

MIDLAND MAIL

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

President: Elizabeth Lewis

Chairman:
Derek Smeathers

Treasurer:
Elizabeth Lewis

Secretary:
Eric Lewis



Number 123, January 2002

CONGRATULATIONS

Our congratulations to Chris Jackson whose exhibit "*The Small UDCs of Worcestershire*" earned a gold medal (85%) at the Autumn Convention of the Midland Philatelic Federation at Redditch in November. Also, Chris' entry in the Open Class - 'Redditch Needlemakers' received 59 votes out of the 116 cast.

NEW MEMBER

We extend a warm welcome to Tony Plowright of Beeston who collects general G.B. postal history.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Our next three meetings will be held at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham and will start at 1.30 p.m.

On **12th January** Derek Smeathers and Paul Bradshaw will show 'The Smaller Towns of Northamptonshire'. On **9th February** the meeting will consist of one board displays by members on 'Illustrated Envelopes or Letter Sheets'. On **9th March** the afternoon is devoted to Shropshire material with Jim Ball showing 'Wellington & Surroundings' and Dave Tarry displaying 'Newport and Surroundings'.

2002 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Carrs Lane Church Centre on **20th April**, starting at **12.45 p.m.** It will be preceded by a committee meeting at **10.45 a.m.** Please note the above date and times in your diary now.

MATERIAL FOR THE ANNUAL AUCTION

In order that catalogues can be sent to our overseas members in good time for them to submit bids it is necessary to have auction lots in by 9th March at the very latest, i.e. the date of our March meeting.

It would however be appreciated if you could submit lots before that date, perhaps at the meeting on 17th February or by post to Mrs E. Lewis at 27 Rathbone Road, Smethwick, B67 5JG

Please include full descriptions together with estimated market values and your reserve price, or state no reserve. A gift of any surplus material that you may care to give to sell for Society funds would, as usual, be much appreciated.

NOMINATIONS REQUIRED

Our President's will have completed her three year term of office in April. Consequently, nominations, duly seconded, for this position are required prior to the A.G.M. with, of course, the agreement of the member nominated. Please give nominations, along with the names of a proposer and seconder, to Eric Lewis, having secured the agreement of the person concerned.

DENIS SALT

The Society has sent a donation to the Shropshire & Mid-Wales Hospice in memory of Denis Salt. A nice letter of thanks was received from the hospice.

THE NOVEMBER MEETING

The theme of our meeting on 17th November, which was held in the premises of Warwick & Warwick in Warwick, was 'How it all began'. Eric Lewis claimed two boards and a table for his display, which he said was nothing like what he had intended to bring, on 'How Stamp Collecting Began'. Such was the wide range of material shown by Eric that it could form the basis of an afternoon's display in its own right. We saw a letter sent in 1841 by a boy at school to his sister saying "I enclose these two or three stamps ...". Obviously she was an early stamp collector. A stamp album of 1862 was the first to be produced in the English language. An early stamp magazine was represented by a bound volume two (1864) of 'The Stamp Collectors' Magazine'. There was an Oppen's catalogue of 1866 as well as one from Gibbons of 1875 - nine years after Gibbons had started. All of G.B. was listed on one page and a dozen penny blacks were available for sixpence. In a Whitfield King auction of 1907 sixty-three penny blacks realised £6. 5. 0. and a collection of 223 entires raised five shillings. For the early postal historian there was advice in a book produced in 1897 on how to mount covers - tie them to the page with string. Finally, Eric produced a stamp snake made up largely of penny reds along with fourpenny and sixpenny surface printed.

The unenviable task of following Eric fell to Chris Beaver who explained how his various interests developed. He began with a registered letter sent to him as a first birthday present from Tanganyika by an aunt. His interest in postal history was kindled by finding, at a stamp fair in Stoke, a Stoke-on-Trent spoon on piece and the Stafford spoon with the 732 error. Later, Chris bought a lot of Staffordshire material from a dealer who knew nothing about it. Among other items this contained the three-line handstamp 'NEW/CASTLE/UNDER' as well as various covers from the 5th Clause and Penny Posts of the Potteries.

Harold Wilson described how he had been guided into collecting the stamps of Great Britain. Eventually this led to visits to Geoffrey Manton's shop where one day he found a shoebox of covers on the counter which he started to buy. One day, Harold found a cover with the mark of a T.P.O. on it. Harold then went on to show use some very scarce material related to the railways, beginning with the numbers struck on letters from the U.S.A. carried on the Liverpool to Manchester railway. There were five (later seven) trains a day and the appropriate number was struck on letters carried by a particular train. Then came examples of letters carrying the names of various railway companies. The handstamps were applied in the Inland Office to explain why the adhesives had not been cancelled by the town handstamps. Harold also showed us the earliest known letter to be struck with a handstamp in a T.P.O. - the missent mark of the London & Birmingham Railway Office.

John Calladine looked at the first provincial namestamps. Those of Bristol and Exeter first appeared in 1697 and 1698 respectively and John showed us examples from 1714 and 1710 respectively. Two letters sent from Chippenham in 1705 carried no handstamp but one sent in April 1706 showed the mark 'CHIP.NHAM'. We saw a 'THETFORD' of 1707, a 1721 'TEDBURY' and the enormous 'CHIPPING/NORTON' of the 1770s.

