MIDLAND MAIL

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

President: Rev. C.M. Beaver

Chairman:
Mike Young

Treasurer:
Trevor Clewley

Secretary:
Eric Lewis

Number 88, January 1995

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:
Ian Baker of Cranford, Middlesex who collects Birmingham Postal History;
Geoffrey Wood of Worcester who collects pre-1900 Worcestershire and Herefordshire.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This will now be held at 1 p.m. on 29th April at Carrs Lane Church Centre (not at Langley as stated in the programme) and will be preceded by a committee meeting at 11 a.m.

NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIRMAN

In April, Mike our chairman, is retiring after four years in office. Nominations for his position are required prior to the A.G.M. and should be handed or sent to the Secretary together with the consent of the nominee.

AUCTION LOTS

Lots are requested for the auction which will follow the A.G.M. on 29th April. So as to enable the catalogues to be distributed well before that date, it is essential to have the lots in by 11th March, the date of the March meeting.

Please include brief but full descriptions together with an estimated market values and your reserve prices or state 'no reserve'. If you wish the lots may be brought along to the auction but in that case please state the condition of each item based on 'poor', 'good', 'fine', or 'superb' and clearly indicate the number of items in each lot.

Your committee always appreciate lots given by members to sell for the funds of the Society prior to the auction proper. Perhaps you could find one or two suitable lots for sale in this way.

Please hand lots to Mrs E. Lewis or send them to her at:
27, Rathbone Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands B67 5JG.

BAKER TROPHY

This trophy is awarded to the author of what in the opinion of the members was best article to appear in Midland Mail during the previous year. Please send nominations for this award to the Editor by 11th March.

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION AWARDED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH PHILATELIC SOCIETIES.

After lunch at the December meeting one of our members, Mr Tom Poynton, who is vice-chairman of the A.B.P.S. presented John Calladine with a framed Certificate of Appreciation as a token of esteem for the work he has undertaken for philately over the past few years. We all join in with our appreciation for the time and effort he has devoted to keeping the Society's name held in high regard in the world of postal history.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The Guildhall at Worcester is the venue for our meeting on 18th February when Roger Broomfield will give a display on 'The Aberystwyth Road', starting at 2 p.m. This meeting is held in conjunction with the fair organised by the Worcster Philatelic Society, so give yourself plenty of time to visit the dealers' stands.

Our Annual Competitions will be held on 11th March at Carrs Lane, commencing promptly at 1.30 p.m. The three categories for entries are pre-1840, pre-1939 and post-1939.

There will be a joint meeting with the Shropshire PHS on 1st April. Full details of this will be given in the next issue.

A MEMBER'S WANTS

Dr Malcolm Nixon is studying the postal history of Etruria in Staffordshire and would be only too pleased to purchase any postal history items originating at, or sent to that town. He is looking for material up to the present day and condition is less important than research value. If you can help, please contact Dr Nixon at: Byeways, Claines Lane, Worcester WR3 7SS.

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THE NOVEMBER MEETING

With several regulars known to be unavoidably absent, it was generally expected that the attendance on 5th November would be minimal. Happily, twelve stalwarts appeared at Carrs Lane, each clutching nine sheets or more, for some allow numeracy to suffer in the name of art. The subject for the displays was "As Time Goes By".

The first on stage was GUY BRIDGES who decided to concentrate on the content of letters. There was, however, one very desirable postal marking - the uniquely recorded 'No. 1' of Chirk on an Oswestry Penny Post letter of 1815. Guy had taken the trouble to transcribe a long and fascinating cross-written letter describing a stagecoach journey from Rotherham to London, via Leicester where the traveller, a medical student, had traded the gnawing cold of a front seat for the comparative warmth of a berth behind a pile of luggage. A second sad letter, with no punctuation whatsoever, was from a poor maidservant in London who was about to lose her job and a third was from the artisans of Stoke salt Works, near Bromsgrove, who had not been paid. ERIC LEWIS' cunning knew no bounds for he had decided that "As Time goes by" allowed him to show items he had acquired to further enhance the exotic material he already had. Thus he now had a notice relating to a quicker sea route to the Cape of Good Hope - not the one in Birmingham - which proved that a letter in Eric's possession went on the first sailing of the service. Undoubtedly the 'piece de resistance', developing the theme of three seater privvies that had featured in an earlier display, was an illustration of a five-in-a-row water closet. This amazing invention had a brief heyday for it was discovered that a piece of burning paper could be persuaded to float from the cistern end, under consecutive seats, to the distant discharge. This gave added value to the expression "in the hot seat" but what it had to do with postal history was a little hazy. It must have seemed apposite on bonfire night.

RICHARD FARMAN had us believe that 'time' could be equated to 'transport' though the first item, a letter of 1706 seeking a church for the neglected souls of Birmingham, had little to do with either. Thereafter, however, we saw examples of letters taken by Pickfords van, by canal to Middlewich, by sailing ship, by the Shropshire Union Railway, by Clyde steamer, by the 'Mammoth' balloon and by the Graf Zeppelin. Amongst these, there was a little gem - part of the wrapper of the very first parcel posted at Swithland in 1884. (it is noticeable that everyone now includes Leics items in the hope that the Editor will give them star billing.) TREVOR CLEWLEY, as befits a postal historian of his status, knew exactly what the topic of the day was intended to convey and received top marks for relevance. He also showed commendable restraint, mounting just 24 items on his nine sheets. The subject was the time codes of 1893-95, although one example from West Bromwich was clearly dated 1910. Of particular note were some Llandudno duplexes with hybrids of 'time in code' and 'time in clear'.

DAVID HARDWICK'S displays are usually beyond the comprehension of your scribe and this one seemed to consist of items from a motorcycle museum and a 'Which Computer' show that had nothing to do with either, let alone the topic of the day. One believes them to have been the output of bizarre franking machines made by Pitney Bowes, Frama and, for all we know, Perkins Bacon and Petch. However, for simpletons among us, he included some hilarious envelopes variously mis-addressed to Daventry, which (if one envelope is to be believed) is in "North Ants". Pride of place went to a letter from Denmark addressed as follows:

PIA HAEFRD, THE READ LOGLDGE POETSVAG, NELNERHA nr DAVNTRY, NORT THANSS nn116HH

No postal service that can deliver that (and Royal Mail did) deserves to be privatised. David ended with a display of large plastic sacks with 'Same Day' or some such logo printed on them. One took these to be laundry bags purloined from the Daventry Little Chef but he claimed they related to a new city postal service whereby, on payment of the equivalent of about half a day's wages, Royal Mail can send your letter in a Sinclair C5 and have it at its destination 3 miles away by 6 p.m.

Since David had showed about 19 sheets (if you count plastic bags as sheets), HAROLD WILSON limited himself to just five. These concerned the first and third trials of the Azemar stamping machine and included a letter from Azemar to Wilhelm Ree which appeared to show that (contrary to Stitt Dibden's conclusions) both Azemar and Ree were mere agents and that the producers of the 'Azemar machine' were probably Fischer and Nass in Germany. We saw a cover of April 1869 with the segments made up correctly and another of June 1869 with two second segments (it being generally agreed that the machine was supplied with two sets of five segments). A strike from the third and final trial of 1871/3 showed no trace of an outer ring for the dated portion.

JOHN BRADNOCK revealed that neither time nor date went by during the postmen's work to rule in 1964 when letters were stamped without proof of either. During the occupation of the Channel Islands in WWII, a different problem beset the GPO. As the Wermacht were speeding across from France in 1940, no one in the Jersey post office had the foresight to order '1' or '2' date slugs for the succeeding years. Being of British stock, they were not easily thwarted and mauled the '0' of '40' to make '41' and then made their own slugs (doubtless from bits cut off parked Stuka divebombers) to muddle through the war. John concluded with 'last day of £-s-d' covers of 29th February 1972 when the staff on the TPOs obligingly cancelled anything put in front of them - Victorian, Edwardian or whatever. DEREK SMEATHERS assured us, in contrast, that the topic of the day was best related to gaols where time passes ever so slowly. Derek's 'gaol' was actually a concentration camp of WWI set up, in 1914, behind Eastcote House, Northampton. Life there was gentlemanly until its status was changed to that of a prisoner of war camp when the residents gloated over the loss of the Lusitania. We saw mail from the camp and a postcard of its wooden dining hall which went on to become 'the Palais' and then a garage. The historic structure was said to be saved in the 1950s by cladding it wth brick but Derek reported that a recent visit had proved the mummy's tomb to be minus mummy. Woodworm fugit?

