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 80, May 1993

I think I am correct when I say that the name of Elizabeth Lewis has appeared amongst the list of Officers of the Society in every edition of Midland Mail since September 1979. She has served the Society well, both as Chairman and as Secretary, and we owe her a great debt. But the name Lewis is not lost to Midland Mail as we welcome Eric as our new Secretary. Welcome also to our new President, Chris Beaver. Our thanks are due to John Calladine who has so ably held that position for the last three years.

Alan Godfrey has sent to me a booklet issued by Royal Mail, titled "A Postage Stamp Makes A Great Impression". It is encouraging businesses to use postage stamps on mail and cancel them in-house, with a customised slogan postmark. The cancelling machines, new or reconditioned, are available from Royal Mail, amongst others. As Alan says it should produce some interesting postal markings, so look out for them. For the businessmen amongst you, who have always wanted to own a Krag machine, now is your chance!

My thanks to those of you who sent in nominations for the Jon Baker trophy. By a narrow margin, the winner was Chris Beaver with his article "Which Way to Banbury Cross." Of those who sent in nominations, Derek Woodhall's name was drawn out of "the hat", so he will receive the latest set of NPM postcards.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

As you will see from the report of the AGM, the annual subscription has been raised to £6. We are faced with increased costs, including the VAT which we shall in future have to pay on the printing of Midland Mail. (Norman is getting desperate.) This issue sees the end of our season, so cheques should be sent as soon as possible to:
Trevor Clewley, 127 Queslett Road East,Streetly,Sutton Coldfield,W Midlands B74 2AJ

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following, who have joined the Society since the publication of the last issue of Midland Mail and look forward to seeing them at our meetings whenever possible:

John Bradnock from Birmingham;
David Greenhalgh from Coventry;
Chris Procter from Winchcombe;
Barrie Wildblood from Oswestry.

JOINT MEETING WITH SHROPSHIRE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Both Societies were well represented amongst those who met at Shrewsbury on 3rd April; indeed many were members of both Societies. The guest speaker was Michael Scott Archer from Crikhowell who in the morning displayed "The Postal Services of Chirk and Ruabon". The first part showed the development of Chirk and its postal service from 1695; its links with Oswestry, Wrexham and Llangollen, and later with Chester and Ruabon.

Much discussion was aroused by, and considerable interest shown in, the Chirk Penny Post stamps and the receiving house numbers, amongst which was the only known example of the No. 1 used at Chirk in 1815 as a receiving house in the Oswestry Penny Post.

In November 1831, Chirk became a posttown and ran its own penny post. Examples of the scarce Cefribychan receiving house stamp were shown.

The Ruabon section showed the first straight line Ruabon stamp used from 1810, and examples of handstamps from the Ruabon Penny Post, established in 1833. Later stamps of Chirk and Ruabon were shown and villages that came under these offices.

Unfortunately, Mr Scott Archer had to leave early, but he started the afternoon session with a short display of Llangollen, illustrating all the various aspects of a small town office and the uses it made of its handstamps.

The rest of the afternoon's entertainment was provided by various members commencing with MIKE YOUNG who displayed material from the Worcestershire village of BLACKWELL including various Post Office documents relating to that office. ROGER BROOMFIELD concentrated on penny posts, undated circles, and skeleton handstamps used at the various sub-offices in area of THE FOREST OF DEAN. We then travelled to the other side of the Midlands to view covers carried in the STRATFORD AND HOCKLEY PENNY POSTS shown by PETER SHARP. This was followed by DENIS SALT'S SHROPSHIRE SELECTION which commenced with an 1810 5th Clause Post from Bishop's Castle to Llangduffin, prior to the introduction of a penny post in that area. SHEILA HART displayed DERBYSHIRE material with an emphasis on rubber handstamps and picture postcard views of the various villages which were drowned when the Ladybower, Derwent and Howden reservoirs were constructed. ERIC LEWIS showed examples of ABUSE AND ABNORMAL USE OF THE FREE FRANKING SYSTEM including a letter written on two sides of three huge sheets of paper, each weighing just under an ounce and posted as separate "Free" letters to conform with, but hardly within the spirit of the franking privilege. BARRY WILDBLOOD produced a 1673 SHREWSBURY to London letter with an interesting transcript. CHRIS BEAVER brought along the NEWCASTLE PENNY POST cover illustrated in the March issue of Midland Mail, followed by various official and unofficial penny post rates of Black Country offices. ELIZABETH LEWIS related various stories concerning surcharged mail illustrated by covers and cards including a 10th January 1840 first day postage due cover, which she nearly sold by mistake in one of our auctions, and a secret message glued between two picture postcards. A selection of MAURITIUS covers and stamps mainly illustrating the early, intermediate and later printings from the various plates of the "Post Paid" stamps was shown by DAVE TARRY. GUY BRIDGES completed the day with a range of MALTESE CROSS CANCELLATIONS including experimental, coloured and distinctive types plus usages of the Maltese Cross as late as 1858.

The Societies' thanks are expressed to Denis Salt for organising the meeting and to Guy Bridges, the Chairman, who both ensured that all present had a most enjoyable day.

The Editor would like to thank Guy Bridges and Eric and Elizabeth Lewis for providing the above report.

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THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND AUCTION

Our AGM and auction were held in Birmingham on 24th April. Illness and other commitments meant that the attendance was smaller than usual, and the list of apologies rather longer.

After Elizabeth had read the minutes of the 1992 AGM, our Chairman, Mike Young, reviewed the events of the past year which had got off to an excellent start with the meeting at Cranham. He finished by thanking the Officers of the Society for all their efforts. As our Treasurer had been immobilised it was not possible for a full Treasurer's report to be presented. However, in a letter read out by Elizabeth, Trevor said that the subscription had stood at £5 for some years, and that because of increased costs, he felt that it would be prudent to raise it to £6. A proposal to this effect was carried unanimously. An audited set of accounts will be produced as soon as Trevor has recovered and distributed, it is hoped, with the August issue.

The Editor reviewed the contents of Midland Mail during the season and thanked all those who had contributed in any way. Then the Coordinating Editor reported that the local post book would be about 330 pages in length. The launch of the book, which would be towards the end of October, was to be sponsored by the Midlands Postal Board.

We then proceeded to the election of a new President and Secretary as the time had come for John Calladine and Elizabeth to stand down. Chris Beaver and Eric Lewis respectively were elected to these positions.

Elizabeth then reported that the survey on meetings' locations had produced a significant majority in favour of staying in central Birmingham apart from our usual excursions to Burton etc. However, next year's AGM will be held in the parish rooms of our new President.

After Chris Beaver, on behalf of the members, had thanked the Officers for their hard work, the trophies were presented. The winners were:

pre-1840 Denis Salt; post-1840 Guy Bridges;
post-1938 Elizabeth Lewis; Jon Baker trophy Chris Beaver.