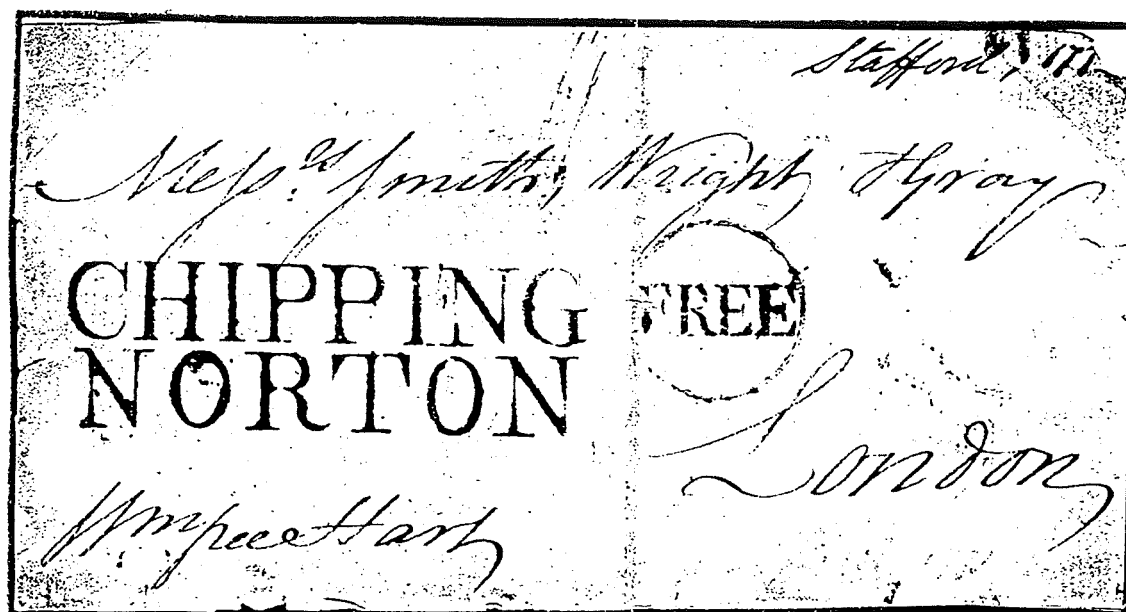
John Soer explained that his interest in postal history began when he found a penny post item from Ashby-de-la-Zouch concerning the church in which he was baptised and confirmed. This happened while looking for penny red plate numbers on cover in a tray on the counter of a well-known postal history dealer when such people could be found in the Strand. As no information on the Ashby penny post was available this discovery led to visits to Post Office Archives. He then went on to show the first postmark used in a number of Leicestershire villages.

The story of meter marks and franking machines was told in Alan Godfrey's display, beginning with the Wilkinson machine of 1912. Alan then took us through the various changes of design of the value element of meter marks. He then went on to the trial marks produced by the Integrated Mail Processor at Watford.

Alan Marshall started with carriers' letters of 1666 and 1714, the latter sent by the vicar of St Peter's Church in Nottingham. Then he went on to early letters sent from Nottingham to London in 1672, 1674 and 1684. Alan then turned his attention to registered mail. After a letter of 1837 which had carried money he produced an example of the 1/- rate (1842) and the 6d rate (1842).

If we produced Midland Mail in colour, then Mel Matthews display could form the basis of a major article for he traced the history of the pillar box by means of colour photographs. He began with one of those introduced by Trollope which is still in use in Guernsey. Boxes made by Smith and Hawkes of Birmingham are still to be found in places such as Shirley, Warwick and Malvern. After a look at those produced by Handyside of Derby, Mel took us through those used in London and the special boxes of Liverpool before ending with the elliptical boxes which are still to be seen in larger towns.

Derek Smeathers rounded off the afternoon with material relating to the Rushmills factory where the paper for the Penny Blacks was produced. A letter of 1814 to the Bank of Scotland mentioned the paper used for banknotes. Derek explained how the ability to produce watermarks regularly throughout the sheet enabled Stacey Wise to win the contract to supply the paper to Perkins Bacon for the Penny Black. He then finished by showing a number of photographs of the factory which was demolished in 1978.



My thanks are due to John Calladine for sending a copy of the above cover which he showed at the November meeting. The 'CHIPPING/NORTON' handstamp has been recorded in use between 1771 and 1776. It measures 67x22 mm and so could be the largest recorded provincial town stamp.

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THE DECEMBER MEETING

I am tempted to leave this page blank since to try to do justice to the material shown by James Grimwood-Taylor at Burton-on-Trent on 8th December in anything less than 300 pages is totally impossible. However, so as not to disappoint those members who positively revel in the discomfort felt by your Editor on such occasions I will describe a few of the covers that caught my eye.

James began with letters sent by Italian merchants in 1458 and 1472 and then produced a number of items from the Corsini correspondence one of which, sent in 1573 from Exeter to London, was endorsed "For the carrier """. A letter sent to Warwick in 1602 was signed by nine Privy Councillors including John Stanhope. Another sent in 1650 from Shropshire to London showed a rate of sixpence. There was no Bishopmark on a letter sent from London to Derby in 1666 as the handstamps had been destroyed in the Fire of London. This was followed by an original Dockwra on piece - the only one known in such a condition.

The covers shown in the next section illustrated the high rates charged on heavier letters at about the time of the Napoleonic Wars. Among these were: £1.16.0 on a letter from Cheltenham to Edinburgh; £1.5.8 for a letter weighing seven ounces sent from London to York; £1.16.0 for a nine ounce letter sent from Chelmsford to Edinburgh; and £5.9.6 on an express of 1805 from London to Hereford. These charges were small compared with those levied on some items of foreign mail. The charge on a letter from India to Edinburgh via London was £7.7.0½. While a 12½ oz letter from the West Indies cost the recipient a mere £5.8.4. which was less than half the £11.4.0 paid for a letter weighing 16 ounces sent in 1817 from Bombay to London.