ALAN GODFREY was another who paid some heed to the chosen subject. He illustrated the changes that had taken place at Alcester post office since a letter of 1727 for Studley was "to be left at the post house in Alcester". Covers and postcards were used to illustrate the various sites occupied by the post office from its first position at the Swan Inn (a letter of 1759) right up to 1963 when a 'contemporary' (i.e. totally out of place) modern building came to grace the High Street. Elizabeth Lewis set out to show that young Victorian ladies passed their time, not by thinking up impossible subjects for nine sheet displays, but by making delightful colourings, drawings and patterns with English, French and Dutch postage stamps. We also saw a newspaper of 6th May 1840 describing the Post Office's new offerings as "a most disgraceful production" and such immoderate remarks can only have encouraged the fertile imaginations of those who drew the several Mulready caricatures on display. As JOHN CALLADINE began with a postcard sent from Nuneaton to Leicester, hopes were raised only to be dashed when the picture proved to be, not of either town but of Stourbridge town centre. What followed was intended to be loosely bound together by the Stourbridge town clock, manufactured at John Bradley's Stourbridge Ironworks in 1857. Across the road from the clock was Bate and Robins Bank, and a printed Mulready banker's advice note originated there. Much mail addressed to John Bradley's survived the company's bonfire of its archives in the 1940s and John showed entires with the numbered Maltese crosses of London. As befits the Society's president, standing in for the chairman on the day, CHRIS BEAVER saved his contributions to the end. It was an apt one, too, for Chris included items from 1594 to 1994 at approximately fifty year intervals. There was a cracking first type mileage mark of Newcastle (1784), a very scarce '662' cancel of Shirleywich (1845), some pristine village rubbers (1897) and a POW item (1946) - to mention those that caught the eye. Considering that he has just retired and moved from a vast vicarage to a dwelling more relevant to the average Society member, one marvels that he even found his nine sheets, let alone found time to display them.

WJC

THE DECEMBER MEETING

Such was the spirit of bonhomie at the Bass Museum and so good the lunch arranged by Richard Farman that it was rather later than scheduled when we sat down to see Bob Swarbrick's display on the Royal Marines. What a superb and fascinating display it turned out to be, covering the history of the Marines from their inception to recent activities. Your reporter was unequal to the task of describing all that we saw and so will mention just a few of the items that Bob showed after he had given us a brief outline of how the Marines came into being.

From 1762, there was a letter describing the march south to Plymouth of a group who were to join a draft which sailed to take part in the battle for Belle Isle. It was as a result of this action that the laurel wreath was incorporated into the regimental emblem. We saw a letter of 1802 from Thomas, Second Baron Lowndes accepting the stewardship of the 'Marine Society' - the registered charity for the widows of marines. A letter sent in 1822 from Sligo, rated 2/1 and showing the Sligo/103 mileage mark, described the terrible poverty and food shortages in Ireland. A 500 mile overland journey made by a First Lieutenant Heaslop and 76 officers and men sent in support of a battalion of R.M.L.I. was described in a letter sent from Orizaba, Mexico in 1862. A "Smart Money" certificate showed that £1.2.0. had been paid to secure the discharge of one recruit.

A number of letters showed the concessionary rates including one sent in 1829 by a private in the Portsmouth barracks. Another concessionary letter, sent by a marine in 1806 to his girlfriend Elisabeth Worsel in Dudley, was endorsed "To be Left At Ann Norrods Kingswinford, Near Dudley". Amongst a number of covers from the Second Opium War, showing the various rates, was one sent to Canton in 1859 showing a charge of ninepence.

Bob began the second half of his display by looking at the activities in WWI of the Royal Marines Artillery. There were three letters from a Q-ship, and postcards from Ascension where marines guarded the radio shack. These were followed by cards showing all the handstamps from the guns in the howitzer brigade.

Next, it was the turn of the Royal Marines Infantry, beginning with an internee postcard from Holland. The activities of the marines in the area of Scapa flow were dealt with comprehensively by means of censor marks etc. In particular your reporter liked the Krag cancellation with XXXXXX/XXXXXX in the dater die. So intense was the cold in the winter months that a turn of duty for the gun crews was only an hour.

During the Dardanelles campaign the Aegean island of Mudros was used as a staging post and later as a point to which the marines withdrew. Of postal history interest were letters carried by the Dispatch Rider Letter Service.

Further letters and cards showed that marines were present in Russia in 1919 when various countries sent troops to help those opposing the Bolsheviks.

Mail from Ceylon, India, Burma and Tobruk illustrated the wide ranging activities of the Marines in WWII. More recent campaigns in Cyprus, Aden, Belize and the Falklands were dealt with in a similar manner.

In his vote of thanks, Guy Bridges commented on depth of research that had gone into a wide range of very interesting material on a most unusual topic.

Our thanks are due to Richard Farman for again arranging a most enjoyable day in Burton. I am unable to say if, as last year, we exhausted the stock of the special Christmas Ale.

THE JANUARY MEETING

"A Winter's Tale" was the topic for the nine sheet displays at our meeting on 14th January. The subject presented no difficulty to DEREK SMEATHERS for he produced a range of letters sent at Christmas. One of 1789 had a bishopmark for 25th December; one of 1799 was sent from Brixworth and a third was a 'free' from Brackley. However to make sure that he was mentioned in this report Derek included a cover that was back-stamped at Market Harborough on 25th December. TREVOR CLEWLEY totally ignored the topic for the day, declaring that there is no such thing as winter in Streetly - an unrecorded example of global warming? This strange meteorological phenomenon did, however, enable him to produce a penny black on cover with a strike of the Upper Parade/Leamington handstamp. That was followed by a number of duplexes including one from Stoke in which the '7' of '547' appeared to be missing. Trevor was unable to explain how a letter sent from Middletown to Criggion, about four miles away, ended up on the Shrewsbury-Aberystwyth S.C. Finally, he ensured a mention by including a Leicester machine cancellation with the B.I.F. slogan on a Blood Transfusion Service form. A Melton Mowbray penny post item would have been better, but I suppose it will do.

RICHARD FARMAN was obviously desperate to ensure that his name appeared in this report for all nine sheets were devoted to the extra charges levied for delivery in the Ashby-de-la-Zouch area. He gave some spurious reason why these should be linked with winter, but we are not convinced. Of note was a letter sent in 1809 to the person in charge of the French prisoners of war who were housed in the town. ERIC LEWIS showed letters from the local posts of Ludlow along with receipts from appropriate inns. Many of these had apparently come into his possession as a result of trips into deepest Shropshire last winter. It was difficult to see any relationship between the day's topic and ELIZABETH LEWIS' nine sheets but we will forgive her for they were thoroughly entertaining, consisting of unusual addresses and manuscript endorsements. A letter sent in 1820 to Shrewsbury was endorsed "Have the goodness to deliver this tonight"; another sent from Wolverhampton to Mortimer's Cross was marked "Don't Detain this Letter in Leominster".

The next speaker, JOHN CALLADINE, was having no truck with deviation from the subject for his display was based upon the winter of 1839-40, the period of the Uniform Fourpenny Post. Although he could not manage a first day cover, he did show one from the third day and one from the last day. The latter had the Stourbridge cds with the date inverted. CHRIS BEAVER started with material from WWI such as APO and censor marks on the grounds that the abiding images of that conflict are of winter. He then finished with mailcoaches in winter scenes on postcards, and postal scenes on the Christmas cards he had received - postal history for a recession?