The realisations in the auction, ably conducted by Mike Young and the Lewis family were:

A	7.50	B	11.00	C	5.50	D	7.00	E	1.00	F	1.00
G	10.00	H	1.60	J	3.50	K	3.50	L	1.00	M	5.50
N	2.00	O	2.00								
1	2.40	4	2.00	5	1.00	6	2.75	7	2.00	8	2.00
10	4.00	12	1.50	14	1.70	16	0.75	17	2.70	21	6.00
24	17.50	26	5.00	30	2.20	31	7.50	32	3.00	34	2.10
35	1.60	36	1.20	37	0.75	38	3.50	39	8.00	40	1.00
41	15.00	42	8.50	43	11.00	44	24.00	45	14.50	46	10.50
48	16.00	49	3.75	51	18.50	52	11.00	53	0.70	54	3.00
57	1.00	58	13.00	59	9.00	60	4.00	61	15.00	63	11.00
64	16.00	65	10.00	66	10.00	67	10.00	68	17.50	69	2.50
70	8.00	71	15.00	73	4.50	74	8.50	75	16.50	76	3.50
77	12.00	78	6.00	79	2.20	80	2.75	81	12.00	82	3.75
83	8.00	84	4.25	85	1.00	86	5.00	87	6.50	88	10.00
89	11.00	90	6.00	91	5.00	92	9.50	93	13.00	94	3.75
95	4.75	97	7.00	98	17.00	99	5.25	100	2.25	102	3.50
103	6.50	104	5.50	106	5.00	107	4.25	108	7.50	109	14.00
110	11.00	111	2.75	112	4.25	113	8.00	114	14.00	115	9.50
116	3.25	117	5.00	118	1.75	119	8.50	120	1.25	121	4.25
122	3.50	123	2.25	124	1.50	125	5.00	126	3.50	127	4.25
129	8.50	130	1.50	131	5.50	132	2.75	133	1.00	134	1.00
135	5.00	136	5.00	137	1.25	138	1.25	139	4.00	140	1.25

141	4.00	142	4.50	144	1.00	145	2.00	146	5.00	147	1.00
148	5.50	149	1.00	150	1.75	151	3.00	152	2.50	153	1.25
154	1.25	155	3.25	157	3.50	158	2.75	159	1.00	160	4.00
161	2.50	162	2.00	163	4.50	164	2.00	165	12.00	166	2.00
167	2.00	168	1.00	169	1.25	170	1.25	171	4.50	172	1.00
173	2.00	174	3.50	175	2.00	176	4.00	177	4.50	178	2.50
179	1.25	180	2.50	181	2.75	182	2.40	183	1.00	184	1.25
185	5.00	186	4.00	187	2.25	188	2.25	189	6.00	190	2.00
191	1.75	192	2.75	193	6.00	194	1.50	195	2.00	196	1.25
197	1.25	198	1.75	199	1.75	200	1.25	201	5.50	202	1.25
203	1.25	204	1.25	205	3.50	206	1.25	207	1.25	208	1.25
209	2.00	210	2.50	211	2.75	212	2.50	215	1.00	216	1.00
217	1.00	218	1.00	219	1.25	220	5.00	221	2.80	222	26.00

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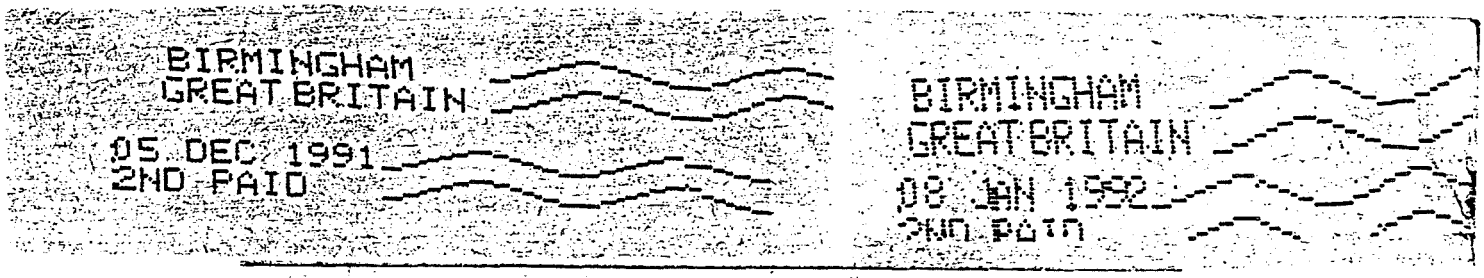
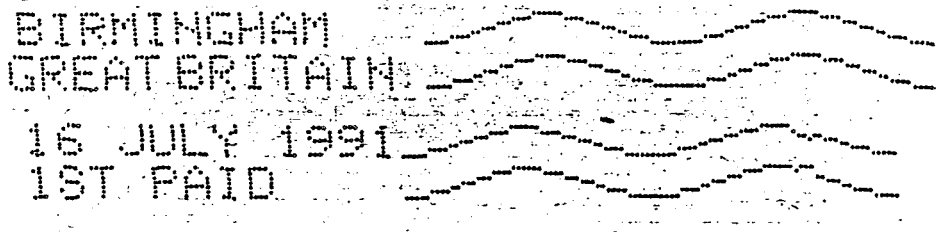
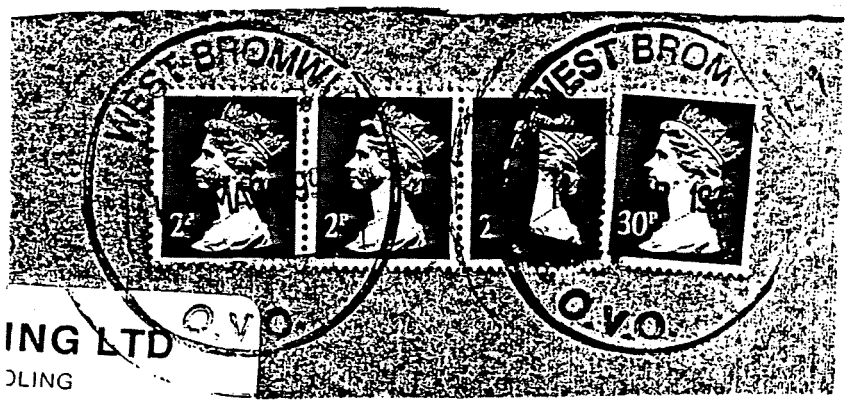
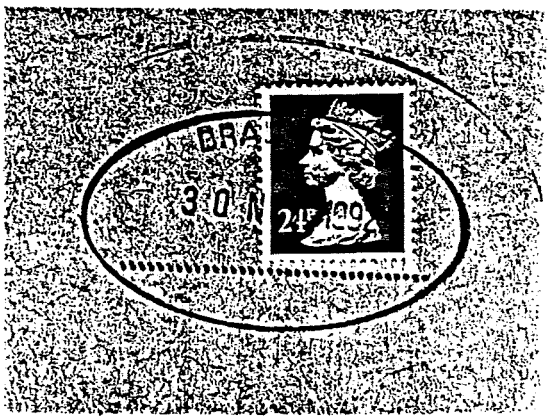
CORRESPONDENCE

In response to the various pieces in the last issue, Alan Godfrey has sent copies of: Birmingham "PAID" inkjet markings in red and black ink; a West Bromwich "O.V.O" handstamp which is 40mm in diameter compared with the 32mm of that in MM79; a Bradford oval which is 50mm wide rather than 55mm.

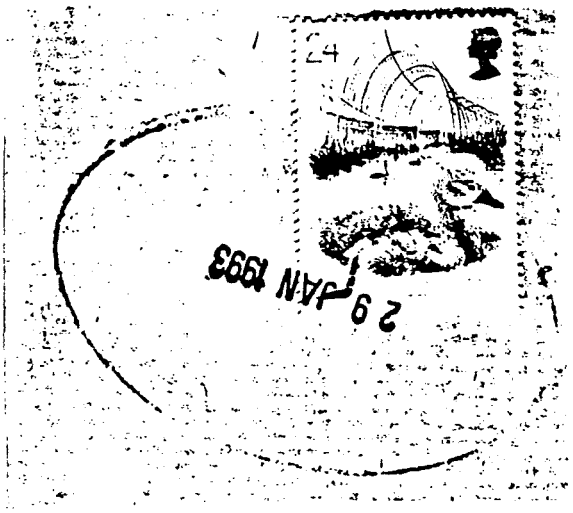








Derek Woodhall too has one of the West Bromwich marks which is a slightly larger diameter than mine. He also has a Bradford oval which he describes as of "enormous girth". That description fits the example sent by Chris Beaver which does not show the place of cancellation. However it originates from the same source as my Bradford oval.