James then turned to the subject of postal reform. We saw two frames of material produced by the Mercantile Committee as well as several sheets on the development of postage stamps, beginning with a stamp of 1643 from Italy and a tax stamp of sixpence from 1696. There were a number of essays including one by Dickinson printed on both sides of the paper. The section ended with a number of items relating to the uniform fourpenny rate which included the handstruck 4 of Ipswich.

The second part of James' display began with foreign mail sent during the five weeks of Uniform Fourpenny Postage. We saw letters sent to/from countries such as Belgium, Cuba, Sumatra and Singapore. A letter from York to Figi via Sydney took 552 days to reach its destination as the ship from Sydney only went once a year. The reply was written on 10th July 1842.

Then we came to Uniform Penny Postage, beginning with the handstruck 2 of Catterick on the first day. In a letter sent on 10th January the writer admitted that he had delayed acknowledging a present as he could now do so for only a penny. James also showed examples of the postal stationery used by the Houses of Parliament as the franking privilege had been withdrawn. We saw examples of a penny black and a Mulready used on 6th May 1840. A number of Mulready caricatures followed. Then came a range of penny black covers, including various multiples on heavier or redirected letters. An unusual item was three penny blacks on a cover as the rates as the weight of a letter increased were one penny, twopence and then fourpence. Of particular note was a "bisect cover" on which two fine used adhesives had been cut in half and the two unmarked parts joined together. Covers on which an obliterated stamp had been used attracted a surcharge of twopence. Similarly, the use of a cancelled twopenny blue resulted in a surcharge of fourpence. There were also twopenny blues on a number of letters sent from Derby. Postal stationery came next when James showed examples of the penny pink and twopenny blue envelopes.

Despite the cheaper postage mail sent abroad and heavier items attracted high charges. A legal document weighing 21 ounces cost 7/- to send, and a letter to Italy cost 15s.5d.

Not everyone was pleased with the reduced rates for one person wrote a booklet of forty pages explaining why he did not like cheaper postage. One reason was that he received a lot of what is now called 'junk mail'.

Of particular note was an example of the halfpenny postcard sent on the first day of use - 1st October 1870.

Among the material in a section on postal reform abroad were first day (1st July 1875) items for the uniform rate between members of the General Postal Union, a postcard sent by Henniker Heaton in 1895, and a cover from the first day of Imperial Penny Postage - 25th December 1898.

James rounded off his display with a Christmas card - the official Post Office 1890 Jubilee Christmas card sent by the postal staff at Derby.

In recent years we have seen some outstanding displays of postal history at our annual get together in Burton and James more than maintained this tradition. The warmth of the applause which followed Derek Smeathers' vote of thanks showed that those present appreciated the quality of what they had been shown.

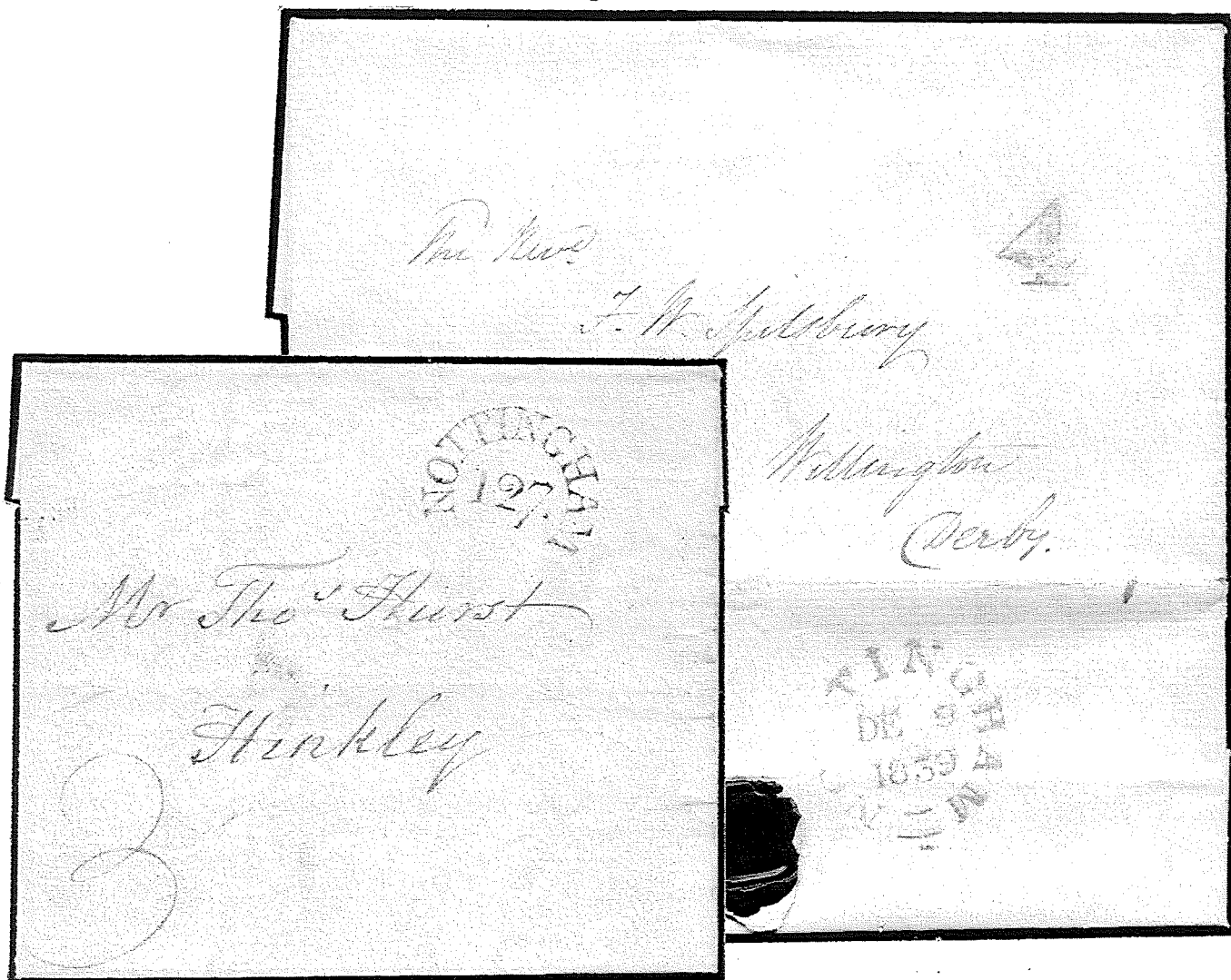
Once again, our thanks are due to Richard Farman for arranging yet another superb day at the Bass Museum. Even the jokes in the Christmas crackers seem to improve.