JOHN SOER scored full marks for sheer deviousness and nought for postal history content. He tried to justify showing his usual rubbish (no, not the National Curriculum) by reference to Act IV, Scene II of 'The Winter's Tale' - "My traffic is sheets; ...a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles..". HAROLD WILSON showed some recent acquisitions, beginning with an early copy of the Railway Times and a newspaper containing an account of manned flight by air balloon. The latter involved chemical experiments which, today, would give the Health and Safety Executive apoplexy. This was followed by three real gems, missent marks of TPOs - the Gloster and Tamworth, the London & Birmingham, and the York & Newcastle. Was it meant to be a comment on the weather in the Channel Islands when ROGER BROOMFIELD started by telling us about a holiday there? Then he went on to Herefordshire skeletons such as 1839 Ledbury, 1839 Knighton, 1840 Hereford. At least his final item, a rare mileage mark of Leintwardine, has a connection with winter which the crossword fans will spot. DENIS SALT showed a family correspondence which was notable for a number of Ship Letter marks such as London, Plymouth and Portsmouth as well as a disinfected letter. MIKE YOUNG rounded off the afternoon with a display of all the first type mileage marks of Worcestershire. Eight different varieties were used at Worcester; two at Bewdley; three at Kidderminster.

TWO CORRECTIONS TO THE LOCAL POSTS BOOK

Two illustrations (MLP246 and MLP248) on page 120 (Tewkesbury) have been transposed. The index on page 353 also requires amendment, the first line to read (type) '3' in lieu of '4' and the third line to read '4' in lieu of '3'.

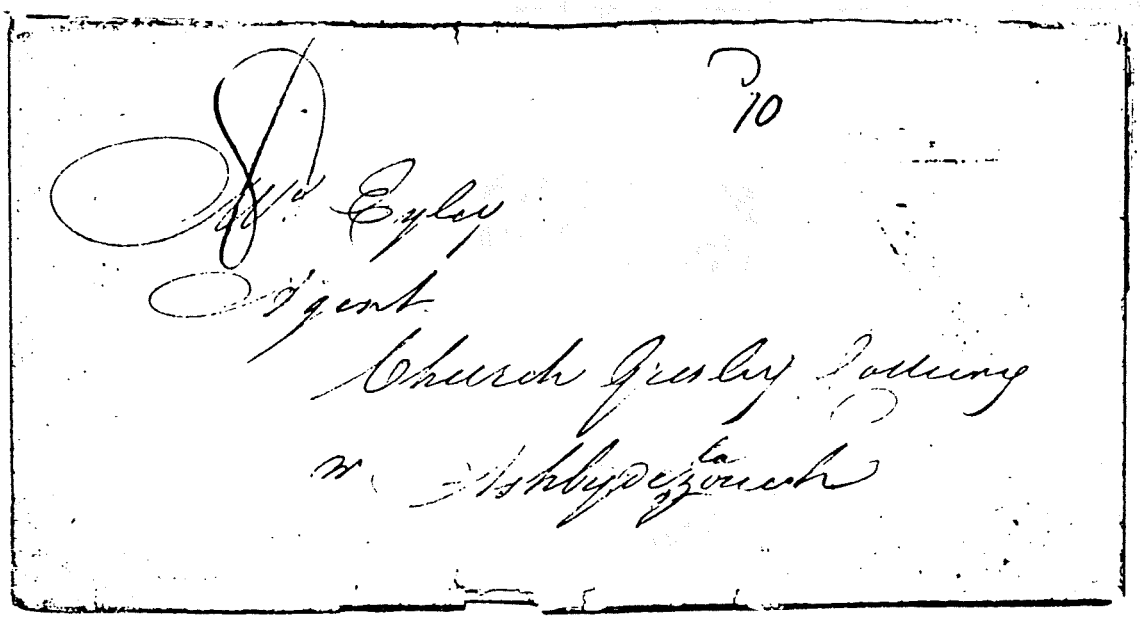
Members may wish to correct an error on page 293. The usage in black of MLP902 in the Coventry Penny Post should be amended to read '27APR26' in lieu of '24MAR16'.

*****

A LOCAL DELIVERY CHARGE

At the last Stampex, the only cover I found that was worth buying is that shown below. The letter was written at Foleshill in March 1834. It shows a poor strike of the 'Coventry/Py Post' and a red/orange line between the last two letters of 'Post' which is presumably all that was struck of the boxed No. 7 of the Foleshill receiving house.

What interests me is the 10d shown near the top of the cover. The charge of 8d represents the penny post rate plus that of 7d for from 30 to 50 miles. So does a charge of 10d represent a 2d fee for an unofficial post from Ashby to Church Gresley? I am always wary of drawing conclusions of this nature until I have seen at least two covers marked in the same way. Does anyone have covers in their collection to Church Gresley showing a similar charge.





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THE LEDBURY PENNY POST

by Roger Broomfield

Question - Why are items from the Ledbury Penny Post like London buses?

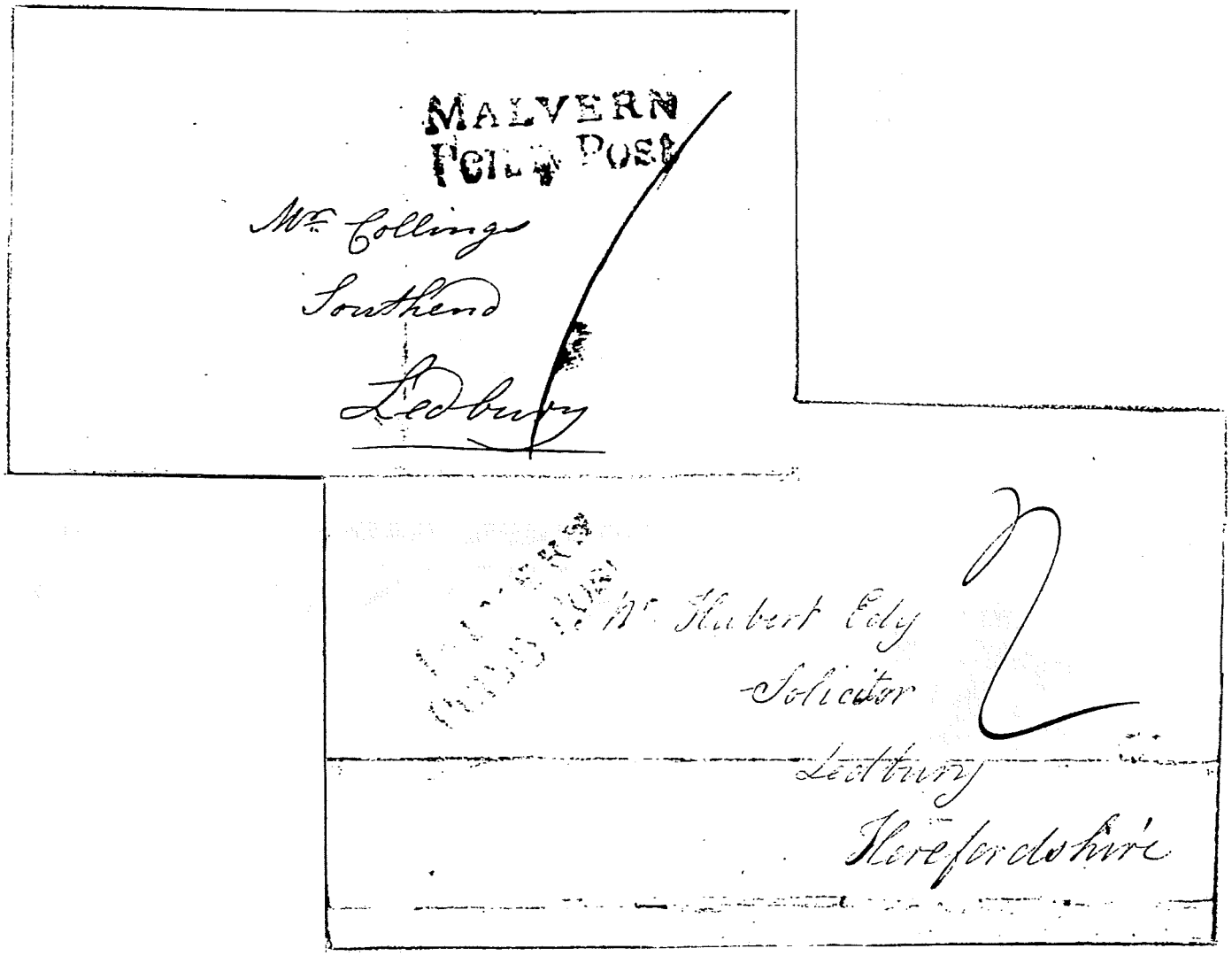
Answer - You don't see one for a long tine and then they come along in twos!

