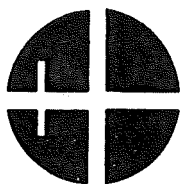


MIDLAND MAIL



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



President: John Soer

Chairman:
Roger Broomfield

Treasurer:
Elizabeth Lewis

Secretary:
Eric Lewis

Number 96, August 1996

COMPETITION WINNERS

I omitted from the report of the A.G.M. in the last issue the names of the competition winners. They were: Jon Baker Trophy for the best article in Midland Mail - Brian Atkins; pre-1840 competition - Eric Lewis; post-1840 section - Roger Broomfield; post-1940 competition - Alan Godfrey. My apologies to all those concerned.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

We start the season with two meetings at which members will have the opportunity to see some very rare material. On 14th September there is a joint meeting with the Somerset and Dorset Postal History at Cranham to celebrate the tercentenary of the Great Cross Post. Details of this meeting are on the enclosed sheet.

Then, on 19th October, Malcolm Ray-Smith will display 'Early G.B. Postal History'. This meeting will be held at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham, starting at 1.30 p.m.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE SHROPSHIRE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The principal speaker at this meeting held on 20th April in Shrewsbury was Harold Wilson whose subject was 'Railways and the Mail'. Harold started with the first handstamps used on the railways which were all 'missents', including a cover of 1838 with a 'MISSENT TO LONDON & BIRMINGHAM RAILWAY OFFICE' as well as a 'MISSENT TO ST. ALBANS' mark. The display continued with various T.P.O. and R.P.O. handstamps, showing the growth of mail carriage on the railways as the network expanded. Various 'Late Fees' of 2d., 4d. and 6d. were shown along with numerous station postmarks; indeed, a great deal of rare and often unique material was displayed by Harold whose knowledge and enthusiasm were very evident as he took us through this fascinating display. We later saw examples of mail carried by the letter service of the railway companies, along with examples of the Railway Air Service.

It is impossible in the space available to describe this marvellous display and do it justice. I can only recommend that anyone who has not seen this display does so if the opportunity arises.

After lunch, some of those attending the meeting gave short displays:

Denis Salt - letters from from an army officer serving in Egypt to his father in Shrewsbury;
Chris Beaver - material from WW I, including letters from conscientious objectors;
Eric Lewis - Inspectors' marks with large and small crowns as well as later erasure marks;
Elizabeth Lewis - Coffee House mail from 1713 and two letters to Chocolate Houses;
Dave Tarry - the postmarks of the Newport sub-offices, including village rubbers;
Guy Bridges - Oswestry material from 1710 to 1820;
Harold Wilson - items connected with the Post Office underground railway.

I am indebted to Jim Ball for providing the above report.

THE SOCIETY'S NEW PROJECT - 'Mileage Marks and Mail Routes of the Midland Counties'.

With the completion of the 4th edition of the UDC book and the major project of the local posts, the Society has considered what new project might be initiated in 1996. While there is, as yet, no target date for the completion of such a project, it is inevitable that we shall be thinking of publishing the results of our research at around the time of the millenium.

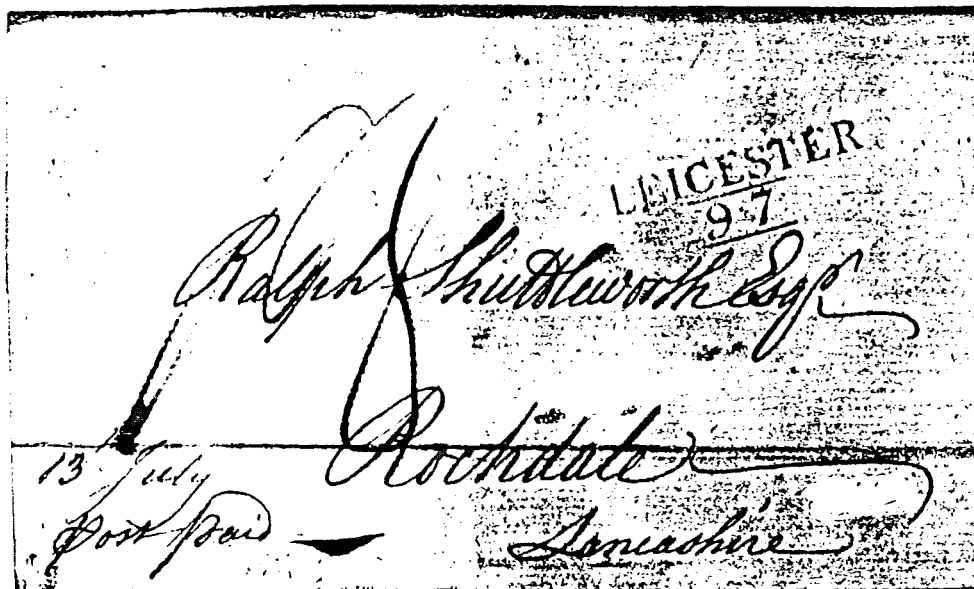
The mid-1780s saw two entirely new developments of major interest to postal historians. The first of these, the introduction of mailcoaches, greatly accelerated the conveyance of letters along the principal mail routes. The second and concurrent development, the introduction of mileage marks, was primarily intended to assist the reassessment of postal charges on letters passing through London but it led to the public becoming more aware of the routes over which their letters were carried (especially if they thought the indicated mileage to London was too high). Mailcoach routes had more effect on that mileage than other factors. However, there were further important influences, particularly affecting the minor offices for, while some had mileage stamps showing the same mileage as the nearest posttown, some were makedly (and deliberately) different, adding a further penny to the General Postage.

