

# MIDLAND MAIL

## THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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**Number 174 April 2012**

### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The A.G.M. and Annual Auction of the Society will be hold on **5<sup>th</sup> May, 2012**, at St. Germain's Church Hall, B16 9TD.. Viewing of lots will take place from 11 a.m. The Annual General Meeting will be held at 1 p.m. and the Auction will begin at 1.30 p.m.

On **12<sup>th</sup> May** is a meeting in conjunction with WORPEX at Oldbury Park School, Worcester WR2 6AA. The theme of the meeting will be Uniform Fourpenny Post and Uniform Penny Post. The meeting will be led by Malcolm Allison followed by displays by members. Meeting will begin at 1.30.

### THE JOHN BAKER TROPHY

I have received several entries for the trophy, awarded for the best article to appear in Midland Mail during 2011 as voted for by members. There is still time to vote for your choice. As outlined in an earlier Midland Mail I felt if for this year Members made their own selection, so far a number of varied articles have been nominated, if you have not already voted please do so.

### THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

This is due to be published in June and although so far members have been keeping me supplied with articles on a wide variety of subjects I hope this will continue. With five editions a year there is plenty of space for me to fill, articles both long and short are welcome even if you have never contributed before please look into your interest/collection and share it with other members.

I regret the errors that occurred under my editorship, in future all "major" articles will be returned to the contributor for proof reading in order to avoid such mistakes.

Articles can be sent either by post, handwritten or typed, to me at Mrs Sadie Cole, Pool House, Discoed, Presteigne, Powys LD8 2NW or by email to [sadiecole@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:sadiecole@mypostoffice.co.uk) It would be helpful if typed or emailed contributions were uniformly formatted using 9 pt Times New Roman Font, but please do not let this put you off sending articles.

Although I make every effort to attend M.P.H. meetings unfortunately living "in the wilds" of Mid Wales it is not always possible. So the recent suggestion that I be given a short outline of material displayed by the member giving the display is very much appreciated and I am sure will lead to a more accurate report appearing in MM. (Discoed is 1hr drive from a motorway and the building of 3 new houses in recent years has increased its size by 25%!)

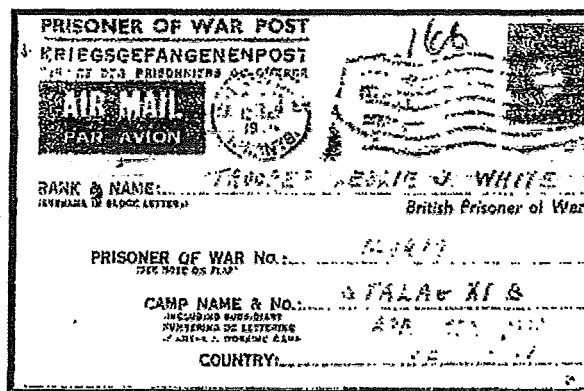
## ERRARE HUMANUM EST

Again I start page 2 with an apology, this time to Derek Smeathers for omitting a whole paragraph from his report of the September meeting at Nuneaton. This crucial paragraph was a summary of Derek's display of Northants in WWII. which formed the second part of the morning display.

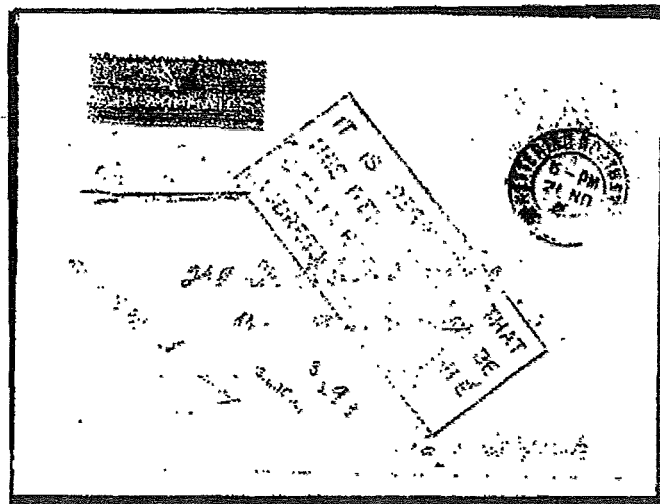
#### Northants in WWII

"The morning continued with Derek Smeathers' display of Northamptonshire postal history all connected with World War II. This occupied nine boards, each covering a different aspect, showing 'Changes at Home' postal and otherwise! Next came 'Increase in postage and Censorship' including both military and civilian items. Board 3 covered 'Postal Services at War' and the next showed adaptation of pre-war mail routes forced by enemy occupation and activity. Board 5 was of 'Telegrams and Airgraphs' and Board 6 showed the development of the Air Mail Letter Card. Next came a display of different Naval and R.A.F. Censor markings. Board 8 was entitled 'Czechs and Yanks' with the Czech Army at Desborough and the eighth United States Air Force bases across Northants. The final board showed covers and cards from POW Camps, together with a few military letters from 1945.

The two examples of items from Derek's display shown below have been slightly reduced in size for convenience of space.



Prisoner of War Mail : Northamptonshire to Germany



World War II mail from Northamptonshire to the U.S.A.

## DECEMBER MEETING

Mail to and from India – Max Smith

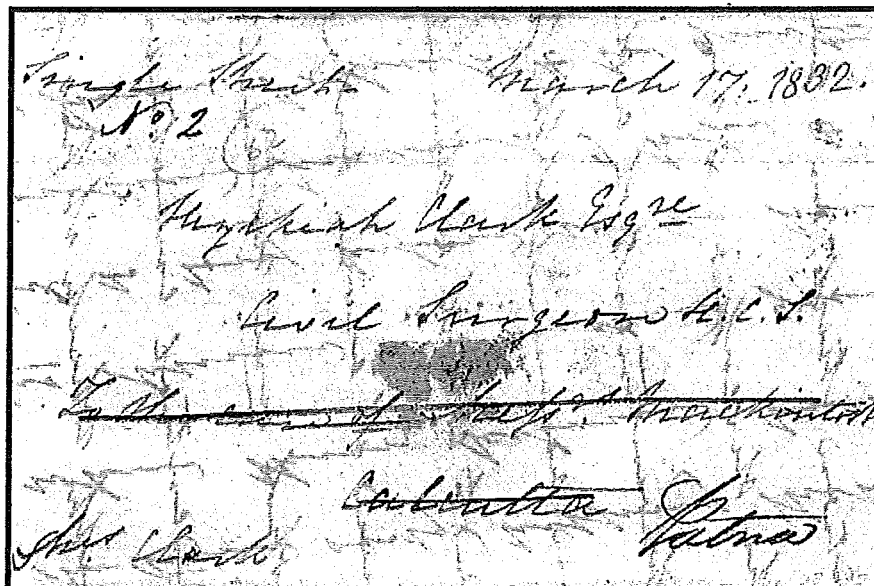
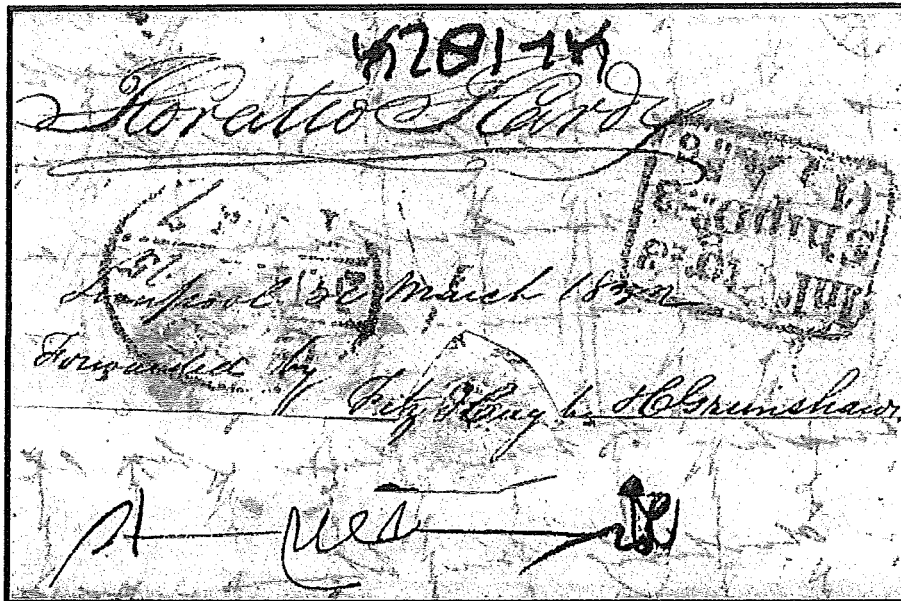
At the December meeting at Burton-on-Trent the afternoon display treated members to a magnificent display of Indian Postal History. As reported in the earlier article on the December meeting I was hoping to receive a summary of the display from Max himself. This has now been received and is reproduced below.