1952 – Our Golden Jubilee Year – 2002

A superb collection of
City of Nottingham Postal History
features in our

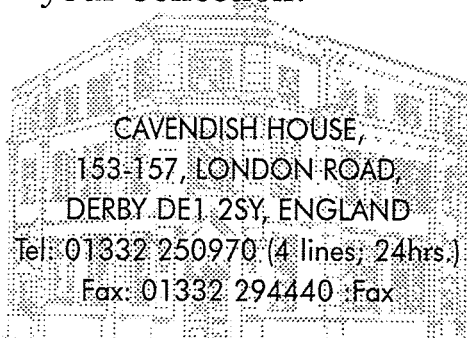
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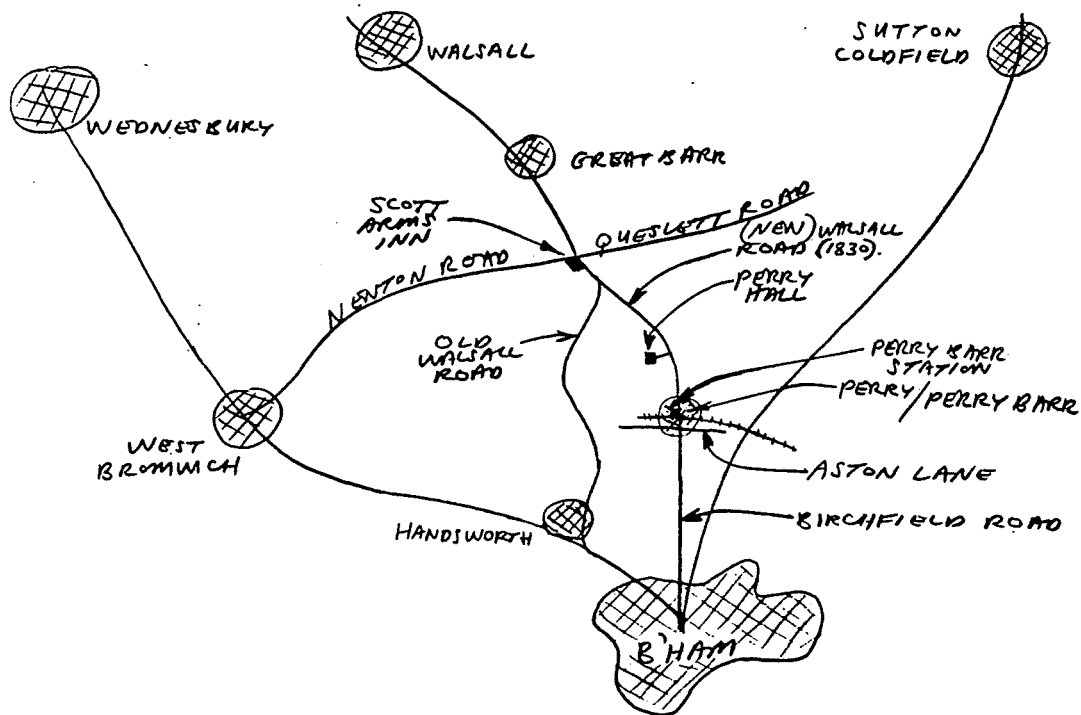
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A TALE OF TWO 'BARRS'

POSTAL SERVICES IN THE AREA NORTH OF BIRMINGHAM FROM 1650 UNTIL ITS ABSORPTION INTO BIRMINGHAM IN 1928

This article, developed from a short display presented to the Birmingham Philatelic Society by Don Keen, incorporates additional research by Alan Spencer and Eric Lewis. It was first published and distributed to members of the Birmingham Society in March 2000 and is reproduced with the Society's permission.

This article concentrates on local posts directly to the north of Birmingham and whilst official local posts served various villages around Birmingham from 1793, it was not until 1837 that the service extended north to Great Barr and later to Perry Barr. Until then the nearest localities in the Birmingham Penny Post were Sutton Coldfield to the east and West Bromwich and Wednesbury to the west, each having been incorporated into the penny post system in 1793.



Localities and roads, which developed from cart tracks
north of Birmingham during the period of this article.

ORIGINS OF THE TWO 'BARRS'

The naming of the Great Barr area goes back to Celtic times as 'Barre' meaning hill top. By the end of the 12th century Barre had been split into two manors: **Magna** (Great) Barr and **Parva** (Little) Barr. The naming of Perry Barr dates back to Anglo-Saxon times as the manor of 'Pirio' meaning pear tree. By the 14th century it was known as the Manor of Pury.