The only item from the Ledbury Penny Post with a Malvern Penny Post handstamp previously known was that shown on page 149 of 'The Local Posts of the Midland Counties to 1840'.

At the last Stampex our eagle-eyed Coordinating Editor spotted another - also addressed to Ledbury but this time with a 1d charge and dated 9th January 1826. I am pleased to say that this item is now in my collection.

Whilst talking to a friend of mine in Malvern, I happened to mention this item and was amazed to learn that he had "several" penny post items in his possession. (He is a Malvern man and very interested in the history of the town.) I was even more amazed to learn that one of these Malvern Penny Post items was addressed to Ledbury and turns out to be almost the twin of the one shown in the book. Like the one in the book, his was charged at 2d. It was dated 26 August 1831.

Illustrations of the two newcomers are shown below. If anyone knows the whereabouts of a letter sent to Ledbury between 1822 and 1840, and bearing a Malvern Wells Penny Post handstamp, please let me know.



A NORTHAMPTON TRIAL

Derek Smeathers has kindly sent, in response to my comment in MM87/7 para 3, the following extract from the Northampton Mercury of Saturday 10th March 1804.

"At the Court of Assize John Chettle was indicted for stealing a letter containing bank notes and bills of exchange out of the post office at Wellingborough, but this charge fell to the ground upon examination of Miss Thomas by Sargeant Vaughan, the prisoner's counsel, who had a model of the letter box produced in Court; and Miss Thomas acknowledged in reply to a question put to her by Mr. Vaughan that, from the construction of the box, it was possible the letter in question might have slipped back from her hands through the hole the letters were usually put in at, into the gateway of the inn, while she was taking them out to make up the bag. The prisoner was then indicted for stealing the contents of the letter (supposing that he might have found it in the gateway of the inn) - here the learned Judge took occasion to say that it could not be too generally known that any person finding a letter, parcel or other article that had either a written direction or other mark, pointing out the owner thereof, and who instead of restoring, should withhold and apply the contents to his own use, was guilty of stealing the same.
Several witnesses were examined in support of the indictment. A ten Pound Bank of England Note was proved to have been uttered by the prisoner in Wellingborough a few hours after the loss of the letter, which note corresponded in number, date and appearance (having been cut round the edges) with a note of the same value sworn to have been enclosed in the letter by the traveller to Messrs. Mander and Bacon of Wolverhampton who previously copied the description of it into his journey book, but was not correct in the name of the clerk of the Bank by whom it was signed; this variation naturally threw a doubt upon the minds of the Jury respecting the identity of the note, and they accordingly returned a verdict of: Not Guilty."

Derek goes on to say that the inn mentioned at Wellingborough was the Hind in the town centre. Its outer structure is still largely unchanged, and it sounds as though the 'window' was inside the covered coach entrance into the rear courtyard - in the trial referred to as the 'gateway'

Whilst looking through the pages of the Mercury, Derek turned up two items of interest. One gave details of "The National Lottery Draw"; the first prize was ONE THOUSAND pounds. The second reported that, at Oxford, a George Payne who had been found guilty of "feloniously secreting a letter" and taking from it a ten pound note was fined one shilling and sentenced to two years in the House of Correction. This shows what the smart lawyer had saved John Chettle from in the case at Northampton.

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THE SMALL BIRMINGHAM RECEIVING HANDSTAMPS INTRODUCED FOR A SHORT TIME IN THE LATE 1850s

by Elizabeth and Eric Lewis

During the period of use of the 25 mm sans-serif double arc stamp on mail coming into Birmingham, several new handstamps were brought temporarily into use in the late 1850s. These were undoubtedly of an experimental nature, varying appreciably in format and each used for a very limited period.

Illustrations with notes of each type are given below and most are to be found struck in blue and black.

All are appreciably smaller than the above mentioned double arc stamps, none being greater than 21 mm but none are as small as the true Cresswell stamps used for undated circles during this period.

It is surprising to find that two of the types have seriffed lettering although the general use of such had fallen out of favour some years previously.



Double circle with code letters A to G possibly to identify the clerk who used the handstamp during a particular duty.



Single circle with index numeral 2 in base. Code letter normally A but L also seen.



As previous item but index numeral 3 (no number 1 or any other index number has been seen.)



Short arc broken by the year. Code letter and index numeral in upper portion of stamp. Only index number 3 seen but code letters vary.



Double arc only 19 mm diameter. Code letter in the top. Only code A seen.



Single circle with R.T. in the base and a code letter at the top.

The last item with R.T. in the base is a mystery. We have only one example but Martin Willcocks had previously told us that he has two, both with R.T. in the base. For what do these letters stand? Can any member suggest an answer?

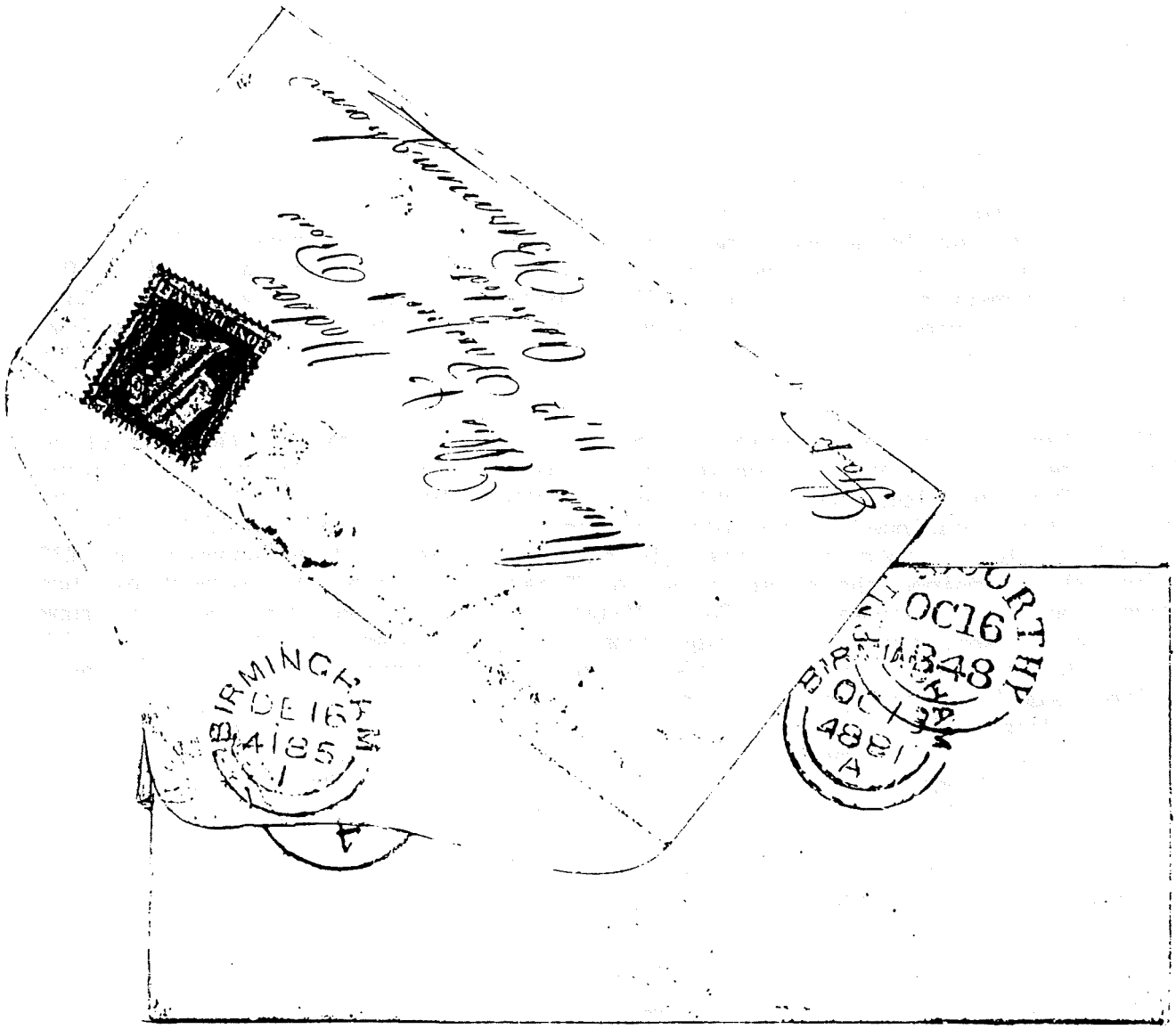
A very late use, in December 1861, of the seriffed single circle has turned up. This is well outside its normal period of use and may have been a recut as the lettering appears larger, the first few letters actually touching the circular frame.