We propose, therefore, to undertake a study of mileage marks and mail routes in the Midland counties between 1785 and the demise of mileage stamps. While many stamps had the mileage figures excised from 1829, a few remained unaltered and in use until the 1850s although mileage had no relevance after 1839. Essentially we seek to illustrate and record the usage of each mileage stamp employed in the Midlands, identifying every different stamp rather than just different types. (Since mileage-erased marks are not included among our UDCs, we will also include them in this project.) We shall then set out to explain why the mileage on each stamp was as shown at that particular date. This means we shall have to identify the mailcoach route to London and, where relevant, the associated rides that made up the complete journey. As the mileages on the stamps changed, we should be able to explain what changes to mailcoaches and rides brought that about.

The membership of the Society can become involved immediately. We need to know of mileage marks in your collections. As we suspect that there are more handstamps than are listed in the British County Catalogue series, it would be very helpful if members submitted photocopies, particularly of the straight line stamps. For the later marks, a BCC number will suffice together with the full date of use and, if the ink is not black, a note of the ink colour. This information should be sent to the appropriate County Editor whose address is given on the final page of the latest UDC book. Before the end of the 96/97 season, we hope to have a more-or-less complete list of stamps and usage so that the necessary research of the routes that 'explain' the mileages can be undertaken. While we shall rely on Chris Beaver to provide most of the data on mailcoach routes, there may well be considerable additional research needed on the rides.

When we reach the point where we can publish the results of the work - which we believe is unlike anything attempted before - we expect to move into the computer age with a more professional product than we have been able to offer before. It should be a worthy beginning to the 21st century and, perhaps, an appropriate celebration of the Society's Silver Jubilee.

WJC.



NOTES ON THE POSTAL HISTORY & POSTMARKS OF

MARKET DRAYTON TO c1920

by Brian Atkins

- 1677 Gardiner's survey shows Drayton, as it was then, served off the Chester Road from Lichfield and Stafford.
- 1684 P.O. Account Books show a postmaster named Steventon receiving a salary; in 1687 Elizabeth Steventon made a return but received no salary.
- 1690 Robert Burghall made postmaster (1690-1702), succeeded by Eliza Burghall (1703-18) and Eliza Taylor (1719-21).
- 1722 Catherine Taylor in charge of the office, followed by Randall Maulkin (1723-60), William Judgson (1760-81) and William Farbeck (1782-1795). All made a return but received no salary. It is likely that for most of the 17th and 18th centuries the postmaster's income was gained by charging for delivery of letters. The earlier volumes of the Account Books are arranged by roads, and the position of Drayton suggests it may have been a sub-office of Nantwich.
- 1785 The beginning of the 'mailcoach era' and soon after this, mail from Market Drayton was carried to Ashley Heath (Loggerheads) where it met the mailcoaches on the London to Chester route.
- 1795 Once the direct crosspost link between Chester and Shrewsbury ceased in 1795 a letter from Market Drayton to Whitchurch had to go through Stafford, Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury, a distance of over 60 miles, whereas the direct route is only 13 miles.
- 1798 The Surveyors' Journals show that in May, Saverland was at Market Drayton instructing the new deputy named Grant (MM92/14).
- 1810 Post 42/207/1810 states that the postmaster of Market Drayton should have an allowance of £40 p.a. for the carriage of the mail to Loggerheads to meet the mailcoach from London at 7 p.m. The messenger was to leave as soon as the office closed at 5 p.m., returning by 9 p.m., but he was often delayed in winter by the poor condition of the roads and the late arrival of the coach until 11 p.m., or even 1 or 2 a.m.
- 1822 Pigot's Directory shows Richard Grant of the Beast Market as the postmaster.
- 1837 Whitmore station on the Grand Junction Railway opened in July 1837 and in 1838 Market Drayton began receiving its main mails by mailcart from Whitmore station (Shropshire Post 14/6).
- 1851 Bagshaw's Directory shows Richard Grant, Beast Market as postmaster with letters arriving at 4.15 a.m. and being dispatched at 9.30 p.m.
- 1879 Kelly's Directory shows Miss Sillitoe as postmistress. Letters from London and all parts arrive by mailcart from Newport at 4.20 a.m. Night mail box closed at 8.15 p.m. Mail for local villages dispatched at 6.00 a.m. and town delivery at 7.00 a.m.
- 1900 Kelly's Directory gives as the postmaster John Armit in Stafford Street. Letters from London arrive by mailcart from Newport at 4.17 a.m. and from Crewe at 2.00 p.m.
- 1913 Kelly's Directory lists as the postmaster Thomas Combsen of Cheshire Street. Letters from London via Newport at 4.15 a.m.; via Crewe, Liverpool and Stafford at 2.00 p.m.; via Stafford, Crewe, Manchester & Liverpool at 7 p.m. Little Drayton was a town sub-office at 153 Shrewsbury Road with Mrs Kate Perkins, a baker, as the sub-postmistress.
- 1926 Kelly's Directory shows Frederick J. Knight in Cheshire Street as the postmaster. The hours of business were 9 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. (Sundays 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.) Mrs Perkins was still in charge at Little Drayton.

Before the postmark usage is set out below I should point out that Market Drayton has turned out to be the most difficult of all the towns attempted so far. The problem has been with the later small single-circle stamps and duplexes. I have spent many hours making transparencies and comparing them to copies sent to me (for which many thanks to all). While I am satisfied that most of the single-circles are not recuts, I cannot say the same for the duplexes. Some of them have minor differences which could be due to wear. However, the items sent to me do fall into distinct usage groups and I have decided to keep them in these groups, at least until such time that further evidence clarifies the situation.

MD3 (SH290)

DRAYTON

Size: 36x5mm.
Recorded date: 14NOV1713
Colour: Black.

MD6 (SH292)

DRAYTON

Size: 23x3mm.
Recorded date: 1726
Colour: Black.

No illustration is available. This item appeared in the first County Catalogue but has not been verified since.

MD9 (SH295)

**DRAY
TON**

Size: 20x10mm.
Recorded dates: 1732 - 8JUL1778
Colour: Black.

MD11 (SH298)

DRAYTON

Size: 28x4mm.
Recorded dates: 14AUG1782 - 17DEC1794
Colour: Black.

