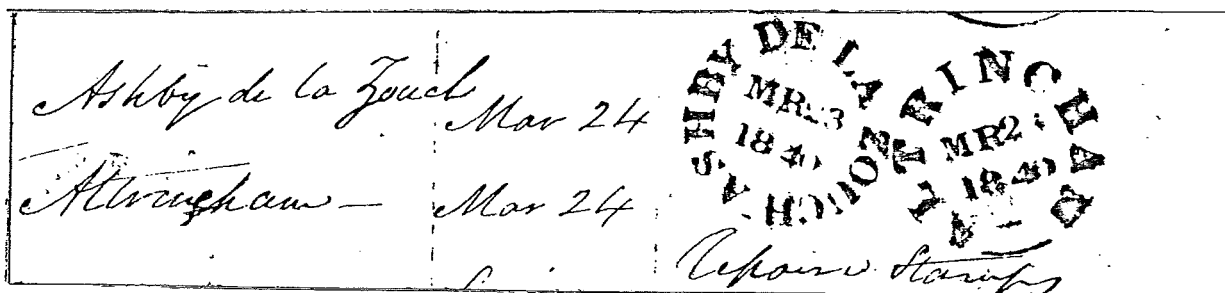
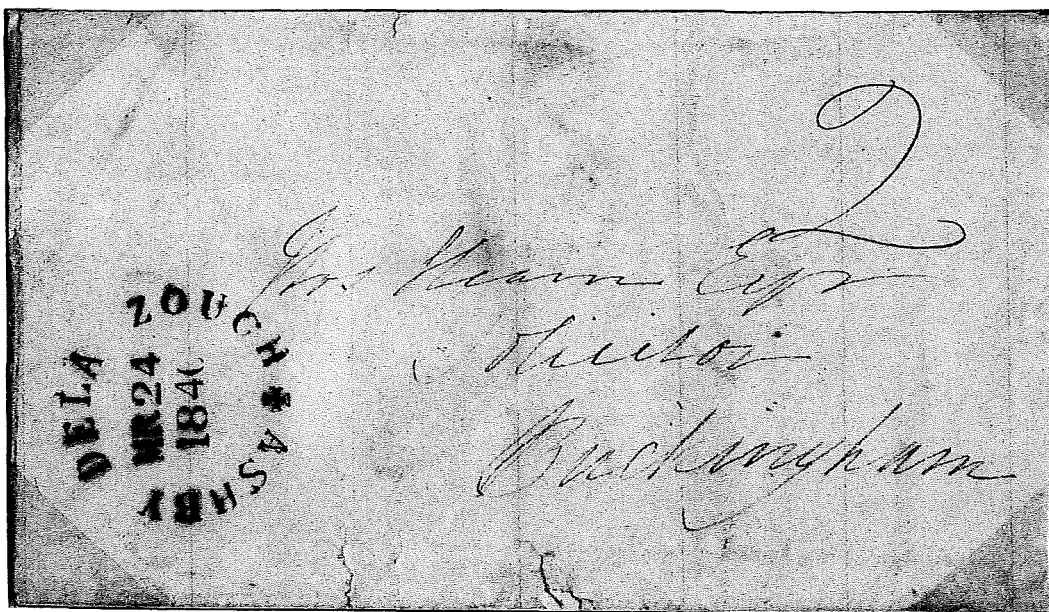
I am indebted to Rick Martin for sending a copy of the items illustrated below. They come from a sheet of samples taken from handstamps returned for scrapping. Can any Staffordshire member explain why Rugeley power station had a handstamp. Was there a post office there?



SOME EARLY LEICESTERSHIRE TRAVELLERS

In 1837, it was decided that all post towns should be issued with a datestamp. At the time, three Leicestershire post towns were using undated circles - Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Lutterworth and Melton Mowbray. For a while nothing changed, but then in February/ March 1840 each was issued with a datestamp. Inspection of strikes from these look very similar to those of the undated circles. Indeed, each was a recut of the UDC. So what did each office use in the meantime? The answer of course is a temporary handstamp - a traveller.

The first illustration shows the only recorded copy of the Ashby traveller on a letter sent from Ravenstone on 24th March 1840 - the date on which the datestamp was sent from London. The letter was unpaid so a charge of twopence was levied. Below this is an extract from the Steel Impression Books which shows that the datestamp was a "repaired" handstamp.