These handstamps are well worth looking out for. All are scarce but are often overlooked being receipt stamps on the back of otherwise common covers and their variety enables an interesting side-line collection to be developed.

Other types may exist as we have never particularly searched for these marks which by their nature are normally found under other counties in dealers stocks.

Reverting back to the normal 25 mm double arc stamps of the period a couple of late uses are shown below. Has anyone a later use?



G.B. POSTAL HISTORY

ALSO: Some Foreign, Ephemera, Post Boxes - etc.

Wants Lists - for specific items or for general interests - will receive my personal attention

JIM HAMMOND

5 Staverton Rd, Daventry
Northants. NN11 4HL.
Tel. Daventry (0327) 71842

PAYMENTS TO SURVEYORS

by Rev. Christopher Beaver

The question was raised in connection with Samuel Woodcock's illness whether his salary in 1803 was as little as £150 p.a. (MM86/18). It sounds unlikely, particularly in view of Freeling's statement that surveyors had formerly been paid "£400 and £350 certain". But it was so. Indeed it had quite recently been raised from the £100 on which he had been since 1785 when he had begun as one of John Palmer's surveyors. The lower figure was officially determined in 1787 but made retrospective. The higher figure began to operate (it would appear) when he ceased to be also postmaster of Gloucester in May 1800.

Freeling's report of 9th May 1803 indicates that Woodwock and other surveyors of the "new establishment" normally had other income. The expectation was that the payment of a guinea a day when away from home would induce them "to be in their districts", that sum being more than enough to cover their expenses. Payment for the actual cost of coach hire had been made in addition since September 1792. They also had stationery and free postage. That special payment of 50 guineas to "poor Mr Woodcock" was evidently for the six months when he had been working but confined to his chamber, nothing to cover the previous three months when he had been confined to his bed.

What Freeling does not mention is that one of the surveyors of the "old establishment" remained in office, George Hodgson in the Northern District of England, and apart from the "formerly" in this report nothing has been seen to suggest that he may not have continued on the old scale until his retirement in 1809. Back in 1720, Ralph Allen's contract included the payment by him of three surveyors on £300 p.a. and that remained the salary when the Treasury approved the payment of three surveyors out of the revenue in 1764. Hodgson had begun that year as a supernumerary surveyor and, though still supernumerary at the time, was on £300 by 1768. From 1783 his salary was raised to £400. The senior surveyor in Scotland, Francis Ronaldson, similarly rewarded, did transfer a few years later to the "new establishment", but Hodgson like the always uncooperative Johnson Wilkinson (he remained on £350) held out for he terms of his existing contract. In their reviews of salary scales and establishment posts Commissioners in 1787 and the PMGs in 1791 wanted to have Wilkinson on £100 and Hodgson on £150 salaries, plus the daily allowance when away from home, £150 being the same as for George Western the only "new establishment" surveyor who was not then a postmaster. The surveyors' journals instituted in 1792 were of course the means by which allowances were claimed and granted. In the same year, that a guinea a day was reckoned as amounting to an average of £275 p.a. - that is about 260 days away.

These inducements to travel continued until the 1850s. Meanwhile the salary scale had been revised several times. In 1821 (when Samuel Woodcock was still the surveyor of the South Wales District), for the first seven years a surveyor was on £240, the next seven on £300, thereafter on £350, plus the allowance of 26/- a day regardless of length of service, plus the actual cost of coach hire. In 1832, the only difference from this was that 8d a mile was paid rather than the actual cost of travel. About 1838 the salary scale was changed to £300 for the first seven years, £400 thereafter. In 1857 the starting salary became £500, with annual increments of £25 to a maximum of £700.

One other special payment to surveyors must be mentioned since Woodcock was involved. An annual inspection of the dead and refused letter accounts in the penny posts of Bristol, Birmingham and Manchester was rewarded with a £30 bonus to the surveyors of the South Wales, North Wales and Midland Districts. This began from 1793 and came to be treated as a right, yet similar duties elsewhere attracted no such payments. When Woodcock was about to retire in 1822, George Louis, then surveyor of the Western District, applied to take on the Bristol responsibility, Bristol

being on the border of their districts. Freeling on his own authority informed him that Woodcock's successor would do it for no extra payment. The PMGs thereupon agreed that all these privilege payments should cease on the retirement or death of the incumbent surveyors of those districts. In the event, both Benjamin Churchill and George Karstadt continued in post and received the £30 until 1840 when the penny posts ceased, while Charles Rideout did the Bristol account for nothing!

On his retirement Samuel Woodcock was awarded £375 p.a. superannuation. He died "at a very advanced age" on 3rd October 1829, upon which Sir Francis was moved to comment: "There never was a better man or more zealous public figure."

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THE SURVEYORS' JOURNALS (Part 14)

Mr Saverland spent virtually the whole of January 1805 at Shrewsbury, putting in a new deputy. From there he went to Cheshire before returning home on 8th February. Seventeen days later, he went to Hinckley to give directions for a bag to be made up every morning for Nuneaton which was to be dropped off and taken up by the guard of the mailcoach at the Harrow turnpike gate. He told the gatekeeper that she would be paid one guinea a year for her care of the bags and keeping them locked up.

For most of March, Mr Saverland was at home making out lists of the new rates of postage for all the offices in his district but on the 24th he went to Coventry to attend the trial at the assizes of "Solomons, a jew" who had been found passing several notes stolen out of the Market Drayton bag when the Chester mailcoach was robbed near Barnet in 1803. He makes no mention of the fact that he met Mr Western in Leicester on about the 20th of the month.

There is little of note in the journal for April. He spent the last three days of the month inspecting the Northampton office before embarking on a tour of offices in Buckinghamshire. On his way home he called at Daventry and Southam. Three weeks later, he returned to Daventry to find someone to carry the bags to and from Southam since the person recommended by the people of Southam and its neighbourhood had given notice to quit on account of "the Gentlemen not paying the Subscriptions they had promised, for conveying the Bags, three additional days a week." He found a person to carry the Southam bag to and from Daventry on three days a week for the office allowance. Also, he instructed the deputy at Daventry to send the Dunchurch letters by the Liverpool Heavy Coach (a stagecoach), having previously arranged with the proprietors to pay the coachmen two guineas a year for "their care & trouble in leaving the Bags at Dunchurch." He then went on to tell the receiver and people of Dunchurch about this measure - "with which they were well pleased."