MD13 (SH302)

DRAYTON

Size: 43x5mm.
Recorded dates: 24JUN1788 - 24DEC1793
Colour: Black.

MD15 (SH305)

MARKET DRAYTON

Diameter: 34mm.
Recorded dates: 12MAR1796 - 18DEC1799
Colour: Black.

MD17 (SH308)

MARKET DRAYTON
156

Size: 56x11mm.
Recorded dates: 6JUN1802 - 24SEP1828
Colours: Black (to 1808 only) and Red.

MD18 (SH310)

MARKET DRAYTON

Size: 56x4mm. (Mileage removed)
Recorded dates: 9DEC1829 - 5MAY1839
Colour: Red.

MD24 (SH319)

Missent to
Market Drayton

Size: 30x7mm.
Recorded date: 1850
Colour: Black.

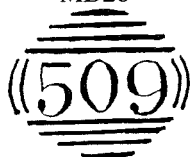
Illustration not available. This item appeared in the original County Catalogue and has never been verified although one was reportedly sold in the Stobbs' sale at Cavendish Auctions.

MD26 (SH320)

Too Late

Size: 30x7mm.
Date of Issue: 1MAY1841 (SIB 4/70)
Not recorded in use.

MD28



Size: 23x18mm.
Recorded dates: 1JUN1844 - 2FEB1853
Colours: Black and Blue.

MD30 (SH313)



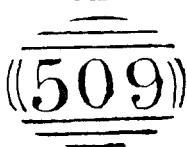
Diameter: 30mm.
Date of Issue: 6NOV1838 (SIB 2/9)
Recorded dates: 1839 - 20JAN1840
Colour: Red.

MD32 (SH315)



Diameter: 30mm.
Date of Issue: 6NOV1838 (SIB 2/9)
Recorded dates: 9DEC1839 - 2FEB1853
Colours: Red, Black and Blue.

MD34



Size: 22x15mm.
Date of Issue: 22DEC1856 (SIB 13/111)
Recorded dates: 25JUN1857 - 17FEB1864
Colour: Black.

MD36



Diameter: 25mm.
Date of Issue: 22DEC1856 (SIB 13/111)
Recorded dates: 25JUN1857 - 1AUG1857
Colour: Blue.
Code: A only.

MD38



Diameter: 22.5mm.
Date of Issue: 9DEC1858 (SIB 16/105)
Recorded dates: 31DEC1860 - 17FEB1864
Colours: Blue and Black.
Code: A only.

MD40



Diameter: 23mm.
Date of Issue: 15FEB1870 (SIB 29/31)
Not recorded in use.

MD42



Diameter: 21mm.
Date of Issue: 2OCT1873 (SIB 32/138)
Not recorded in use.

MD44



Diameter: 20mm.
Date of Issue: 21DEC1883 (SIB 42/186)
Not recorded in use but see MD52.

MD46



Diameter: 19mm.
Date of Issue: (SIB 44/161)
Recorded dates: 4AUG1886 - 27APR1891
Colour: Black.
Codes: B and E.

MD48



Diameter: 20mm.
Date of Issue: Not known.
Recorded date: 24APR1893
Colour: Black.
Code: A.

MD50



Diameter: 20mm.
Date of Issue: Not known.
Recorded date: 27JUN1894
Colour: Black.
Code: F.

MD52



Diameter: 20mm.
Date of Issue: Not known.
Recorded dates: 1JUL1895 - 22OCT1906
Colour: Black.
Codes: A and B.

MD52 may be a recut of MD44 as there are similarities between the two.

MD54



Diameter: 21mm.
Date of Issue: Not known.
Recorded date: 1MAR1896
Colour: Black.
Code: A only.

MD56



Diameter: 24mm.
Date of Issue: Not known.
Recorded date: 26JUN1911
Colour: Black.
Code: * only.

MD58



Diameter: 20mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

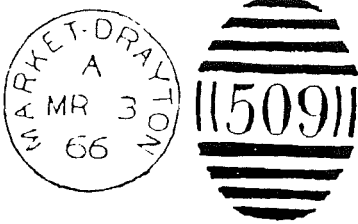
Recorded dates: 5AUG1913 - 12APR1915

Colour: Black.

Code: Blank only.

MD58 is very similar to MD52 and may be a recut or late use of it but some letters, notably the 'N' show signs of repair. MD30 to MD58 (excluding MD34) have been recorded used as backstamps or on Parcel Post labels with one exceptional use of MD52 cancelling an adhesive on a registered letter. MD60 to MD98 have been recorded cancelling adhesives.

MD60



Size: 22.5mm diameter, 20.5x28mm.

Date of Issue: 5MAR1866 (SIB25/74)

Recorded dates: 4JUL1866 - 8SEP1875

Colour: Black.

Codes: a and B

MD62



Size: 18x27mm.

Date of Issue: 10APR1873 (SIB 32/59)

Recorded date: 24AUG1882

Colour: Black.

MD64



Size: 21mm diameter, 19x33mm.

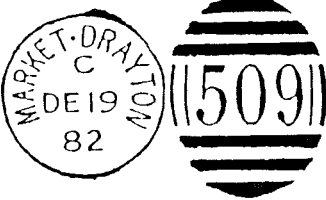
Date of Issue: 20MAR1877 (SIB 36/1)

Recorded dates: 27APR1879 - 19DEC1881

Colour: Black.

Codes: A and C.

MD68



Size: 20.5mm diameter, 20.5x27mm.

Date of Issue: 20DEC1882 (SIB 41/211)

Recorded dates: 26APR1883 - 16JAN1886

Colour: Black.

Code: C only.

MD70



Size: 18x25mm.

Date of Issue: 4DEC1884 (SIB 44/161)

Not recorded in use.

MD72



Size: 21mm diameter, 19x28mm.

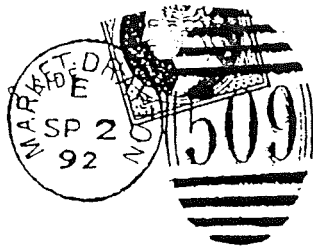
Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded dates: 3JUN1890 - 3SEP1890

Colour: Black.