An 1834 map shows Great Barr in its present position but what is now the centre of Perry Barr is shown merely as 'Perry' with smaller localities of Little Perry and Great Perry along the road approaching the Scott Arks.

UNOFFICIAL POSTS TO THE NORTH OF BIRMINGHAM

While an official penny post did not exist to the area under consideration until 1837, private posts, usually operated by the Birmingham postmaster, undoubtedly did from at least 1650. Two examples are illustrated on the next page.

The first dated 1650 is addressed to 'Reynolds Hall nigh Walsall' and has the instruction on the address panel 'Leave this letter ... in Birmingham to be sent'. It was carried in the General Post from Hertfordshire to Birmingham from whence it was taken privately to Walsall, undoubtedly along the road passing through Great Barr as Walsall had no official post until well into the next century. This item did not receive a postmark as it is dated prior to the introduction of the Bishopmark in 1661.

To my most kind father Mr Rich
 Lershowse at his house Rey-
 nolds Hall nigh Bursall
 Stafford shire
 Leave this letter to Mr
 George Wyrley in
 Birmingham to be sent

Our second example is a letter dated March 1724/5 from Henry Gough at Perry Hall to Richmond, Surrey and was carried privately to Birmingham where it received a Birmingham postmark on entering the General Post for conveyance to Richmond.

Perry Hall March 1724
 Delivered for
 Yours of the 10th I received, but not
 till the 10th, being then at Oldfalling where my wife
 I staid a week to order our affairs, & returned hither yesterday,
 where we must make some stay, till we can see this place,
 all which I am now treating with a Gentleman, and am in
 hopes we shall come to an agreement. My marriage writings
 are there as well as here, so I consulted my Lawyer Mr Hays
 of W-Hampton upon them. He is one who has been long

Succeeding Birmingham postmasters continued to operate a private local post to the north of Birmingham until 1837. It should be noted that private local posts were permitted by the Postmaster General provided letters were not taken along a penny post route. Fees for this service went directly into the postmaster's pocket, again with the approval of the Postmaster General.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICIAL PENNY POST RECEIVING HOUSE AT GREAT BARR

Benjamin Churchill, the surveyor, wrote to Freeling on 17th December 1836 and again on 7th January 1837 proposing the establishment of a penny post to Great Barr among four other places which lay to the east and south of Birmingham. The earlier letter cannot be traced but that of January states '*... the places enumerated are all of considerable population and importance and have no means of getting their letters in any other way than by private hands; a daily post, therefore, to and from Birmingham would be most desirable. All the places in question can be served with a daily bag by the different mails ...*'. In the case of Great Barr, the 'mail' to which he referred was the Birmingham to Walsall mailcoach which would drop off and pick up a bag en-route. He recommended a salary for each receiver of £10 p.a. which was to include delivery of the letters.

Freeling endorsed Mr Churchill's recommendation in a minute to the Postmaster General dated 17th January 1837 but the exact date of establishment of the Great Barr Penny Post is not recorded.

The Great Barr receiving house was in the Scott Arms Inn which was built by Sir John Scott in the early 1800s, and the location of which is shown on the map. William Craggs, the innkeeper, who rented the inn from the Scott family was appointed as the receiver. A handstamp was produced for use by the receiver, its period of use being recorded from 27th December 1838 to 15th December 1853. It was invariably struck in red ink. While its use continued after the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage on 10th January 1840, it was of course only used from that date to indicate the sub-office of origin, separate charges for carriage in the penny posts having been abolished.

When, on 5th July 1837, the use of the Grand Junction Railway made redundant the Birmingham and Walsall mail-coach, a foot messenger was appointed to serve Great Barr from Birmingham.

The Scott Arms Inn and an 1839 letter posted there



GREAT BARR FROM 1840

Kelly's Directories of 1845 and 1854 list Robert Craggs, presumably the son of William, as the Great Barr receiver, still at the Scott Arms but the exact dates of his service are not known. Various people ran the office in succeeding years, the following being a list of their dates of appointment to the office. They undoubtedly conducted the post office business from their own houses or shops in conjunction with their main occupations. Their addresses are not known but they may well have been near or at Great Barr, along the road towards Walsall.

Aaron Insley	4th December 1856
William Davis	18th January 1862 (Died 13.3.72)
Thomas Richards (a shoemaker)	7th April 1873
Mrs Sarah Trenthan	10th April 1912

The Great Barr sub-office closed from 30th May 1913 when Mrs Trenthan gave up her position but it was reopened by Miss Norah Kathleen Grant on 1st August 1913. She was succeeded by Mrs Fanny Billings on 6th May 1918.