The first part of his display dealt with the early links with India which were purely for trade, formed by the East India Company which set up a three cornered trade - Wool and Cotton Fabric to China - silk from China to India - spices from India to Britain. Three settlements at the Presidency ports of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay became the focus of this trade and became almost independent territories with their separate armies, civil service, currencies and of course postal regulations. The early postal history of India is basically the Company correspondence. In the comprehensive display of 18th and 19th century mail to and from India were several with unique hand stamps, including the famous 'Horatio Hardy' endorsements from the proprietor of the Jerusalem Coffee House and private mail paying extra fees to be sent with the Company's Packet mail. Several items were marked Kings Postage, Ship Letter and India Letter.

The second part of Max's display dealt with the progression from sail to steam and dealt with the route changes and illustrated some of the difficulties encountered with the introduction of steam ships. The early steamers were often so underpowered that they were unable to carry sufficient coal to allow them to complete their journey except for part of the year when the weather conditions were favourable. Pioneers like Waghorn pushed for improvements and gradually they led to the time taken for delivery to be reduced from 6 months to 6 weeks by 1880, albeit not without several wrecks and disasters along the way. There was a good range of Registered Mail, Redirected, Underpaid and Express Mail between India and Great Britain to view.



1816 'King's Postage' paid cover from Madras to Madeira via GB



Front and Reverse of 1832 from G.B. to Calcutta forwarded by agents FitzHugh & Grimshaw in Liverpool and Horatio Hardy in London



1849 from Brighton to Madras via Marseilles, paid 2/3d using all four of the stamps available in GB at the time.

#### JANUARY MEETING

The January meeting was held at St.Germain's Church Hall when the subject was Members Displays of "Postal History of Your Local Village(s)". Ten members displayed a wide variety of items from their local village(s) although Guy Bridges stated that he did not live in a village and showed items from Abbey Foregate . Shrewsbury, 'the street where I live'! Jan Young also deviated slightly from the subject showing Social History items - 'Invoices from various people who provided services for villages'.

Roy Summers showed Staffordshire villages. A Tettenhall Cresswell Handstamp on an entire dated 1859 going to Stourbridge – a cover with a Trysull Type D4 U.D.C. – the only recorded use. A Trysull Penny Post item and a Brewwood straight line mark on a Mulready which also had a Wolverhampton Traveller handstamp. He also showed a cover with a misspelt KINVAR (for Kinver), a Mulready with a Tettenhall U.D.C. and other items from villages around Wolverhampton.

Mick Gill took members to Carlton on Trent, a village on the Great North Road midway between Newark and Tuxford as shown on a 1744 John Cowley map of Nottinghamshire. The village had a Post Office at the Bell Inn from 1793 and a letter from London to Norwell dated 1796 was endorsed "to be left at the Bell Inn Carlton upon Trent". The importance of the village postally is shown by the issue of the 543 numeral handstamp in 1844 – Newark U.D.C. followed for 1845, 46, 47 and 48. An envelope of 1859 carried both the Carlton Upon Trent U.D.C. and a sans-serif Sutton on Trent U.D.C. Examples of two types of rubber datestamps used in 1917 and 1921/22 followed.

A 1776 Armstrong map of the Great North Road showed Carlton on Trent and, just off the road to the north, the neighbouring village of Sutton on Trent, today the more important of the two. Three Vulcan Series postcards published by E.Crowe, General Stores, Sutton on Trent showed views of Carlton on Trent and six Sutton on Trent, the last including the General Stores, now the village library. Eleanor Crowe, nee Gill, was Mick's great aunt.

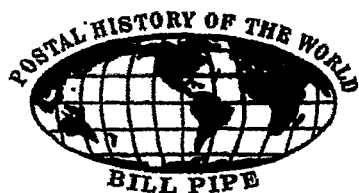
Derek Smeathers showed items from the six Northamptonshire villages in which he has lived beginning with IRTHLINGBOROUGH – a letter of 1743 before it had a post office, stamped with the first namestamp of Higham Ferrers, the undated circle of Irthlingborough in 1858, and two skeletons of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Next came BLISWORTH – a 1773 letter mis-sent to Coleshill; the quite scarce undated circle of 1858 and photographs of a Blisworth postman, Edgar Ayres in full uniform of 1913. The village of BOUGHTON was represented by the only known example in RED of the undated circle of 1845, issued BROUGHTON but used only with the 'R' excised, another example in black, and a green inked type D4 undated circle entered in GPO Impression Book, but mis-read as 'Brighton' for many years. His next village was HORTON which had never had a post office but did have a Stately Hall, so a 'Free' cover from Lord Halifax there, of 1722; another front signed by Sir George Gunning in 1804; some early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcards to Hall staff, and one to Derek at his Horton address in 1964 sent from Algeria with underpayment surcharge. After Horton came GREAT BILLING. Also with a grand hall, occupied by the Elwes Family until the Second World War, represented by a 'Free' front addressed to Elwes, an undated circle on a cover of 1857, and two 20<sup>th</sup> century postcards of particular local interest. Finally, Derek put up items from his home 'village' of Kingsley (known locally as Phippsville) and now a suburb of Northampton.

To illustrate the "Street Where I Live" Guy Bridges gave a display showing Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury. He started with an old map of the area showing the position of the first Post Office, established in 1847, plus a photograph of the site with an old Penfold pillar box opposite. He showed the U.D.C. in blue and black, and late date stamps used. Also some Registered letters posted at Abbey Foregate sub-post office, which was No. 1, including one posted in 1942 from Haifa, Palestine, censored in Palestine.

His second display was 'Atcham', with an 1836 Free letter from Lord Berwick at Attingham Hall, (Atcham), he then showed a selection of Rubber postmarks used at Atcham. In WWI Attingham Park was used as a hospital for wounded soldiers and he showed a postcard from there bearing the cachet used at the hospital. In WWII there was a U.S. Airfield at Atcham from August 1942 to August 1944, being A.P.O. No. 526, and he showed envelopes used from the airfield.

Eric Lewis displayed various letters which had been carried in Birmingham Unofficial local posts organised by the Birmingham Postmaster at his own expense, his charges going into his own pocket with full approval of the Post Office officials. The letters shown ranged from 1650 to 1776 when Birmingham itself was still only the size of a village and had organisation from such places as Solihull, Northfield and Smethwick, each still an isolated village at that time. A map shown was of particular interest as it depicted where Thomas Hanson had lived in the vicinity of where our meeting was taking place but some 125 years prior to the road, on which the meeting room is situated, was constructed. A local village in more ways than one!

During the second half of the afternoon Eric's display now concentrated on the period during the late 1700's when Birmingham's Penny Post was established, letters shown originating in what was known as the 'Country Office' of the Birmingham Penny Post, each of which was at the time a small village. Examples shown were early usages from Solihull, Knowle, West Bromwich Wednesbury, Castle Bromwich and Sutton Coldfield. The latter item bearing the only recorded use of Sutton's PP13/PAID handstamp, It was used less than two months from the establishment of Birmingham's Penny Post and may well be the earliest recorded use in any provincial Penny Post.