Code: E only.

MD74



Size: 20mm diameter, 18x31mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded dates: 18SEP1891 - 15DEC1892

Colour: Black.

Codes: D and E.

MD76



Size: 20.5mm diameter, 19x25.5mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded date: 4DEC1893

Colour: Black.

Code: F.

MD78



Size: 20mm diameter, 18x28mm

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded dates: 27AUG1895 - 24SEP1897

Colour: Black.

Time: 8.30 pm only.

MD80



Diameter: 20mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded date: 27APR1899

Colour: Black.

Time: 8.45 pm

MD82



Size: 21mm diameter, 18.5x28mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

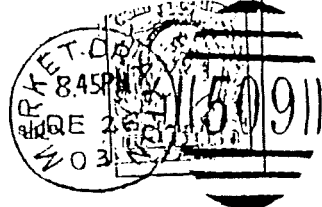
Recorded dates: 2JAN1902 - 22JAN1903

Colour: Black.

Times: 12 noon, 4 pm and 8.45 pm

Note the wide arms of the letter 'Y'; earlier stamps had narrow arms.

MD84



Size: 22mm diameter, 18.5x28mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded dates: 24DEC1903 - 27SEP1904

Colour: Black.

Times: 4 pm, 7 pm, 8.30 pm and 8.45 pm.

MD86



Diameter: 23mm.

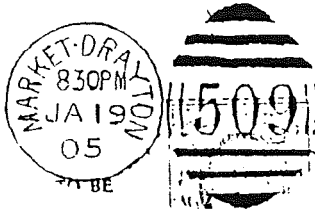
Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded dates: 29OCT1903 - 7DEC1904

Colour: Black.

Times: 11.30 am, 7.15 pm, 8.30 pm and 8.45 pm.

MD88



Size: 20mm diameter, 19x27mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded dates: 19JAN1905 - 26JAN1905

Colour: Black.

Time: 8.30 pm.

MD90



Diameter: 28mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded dates: 13DEC1904 - 26AUG1912

Colour: Black.

Times: 10 am, 12.5 pm and 7 pm, 8.30 pm and 9 pm.

MD92



Diameter: 31mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded dates: 17DEC1912 - 17JAN1913

Colour: Black.

Times: 9 am, 2.30 pm, 9 pm and blank.

MD94



Diameter: 27mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded dates: 10JUN1913 - 9SEP1916

Colour: Black.

Times: 6 am, 7 pm, 9 pm and blank.

This is not the same as MD90; note the difference in the shape of the 'M's.

MD96



Diameter: 22mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded date: 21MAY1917

Colour: Black.

Time: 8 pm.

MD98



Diameter: 26.5mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

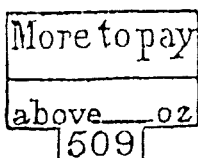
Recorded dates: 17AUG1921 - 20NOV1922

Colour: Black.

Times: 10 am, 2.30 pm and 8.15 pm.

This stamp is similar to MD94, but is slightly smaller. Only three examples were presented and until other turn up, particularly between 1916 and 1921, this will be treated as a different stamp.

MD100



Size: 25x19mm.

Date of Issue: 14JAN1878 (SIB 36/129)

Not recorded used.

MD102

1^D-
509

Size: 13x18mm.

Date of Issue: 26JUL1911 (SIB 49/239)

Recorded dates: 26AUG1912 - 9SEP1916

Colour: Black.

MD104

2^D-
509

Size: 16x18mm.

Date of Issue: 26JUL1911 (SIB49/239)

Not recorded used.

MD106

LIABLE TO LETTER RATE

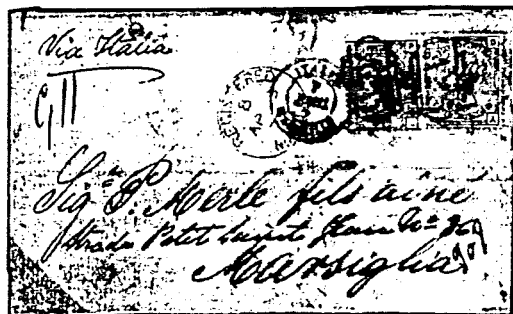
509 [boxed]

Size: 41x11mm.

Date of Issue: Not known.

Recorded date: 6FEB1906

Colour: Black.



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THE SURVEYORS' JOURNALS (Part 22)

Mr Woodcock spent a week at the start of January 1813 visiting Dursley, Kingscote, Wotton-under-Edge and Cambridge Inn in order to start "the Wotton and Dursley Cross road mail under new and improved regulations." Towards the end of the month he inspected the various branches from Worcester. For the whole of February and the first ten days of March, he was in charge of the office at Oxford, investigating some serious charges which had been made against the postmaster.

From Oxford, Mr Woodcock went on to Bicester to try to find someone to undertake the ride to Oxford as the contractor had refused to continue unless he was allowed to carry passengers [in his mailcart, presumably]. Then, it was on to Banbury and Brackley to look into a request for a post between those two places. At Woodstock he looked for a contractor to carry the mail on horseback between there and Banbury. On 20th and 21st March, he was in Moreton-in-Marsh and Stow opening a penny post between Moreton and Bourton-on-the-Water. However, on the 22nd, he returned home, "much afflicted with a Sciatic in my Hip and Knee." This was to keep him at home for the whole of April.

From the 6th to 8th May, Mr Woodcock was at Malvern, starting the daily penny post to and from Worcester. [It is possible that the daily post either did not come into being or did not last for long as we shall see in the next issue.] For the rest of the month and the early part of June, he was in the area of Hereford, Ross, Ledbury, Worcester and Hay preparing the rides which were to replace some of the mailcoaches in the area.