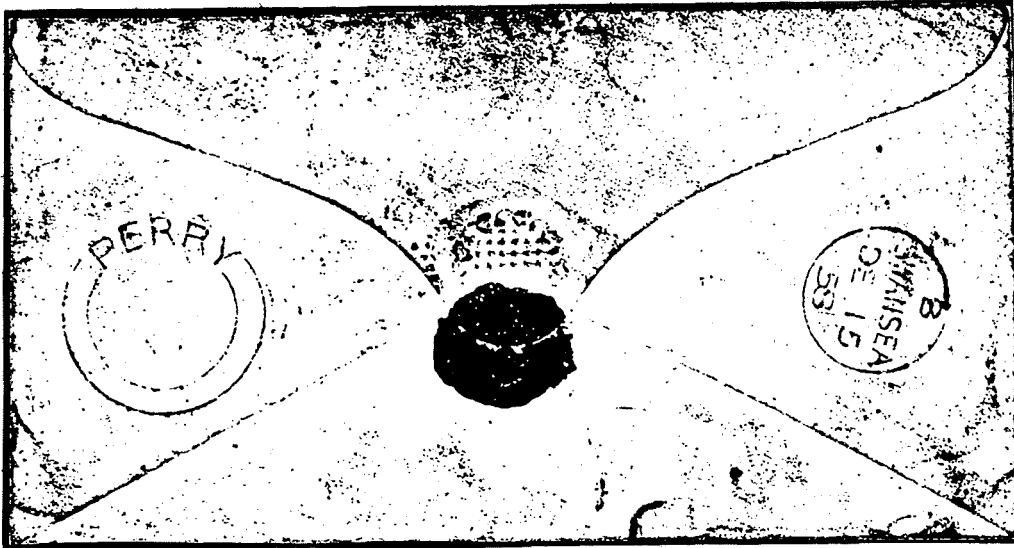
An undated circular handstamp was issued to Great Barr from London on 7th December 1854. Only three examples have been recorded of its use dating from July 1855 to 1858. No circular date stamp was issued to this office following the withdrawal of those handstamps early in 1860 as Great Barr was not a Money Order Office. A date stamp would have been issued on 8th March 1800 when the office commenced postal order business but it is not known used on ordinary letters. A date stamp would also have been needed for any parcel post business but again this does not seem to have applied at this office.

PERRY/PERRY BARR

The earliest mention of an official post to Perry Barr we have been able to find is in the details of the Revision of Rural Posts under Birmingham of February 1856 (MM51/16). However, from various local directories it would appear that Perry Barr was undoubtedly first served through Great Barr's sub-office, the mail travelling via the old Walsall Road through Handsworth to and from Birmingham.

By 1851 the population of Perry Barr (1035) had exceeded that of Great Barr (1001) and as a result its postal business increased.

John Oaks was appointed as the sub-postmaster of Perry on 9th April 1856. The 1856 Post Office Guide shows Perry post office at Perry Barr station but the actual office may have been nearby. An undated circular handstamp was issued from London on 25th March 1856. Only two examples of its use have been recorded - in yellow-green ink on 19th October 1856 and in blue-green ink on 14th December 1858. The latter is shown below.



John Lane, a grocer, took over as sub-postmaster on 1st July 1860, carrying out the business from his cottage at 363 Birchfield Road, near the railway station.

On 1st January 1868 Perry became a Money Order Office and was officially renamed by the Post Office as Perry Barr. Money Order business required the use of a date-stamp and its use on letters and cards is occasionally found. It should perhaps be stated at this point that receivers and sub-postmasters were at that time not permitted to cancel the adhesive stamps applied to ordinary letters.

By 1870, John Lane, although still sub-postmaster at his post office in Birchfield Road, was now living at Wasp View in Aston Lane. It may be that he took up residence there at the time Perry became a Money Order Office.

An 1872 Midland Post Office Directory shows posting times at Birmingham's main office in New Street for Perry Barr as 5.15 a.m. and 1.45 p.m., the later post taking the mail received during the morning from all the principal places throughout the country. Post to Great Barr was however only taken at 5.15 a.m. Return post was dispatched at 6.10 p.m. from Great Barr and at 11.45 a.m. and 7.10 p.m. from Perry Barr. This would indicate that the post now travelled from Great Barr through Perry Barr into Birmingham. Sunday's post was dispatched at 1.25 and 2.25 p.m. respectively into Birmingham.

From the above it is apparent that Perry Barr was becoming the more important of the two localities, a second post from Birmingham each day enabling traders to reply more promptly to distant towns, a privilege not enjoyed by the residents of Great Barr.

John Lane retired on 12th November 1887 and on the following day his son, Alfred, a baker at 355-357 Birchfield Road superseded him as sub-postmaster. Within two years Alfred had moved his bakery and post office business to Tudor House, a new, specially designed bakery and shop at the corner of Birchfield Road and Aston Lane, the site of the old Birchfield Road toll-gate house.

In 1899 a correspondence took place in the Daily Post about the state of Perry Barr's sub-office. As a full transcript would occupy three pages, we have had to condense it down to a few lines taken from the nine letters written to the editor.

"Letters cannot be registered or parcels posted after 7.15 p.m. The office serves a population of some 10,000 people - surely it is only necessary to call attention to the inadequacy to have it altered."

"I should like your readers to know how I was treated by the Postmaster of Birmingham when some months ago I wrote to him pointing out how far behind the times our postal arrangements are:

1. There is no room to write even a telegram at the counter without being overlooked and constantly interrupted by the assistants asking you to move enabling them to pass.
2. On early closing days persons transacting postal business have to stand in the street without any protection in all kinds of weather."

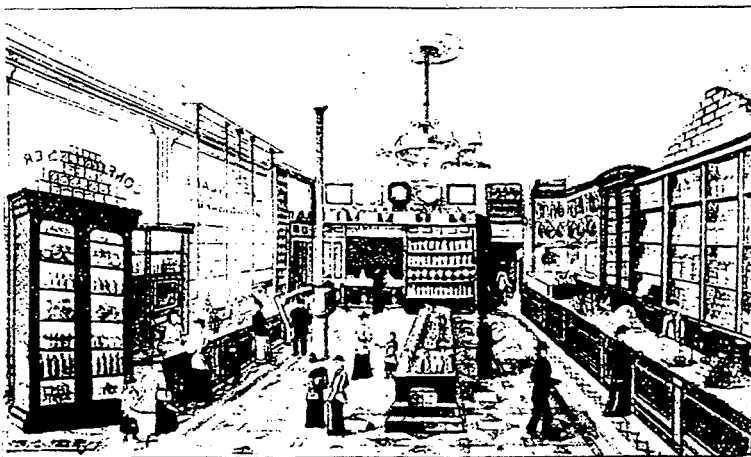
"The result of my appeal was that an inspector of the Post Office called to see me, and said:

1. That if I could not write my telegrams comfortably in the post office the easy remedy was to write them out at home and take them ready written to the office.
2. That the post office doorway could not be kept open for my convenience on Wednesdays."