## **THE MAGPIE**

**POSTAL AUCTIONS & LISTS  
POSTCARDS & EPHEMERA  
PAPER COLLECTABLES  
POSTAL HISTORY**

**W.T. PIPE  
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**Tel: 01202 623300  
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Email: [magpiebillpipe@free.uk.com](mailto:magpiebillpipe@free.uk.com)**

Alan Marshall's display featured Bunny Village and illustrated the association of Bunny village with the Parkyns Baronetcy of Bunny Hall. Items shown included a strip map showing the Bunny Estate midway between Nottingham and Loughborough. A postcard of an effigy in the Parish Church of Sir Thomas Parkyns, 'Wrestling' Baronet, 1717, and notepaper bearing the Parkyns Arms and Seal. A copy of the earliest Retford mark of 1711 addressed to Sir Thomas Parkyns. A copy of a Church of England Court Registration with signatures of Sir Thomas Parkyns Clerk and the famous clockmaker Humphrey Wainwright and Vicar Thomas Pointer with wrapper from the Vicar of 1764. Letter from and Free Frank to Lord Rancliffe (4<sup>th</sup> Sir Thomas Parkyns) View of Grand Festival marking the rescuing of Nottingham from Tory domination in 1812. This was followed by a Bunny U.D.C. on cover.

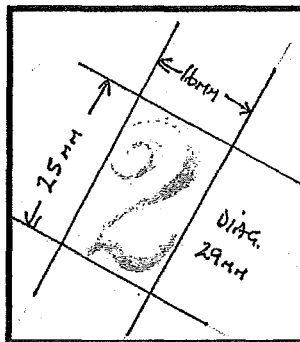
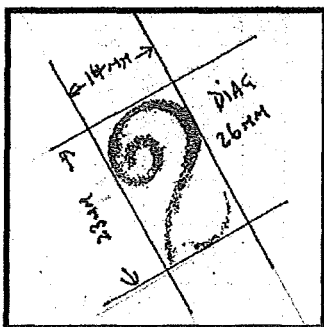
Then followed items related to Bunny Village. 1904 appointment letter of Bunny Postmaster and a postcard to his wife in 1909. A picture of the Bunny Postman and Royal Mail Cart in 1910. A 1907 postcard showing route of original post road. Then a picture of Bunny Hall in 1904 prior to the fire and 1910 after the fire. Also seen were 2 postcards posted on the same day in 1911, one regarding the Bunny Hall central heating boiler. Finally Alan showed three different Bunny postmarks, 1916, 1923 and 1926.

Displays of Barton-under-Needwood, Staffordshire, and Bawtry, Yorkshire, and U.D.C.s of Stockwith and Walkeringham, Notts, both on one cover, were given by Richard Farman and Clive Jones respectively.

I am very grateful to the members who sent me a summary of their display as I was unable to attend the meeting. Several members were kind enough to send items to illustrate their display but unfortunately space does not allow for them to be included here. Rest assured they are on file for future use.

#### WOLVERHAMPTON '2's - Spot the difference

Roy Summers noticed that two covers in his collection from Wolverhampton to Mr Pinckard, Life Assurance Office, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, London, dated 1842 and 1843 that the handstruck '2' as different on each cover. Reference to the County Catalogue the only items recorded were 14x23mm and a much larger one 22x33mm. The 1843 strike is as stated in the C.C. (14x23mm) with the additional measurement 26mm diagonally. The other item (1842) is therefore a new mark for the C.C. Measuring as it does 15x25mm with the diagonal measure being 29mm. He thinks that possibly other collectors have this new (for the C.C.) mark but have not checked the measurements.



## FEBRUARY MEETING

At the Black Country Museum Alan Marshall gave a display of Nottingham City and County (South of the Trent) and I am indebted to Alan for the following report of his display.

The display opened with a selection of maps, a mileage chart and a copy of a unique picture of a Royal Mail coach approaching the town, followed by post cards of historic public houses in very close proximity to the Castle. A couple of early carriers letters led to the earliest Nottingham mark and the proving example of the previously unrecognised one T stamp of 1720. A later one T stamp was shown ahead of a previously unseen mark of 1747, a privilege letter and one with a Dockwra receiving mark.

We then saw a one off 1/2d delivery charge, 1 of 3 unrecorded marks of 1776 and a Z rating mark of 1780. Next a pair of same day straight line 127 cancels accompanied 23mm and 25mm 127 horse shoe marks and straight line 124 cancels along with both the large and small dia. 124 marks. An 1822 Burgess Oath of Nottingham and wrapper of H.R.H. Duke of Sussex appeared with letters of the Archdeacon of Ely and an eminent surgeon of Nottingham. Then came Unofficial Penny Post, U.P.P. manuscript 1d on a Railway letter and a John Leach front with a 'not Belonging' 1d Black from the Mrs Fowler collection.

The two earliest of 11 recorded handstruck 4's of Nottingham U.P.P. Pd 1d, and H.S.2 led to various H.S.2's after the U.P.P. period. There was the late usage of a London error 'To Pay' stamp, a recipe for ink, a market price list, a quotation for a cotton yarn dryer to France 1872 and a permit to pass the gate bar to Strelley Hall. A Penny Black with a rare John Gadsby propaganda label preceded a Postal Stationery envelope, a varied selection of U.D.C.'s of Radford, Old Radford, Bottesford, Watnall and Basford and an 1855 Petition to the Commons from the Nottingham Poor Union followed by an interesting 4d rated letter, a very early Telegram of 1871 and a pair of newspaper wrappers.

We then saw a selection of Late Fee mail into Nottingham 1808 to 1866, a Posted Since and Nottingham Too Late marks with a unique 1852 philatelic special Too Late creation. There was overseas mail to Tyrol, Malta, Austria, U.S.A., Italy, France, Switzerland, South Africa, Guatemala, Germany with squared circles and an 1814 cover that contained pattern samples of cotton hose to Beljana finishing with a 'Found without Contents' envelope from Russia.

A Registered Mail section covered the early manuscript denoted items from 1/- in 1842, 6d from 1849, the alternative double letter rate a rare 'Charge' mark to France 1879 and a 3VOS cancel to Jersey. Registration continued with a 3TH.HOS mark, a private order postal stationery envelope, OHMS Returned Letter Branch, an Unhealthy Area notice envelope and a perfin KGV 3d embossed unused envelope. Finally was a 1928 Royal Show skeleton with error letter, redirected items, a returned 1946 'No Registered Service' envelope from Germany and an unusual oval rubber.

The second half started with the earliest recorded Bingham mark of 1795 without a postal rate, a unique mark of 1809 with no other marks recorded until 1825. A letter from John Strong in 1835 who by then had been officially recognised and the unique mark of 1839 illustrated in the County Cat. The well known straight line Bingham with date in lower case, an 1844 type 584 cancel and the reallocated 656 mark of Wath, Yorkshire. A Bingham C.D.S. in red accompanying a Nottingham traveller cancel of 1847, the earliest and latest skeleton date of 1906 and an incorrect date of 1890. Bingham continued with Registered, Express, Advertising, Income Tax and Parliamentary election covers. A change then to the only double U.D.C. strike in green of Radcliffe on Trent, an uprated Mulready Nottingham to Bunny and an advertising Mulready to Tollerton.

Next came Railway items, a seal of the Ambergate, Nottingham, & Boston & Eastern Railway of 1846, a G.N.R. invoice to Belvoir Castle, Dublin/Belfast and Halifax T.P.O.'s, a Berwick & Newcastle Sorting Tender and a Codnor Park L.M.S. postcard. Moving to maritime items there was a Dover Ship Letter to Melton Mowbray added to and redirected from Nottingham, a U.S.A. 1/- retaliatory rate of 1848 and a Boston ship letter. A left ship postcard to Colombo, sailing vessel Argonaut strike from Corinth and a 'Tin Can Mail' from Tonga. A selection of Coffee House mail items to London 1820 - 58 comprising a high rated summons entire, two with military connections one of which being from Bingham and a G.N.R. printed letter. Then came Censored envelopes of WWI to Switzerland, Denmark and Belgium with a WW2 to Argentina and a retained item to U.S.A.

A fairly long Military section then followed starting with an earliest recording of 1795, a strange one of 1807 and a pre Soldier's Penny rate letter of 1811. A Militia disbanding O.H.M.S. and a card for 'Next of Kin' notification of a soldiers arrival at hospital of 1917, a registered Medals envelope, postcards to a Japanese P.O.W. to Malaya and Thailand 1943, a 6 month search to India and an interesting exchange between a German P.O.W. and a British Soldier..