From 5th to 14th June, Mr Saverland was in London consulting Freeling about a proposal to run a mailcoach direct from London to Holyhead by way of Coventry, Shrewsbury and Capel Curig. Their conclusion was that such a coach would "materially derange our present establishment of Mail Coaches on the Chester & Shrewsbury lines of Road; increase the expence of conveyance to & from Ireland & only occasionally accelerate the correspondence from that part of the Kingdom to London & a small part of the Cross Roads, which might be effected by means less expensive than a Mail Coach to run over the whole line of Road."

He had scarcely arrived home than he was setting out for Coventry to inquire about an anonymous letter posted there and sent to London. From Coventry he travelled to Newport, Shropshire as he had been informed that the deputy there had been dead for some months and that the family was carrying on the business. On arrival there, he found that the postmistress was alive and well but her mother had died. At Oswestry, his next point of call, he arranged for a David Jones to be committed to Shrewsbury gaol to await trial concerning the loss of a bill stolen out of a

letter sent from Oswestry to Chester. After he had made further enquiries in Cheshire, he returned home on 9th July.

On the following day, he went to a bank in Lutterworth to see if one of their £10 notes, stolen out of a letter from Kington, had been presented for payment. When he found that the note had not been received there he obtained a promise that "particular attention might be paid to any Person offering it."

Another stolen bill demanded Mr Saverland's attention in mid-August. A postboy had been arrested at Newcastle-under-Lyme for stealing a £15 bill out of a letter. Mr Saverland was anxious that the magistrates should not fully commit the accused for trial as the assizes were about to begin and most of the witnesses lived in Cumberland. However, on his arrival in the evening of 11th August, he found that the postboy had been fully committed and sent off to Stafford on foot in the care of a single constable. On the 13th, the constable returned with the information that his prisoner had escaped between Stone and Stafford.

This business was interrupted by his attending the trial at Shrewsbury Assizes of the David Jones mentioned above who was capitally convicted.

On his return to Stafford, Mr Saverland presented Bills of Indictment against the High Constable for allowing an escape and against the prisoner for escaping. However, the bills were thrown out as the Petty Constable had followed the advice of a Mr Heath, a lawyer of Newcastle, and run away. When the judge was informed of this he recommended an application to the Court of the King's Bench that Heath be struck off the Roll.

Mr Saverland spent virtually the whole of September and most of October in charge of the Newport, Shropshire office as the postmistress had resigned.

Two missing letters were investigated in November. One of these, sent to Ruthin, was said to have contained a £50 and two £10 Bank of England notes. Towards the end of the month he met Mr Western in Leicester to consider five applications for posts in Lancashire.

There is nothing concerning the Midlands in the December journal.

The 6th January 1805 found Mr western in Loughborough where the deputy had resigned. From there he went to Bakewell to investigate an accusation that charges had been levied on two letters sent "post paid" from London. Then he was forced to spend two weeks at the Macclesfield office as the deputy was insolvent.

His next business in the Midlands was at Bakewell where he spent the first two weeks of March in charge of the office. A journey to Loughborough to install a new postmaster was fruitless as the arrangement had to be postponed, "some difficulties" having occurred. However, Loughborough was on the way to Leicester where he met Mr Saverland to discuss plans for improving the posts between Buxton, Macclesfield and Liverpool. After one day at home, he set out for Lancaster to attend the trial of the Manchester letter carrier.

On 6th April, he left Lancaster for London which he reached on the 8th. Apart from four days on leave in Dover, he remained at the GPO until 1st May.

Over two weeks in May were taken up in instructing a new postmaster at Loughborough from where he went to Leicester to inquire about a number of missing letters sent from places as far apart as Newcastle-on-Tyne and Launceston. There then followed his third visit of the year to Bakewell where the deputy had died. He was not able to appoint a replacement immediately as objections were made about the salary and the pay for the rides, so he went on to Buxton to prepare for the ride to Macclesfield which was to start on 6th June. The next two weeks were spent in

dealing with the rearranged posts and he visited, amonst other places, Knutsford, Liverpool and Bakewell.

Mr Western had no official business in the Midlands during the next three months. Apart from various matters in Lancashire and Yorkshire, much time was taken up in carrying out, with Mr Bartlett, a reorganisation of the posts in Lincolnshire.

In October, there was only a brief foray to Oakham to look into an application that the post from Stamford to Oakham should go by the home of Mr Gerard Noel at Exton.

On 18th November, Mr Western went to Buxton as the contractor for the ride to Monksheath had given notice that he would quit on 5th December unless his pay was increased. Then followed yet another visit to Bakewell; this time because the post-mistress had married. Mr Western reported that her husband was a fit person to be the postmaster. The last four days of the month were spent at Leicester meeting Mr Saverland.

In his report on the riding work in November, Mr Western commented that the late arrivals of the mailcoaches from London had caused a number of problems. He had directed that the Sheffield bag for Manchester should be sent via Derby. Also, as the London mail was often too late at Derby for the coach to Sheffield the Alfreton bag had been repeatedly sent on to Belper by the Wirksworth rider to be forwarded from there to the Peacock Inn.

Another visit was made to Bakewell in December to instruct a new deputy. We are not told if this was the husband of the previous postmistress.

Unlike the journals of his colleagues, those of Mr Woodcock from this period are very brief with little detail. The start of 1805 found him in South Wales but on his way home he inspected the new post on the line of road: Chepstow, Lydney and Newnham.

There was nothing of note on a survey, which took up a week in February, through Tewkesbury, Pershore, Evesham, Alcester, Stratford and Warwick during which he "settled the rides between Stratford & Warwick and Stratford & Keinton."

The journal for March is missing.

For the first seven days of April, Mr Woodcock was in Oxford trying to find a new contractor for the ride to Abingdon and Wantage but nobody was willing to under-take it at as low a price as the previous contractor so Mr Woodcock agreed new terms with him. During the last five days of April he visited the New Passage, Chepstow, Ragland, Abergavenny and Brecon, making arrangements for the Gloucester and Carmar-then mailcoach to run daily starting on the first of May.

Mr Woodcock was in Wales during May, June and much of July.

Four days, from 12th August, were spent in arranging for the Gloucester and Hereford coach to go through Ledbury and putting on additional posts between Hereford and Ross, and between Newent and Gloucester.

When Mr Woodcock arrived at Worcester in October, he found that the horses provided for the ride to Bewdley were so inadequate and the business so badly conducted he gave the contractor notice to quit. He also arranged a quickening of the posts between Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, and between Worcester and Bromyard.

Bath was the venue for a meeting with Mr Lott in November to arrange "a more extensive communication thro' the Cross roads" between the two districts.

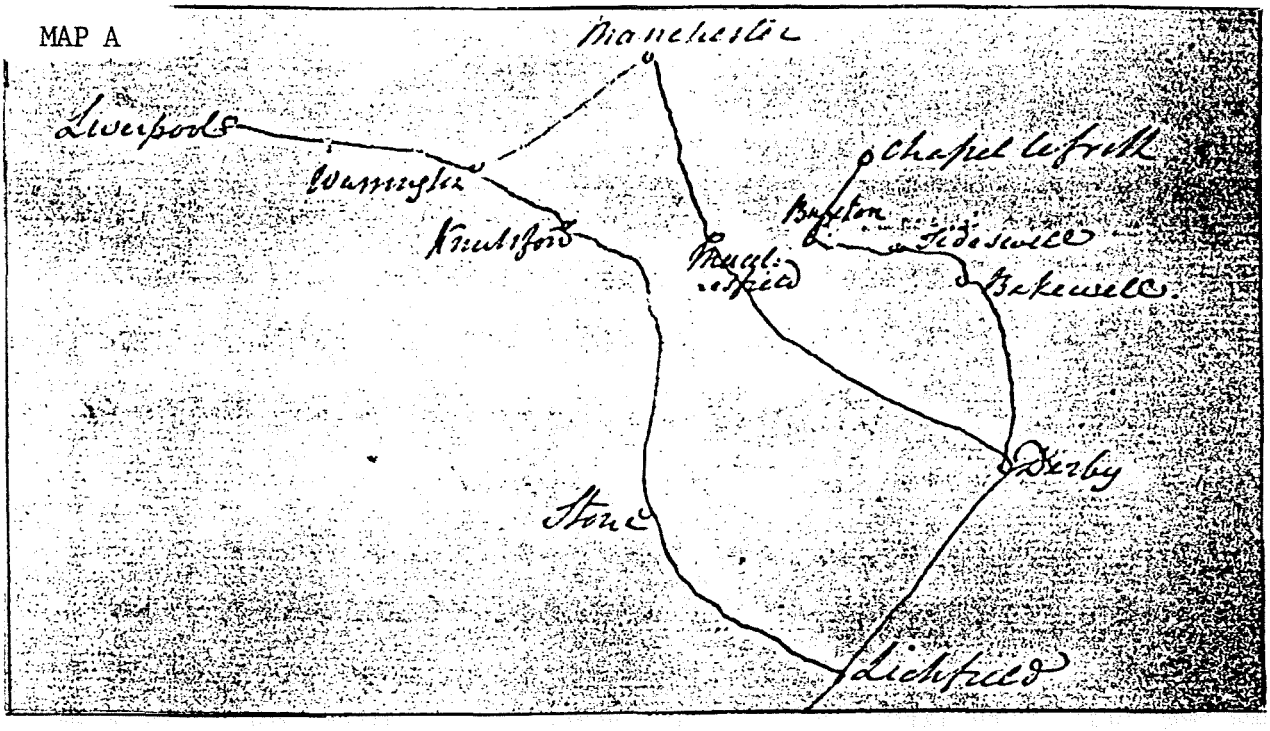
Mr Woodcock was confined to his house by illness for the whole of December.