The offices at Cheltenham and Tewkesbury were inspected during the first five days of July. For the following nine days, Mr Woodcock was in charge of the office at Pershore as the postmaster had died. As the appointee, the daughter of the late postmaster, was fully acquainted with the business, Mr Woodcock was able to go on to Burford to instruct the new deputy there. Towards the end of the month, he was at Oxford seeking a contractor for the Wantage ride.

Mr Woodcock spent most of August at home but did spend five days inspecting the offices of the Dursley penny post and visiting Chipping Sodbury and Iron Acton to report on an application from the latter place for improved postal services.

The only other times in 1813 that Mr Woodcock was out and about in the Midlands on official business were in the November when he was at Ledbury and Hereford to dismiss the rider, inspecting the office at Leominster and at Malvern to take a look at the running of the penny post.

Mr Godby's journals record only four official journeys in the Midlands in the first half of 1813. He was at Oxford in the February helping Mr Woodcock with his enquiries into the charges made against the postmaster. For one week in April he was at Lichfield to attend a meeting of the inhabitants and to propose private letter boxes as a means of expediting the delivery of letters there. In mid-June he was in Coventry as the contractor for the ride to Warwick was being sued for breach of contract, and to fix "proper hours" for the closure of the box at Warwick. Finally, the last four days of June saw him putting in a new receiver at Madeley Wood and preparing for Wellington becoming a posttown.

Mr Godby was no more active in the Midlands during the latter half of the year. Instructing a new deputy at Wellington and making that place a posttown took up nine days in July. At the start of September, he was at Stafford and Eccleshall enquiring about the loss of a letter "containing property". A charge of misconduct against the letter carrier in the Leamington penny post took him to Coventry, Warwick and Leamington at the start of November. At the end of that month he was in Stone to install a new deputy. In mid-December, he visited the offices at Atherstone, Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Burton-on-Trent. [It appears that he was too early for the December meeting of the Midlands Postal History Society.]



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Catalogue on request from Graham Moss at 65 George Street Oldham OL1 1LX

Mr Hart was at Wirksworth on 18th January to engage a new contractor for the ride to Bakewell. Five days later, he went to Loughborough to instruct a new deputy but returned home immediately as no appointment had been made. However, he was able to go back to Loughborough on the 26th to start that task which occupied him for a little over two weeks.

On 19th April, he went to Market Harborough to investigate the conduct of the deputy. He returned there eight days later to install a new deputy but found "the old and new deputy so engaged with the Business of the Fair, that my Time would be uselessly spent there ... and returned home until the expiration of the Fair." After this remarkable display of tolerance, Mr Hart eventually spent the first twelve days of May instructing the new postmaster.

Mr Hart was in Derbyshire in mid-June to look into the misconduct of the Bakewell rider and then to inspect the penny post at Matlock.

On 30th September, Mr Hart arrived in Derby to "enforce proper management of that office." He dealt with complaints of a refusal to deliver letters after 8 p.m. and "other Acts of Inattention." He returned to Derby later in October to institute "further Enquiry relative to other Complaints..." He also met the Wirksworth and Bakewell contractors whom he admonished and "restored the exact discipline of their rides."

When Mr Hart went to Sheffield at the start of November to establish an armed ride to Worksop, he received many offers for the contract but they all were too high. He met with the same response in Worksop. [The idea of a Sheffield to Worksop mailcoach had obviously been dropped.]

Mr Hart was at home for the whole of December.

ADDENDA

WOODSTOCK TO BANBURY

Freeling wrote to the Postmasters General in April 1813:

"The Mail has been many years carried between Woodstock and Banbury at the small allowance of £83.12/- for 17 miles by a Stage Coach which has no Guard and is subject to no official control but the regulation of its time. It has enjoyed exemption from Tolls, and in consequence of the late Instructions from the Treasury it became necessary to propose to the Contractor that he should relinquish this privilege or put his Carriages under Mail Coach Regulations. It will not suit him to do either and Mr Woodcock has therefore enquired for persons willing to convey the Mail by a Ride, the lowest terms for which it appears by the enclosed Report are £8 per mile or £136 per annum being an increase of £52.8/-. To this I presume Your Lordships must consent and it is the second instance arising out of the new state of things in which I have found myself obliged to recommend to Your Lordships a worse mode of conveyance for the mails at a greater expence."

In the following September, a number of the inhabitants of Banbury sent a petition to the Postmasters General asking that their mail be carried by the coach as before. They said that the contractor, Mr Drinkwater, was willing to provide a four-horse coach with an armed guard for the £136 p.a. paid for the mailcart. Freeling pointed out to their Lordships that this was one of the coaches discontinued as a consequence of the Treasury Order of 9th July 1812, and that as in many other cases they had been obliged to have recourse to a "less certain and secure Mode of Conveyance, even at greater Expence."

Freeling went on to say that it was very difficult to explain to the applicants "the imperious necessity" under which they had been obliged to substitute a less satisfactory though more expensive means of conveyance, and it was almost as difficult to explain that they preferred in this case to give £136 p.a. for a horse and cart than for a coach with four horses and an armed guard. However, they had had no alternative but to discontinue the coach as Mr Drinkwater had refused to set up a Patent Coach, and the Treasury regulation forbade them setting up a coach of the type on offer.

I wonder if anyone has done any research in to how many coaches were discontinued as a result of the Treasury regulation of 1812. I have a vague memory of having read something on this but I cannot remember the source.

[References: Posts 40/113/1813 40/239/1813]

RIDES FROM HEREFORD

In 1813, the Postmasters General had ordered that the "irregular" mailcoaches to Hereford from Gloucester and Worcester be withdrawn. Mr Woodcock then proposed the following rides. The mail was to be dispatched from Hereford through Ledbury to Worcester on four days a week - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday - and to return on the same day. He added that it would be possible to make a saving by using that ride to carry the Malvern letters. On the branch between Ledbury and Gloucester, the mail was to be dispatched from Ledbury to Gloucester on three days a week - Sunday, Wednesday and Friday - and return the same day. There was no need for this ride to be extended to Hereford as there was a daily post between Gloucester and Hereford through Ross.