Continuing there were preprinted Robin Hood Rifles envelopes of 1866 & 70, 2 P.O.W. designed Xmas cards of WWI and a collection of censored serving soldiers and P.O.W. postcards to the Nottingham Comforts Fund for Troops with a variety of P.O.W. camp cancels, a Soldiers Club envelope, a 'Present location uncertain' strike and a Registered Etaples Reinforcement camp all from WWI.

There are now two different 'Missent to Nottingham' marks as shown and all the 4 of 5 known are either earliest or latest recordings with one even in red. An interesting manuscript Missent is from the great grandfather of Diana, Princess of Wales. Next a very early Parcel Post label and rare red oval rubber, postal stationery cards with squared circles of 1891 and Express mail of 3 Kings. Both types of Nottingham Travellers of 1845 & 47, a selection of duplex cancels 1871-82, redirected and refused mail, a QV 1/2d changeling on cover, book post and triangular NG marks of the 1920's.

From the County was mail of Ruddington 1785, 1804 and 1830 with Mansfield mileage removed, a five letter 'Too Late' entire, examples of the Ruddington U.D.C. 1849-59, earliest and latest skeleton dates and Registered overseas covers. A final mixed bag contained advertising covers to Antwerp, Rio de Janeiro, U.S.A., Aristocrat Stamps of Kettering, Nottingham Philatelic Congress 1927, Sorting Office and Mobile office cancels, 'Not called for' and pretty P.P.C.s with skeleton cancels of Lowdam, and Long Eaton. Railway mail bag labels and stamps with 583 cancels and perfin company initials.

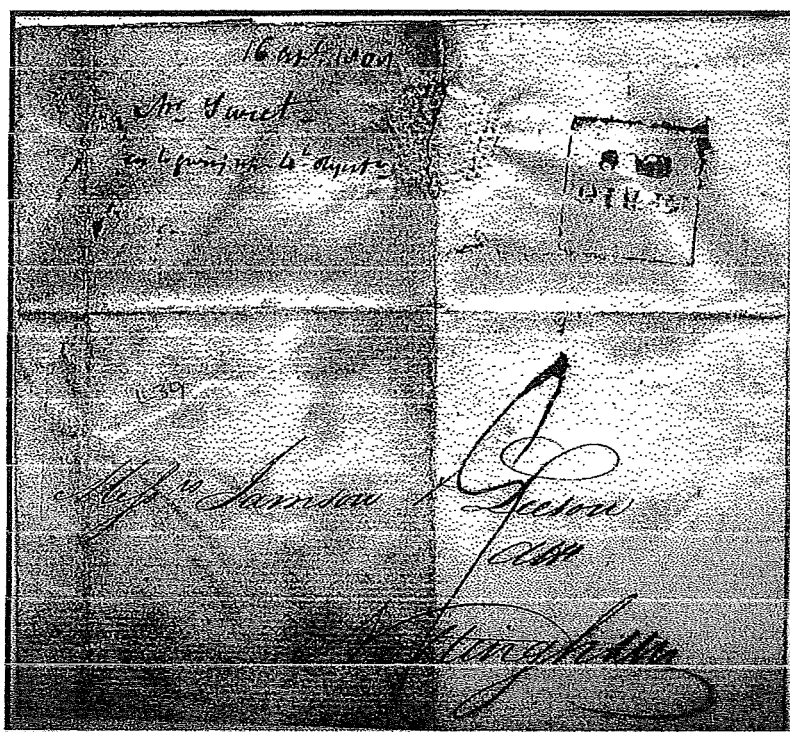
# THE LATE FEE

By  
Alan Marshall

Many towns used a 'Too Late' stamp of various designs but it seems that only a few outside of London used the 'Posted After' and 'Posted Since' stamps. Likewise very few 'Late Fee' stamps are known within the provinces.

The late fee was initially introduced in London at the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and although requiring a fee of 6d to be paid, permitting posting from the normal close of business at 7 p.m. to 7.45 p.m., the fee did not appear on the item. A late fee occurrence was identified by various special stamps, mainly framed rectangular ones during the period 1797 through to 1870's, with a circular one briefly 1799 to 1807. Liverpool had circular late fee stamps in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and London had a number of hooded circles with the letter L included.

Interestingly the earliest duplex type stamp was a late fee one during the 1850's, comprising a rectangular date stamp accompanied by a diamond enclosed No. 38 within a circular barred area. Thereafter an hexagonal date stamp along with a barred oval duplex.



Item 1 London to Nottingham Showing Rectangular 'Mauve' Mark Dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 1808

Item 1 on a London to Nottingham entire is an example of a rectangular in 'mauve' mark dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 1808 which was only in use 1807 to 1809.

The rectangular duplex type as mentioned earlier obviously following the introduction of the adhesives created another variation to the late fee system. From 1840 the application of an additional stamp in the top left corner of the entire/envelope now signified a late fee. At this time the 6d fee applied to posting between 7.0 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. with the 1d sufficing during the 6.0 p.m. to 7.0 p.m. period.

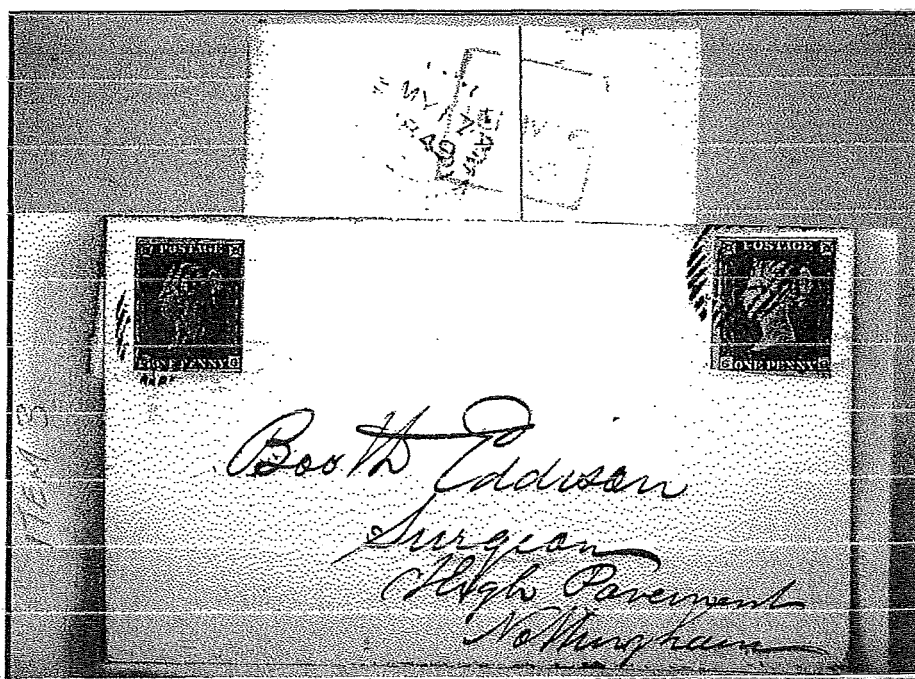
Item 2 is a part entire Nottingham to Leicester 9h June 1840 with a manuscript prepaid 1d in red acknowledged by crossing through and Penny Black (p1.3) placed in the top left corner tied with a red Maltese Cross. A Nottingham C.D.S. on the reverse confirms the date. It is argued that the crossing out of the prepaid penny is a way of indicating that the item is being sent under the late fee system.

Item 3 is an entire of 16<sup>th</sup> May 1849 to an eminent surgeon in Nottingham from his brother in London and shows the system with two stamps. This method is also referred to as being 'two legged'. The reverse shows an

example of a later rectangular stamp with the day date both sides of the month, alongside a Nottingham receiving C.D.S. Booth Eddisons' house remains in excellent condition on High Pavement, at that time on the main post route through Nottingham on the edge of the Lace Market and almost opposite the Gaol. The letter advises receipt of £20 for the Colliery and that he can cut down what he likes at a family property (presumably trees) at Kirkby Woodhouse. It is written on headed paper of the Leeds and Thirsk Railway Coy, Manchester Building, Westminster.