ADDENDA

BUXTON'S POSTS

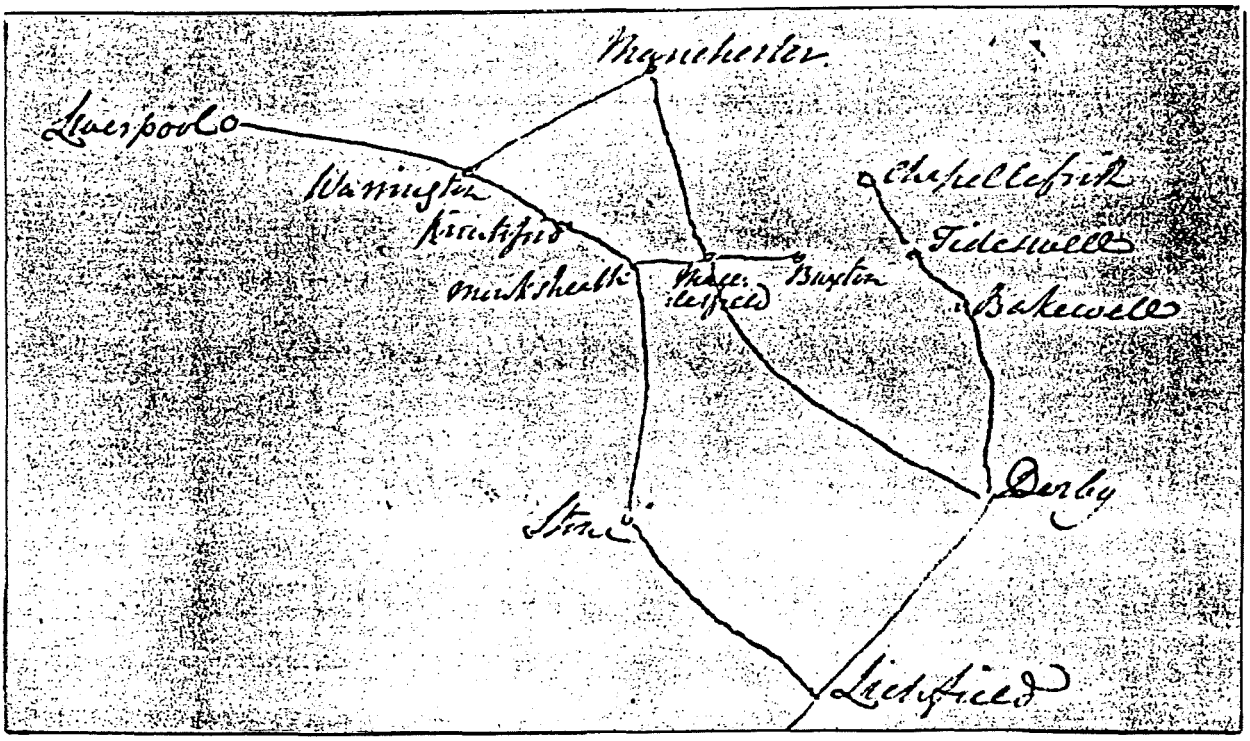
In a letter to Freeling dated 26th April 1805, Mr Western stated that letters from Macclesfield to Buxton or Knutsford and Liverpool were sent by a circuitous route as can be seen from map A below.

MAP A



Mr Western went on to describe a plan, drawn up by him and Mr Saverland, to connect Liverpool and Manchester with Buxton by a ride from Monksheath through Macclesfield. It was also proposed to serve Chapel-en-le Frith from Bakewell instead of Buxton. These posts can be seen on map B.

MAP B



The mailcoach from Liverpool arrived at Monksheath at about 3 a.m., and that from Manchester arrived in Macclesfield about an hour later. So a rider from Monksheath could be in Buxton by 7 a.m. with the bags from those two coaches as well as those from London etc which arrived in Macclesfield the previous evening. If the return post left Buxton at 5 p.m. the rider could be at Macclesfield before the coach went through to Manchester, and at Monksheath before that going to Liverpool at about 9 p.m.

Mr Western said that Chapel-en-le-Frith was not able to answer its letters by return of post but that could be rectified by sending the ride from Bakewell to Chapel instead of Buxton. This would cut off the direct communication between Bakewell and Buxton which amounted to only £1.8.10 a month. He proposed that the postage should be unchanged but Freeling said that it was not possible to charge less than the legal rate according to the distance the letter was carried, and to do otherwise was unusual. He added: "There are now very few instances of the kind."

The postage on letters from London to Buxton would be increased by one penny as the distance would be over 170 miles. Mr Western commented: "..there can be no hardship in this, for Buxton will receive such permanent advantagesfrom this establishment that it can well afford to pay for it,." He went on to say that the postage had been reduced by a penny in 1801 when the letters were sent through Bakewell instead of Sheffield.

Mr Western intended that these changes should come into effect on 6th June, but in a letter from Bakewell dated 1st June he reported that the man who had agreed to do the ride from Buxton to Monksheath, and who had bought horses to do so, now said that he could not do it without making a loss. He ended the letter:

"This circumstance has rather thrown me back, but it must not interfere with the properly serving Buxton as the Company begin to resort thither and will much more so after His Majesty's Birthday. I shall therefore have so much of the arrangement ready by 6th June as will accommodate Buxton tho' the remainder which goes to serve the Macclesfield & Liverpool correspondence may stand over a few days & I will by tomorrow's or Monday's post devise and report some plan of getting over the difficulty without incurring any increased expence if possible."

However, it was the 8th June before he reported from Macclesfield that a solution to the problem was to continue the rides from Buxton to Bakewell and Chapel instead of serving Chapel and Tideswell from Bakewell as he had proposed. The rides to Chapel was done by the man who had contracted to do that to Monksheath. The latter required more than two horses but both rides could be done with three horses. To make the most of this arrangement he proposed to alter the times of the Buxton and Bakewell post. As Bakewell received its London letters through Derby, the post to Buxton could be made to connect with that to Macclesfield so connecting Bakewell and Tideswell as well as Chapel with Manchester and Liverpool etc. In return for this the London letters for Tideswell and Chapel would be 10d instead of 9d. He added in parenthesis "in fact they are now set down at 10d in the new Inland Office sheets of London rates."

References: Post 40/35W/1805
40/73W/1805.