In another report Mr Woodcock said the withdrawal of the Gloucester, Hereford and Hay mailcoach had reduced the post at Hay from six days to three. As the six-day post had resulted in a large increase in revenue at Hay, he proposed that the town be given a daily post by means of a horse post. Mr Price the postmaster at Hay and the contractor for the ride on three days a week was willing to undertake the extra four days for £80 p.a.

[References: Posts 40/139/1813 and 40/155/1813]

DELIVERIES AT LICHFIELD

In March 1813, the Postmasters General received the statement and resolutions of a public meeting held in Lichfield. The main points stated by the meeting were:

the Holyhead and Liverpool mails usually arrived from the north between 9 and 10.30 a.m., and were dispatched by 11 a.m.;

the mailcoach from Birmingham to Sheffield usually arrived at about 11.30 a.m. and left by 11.45 a.m.;

the letters which arrived by these mails were never sent out from the post office until after noon and often not until 12.30 p.m.;

the delivery was very extensive, the town being a mile from north to south, and from east to west. There was only one letter carrier with the result that many of the letters brought by those three mails were not delivered until 2 and 3 p.m., and few in time to be answered by return of post which was of great inconvenience to the tradesmen.;

the Liverpool mail from London arrived at about 1 p.m., that from Sheffield at about 1.30 p.m., and that to Holyhead at about 2 p.m. The last of these had usually left by 2.30 p.m.;

the letters brought by those mails were not sent from the post office until 4 p.m., and even by sending to the office the townspeople could seldom have them before that time;

the greater part of these letters were not delivered until about 6 p.m. or later.

The meeting asked for five changes:

the appointment of another letter carrier;

another clerk in the office to be allowed;

the first delivery of letters to take place immediately on the departure of the Holyhead and Liverpool mails for London.

the letters which came from Birmingham to be given out by the postmaster to those applying for them between noon and 1 p.m. or to be kept for delivery in the afternoon;

the letters which arrived by the afternoon mails to be given out at the post office as soon as the Liverpool mail had been dispatched, and delivered throughout the town as soon as the last mail had left.

The surveyor stated that most of their wishes could be gratified by the appointment of an extra letter carrier at 7/- a week. Freeling agreed that no allowance should be made for another clerk and added that the postmaster could not be required to deliver the mail from London to callers at the window until all the mails had been dispatched. But people could be enabled to obtain their London letters as soon as the bag had been sorted, by the introduction of the system of subscription letter boxes as at Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Bath and many other towns. The subscriptions would allow the postmaster to provide such assistance as would enable him to "carry the accommodation of the subscribers beyond what in reason can be expected at the direct expence of the Revenue." It would also improve the service provided to the non-subscribers as there would be less business for the "ordinary hands" to do.

[Reference: Post 40/89/1813]

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TO THE

BAILIFFS

OF THE CITY OF LICHFIELD.

WE whose Names are Subscribed, request you to call a Meeting of all Persons interested in the early delivery of Letters in the City of Lichfield.

RICHARD DYOTT, Recorder.
J. C. WOODHOUSE.
THOMAS LEVETT.
CHARLES BUCKERIDGE.
THOMAS WHITE.
JOHN F. MUCKLESTON.
E. S. REMINGTON.
JOHN B. SCOTT.
WILLIAM MOTT.
HENRY CHINN.
SAMUEL EBORALL.
F. S. DARWIN.

CHARLES OAKELEY.
JOHN P. DYOTT.
WILLIAM DYOTT.
JOHN LANE.
STEPHEN SIMPSON.
FAIRFAX MORESBY.
THOMAS HINCKLEY.
GEORGE DODSON.
LEWIS BUCKERIDGE.
THOMAS G. PARR.
WILLIAM FEARY.
SAMUEL PALMER.

In pursuance of the above requisition, WE do hereby appoint a Meeting of all Persons interested in the early delivery of Letters, to be held at the GUILD-HALL in this CITY, on THURSDAY the 4th day of FEBRUARY next, at *twelve* o'Clock precisely.

JAMES SMITH,
CHARLES SIMPSON, } *Bailiffs.*

Lichfield, Jan. 21st. 1813.

WILLIAM MORGAN, PRINTER.

WELLINGTON MADE A POSTTOWN

In May 1813, Freeling wrote to Mr Godby saying that it was necessary to reconsider the arrangements at Wellington in view of the theft of a letter and bills which had been put into the receiving house there and which probably had been carried out by some of the persons who improperly had access to the office. So, something had to be done for the security of the correspondence but to create a penny post would involve a loss of £85 on Short Letters from Shrewsbury and Shifnal. Therefore there was no alternative but to make Wellington a posttown

Mr Godby agreed with this and added that Wellington had become a town of considerable importance with an extensive correspondence. He recommended a salary of £40 p.a. and an allowance of 7/- a week for a letter carrier. He was unable to recommend that the receiver be appointed as postmaster because, although he and his family were of good character, he had been inattentive to his duties, and his office was at an inn. However, he proposed that the position be offered to one of the family who could provide an office in a private dwelling.

[Reference: Post 40/144/1813]

A MYSTERY POSTMARK

Can any readers shed a little light on the postmark illustrated below? It has been sent by Dr Malcolm Nixon who says that the letter was a business post item sent to Cheltenham from the NE1 postcode area on 18th June 1996. Notice that the 'I' is not in line with the rest of the date. I have not seen anything like this before so I hope there is someone out there who can tell us what it is.



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TRANSATLANTIC & MARITIME
& SOME OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

PERMEX*

**For the safe storage of your precious stamps and covers,
sold in packets of 16 exhibition sheet protectors (* registered trade mark)**



Jan. 1st, 1808.

INSTRUCTIONS

TO DEPUTY POSTMASTERS

For the Management of the London, and Bye and Cross Road Dead, Missent, Re-directed, and overcharged Letters.