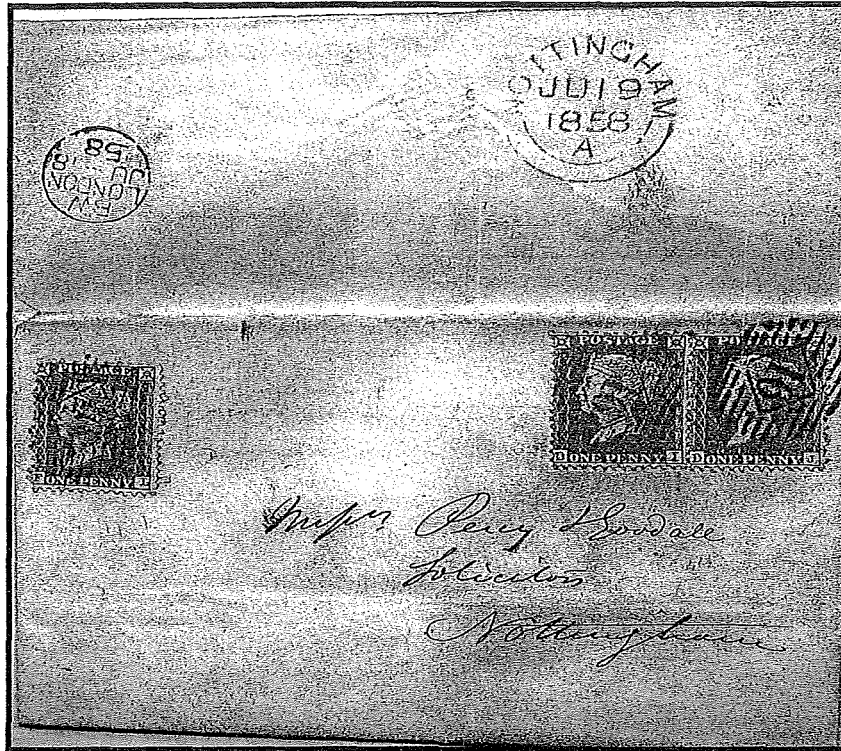


Item 2 Nottingham to Leicester 9<sup>th</sup> June 1840 with Penny Black in Top Left Corner



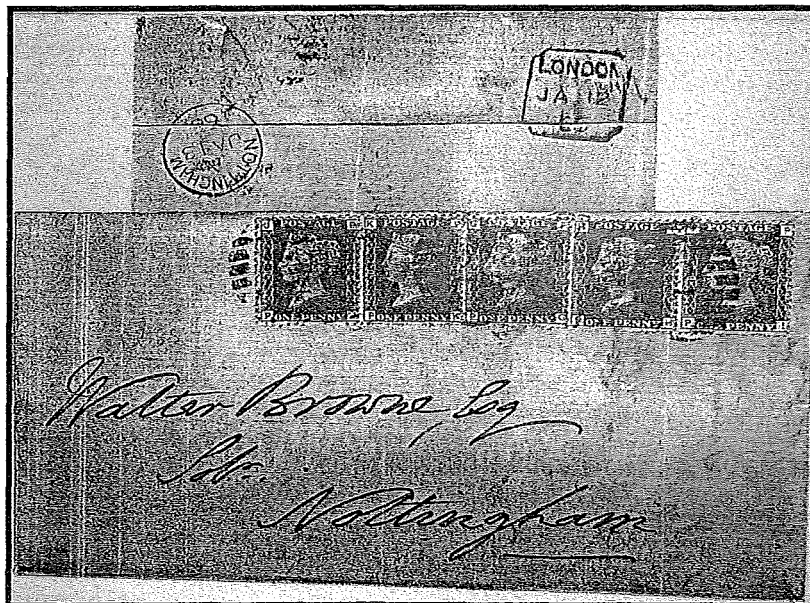
Item 3 London to Nottingham 16<sup>th</sup> May 1849 Showing the Two Stamp System

Item 4 is an entire of 18<sup>th</sup> June 1858 from London to Nottingham with an enclosure and displays a pair of penny reds and one in the top left corner. The reverse shows a small London chief office thimble cancel and a Nottingham receiving C.D.S. 19<sup>th</sup> June.



Item 4 Nottingham to London June 19<sup>th</sup> 1858

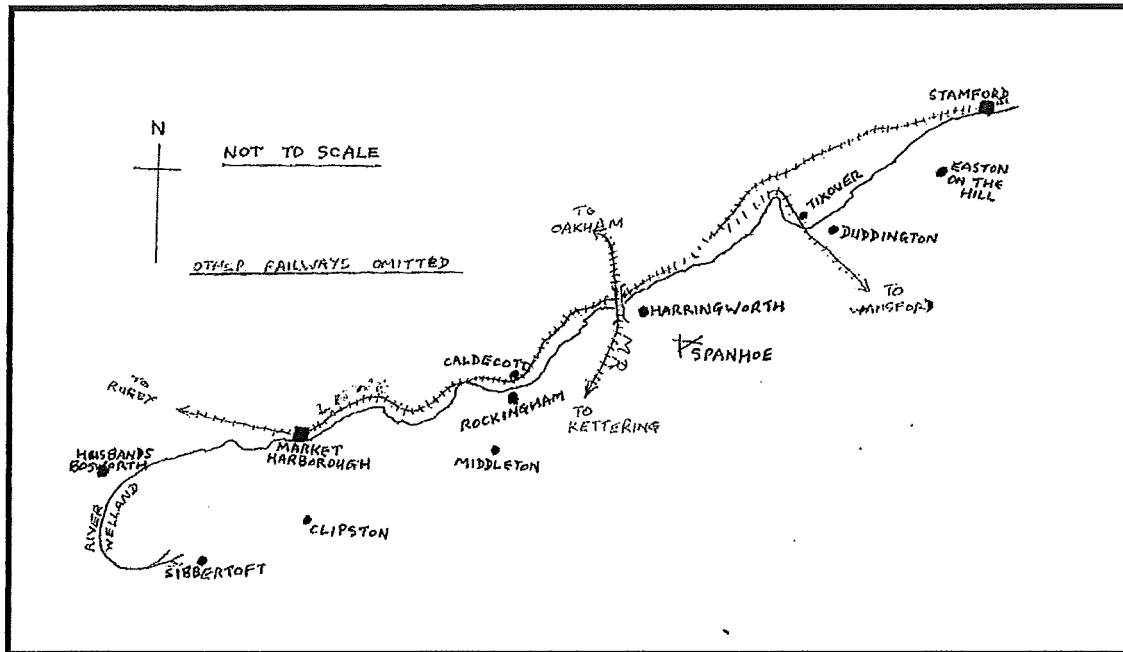
The final item again from London to Nottingham is an entire of 13<sup>th</sup> January 1866 with a variation. It contained a writ of summons presumably exceeding the 2 oz wt. and warranted a 4d rate. The extra penny late fee was this time applied in line and proven on the reverse with a small chamfered corner rectangular late fee stamp (issued in 1858).



Item 5 London to Nottingham 13<sup>th</sup> January 1866 with Chamfered Corner Rectangular Late Fee Stamp  
On Reverse.

## THE WELLAND VALLEY IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

By  
Derek Smeathers



Map showing area referred to

The River Welland runs for about 70 miles from its source in Northamptonshire through several market towns such as Market Harborough, Stamford and Spalding to empty into the Wash a few miles south-east of Boston, Lincolnshire. It rises near the village of Sibbertoft, only 3 miles from the source of the River Avon, but between these two sources is high ground around the Battlefield of Naseby, more than 600 feet above sea level. The newborn Welland trickles westwards for nearly a mile, where it becomes the boundary between Leicestershire and Northamptonshire and makes a wide horseshoe bend to the right below Husbands Bosworth (Leics) to begin its long meandering journey east/north-eastwards along the floor of the valley. Villages here may be in one county, but postally controlled by a post town in another with resultant confusion from time to time. Sibbertoft is in Northants but postally served from Market Harborough.

Further east, Clipston is 3 miles inside Northants but its post town has switched from Market Harborough to Northampton and back again on several occasions in its long history – in 1901 under Harborough; by 1903 under Northampton, and by 1905 back to Harborough (Fig. 2).