ABUSE OF THE FRANKING SYSTEM

The two items shown below were part of Eric Lewis's display at Shrewsbury. Eric writes:

"It is amazing that a member of the Eaton family of Northampton should publish in a history of their family a letter which rejoices in the fact that their letters were illegally franked by the Bishop of London. Other letters to the Eaton family were addressed to the Duke of Montague to gain free postage but marked with a small 'e' by the seal. The Duke would then hand such letters, an example of which is illustrated, direct to the Eaton family. This practice continued for at least twenty years from 1767 to 1787 and maybe much longer.

Letter from Archdeacon Eaton to his brother.

Dear Brother

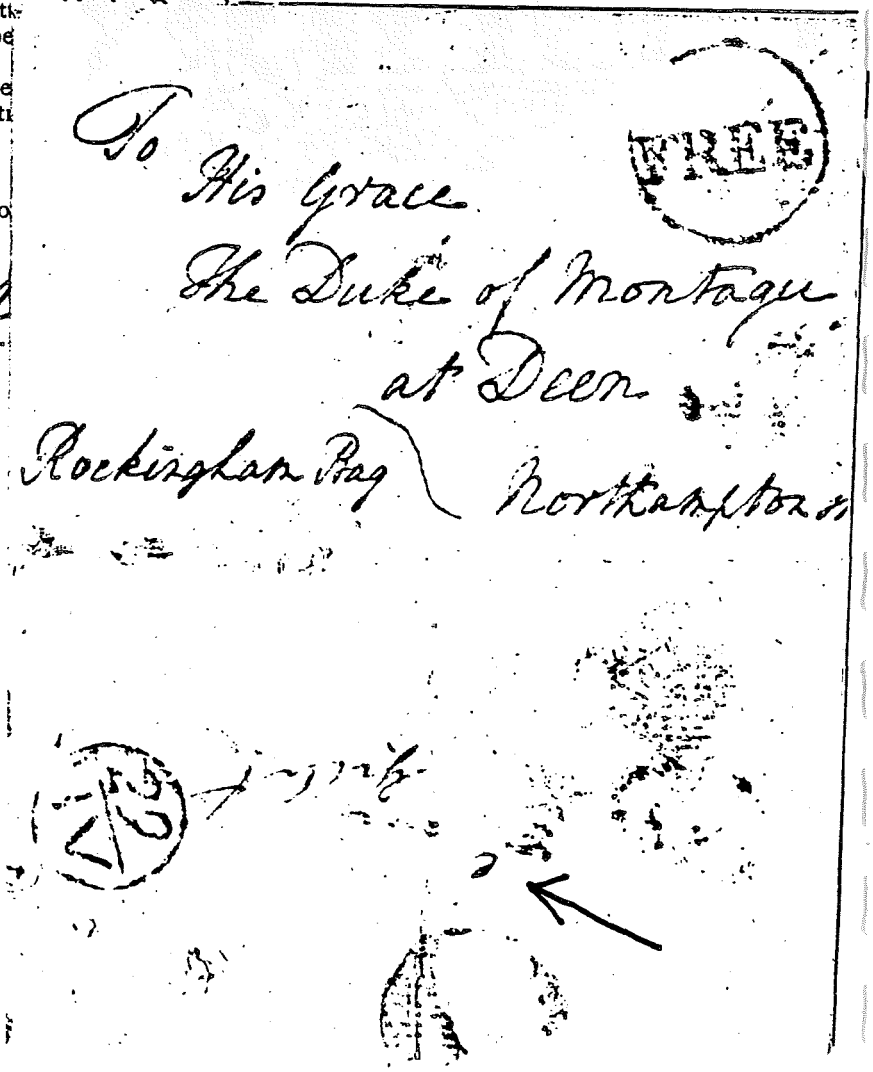
You will I am sure rejoice to see that my letters are still frank'd by the Bishop of London, who was elected on Monday, and will in a few days be in full possession of the See of London: it is needless to tell you, who are so well acquainted with his character and abilities, that his promotion gives universal satisfaction; but what gives me particular pleasure is, that even Mrs Louth speaks of it as an event, that gives her comfort.

I shall in this frank inclose Mr Sibbalds receipt, Sir J: C: Turner's three do Mc Bills, and Dr. Pearce's; the payment of Turners Anny makes I perceive a small balance in our account in my favour; and if you have any cash *to spare*, you may as well contrive to send it to Goslings, as Dr. Wallers affairs will be settled this evening, and I shall probably be called upon before Christmas to make good my engagements to some of his Creditors. Some time ago I desired you to send my Cow, and gave particular directions about it; did you receive that letter? my wish is to have you to sett- man to drive the Cow to Northall; as it will be contrive to meet her on the road.

I have been applied to for some of my Siste- you have an opportunity send some, with instr- them. With love to my Sister & Children,

I am

Yours most affectio-



ANOTHER USE FOR A UDC

Roger Broomfield has kindly sent a copy of the Bill shown below. He comments that the number of letters must indicate that the sub-office marks did not have much use, as we all have long realised. A similar Bill for Titley shows four letters out and one in.

Sub-Postmaster's or Messenger's Bill.*

For [illegible]

Stamp of the Post Town } [illegible]

Stamp of the Sub-Office } [illegible]

Time Outwards.	Time Inwards.		£	s.	d.
Despatched at [illegible] by [illegible] Postmr.	Despatched at [illegible] by [illegible] Sub-Postmr.	Unpaid Letters and Newspapers sent out			
Received at [illegible] by [illegible] Sub-Postmr.	Received at [illegible] by [illegible] Postmr.	Paid Foreign or Colonial Letters sent in			
		Total...			
		Deduct Returned Letters. No.			
Total number of Letters sent out 13		Amount of 1d. Labels in the hands of the Sub-Postmaster†		10	
Total number of Letters sent in 1					

Registered Letters

SENT OUT.	SENT IN.

* When this Bill is used by a Post-Messenger, he is to present it at each Sub-Office along the road, at which no Bag is made up, in order that the Sub-Postmaster may fill up one of the Forms at the back with the requisite particulars.

† No Sub-Postmaster must suffer his stock of Stamps on hand to fall below 10s. worth.

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THE 'X' MARKS OF THE GREAT CROSS POST

by John Calladine

In 'Midland Mail' No. 77, Denis Salt described the origins and expansion of what came to be known as 'The Great Cross Post'. It began as a crosspost link between Exeter and Bristol in December 1696 and was extended to Chester at Michaelmas 1700. Although this post had originally been operated by the Post Office, it was farmed by Joseph Quash from 1706 until his bankruptcy in February 1713 and it was during his tenure of the post that there appeared a series of postal markings ranking among the scarcest in English postal history. These are the 'X' marks of the Great Cross Post.