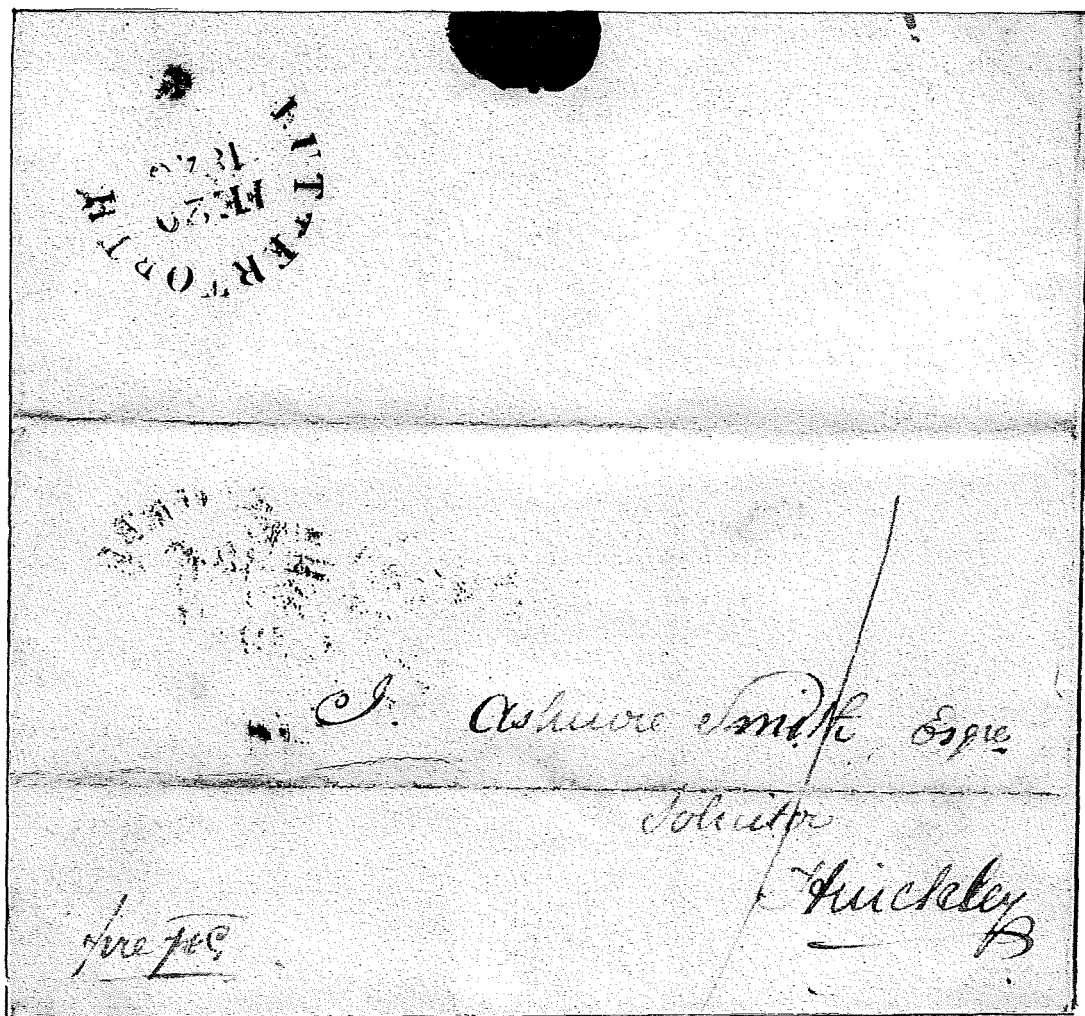
THE MAGPIE

POSTAL AUCTIONS & LISTS
POSTCARDS & EPHEMERA
PAPER COLLECTABLES
POSTAL HISTORY

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

The cover below shows the only recorded strike of the Lutterworth traveller on a letter sent to Hinckley on 20th February 1840. The normal datestamp was issued on 21st February. I do not have a copy of the Melton Mowbray, but I have seen a copy of it used on 1st March 1840; the datestamp was issued on 13th March.



Finally, we turn to the county town. From about July 1829, Leicester used its circular, dated mileage removed mark as a datestamp.. In January 1841 this handstamp was recut. A traveller is recorded used on 1st, 2nd and 3rd January 1841. On the first two days the 'R' was inverted and reversed as shown on the copy below of 2nd January. On the 3rd the 'R' was inserted correctly.