Continuing down the Valley,, Rockingham is very close to the point where Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland meet. In railway days, Rockingham station was actually situated in Caldecott village (Rutland) and to get there, intending passengers (and mails) left Rockingham in Northamptonshire, crossed the River Welland and passed through a half-mile of Leicestershire, before reaching the station in Rutland. Rockingham was a post town by 1750 (fig. 2A) and the Leeds Mail called there from 1807, but its postal importance quickly declined, and by 1848 it was served by a mail cart from Leicester (fig.3) until 1863 when it was under Kettering. It has currently had no post office at all for the last 40 years. Some of its former sub-offices still occasionally suffer from obscurity – a 1973 cover from Northampton addressed to "Middleton" travelled more than 600 miles to several other "Middletons" without getting to its real destination, and was finally returned to Northampton marked 'unknown'; (Fig 4) the sender thought it unnecessary to show 'Northants', and the post office did not recognise a Middleton In Northants!

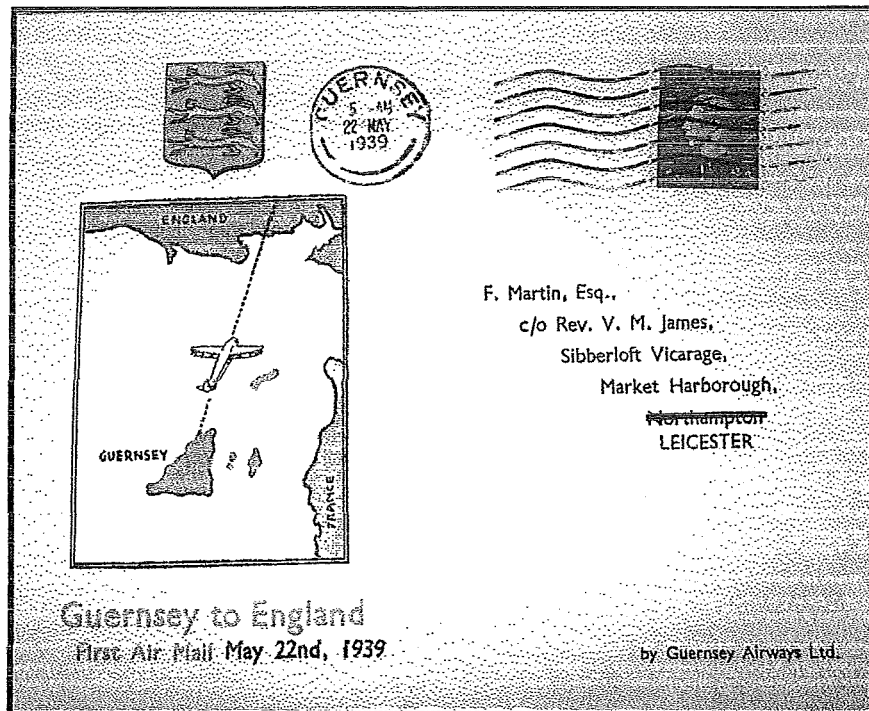


Fig. 1 Cover showing Sibbertoft being postally served from Market Harborough

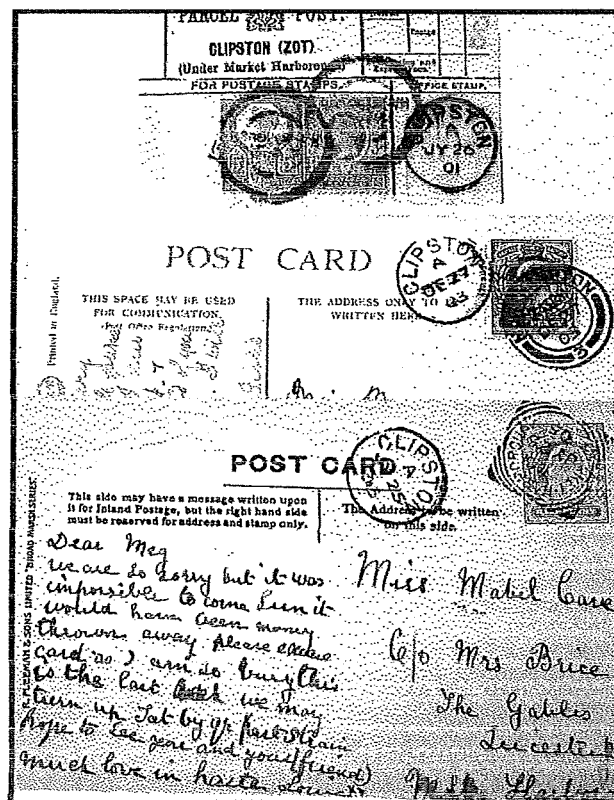


Fig.2 Showing examples of Clipston cancellation

Further down the valley, the River passes under the spectacular Harringworth viaduct, the longest masonry viaduct spanning a single valley in Britain. Its 82 arches carry the railway almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile between Northamptonshire and Rutland. The post office at Harringworth had never been inside the railway station but several examples of a straight-line handstamp in bright violet are known on postcards before World War 1, bearing a striking resemblance to straight-line marks used on railway parcels to other stations on the same line; an example from the neighbouring Weldon & Corby station is shown for comparison.

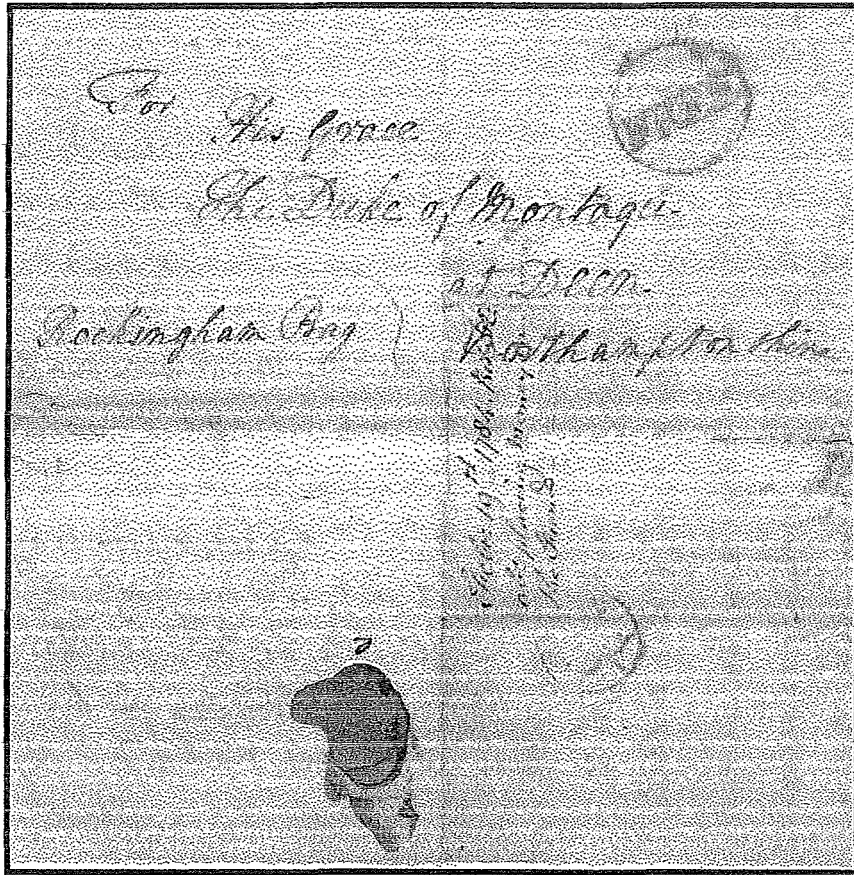


Fig. 2A Illustrating that Rockingham was a post town by 1750

Harringworth is up on the south side of the Welland Valley and during the Second World War it was hardly a peaceful place; the Americans built a large air base almost on its doorstep and one might have expected it to be called Harrington. But another US air base near Kettering was already called Harrington and to avoid possible confusion the new one was named after a nearby farm and woods – Spanhoe. It was a satellite to their airfield at Cottesmore (Rutland), a few miles north across the Welland Valley and became the headquarters of their well-known 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne division. Their Army Post Office (APO) was number 638 (fig.6) and the prefab building in which it was situated still survives. Most of the airfield has gone, but the site of the Admin block remains and is now occupied by small business enterprises; the owner of one of these has a collection of restored WWII aircraft using one of the old perimeter taxiing roads as a runway. In 2000, I was lucky enough to be asked to join a party celebrating a new airworthy certificate for the Russian Tupolev Tu2 troop-carrier. Taking off from Spanhoe was a real thrill! We flew in this aircraft to Northampton (Sywell) Airport for a celebration lunch and later returned to Spanhoe; I took with me four covers I have from this base, in order to make a suitable contribution to the celebrations. The photograph (fig. 7) shows the Tu2 parked at Northampton, dwarfing the other private machines around it.