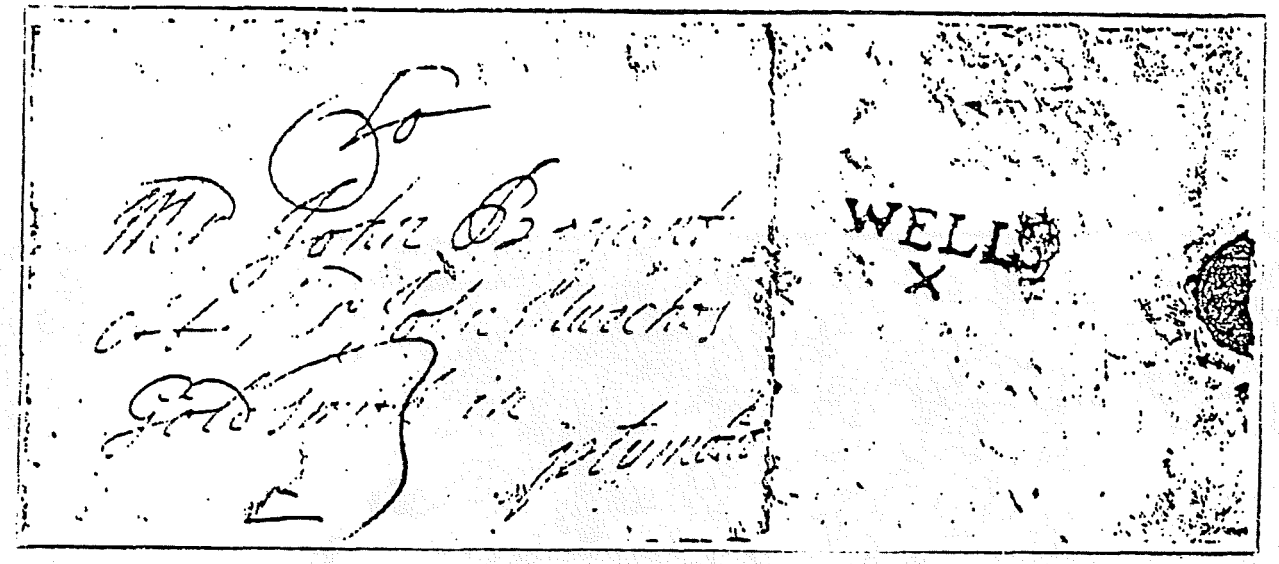
It has long been assumed that the major cities of the crosspost - Exeter, Bristol and Chester - had distinctive crosspost markings. The dated 'E' Bishopmark of Exeter and the dated 'B' Bishopmark of Bristol have been regarded as handstamps used exclusively on crosspost letters. It is now known that the Bristol dated 'B' was also used on London letters but possibly not until after Quash had ceased to farm the Great Cross Post. The Chester 'C', often thought of as a crosspost mark, is not known used on the Great Cross Post and, if Chester had a mark reserved for letters travelling south in this post, it has yet to be discovered.

Most of the intermediate towns on the Great Cross Post were, like the three cities, also served from London. A few, such as Tewkesbury and Bridgnorth, depended on the crosspost for all their mail. It seems likely that Joseph Quash thought it essential, for accounting purposes, to distinguish between 'his' crosspost mail and other mail carried in the General Post and, to that end, he appears to have introduced a series of distinctive handstamps at the intermediate towns. It is probably worth listing the towns again - Tiverton, Wellington, Taunton, Bridgwater, Wells, Wotton under Edge, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Worcester, Kidderminster, Bridgnorth, Shrewsbury and Whitchurch - a baker's dozen. During Quash's farm of the crosspost (1706-1713), any one of these towns may have been issued with a straight line namestamp showing the town's name followed by the letter 'X', to denote 'crosspost'. A typical example is that of Bridgwater:

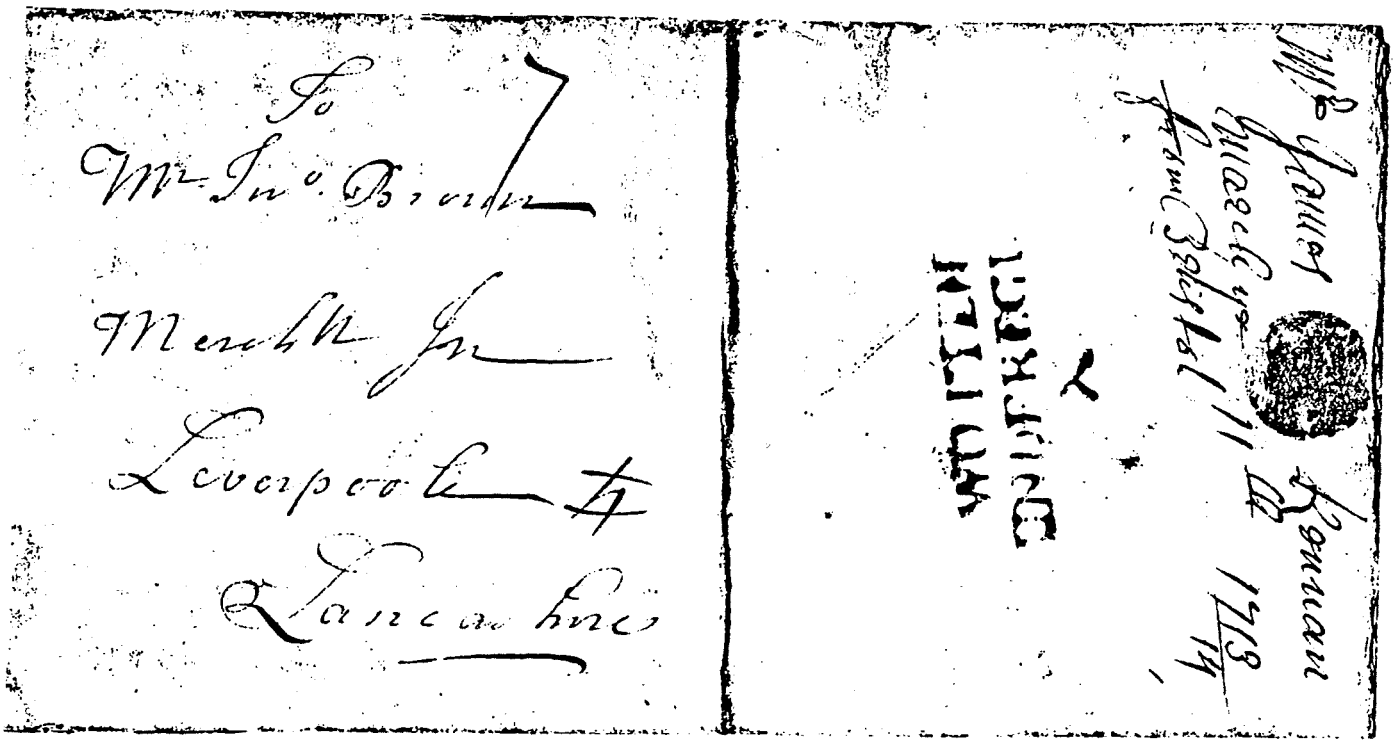
The 'X' marks are rare - very rare. In the past months, however, single examples have been found from towns not previously known to have used the marks and there must be some expectation that a similar handstamp was issued to each of the intermediate towns. If this is so, some important discoveries remain to be made and it may be helpful to summarise, perhaps for the first time, what is known to exist.

The earliest recorded mark at Tiverton (according to the British County Catalogue, Willcocks & Jay) is a two-line namestamp of 1762. No 'X' mark is known at Tiverton nor at the next town along the route, Wellington (Som.). However, a single line Wellington mark of 1705 is listed in the BCC, a year before Quash took over the crosspost. Nothing further is recorded for another thirty years and one can be virtually certain that there is more to be discovered. Taunton is the first town along the route known to have an 'X' mark. This is a two-line mark 'TAUN/TON X' used on a crosspost letter in 1709. Between 1704 and 1719, other Taunton letters are struck with a single line 'TAVNTON' featuring a distinctive Roman 'U'.