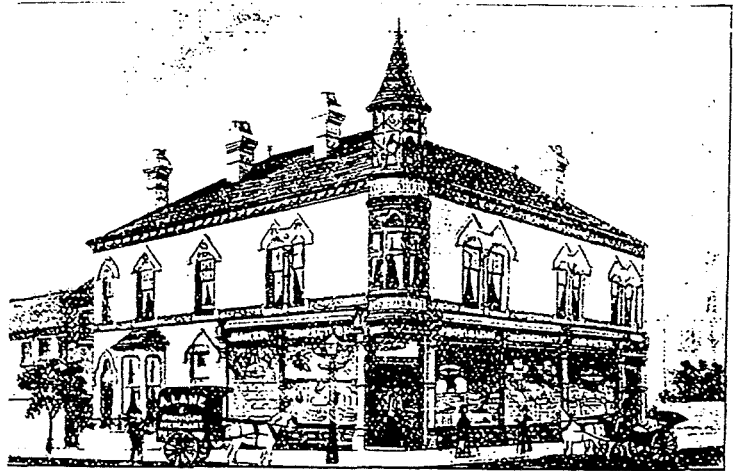
"Surely Perry Barr is large and influential enough to support one small room devoted to the sole purpose of selling stamps, forwarding parcels, and remitting telegrams without having to rely on the present system of mixing letters with buns and telegrams with candles. How is it possible for a businessman to write a telegram in the present post office?"

"... to stand in the street, to tap the window, to see it opened, to be given a stamp, or a pencil and a telegram form, to write the message on the window-sill, the only place, to hand the paper in, to see the window closed, and to see this process repeated time and time again becomes monotonous, but is always to the stranger a sight at one interesting and unique."

"As one who is fully acquainted with the inside it would be difficult to find a more courteous and obliging staff. Perry Barr is not so lamentably deficient in postal arrangements as some of your correspondents would have it appear. It would be a distinct advantage to have a separate establishment as a post office. But it would be wise to ascertain whether the postal business transacted is sufficient to warrant the proposed change. In my opinion, Perry Barr is not deficient in postal service considering the size and the number of its inhabitants. The greater part of Perry Barr has yet to be developed, and this desirable progress cannot make much headway until a better tram service has been inaugurated."



Alfred Lane's Establishment—Interior.



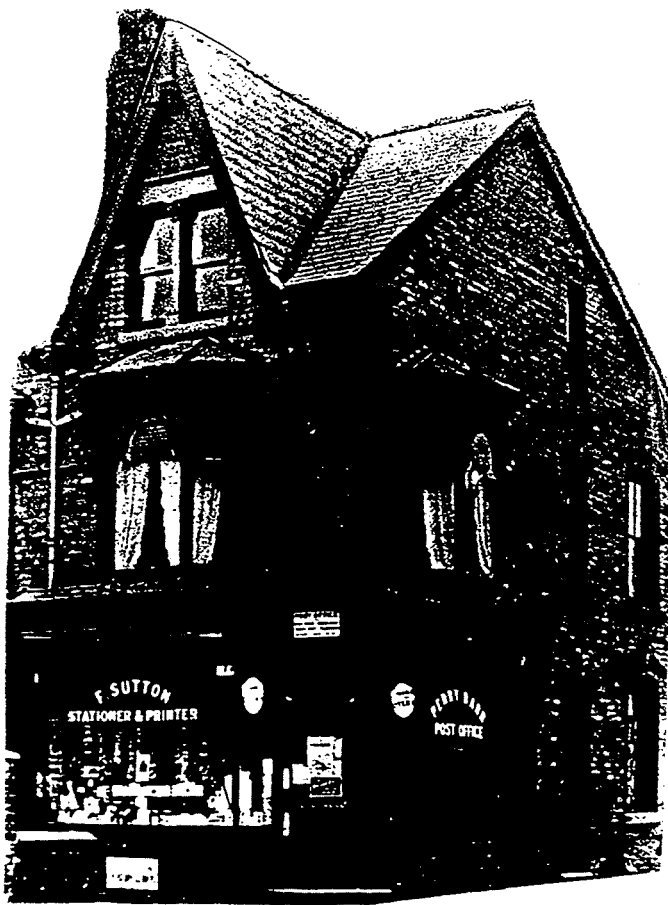
Alfred Lane's Establishment—Exterior.

The Post Office counter was at the rear of the shop. Post Office business was conducted through the window depicted over the bakers cart on Wednesday afternoons when the shop was closed

Alfred Lane retired on 29th October 1906 and Mrs Florence Sutton, a stationer and printer at 334 Birchfield Road - its junction with Willmore Road, was appointed postmistress the following day. The 'Daily Post' of 3rd November 1906 reported that the residents of Perry Barr now have a more up to date post office which had been transferred from Tudor House to the corner of Wilmore Road and Birchfield. In response the editor received a letter which we quote in full:

"Last week you reported that a more up-to-date post office had been opened at Perry Barr, but the inhabitants do not agree with you. Although there were several applications for the appointment from shopkeepers in the main road, the postal authorities have moved it to a back street, where one can hardly see the opening for letters or the time of collection, and the accommodation is about one quarter the size it was formerly. No one could complain of the position or accommodation of the old post office, nor of the courtesy and attention of the ex-postmaster or his assistants, so it is hard to see where the improvements come in."