Fig. 3 Cover showing that by 1848 it was served by a Mail Cart from Leicester

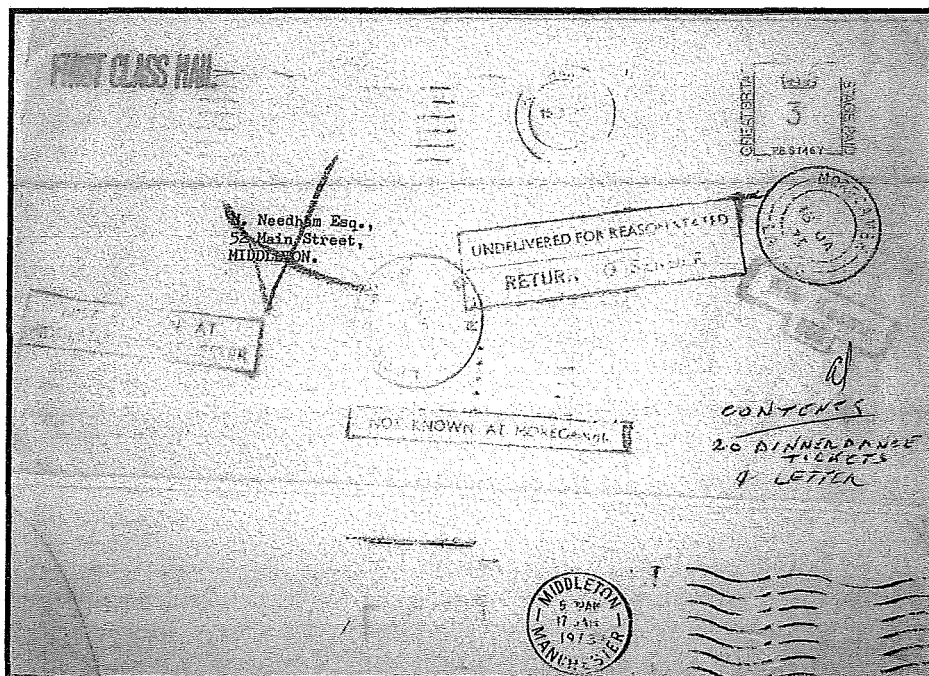


Fig.4 Indicating failed efforts to locate the correct Middleton

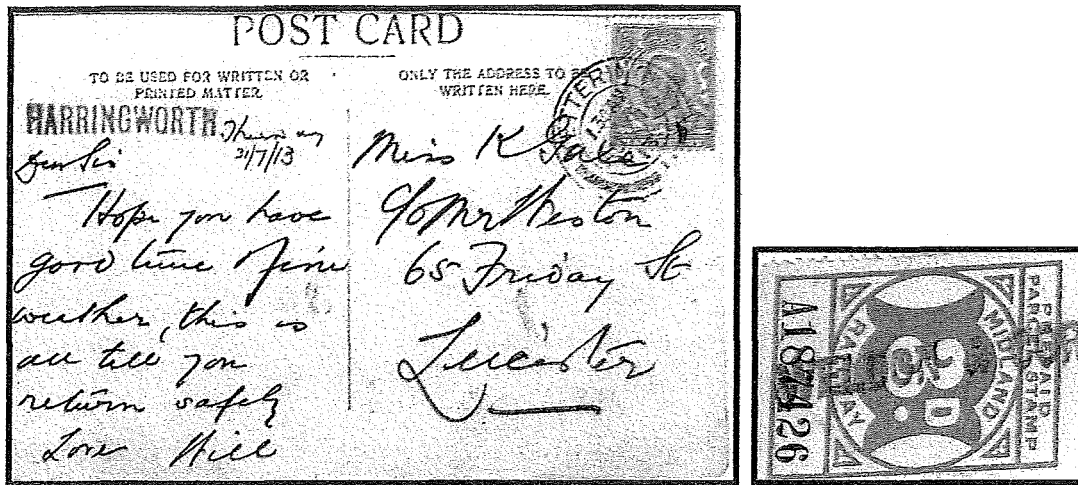


Fig.5 Showing Harringworth straight-line handstamp.

Welland & Corby Station mark

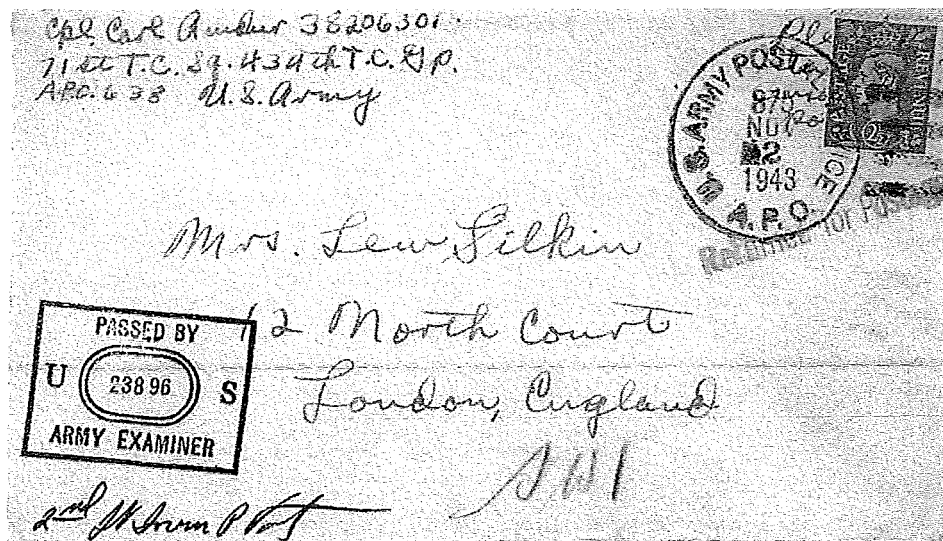


Fig. 6 Cover Showing U.S. Army Postal Cancellation

The valley continues north-eastwards along the boundary between Northants and Rutland, passing through the edge of Duddington Village (Northants) to approach its post town Stamford in Lincolnshire. Duddington was a busy village office using an undated circle issued in 1844. Examples from it are frequently seen on mail to or from Rutland; I have two used on covers from Tixover Hall, Fig. 8 shows it was still a busy office in 1959, being used by commercial and industrial concerns. This appears to be a "confirmation" telegram, the message having already been passed through by telephone. The hooded handstamp was struck at Newark in violet ink - I have not seen one of these used in Northamptonshire.