The 'BRIDG/WATERX' handstamp has been illustrated above. The only known recorded example is on a letter dated December 1709 from Croscombe, near Wells, to Plymouth. One might have expected this letter to be struck at Wells but examples of crosspost letters, perhaps picked up on the road, struck at the next town are not unusual. Wells did have an 'X' stamp and it is notable in that at least two examples are known. They originate from the same correspondence as the Bridgwater example and, again, date from 1709. The one illustrated below is dated 12th October.

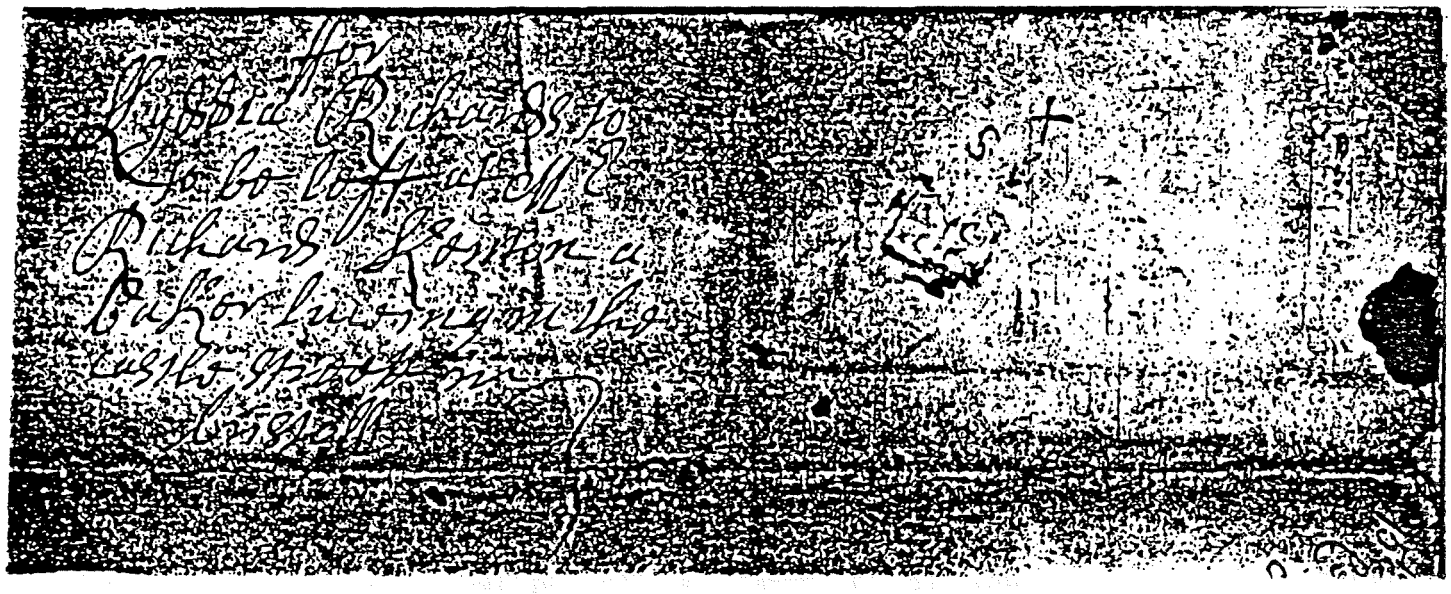


This brings us to what we might term, by the Society's definition of its interests, 'the Midlands'. The first town on the crosspost route after Bristol was Wotton under Edge and it is from Wotton that the most recent and exciting discovery has been made. That it turned up in a derelict house in Liverpool, can only add to its charm. Until this letter came to light, the earliest recorded Wotton stamp was a three-line namestamp of 1723. It is by kind permission of Mr J.D. Morrison of the Border Stamp Company that we are able to illustrate a fine strike of a previously unknown 'WOTTEN/UNDEREGE/X' of March 1713/14. The letter was written in Bristol and probably collected by the crosspost messenger as he left the city. In fact, the majority of later crosspost letters struck with a Wotton handstamp appear to originate in Bristol and to have been stamped at the next town.



The remaining Midland crosspost towns have produced only one 'X' mark to date. Gloucester is a surprising city for it was of considerable postal importance as a gateway to South Wales and yet no handstamp has been recorded before 1720. The earliest recorded Tewkesbury stamp (shown at a Society meeting last year) is from c1730; the earliest confirmed Worcester is, like Gloucester, from 1720 and nothing is yet known from Kidderminster before 1725.

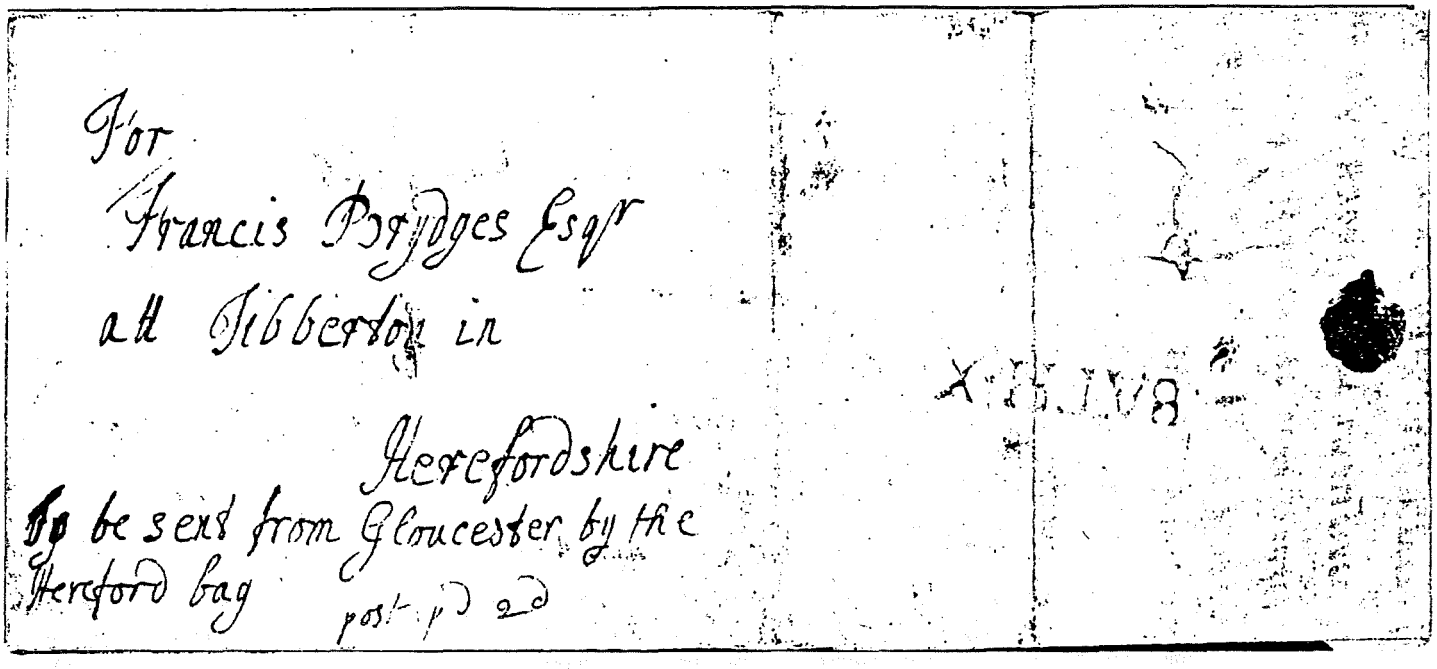
It is one of the three Shropshire towns that has produced an 'X' mark and, as one might expect it is Shrewsbury. The mark, illustrated below, is faint and incomplete but appears to be a convincing 'SHREWS/BURY X' for it is from "Clounbery" (Clunbury) "In the county of Shroupsheare" to Bristol and is dated 15th April 1711. It received a Bristol 'B' Bishopmark for AP/20 on arrival in that city. (The current availability of this mark is not known but enquiries should be addressed to Messrs Argyll Etkin Ltd.)