ARTICLE I.

Letters Missent from London, &c. forwarded by the Cross Post.

WHEN Letters are sent by Mistake from hence (London) to your Office, which ought to go elsewhere, you are to observe always to write in *Red Ink*, on the *Front* of each Letter, "Missent" and stamp the Name of your Post Town upon them, and if they can be sent more immediately from your Office by the Cross Post, than by returning them to London, you will send them to the Place of their Destination in the same Manner as any other Letter put in at your Office; and you are also, by the *next Post*, to send to the Postmaster General, one of the Forms No. 1, in which you are to enter the Month and Date of the Post Mark, with the Direction, and the Number and Amount of the *London missent Letters*, including Paid Letters and Franks, so forwarded by Cross Post, and take Credit for the Postage charged upon you in the *first Page* of the Bye Dead Letter Account, Form N° 6.

Letters Missent from and within the Cross

The Postage for Letters Missent from Places upon the Cross Roads and to be forwarded again through the Cross Roads, is to be claimed in the 2d and 3d Pages of Form N° 6, entitled, "*Missent Letters from Country Offices forwarded by the nearest Post Communication*," and no other Missent Letter-Form is to be used for them.

II.

Re-directed Letters forwarded by the Cross Post.

YOU are to take Credit for the Postage charged to you upon such Re-directed Letters as you forward through the Cross Post, *without* returning to London, in the *last Page* of the Form N° 6, and afterwards tax them with the additional Rate from your Office to the Place you re-direct them, and put the Initials of your Name to the Tax you make upon such Letters, *but you are not to advance the Postage of those you return to London.*

III.

Missent or Re-directed Letters, such as are to be returned to London.

SHOULD it, however, be found *equally expeditious to return* the Missent Letters, Paid Letters, Franks, or Newspapers (either General or Bye) including those re-directed to, or intended *to pass through London*, instead of forwarding them by the Cross Post, you are to return them accordingly, and observe to write upon the *Front* of each Letter, in *Red Ink*, as above directed, and inclose them in the printed Missent Letter Cover, directed to His Majesty's Postmaster General, and insert the Amount of Postage charged upon you in the Form N° 2, which is also to be claimed in the General Office Dead Letter Account, Form N° 5. Vide XIth Article.

IV.

Dead Letters to be

IF any Letters or Packets directed to your Town, or Place within your District, remain undelivered for Want of Knowledge of the Parties to whom they are addressed, you are to make a *List* of their Directions, and to affix it either at the Window, or some conspicuous Place at the Front of your Office, till they are called for, or till the Expiration of the Time you are directed to keep such Dead Letters; but you are *not* to expose the Letters at the Window.

V.

Dead Letters, overcharged Covers, Newspapers, &c. how and when to be returned.

Unclaimed Letters addressed to Peers and Members of Parliament, how and when to be returned.

Letters left till called for.

THE London, as well as the *Bye and Cross Road* Dead and Refused Letters and Covers, as likewise all *undelivered Newspapers*, are to be returned at the following Periods, (*viz.*) those received at your Office in *December*, must be sent up the *last Day* of *January*, those received in *January* the *last Day* of *February*, those received in *February* the *last Day* in *March*, and so on throughout the Year; except Letters addressed to Peers and Members of Parliament neither residing in, nor expected at your Town, or within the Delivery; such Letters, (*after remaining a Fortnight* at your Office,) are to have a Reason assigned thereon, and to be returned in the printed Cover, directed to His Majesty's Postmaster General, Dead Letter Office. ~~Such Letters as are~~ directed to be left at your Office, *till called for*, must be kept *three Months*, and if not applied for during that Period, you will send them up along with your other Dead Letters, overcharged Covers, and Receipts, tied up separately in Parcels of 20s. each, if they

amount to that Sum, and in order to keep the Letters distinct, you will direct those for the GENERAL OFFICE, under Cover, to the POSTMASTER GENERAL, Dead Letter Office, which must be claimed in Form N° 3, and ~~the By Letters~~ the By Letters ~~Office~~, under Cover, to the Inspector of Bye Dead Letters, to be claimed in Form N° 4, observing to write Dead Letters, on the Cover in which they are inclosed, and put your Office Stamp at the Corner, with the Month and Day of Return.

VI.

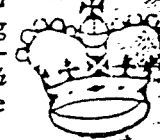
YOU are to write with Red Ink, in the Front of each Dead Letter so returned, the true Reason why it could not be delivered, such as "Not to be found," "Not called for," "Gone away not known where," "Dead," "Refused," and the like; but you are not, on any Pretence, to open such Letters.

Reasons to be written on Dead Letters why they are not delivered.

VII.

YOU are to make the proper Allowances upon such Letters as, upon a cursory View of the Contents, appear to be overcharged, provided you are thus satisfied the Demand is just; and be particularly careful in making Rebates upon such as bear an Impression of the Crown Stamp, as in the Margin, and in Cases where the Covers can be spared, you must by all Means require them from the Person claiming Allowance, and write upon them, in Red Ink, "Single," "Double," &c. (allowed " " in the Sum in Figures; but if the Cover cannot be spared, you are then to alter the Tax of such Letter with Red Ink, and to write on it how much you allow, and obtain the Party's Signature to the printed Receipt for the Money you return.

Rebates to be made on overcharged Letters.



Ditto on Letters charged to Soldiers and Seamen.

Soldiers and Seamen are allowed to send and receive Single Letters only at a reduced Rate of Postage, provided the Sum of One Penny is paid with them at the Time of their being put into the Office, when the Name of the Seaman or Soldier, with his Class or Description, must be written on the Letter, which must be signed by the Commanding Officer only, for the Time being, the Signature of any other Officer belonging to the same Ship or Regiment is not sufficient Authority to exempt the Letter from the Duty of Postage. The Act of Parliament relating to Letters for Soldiers and Seamen, does not extend to Ship Letters, nor to Foreign Countries not being within His Majesty's Dominions. See the Secretary's printed Letter, July 24, 1806, and Advertisement dated August 1, 1806.