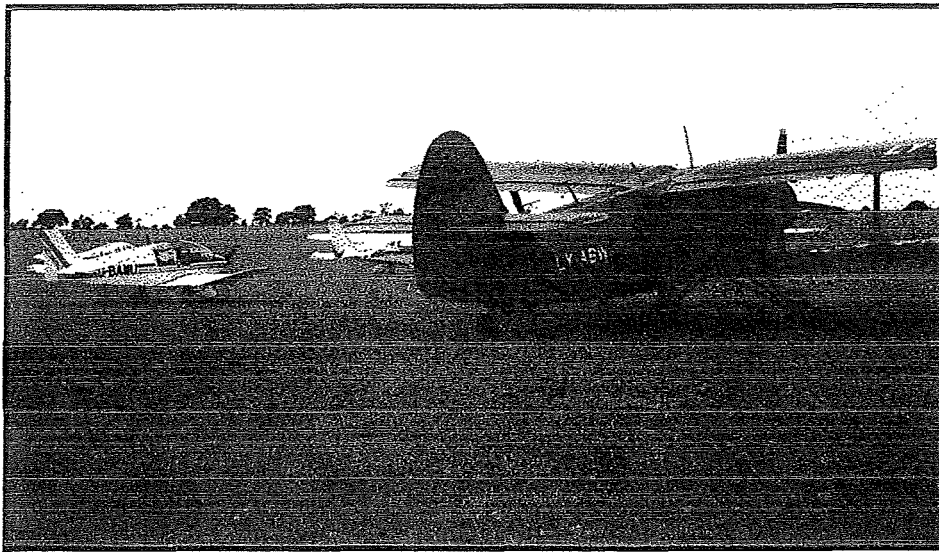


Fig. 7 Shows the Tu2 Parked at Northampton

As the River Welland nears Stamford, Northamptonshire comes to its northern-most point and looking up to the right (south) we can see the last village in the County called Easton-On-The-Hill for obvious reasons: it has a glorious view across to Rutland and down to Stamford. The word Easton occurs often in this area, on both sides of the Valley whilst nearer Northampton we have the aristocratic estates of Easton Maudit and Easton Neston, so it was perhaps short-sighted on the Post Office's part to issue the first handstamp to Easton-On-The-Hill inscribed merely 'EASTON' (fig. 9) especially as it is a large village and a busy office. The postmark is not uncommon. Being 40 miles from the County Town it is the furthest outpost, and probably the right place to end these notes on the Welland Valley and its postal history.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                   |                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Charges to pay<br>£ <u>    </u> s. <u>    </u> d.                                                                                                                                                       | POST OFFICE                                       | No. <u>    </u> |
| RECEIVED                                                                                                                                                                                                | TELEGRAM                                          | OFFICE STAMP    |
| Prefix. Time handed in. <u>19</u>                                                                                                                                                                       | Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Words. |                 |
| At <u>    </u> m.                                                                                                                                                                                       | PE 17                                             |                 |
| From <u>    </u>                                                                                                                                                                                        | PE A 1056 11.49 AM DUDDINGTON STAMFORD Lincs      |                 |
| By <u>    </u>                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                   |                 |
| ABBOTT AND COMPANY LTD NEWARK - N-TRENT =                                                                                                                                                               |                                                   |                 |
| PLEASE TELEPHONE US IMMEDIATELY CANNOT GET YOU ON                                                                                                                                                       |                                                   |                 |
| TELEPHONE = DENHURST SUPPLIES DUDDINGTON                                                                                                                                                                |                                                   |                 |
| For free repetition of doubtful words telephone "TELEGRAMS ENQUIRY" or call, with this form, at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form, and, if possible, the original. |                                                   |                 |

Fig. 8 Telegram Received at Duddington in 195

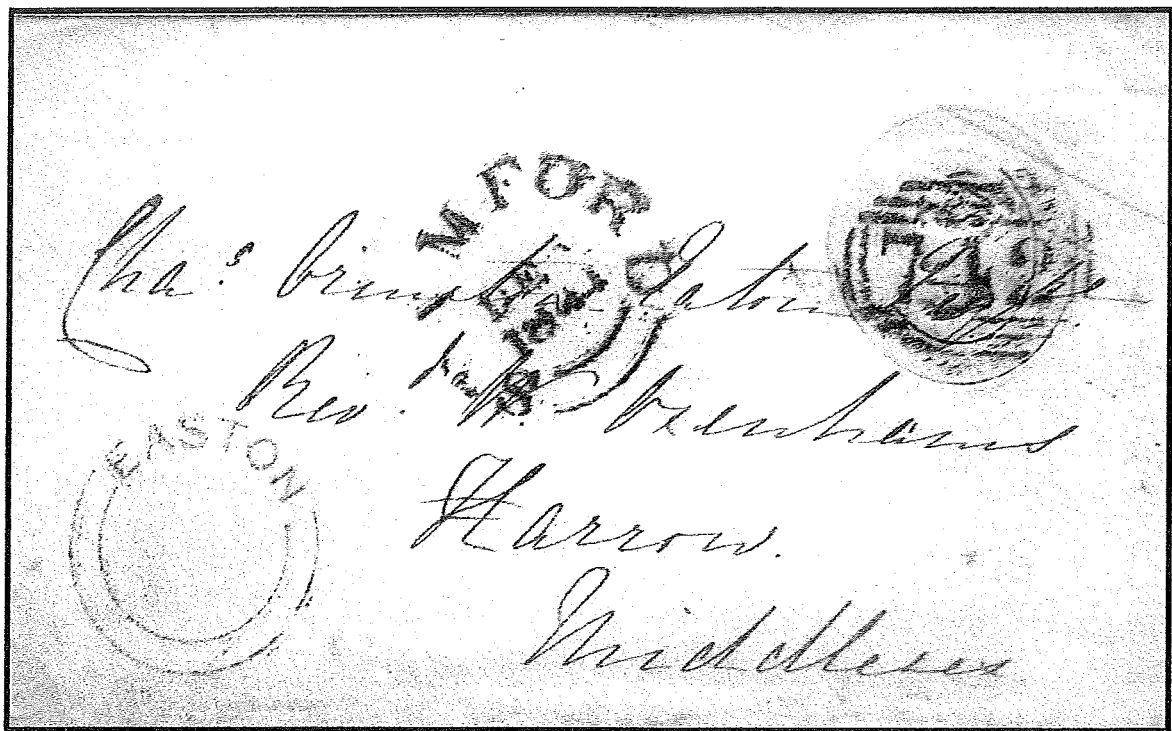


Fig. 9 Showing the First Handstamp issued to Easton-On-The-Hill Merely Inscribed "EASTON"



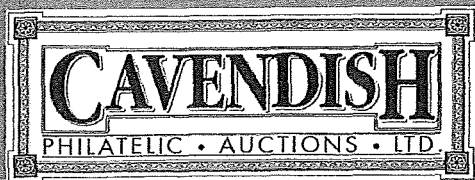
Photograph Showing American Gliders at Spanhoe

**Clipstone Village Post Office - Mansfield Road****1925 - 1931**

In September 1912 the Bolsover Colliery Company began to develop Clipstone pit on land acquired from the Duke of Portland. Most work was suspended during the First World War but recommenced in earnest afterwards. By 1925 the new mining Community had grown sufficiently to warrant the provision of a Post Office.

In May 1925 Clipstone Village Post Office opened in newly-built premises on the south side of Mansfield Road, close to Central Drive. The first Sub Postmaster was Charles Wilson, confectioner. He served until 1931 when Arthur Sleath took over the appointment and the Post Office moved to 129 Mansfield Road, by the Ritz Cinema, from where it continues to serve community.

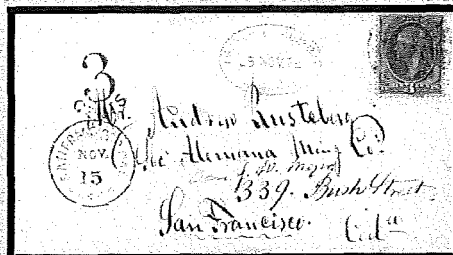
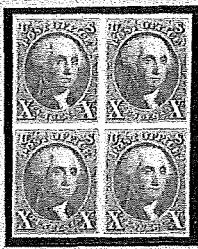
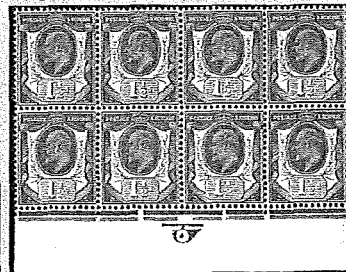
Unused postcard published by Sydney Hall, Photographer & Picture Framer, Edwinstowe, showing Clipstone Village Post Office shortly after opening occupying part of the ground floor of the newly-built Billiards Hall. Extended on both sides, the building now forms part of The Top Club Leisure Centre.



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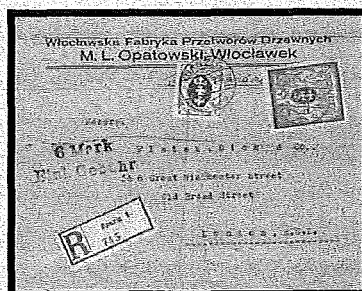
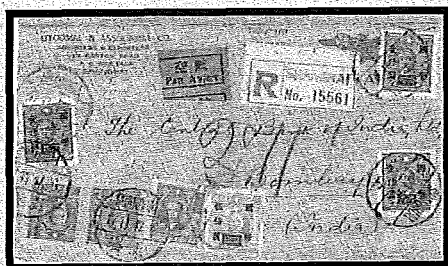
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