Although Shrewsbury used a single line handstamp, 'SHREWSBURY', in 1705/06, other known handstamps before 1720 are inscribed 'SALOP'. The earliest recorded Bridgnorth mark is from 1716 but Whitchurch has an abbreviated 'W.CHURCH' of 1707-09. In view of the existence of early marks at the Shropshire towns, the parallel use of 'X' marks must be a probability.

It may be recalled, from Denis Salt's article on the Great Cross Post, that a branch ran three times a week between Oxford and Bath from July 1709. The BCC lists two 'X' marks from Oxford, one framed and another in the more familiar 'OXON X' style, both used on the branch to "Bristol" in 1719 or 1720. This is relatively late usage of an 'X' mark for, it will be recalled, Joseph Quash ceased to farm the post after February 1713. Bath had established an earlier link with Bristol - how early is less clear - and it is from Bath that another 'X' mark has been found on a letter dated 19th June 1710. The letter has Midland interest as it is addressed to Tibberton in Herefordshire and annotated "To be sent from Gloucester by the Hereford bag". This item is illustrated by kind permission of Michael Jackson Ltd (who have recently sold it). It may well be that the 'X' stamp was intended to ensure that the letter was turned north onto the Great Cross Post but it may have been to aid accountancy on the Oxford branch.

The story of the 'X' marks would be incomplete without mention of the two known Welsh marks - 'PEM-/BROOK X' and 'WREX/HAM X' - for their use may have some similarity to that of the Bath 'X'. Neither Pembroke nor Wrexham was anywhere near the route of the Great Cross Post, of course, but both strikes date from the right period (1713). It seems highly probable that these were, in effect, instructional marks advising the postmasters at Gloucester and Chester, respectively, to turn the letters



onto the crosspost and not to send them via London. Wrexham was linked to Chester by means of a bypost while the connection from Gloucester into South Wales avoided the treacherous crossing of the Severn estuary from Bristol.

In summary, 'X' marks have now been seen from five of the thirteen intermediate towns of the Great Cross Post and also from Oxford, Bath, Pembroke and Wrexham. From all but Wells and Oxford, it is believed that only a single example has been recorded. Although these are among the rarest of marks, some diligent searching in local archives - or, perhaps, in derelict houses in Liverpool - could add significantly to recorded knowledge.

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THE SURVEYORS' JOURNALS (Part 6)

In a letter, dated 12th February 1797, and which accompanied his journal for January of that year, Mr Saverland said that the survey he had carried out had delayed his sending tables of the new rates of postage to the deputies in his district, but that he would finish the task the next day, and "every Deputy, sub-Deputy & Receiving House will then have a Table of Rates."

Mr Saverland's survey in January took him through Rugby, Coventry and Birmingham, where on the 23rd he received an "express" from Mr Western at Derby informing the postmaster at Birmingham that, on the previous evening, the mail, containing amongst others the Birmingham bag, had been robbed between Derby and Nottingham. He immediately issued 2000 handbills to inform the public about the robbery. Then he set out for Derby, calling at Lichfield and Burton on the way, to consult with Mr Western on the taxing and circulation of letters between towns in each other's district.

The only item of note in "our area" in the February journal is to be found in the report on riding work. On the 26th of the month, the horse of the postboy going from Wolverhampton to Bridgnorth was stolen whilst the postboy was in a public house delivering some letters. Consequently, he was obliged to walk to Bridgnorth with the bags which delayed him about two hours. Mr Saverland asked that both the thief and the postboy should be taken before a magistrate so that they could be committed to prison, the former for stealing the horse and the latter for loitering on the road. Freeling agreed to this.

On 7th March he set out on another tour of inspection. The first office he visited was Daventry where he found that a number of deputies did not charge their letters according to the new Act. From Daventry he went on to Towcester and then various offices in Buckinghamshire. He reported:

> "Examined at each Office the new Lists of Postage, desiring the Deputies to transmit to me, from time to time, an account of such Offices which did not charge their Letters agreeably to the Lists. All the deputies expressed great obligation for being furnished with them; notwithstanding which, & the value of them to the Deputies, most of whom said they could not go on without them, I was sorry to find that not one of them had stuck them on a board of the size of the paper, to preserve them, agreeably to my Instructions. Acquainted them, if my instructions were not complied with immediately, I should report their conduct to the Postmr. General."

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.

ROGER HUDSON

P.O. Box 172,
COVENTRY CV6 6NF

Phone: 0203 686613

Mr Saverland went on to London to consult Freeling on a number of matters including the protection of the mails carried by horse during the night. This measure had become urgent because of the increase in the number of bank notes circulating in the country.

In mid-April, Mr Saverland went to Atherstone to find out how much money had been received for postage by the person who had performed the duty during the indisposition of the previous postmaster. The next day, he was at Lichfield to attend a meeting about the post to Uttoxeter. His next point of call was Walsall where the inhabitants were extremely dissatisfied with their footpost from Wednesbury. He suggested serving that town from Birmingham twice a day at a cost of £45 p.a.

At this point, Mr Saverland was called upon to go to London and then Norwich to investigate a possible case of fraud in the office there. He returned to Birmingham and Walsall on 25th May to arrange to serve the two towns by a coach and ride twice a day. After he had supervised the introduction of these posts on 1st June he went back to London "on the Norwich business."

After he had spent two weeks at home, Mr Saverland left on 26th June for Holyhead to inquire into matters concerning the Packets based there. On his way home he found that the road between Eccleshall and Woore was in a very bad state, owing chiefly to the floods having torn part of it away in two places. He wrote to a number of gentlemen in the area asking that they arrange for it to be mended.

On 3rd August, he was at Northampton investigating a complaint made about the postmaster detaining letters and being uncivil to a Mr Gunning of Horton House.

The last week of August and the first week of September found Mr Saverland in Cheshire, on his return from where he inspected a number of offices in Shropshire. He reported:

> "Attending the Office at Bridgnorth on Friday 15th of Sept the Post Boy arrived with the Mail at a late hour, very much in liquor, & 2½ hours out of time. I suffered him to proceed the next morning with the Mail to Wolverhampton & followed him, taking the Postmaster with me, in order to have his evidence before a Magistrate, that the Rider might be punished according to Law. Found on my arrival, that there was not a Magistrate residing in the Town, nor within several miles, & very uncertain whether I should find any at home, at a distance, who would do any business in the afternoon, & the next day being Sunday, & the Postmr of Bridgnorth anxious to get home, I was obliged to content myself, very much against my inclination, in only ordering the Rider to be discharged."

GREAT BRITAIN
1580-1901

Elizabethan to Victorian

POSTAL HISTORY

We offer FREE lists – computerised – of EACH COUNTY, LONDON, SCOTTISH, IRISH, WELSH, LINE ENGRAVED, SURFACE PRINTED, MACHINES, AZEMARS, SPOONS, ADD. ½'s, MILITARY BRUNSWICK'S, MARITIME, etc.

PAUL D. HANSON

12 MALVERN GROVE, BRADFORD BD9 6BU
Tel. 0274-46887 0532-676945

ACCESS – VISA – FACILITIES

The whole of October was spent at home. Much of November was spent in charge of the post office at Chester where the postmaster was nearly £900 in arrears. He raised this sum from the friends and surities of the deputy as well as a sale of his goods.