VIII.

If any Letters should, by Mistake, be sent through London, instead of the Bye and Cross Roads, you are in like Manner, as directed by Article VII, to make the Allowance for the increased Charge occasioned thereby, adding the Reason upon the Cover or Receipt in Red Ink, why the Rebate was made, and send it up with your other London overcharged Covers.

Overcharges on Cross Road Letters, occasioned by being Mis-sent through London to be allowed.

IX.

AS Postmasters have not the Privilege of receiving their Letters free, such as appear to concern the Business of your Office, will be allowed, on sending up the Letters themselves, with your Dead Letters.

Letters on Office Business.

X.

WHEN Letters really for Peers and Members of Parliament, within the Limits of their Privilege, happen to be charged by Mistake, you will beg the Favour of them to spare the Covers, and to write upon each "Received by me," but if they should not be inclined to take that Trouble, you will write on the Cover "Delivered to the Member," in order to prevent, as much as possible, any Abuse of this Privilege. If the Covers cannot be spared, you are then to erase the Tax with Red Ink, and return the Money on such as you are satisfied ought to have been Free; and keep an Account thereof, to be sent with the Covers of overcharged Letters for Allowance, which Accounts must specify from whence the Letters came, as well as the Name of the Member to whom they were directed, and the Day of the Month when received, which the Member will probably have the Goodness to sign.

Postage on Letters to Peers and Members of Parliament, to be allowed when charged by Mistake.

Peers and Members of Parliament must pay the full Postage on all Letters, except such as are sent to and from Places within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, &c.

You will observe, in making these Rebates, that Peers and Members of Parliament can receive free Letters only as are sent by the General Post to and from Places within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and that they must pay the full Postage on all others, including the Rate of Postage charged upon such Letters as are conveyed through the Two-penny Post, to be afterwards forwarded by the General Office.

You will further particularly observe to charge all such Letters as are subject to the Duty of Postage, either from the Member's Absence, Excess in Number or Weight, &c. (notwithstanding they may have escaped the Attention of the Inspector of Franks or other Postmasters,) and make yourself accountable for the Postage in the London Letter Bill of the Day.

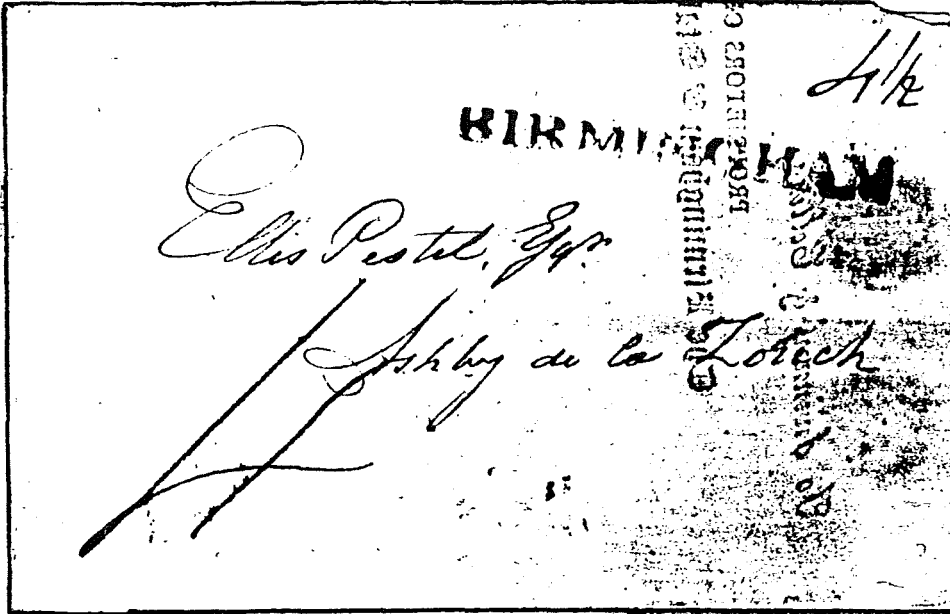
XI.

YOU are to keep an Account of the Missent, Returned, Dead, and overcharged Letters, which must be made out every Three Months, commencing the 1st of January, the 1st of April, the 1st of July, and the 1st of October, according to the Forms N° 5, for the General, and N° 6, for the Bye Letters, and transmitted on the last Days of March, June, September, and December, respectively in each Year. Those for the GENERAL OFFICE, under Cover, to the POSTMASTER GENERAL, Dead Letter Office, and those for the Bye Letters, under Cover, to the Inspector of Bye Dead Letters.

Quarterly Accounts how, and when to be made out and transmitted.

THE ASHBY HALFPENNY

Readers may be familiar with the extra halfpenny charged for delivery at Ashby-de-la-Zouch from 1794 to 1828. But the item shown below, sent from Birmingham in 1796, pre-dates considerably anything I have found before.



To Swinney & Collins,

PROPRIETORS OF
The Birmingham & Stafford Chronicle.

1796
To Post delivered: 7. 1. 2
Sept. 1. 3. To advertising Call on Ashby Canal 5/6 + Post 7/4 0. 11. 11
Sept. 8. 15. 22. 29 General Meetg of Proprietors 5/4 + Post 8/4 1. 0. 11
Sept. 22 Notice of Treasurers Attendance &c 0. 5. 1
October 13 - 20 Resolves at the whole Start 3 October 1796 of 0. 16. 0
Oct. 20 Article respecting Ashby Canal &c 9. 13. 10
..... 10
..... 10. 3. 10

Mr Swinney presents his respects to Mr. Pestel, and begs
his kind Remittance for the above, to enable him to pay a
very heavy Duty to his Majesty for Stamps and Advertisements.
Birmingham 29th Oct^r 1796.

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

It is hoped that this will appear in late October/early November. It will contain the usual reports and more from the Surveyors' Journals. The rest will depend on what is sent to:

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