CHANGES CAUSED BY THE DAILY GLOUCESTER TO CARMARTHEN MAILCOACH

As we have seen in Mr Woodcock's journal the Gloucester to Carmarthen mailcoach was made daily on 1st May 1805. On 5th May, the ride from Chepstow to Monmouth was replaced by one from Chepstow to Ragland where it met the mailcoach for the purpose of forwarding the bye bags, on three days a week, between Bristol, Monmouth, Usk, Abergavenny and Brecon by way of the New Passage.

On 28th June, Mr Woodcock wrote that although every possible effort had been made by the postmaster of Chepstow and his rider, the ride had failed so often as to be of little use. Even at that time of the year, it was too late from Ragland to catch the mailboat at the Passage. Consequently, he proposed to dispense with that post and send the letters every day through Gloucester. He added that the communication, over the Passage, between Bristol and the above towns was less necessary than before as no London bags to or from those towns went that way any longer.

Messrs Woodcock and Hasker wrote from Gloucester on 29th July 1805 that as the mailcoach from Gloucester through Ross to Carmarthen was running daily, they proposed to change the route of the Gloucester and Hereford mailcoach so that it went via Ledbury instead of Ross. They gave as their main reason the fact that the Trustees of the Tolls might complain if two mailcoaches went through Ross.

In conjunction with the Worcester and Hereford mailcoach, this alteration would give Ledbury a six-day service by coach from London. Hereford would receive its letters by 7 p.m., rather earlier than before. It was necessary to put on a ride between Ross and Hereford on three days a week as well between Gloucester and Newent, but as the ride from Gloucester to Ledbury via Newent was redundant, the additional cost was only £6.12.0 p.a. It was suggested that these changes should take place on 14th August.

There are two intriguing comments in the letter of Messrs Hasker and Woodcock:

"From an opposition lately set up against Messrs Willan & Heath they are not enabled without great injury to their concerns to run a patent Mail Coach between Gloster & Hereford as we should have succeeded in establishing."

"And we trust that as there is great prospect of the opposition to these concerns being done away before next year that the patent coaches will then be extended to Hereford."

Can anyone tell me to what these comments refer?

References: Post 40/104W/1805
Post 40/24X/1805

COMMUNICATION THROUGH BRISTOL

Messrs Lott and Woodcock wrote to Freeling from Bath in November 1805 proposing that some of the towns on the Great Cross Road such as Birmingham, Worcester and Gloucester should be allowed to communicate with places such as Portsmouth, Salisbury, Southampton and Weymouth by means of the cross posts instead of through London.

They said that a letter from a place such as Portsmouth to town such as Birmingham if sent through Bristol would arrive early on the second morning, giving the whole day for a reply to be prepared. On the other hand, there was little chance of answering by return if the letter was sent via London. A table was enclosed showing the various towns they proposed to include in this measure as well as the cost of a single letter, sent through London or Bristol, to and from each of the places. This is shown on the next page. Unfortunately Wotton-under-Edge was chopped off by the photocopier.

The chart has been reduced from A3 size but I hope it is legible. In case anyone has trouble in reading it, the places across the top are; Birmingham, Stourbridge, Kidderminster, Bewdley, Bromsgrove, Worcester, Leominster, Presteigne, Radnor, Aberystwyth, Ludlow, Bishops Castle Tewkesbury, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Ledbury, Ross, Hereford, Hay, Monmouth, Usk, Abergavenny, Brecon and Llandovery.

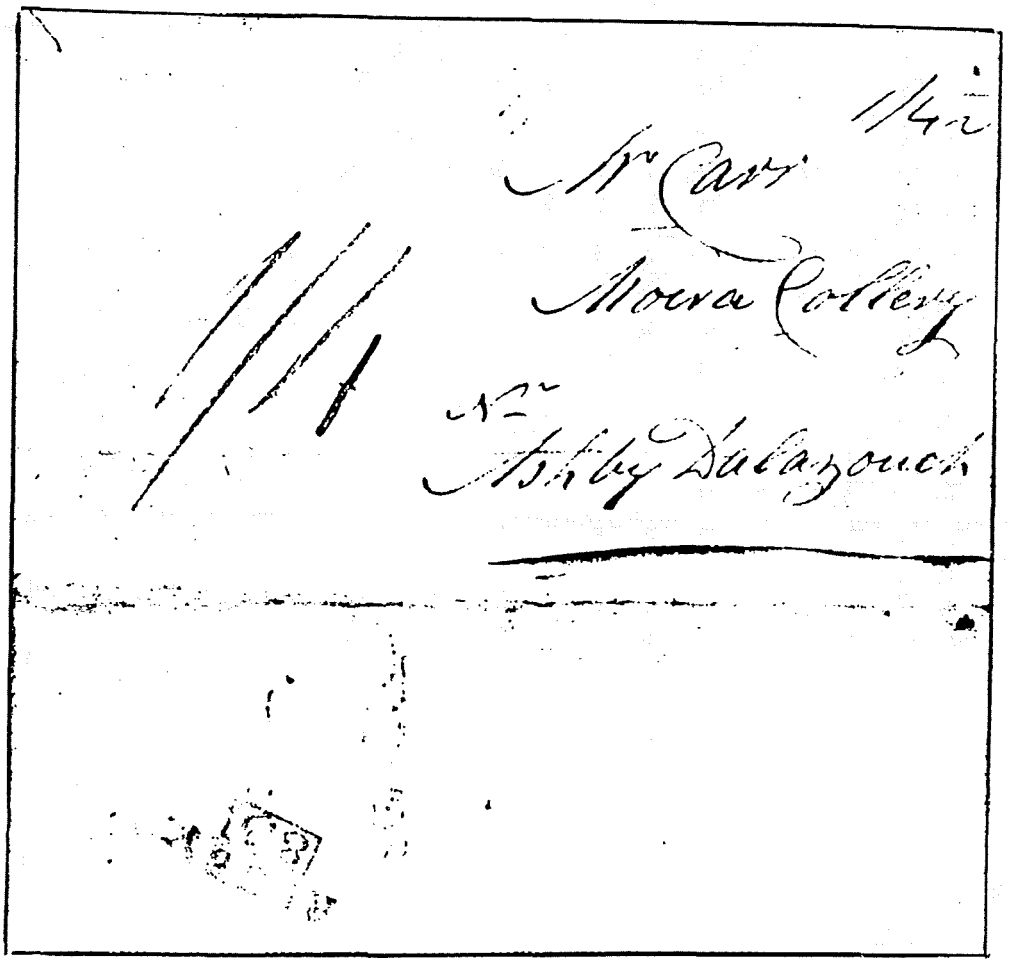
Reference: Post 40/37Y/1805

	Portsmouth	Isle Wight	Southampton	Lymington	Christchurch	Poole	Weymouth	Exeter	Plymouth	Dartmouth	Falmouth	Bristol	Gloucester	Chepstow	Milford	Swansea	Tenby	Aberystwith	Liverpool	Whitehaven	Carlisle	Workington	Cockermouth	Maryport	Parton	Ravenglass	Whitehaven
Barrels Beer																										
Hogsheads Beer																										
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Hogsheads Ale																										
Barrels Cyder																										
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Barrels Mixed Liquors

AN EXTRA HALFPENNY AT ASHBY

The fact that up to 1828 an extra halfpenny was charged for the delivery of each letter at Ashby has been mentioned before in these pages and elsewhere. Richard Farman showed at the January meeting letters, like that below, addressed to villages a few miles from the town. It seems unlikely that as little as ½d would have been charged for delivery to a place about four miles away. I wonder if all letters received through the the Ashby office irrespective of whether they were delivered or collected.

The letter was sent from Rugby in November 1823. Letters showing extra charges like this often are to be found in dealers' stocks under counties different from that to which they are addressed. So I would be grateful if members would be so kind as to let me have details of any letters to Leicestershire, showing extra charges, they may have in their collections.



G.B. COVERS

Do you see my lists of GB cover material? If you don't and are a member of The Midland (GB) Postal History Society, you should! They contain a wide selection of interesting and unusual items - county material, difficult values and rates- from 1840 to date. Send for a copy of my latest list today. All 'Wants Lists' for specific items or county material will receive my personal attention.

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