On 18th December he met, at Hinckley, several of the inhabitants of Nuneaton, concerning the delivery of letters there. The deputy of Rugby was ordered to tax the bye letters from her office, which she had failed to do for some time. The deputy at Warwick informed him that uncharged letters very frequently came directed to Lord Warwick in the absence of that person. Mr Saverland referred the deputy to his instructions and told him to charge all uncharged letters for Lord Warwick that came when his Lordship was not at his country residence. The same applied to all Members of Parliament.

Then he went on to Daventry and the village of Floore from where there had been an application for a receiving house. Unfortunately no further details are given. On the last day of 1797, he was at Northampton where he was glad to find that the deputy had found "a very steady and obliging young man for her Clerk."

Mr Western was at home in the early part of January 1797, "preparing instructions for the deputies in my district as to the new taxes on Letters according to the increased rates of postage." On the 18th he went to Bakewell to meet the postmaster of Buxton whose rider had been accused of secreting letters which he had received on the road. The boy was eventually sent to York for trial.

He then went on to report that on the 22nd the mail from Derby to Nottingham had been robbed. He took steps to advertise the crime and set off for the Nottingham area to make enquiries. After the rider had been examined, he was committed for deserting his mail. The investigation was interrupted by the meeting with Mr Saverland mentioned above. This was followed by what appears to have been an fruitless journey to Lichfield after two men supposed to have been concerned with the robbery.

The first ten days of February were spent on a survey in the area of Newark and Grantham, before he was called to Nottingham where two men, supposed to have been involved in the robbery, were lurking. After they had been arrested, Mr Western made enquiries in the area as to their conduct prior and subsequent to the robbery. Towards the end of the month he set off on a survey on the roadto Northampton. At each office he corrected "the lists". It is probable that these were the tables of rates of postage; unlike Mr Saverland, he does not appear to have issued new lists. This survey was interrupted on 6th March when he was ordered to take charge of the office in Leicester as the deputy there had been suspended. Apart from a week in York to attend the trial of the Buxton mailboy, he was in Leicester until mid-April.

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

He ended his journal for March by saying that he had sent orders to every deputy in his district, that no person under the age of sixteen was to be employed as a rider for horse mails.

The saga of the robbery near Notingham continued for, on 25th April, he went to Northampton and the canal in the neighbourhood of Daventry to inquire after a person alleged to have negotiated a bill stolen out of one of the bags. From Northampton he went on to London where he spent most of the following three weeks. His stay there was interrupted by a visit to Newark where some bills had been stolen out of a letter sent from there to London. Amongst the matters he discussed in London was the post between Chesterfield and Derby.

It was this post which occupied his time for the first half of June. He visited Alfreton, Chesterfield and Sheffield before giving directions for the post to begin on 14th June. He reported:

> "The new post between Chesterfield and Derby goes on very well, and is always in time for the mail going to Sheffield. I expect shortly it is to go 6 times a Week by the Coach, at present it only goes 4 and twice by a man & horse, which cost is so expensive that it was with difficulty I could get it done on terms not to exceed £80 to which I was confined."

From 26th June to 5th July Mr Western was in charge of the office at Newark as the deputy there had died. From then until December all his journies took him into Lancashire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire and need not concern us other than on 23rd September, he went to Sheffield to examine the new branch to Alfreton, and the post between Derby and Chesterfield.

He reported that a "great flood" at Newport Pagnell on the morning of 26th September had caused much disruption. As no coach (from London) had arrived at Northampton by 10 a.m., the Wellingborough mail was then dispatched. But the riders were so "out of their times" that they returned to Northampton too late for the coaches going to London. At Derby the mail had eventually arrived at 3.45 p.m. However the rider was able to get to Bakewell and back by the time of the departure of the London mail in the morning.

Bad weather, but this time snow, was again a problem in November and December. At the end of November the rider from Buxton to Sheffield did not go through Stoney Middleton as he had been so directed by a Mr Hall (the postmaster?) of Buxton. Mr Western wrote to Mr Hall saying that the route of the post ought not to be changed "even for a day except on the failure of a reasonable exertion to continue the usual road." A few days later the rider from Macclesfield to Buxton lost his way in the snow and nearly perished on the moors. As a consequence the postmaster of Macclesfield employed two men and horses for which he requested an extra sixteen shillings.

On 11th December, Mr Western went to Loughborough and Mountsorrel respecting the detention of the mail for the latter place. He went to Leicester to arrange a bye bag from there to Mountsorrel. On his way home he "settled a more safe conveyance for the Letters to Shardelow."

From 4th to 20th January, Mr Woodcock was at Bristol and Bath, "attending the commencement of the New Act, writing letters for the information of Deputies, and making out new lists of Postage, agreeably to the rates specified in the said Act." He was engaged on the same task for the next month, though he was at Gloucester.

He was in charge of the office at Tewkesbury for a month from 24th February as the deputy there was "much in arrear to the Revenue." Although a sale of his effects did not realise enough to pay the debt, the postmaster was allowed to keep his position, "in consideration of the Poor Man's very distressed situation, having given up

his all; and being in other respects a good Officer." He agreed to pay the deficiency in instalments.

The first fortnight of April was spent by Mr Woodcock in the area of Ross, Hereford and Hay, introducing a new ride between Ross and Brecon. This post which started on 5th April and which operated on three days a week, met the mailcoach, through Monmouth and Abergavenny, at each end of the ride.

The time up to 23rd May was spent at home dealing with official business. A survey on the road between Gloucester and Oxford revealed nothing of note. He did report that he had looked over and corrected the new tables; I wonder if this means that he had made mistakes when compiling them or if they came from another source. His February journal, where he mentioned that every deputy in his district had been sent a new list, suggests the latter is not correct.

A visit to Tewkesbury near the end of June found the deputy conducting the business in a proper manner. The offices at Ledbury, Malvern, Ross and Hereford were inspected during the second half of July. Again he mentioned "correcting their new tables". Then he went to Cheltenham to investigate possible instances of the illegal carriage of letters between Cheltenham and Bath. It appeared that only one person, a poulterer named Wildy, carried goods between Cheltenham and Bath. Although he sent a cart, to and from Bath, twice a week during the Season, there was no evidence that he carried letters. However Mr Woodcock asked the postmaster to keep a watch on him. He also wrote to Mr Wildy enclosing some printed cautions "with a hope that the warning there held forth, will (supposing it did exist) put a stop to such a practice in future."

Inspections of the offices at Tewkesbury, Worcester and Ledbury made in August found that all was in order, apart from finding some errors in their new tables. At Moreton in Marsh he found that the deputy did not tax his bye letters, "tho' he has a table & when I sent it to him , I directed him to do so - gave him fresh Orders to do it, as now I think each Deputy should tax all letters put into their Offices, which by the help of their tables they may do more correctly than any forwarding Office can do for them."

There is nothing of interest about the Midlands in the journals until that for December, the greater part of which was spent in charge of the Tetbury office, the deputy having absconded. A new postmaster was installed in place of E. Schollar.

(to be continued)

MORE ON 1797

Full details of some of the measures mentioned by the Surveyors in their journals are often to be found in the Post 40 documents. Three such are, in part, described below.

Gloucester and Carmarthen Branch

The allowances withdrawn on 5th April 1797, and those introduced on that date included the following.

To be taken off.

Gloucester	the allowance for conveying the mail to & from Ross, and waiting there daily.	£111.11.8
Hereford	the allowance for conveying the mail to & from Ross 4 days a week and waiting there one night.	£35.16.0
Hay	the allowance for carrying the mail to & from Hereford.	£40.0.0

Monmouth for carrying the "Old day Mail" to & from Ross	£26.12.0
Brecon for conveying the mail to & from Hay, and to & from Landovery	£72.0.0

New allowances to be paid from 5th April 1797.

Gloucester for conveying the mail to & from Ross 4 days a week (thro' Mitcheldean. 20 miles at £2.13.4	£53.6.8
waiting at Ross 3 nights at 1/- each	£7.16.0
to pay a foot runner for carrying the Mitcheldean bag to and from the Lea to meet the coach 3 times a week	£6.10.0
Hereford for conveying the mail to & from Ross 4 days a week	£37.6.8
waiting at Ross one night at 1/-	£2.12.0
for conveying the mail to and from Hay 3 times a week "with increased expedition". 20 miles at £2.10.0	£50.0.0
Brecon for conveying the mail to and from Hay 3 times a week "with increased expedition". 16 miles at £2.10.0	£40.0.0

Expence of a mailcoach to & from Gloucester & Carmarthen	£143.0.0
Two guards at £30 each p.a.	£60.0.0

The Birmingham - Walsall Mailcoach

On 26th July 1797, Mr Saverland reported to Freeling that the contractors for the above mailcoach refused to work it to the Castle Inn in Birmingham, as specified in the contract. He suggested that they should be prosecuted for the £100 bond as laid down in the contract. Part of the contract is reproduced below as it does contain some interesting information.

"Wheras the Right Honourable the Post Master General has agreed to pay to the above Charles Perks and Richard Corfield the Sum of Forty-five pounds a year for conveying the Walsall Mails to Birmingham post office by a Man and Horse or other Conveyance every day; And for carrying the Walsall Mails from Birmingham post office by a Coach immediately as they arrive at Birmingham aforesaid; And the said Horse and other Conveyance to be free from Tolls for One year determinable on Three Months Notice in writing being previously given by either party; And whereas the said Charles Perks and Richard Corfield have agreed to work the said Mails in the Term and in manner aforesaid. Therefore the condition of this Obligation is such That if the above Charles Perks and Richard Corfield do and shall start from each end of the Ground at the time the Postmaster shall direct for one year to be computed from the first day of June next and everyday convey the Walsall Mails to Birmingham Post Office according to the rate specified in the Time Bill; And also do and shall everyday during the said term of One year as soon as the Mails arrive at Birmingham bring the said Mails to Walsall according to the Rate specified in the Time Bill by the said Coach which shall Really and Bona Fide run to and from the Castle Inn or such other Inn in Birmingham as the Postmaster shall appoint; And carry no more than Four Inside and Four Outside Passengers then this obligation to be void..."

80/18

FROM THE NORTHAMPTON MERCURY

Derek Smeathers has sent copies of pages from old editions of the Northampton Mercury. He comments that for the first four years, it included in each edition "From the General Post-Office Letter" which gave news of happenings in this country andabroad. He asks if this service was provided by the G.P.O.

The Guards now attend the Prince, as usual.

The Earl of *Kilmare*, of *Ireland*, is dead at *Brussels*.

William Bray, Esq; Member of Parliament for *Monmouth*, is dead.

From the London Gazette, April 26.

Lisbon, [*PORTUGAL*] *April* 21. The Ships that were fitted out for the Portugueze Indies sailed a Week a go, and carried with them a new Viceroy for those Parts, Don Francisco Joseph do Sampayo de Mello, in the Room of the Count d'Ericeyra's Son, who has obtained Leave to return home. Here, as well as in Spain, the long Continuance of dry Weather threatens the Country with great Scarcity of Corn; and unless the Rains which we have had for two or three Days past are followed by more violent ones, there will be a great Demand of Corn from foreign Parts.

From the General Post-Office Letter *in* Lombard-street, April 26.

They write from *Paris*, that 300 Archers being appointed to take up all Beggars and Vagabonds, and to send those who are not able to work to the Hospitals, and those who are, to *Missippi* (of which latter 300 were sent away the 27th) had laid hands on divers trading People of Credit, and killed 3 that resisted: Upon which the People rose upon them, kill'd 11 of the Archers, and wounded many more. The next day there was the like Insurrection, when several more of the Archers were kill'd. The Parliament have assembled on this Occasion, and made a representation thereof to the Government.

Yesterday the Commons passed the Bill to prevent Abuses in Allowance on Damaged Wines.

Order'd a Bill be brought in for appointing Commissioners to examine, state, and determine the Debts due to the Army.

The Lords read yesterday 12 or 14 more Petitions of the Clothiers, Stuff-makers, Weavers, Diers, &c. of the Counties of *Glocester*, *Worcester*, *Somerset*, and the Cities of *London*, *Bristol*, &c. for passing the Callicoe-Bill.

Read the said Bill a 2d time, and heard Council for the *East India Company*, who observ'd that the Drapers would be great Sufferers, should the Bill pass; having a Stock of Callicoes on their hands, valued at 250000 *l.* which would be a dead Stock

This day the Lords finish'd hearing the *East India Company* against the Callicoe-Bill, and are to hear the Weavers to morrow

The Committee also came to a Resolution that the Bubbles are prejudicial to the Trade and Commerce of the Nation. Tho'

The *Bristol-Mail* was again robb'd yesterday, in the same Place as on Friday, by one Highwayman.

From Wye's Letter, April 26.

Hague [HOLLAND] *April* 30. The Portuguese Ambassador has renew'd his Instances in more pressing Terms than formerly, for the Payment of the Arrears of Money due to the King his Master, from this State, in the late War, according to the Convention made with that Crown, when His Majesty enter'd into the Grand Alliance: But this Affair meets with great Difficulty; by reason of the Pretensions of our West India Company upon Portugal, with regard to the Cession of *Brazil*.

The States General are by no means pleas'd with the Satisfaction to be given by the *Palatine Court*, for the Insult offer'd to one of the Domesticks of our Envoy at *Heidelburg*, who is removed from thence to *Frankfort*, on account of some new Insults towards him and his Domesticks, by the Scholars of the *Jesuits*.

Letters from *Paris* of the 1st of *May* say, that the *Protestants* who were seiz'd some time ago near *Nesmes*, for having assisted, tho' without Arms, in an Assembly, to pray to God, receiv'd lately their Sentence. Some of them are condemn'd to the Gallies, others to be transported to the *Mississippi*, and divers Women to be confin'd to Monasteries.

The Principal Reasons offer'd by the East India *Company's Council, against the Callicoe-Bill are*,

That the Company, together with the Trade and the Prolongation of the Term of their Charter, was establish'd by several Acts of Parliament, on condition whereof they had advanc'd many Millions to the Government.

That there being several Duties laid on Callicoes for 32 Years, the Annuitants would be expos'd to great Hardships, if the Bill should pass, by being left without Security for their Money.

That the Fair Sex would undergo great Severities from the Malice of the Weavers, and the Authority given to the Justices of the Peace; since every Woman would be liable to Trouble, who is only suspected of wearing foreign Linnen, the same not being easily distinguishable from some of our own.

Also one *John Eggleston*, a Linnen-Draper, of the Sect of the People call'd Quakers, made the following Objection against passing it:

That great Danger would arise thereby of being depriv'd in the Exports of Callicoes to our own Plantations, to *Africa*, *Jersey*, and *Guernsey*; as also of that Trade falling into the Hands either of the new erected Company at *Ostend*, or of the *Dutch*.

Since

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THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

This should appear by mid-August. The only certain content is more from the Surveyors' Journals. So, please, articles to:
John Soer, 51d Barkham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 2RG.

Please note that the first meeting of the season will probably be on 4th September.