This criticism is surprising to say the least in view of the fact that the new post office was still on Birchfield Road as stated by the 'Daily Post' and it remained there until 14th April 1916. Mrs Sutton was superseded on 15th April 1916 by Mrs Charlotte Southall who was also a stationer and who may well have been Mrs Sutton's daughter.



Florence Sutton's stationery and post office business

PARCEL POST. BIRMINGHAM Perry Barr (QMZ)		X LIST Letter and Number	S. Postage	D. Fee paid on Registration
FOR POSTAGE STAMPS.		OFFICE STAMP.		
		PARCEL POST. Birmingham QMZ (Perry Barr)		
		X LIST Letter and Number	POSTAGE. S. D.	
FOR POSTAGE STAMPS.		DATE STAMP.		
		Registration and Express Fee.		
		4 2		

Perry Barr's cds. used on parcel post labels when Alfred Lane and Florence Sutton respectively ran the Perry Barr sub post office.

It will be seen from the above that while Great Barr was by far the first of the two 'Barrs' to receive an official post, Perry Barr's postal service rapidly overtook Great Barr in importance during the latter part of the 19th century during which it became a money order, telegraph and parcel post office.

During and after the latter half of the 19th century a number of other sub-offices opened on or near the road we have explored. Their extent is such that they are beyond the scope of this article as is the further development of the Great Barr and Perry Barr post offices after the incorporation of these areas into Greater Birmingham in 1928.

MANSFIELD TRAMS AND THE MAIL

When, in 1919, the third delivery, at 4.45 p.m., was restored at Mansfield, the postmaster, Mr E.C. Winter, suggested that 240 letters a week from Sutton-in-Ashfield could fall into this post if a bag was carried on a tram leaving Sutton-in-Ashfield at 3.55 p.m. and arriving in Mansfield at 4.15 p.m.

The surveyor reported that the cost would include one hour's additional attendance by an auxiliary postman at an annual cost of £7.3.6. Mansfield & District Tramways said that they would charge the "same rate as for those we carry at present namely 2d. per bag per journey".

The postmaster explained that an arrangement for the conveyance of mails by tramcar between Mansfield and Huthwaite had been in operation for about twelve years and had proved to be "satisfactory and economical in every respect, there having been no case of loss or damage". In went on to say that the bags were placed in the care of the tram driver who handed them to the postman at the terminus.

A year later, Mr Winter wrote that as a consequence of the heavy postings by Messrs Wm. Hollins & Co Ltd., of Pleasley Works, there was so much work in the sorting office between 7.15 p.m. and 8 p.m. that there was great difficulty in clearing a dispatch by 8.15 p.m. - the General Night Mail.

Mr Winter said this could be obviated by dispatching the motor mail from Pleasley Vale at 6 p.m. instead of 6.50. As Hollins & Co had invariably posted their correspondence by 5.30 p.m., they were happy with this proposal. He did not anticipate any other complaints from that area as there were only about a dozen houses in the village. However, for Mansfield Woodhouse (population 12,000 - 14,000) a dispatch at 6.10 p.m. would be too early. He went on to suggest that this could be overcome by the use of a tramcar leaving at 7 p.m. at a cost of £3.18.3 (3d. per bag per day). The document below shows that the time between the arrival of the two posts was in fact only twenty-five minutes as the van did not leave Pleasley Vale until 6.30 p.m.

[Refs: Post 121/47 and 121/175]

Latest Hour of Posting	Hour of Despatch from the Office	Mode of Conveyance, and, if by Railway, proper Time of Departure of Train	Offices from which Mails are received	Mode of Conveyance, and, if by Railway, proper Time of Arrival of Train	Hour of Arrival at the Office	Town Delivery begins	
H.	M.	H.	M.	H.	M.	H.	M.
			X X X X X X X X	X X X X X XXX	X X X X X X X	X X X X X X	
			Blidworth Strn (Locked Pch)	M.R. 6.20pm	6.30pm		
			~~Mansfield~~ Woodhouse S.O. (C)	Motor van Post 3.	6.50 PM		
			~~Pleasley Vale~~ S.O. (L & P)	do	do		
			Huthwaite S.O. (C)	Tram 7.0pm	7.5pm	7.0am	
			Pleasley S.O. (C)	Tram 7.0pm	7.5pm	next day	
			~~Mansfield- Woodhouse S.O. (C)~~	~~Tram~~ ~~Motor~~ ~~van~~ ~~Post 3~~ 7.10pm	1.50 PM 7.10pm		
			~~Pleasley Vale S.O. (C)~~	~~Motor~~ ~~van~~ ~~Post 3~~	~~7.10pm~~		

Page 16 (Weekdays)

~~Pleasley Vale S.O. (C)~~	~~Motor~~ ~~van~~ ~~Post 3~~	~~7.10pm~~
---------------------------------------	---	-------------------

R.W.R.- No 10.

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Mansfield.

2102/17

Outward Journey	Hours (Weekdays)	Inward Journey	Hours	Description and frequency of Post Wages of Postmen and Sunday Pay Sunday Subs Pay Suboffice Salaries Allowances &c &c
Mansfield P.O.	a m 6.35	Pleasley Vale S.O.	p m ~~6.50~~ 6.30	Motor Van Daily G.E.Neville, Westfield Garage, Mansfield.
Mansfield- Woodhouse S.O.	6.45	Mansfield- Woodhouse S.O.	6.40 ~~7.0~~	£468 6 June 1920 82530/20
Pleasley Vale S.O.	6.55		6.50	The Contract includes the Station Services shown on Page 21.
Pleasley S.O.	7.0	Mansfield P.O.	~~7.10~~	* Sealed Bag collection from box / For W.D service see Post 24 / For W.D service see Post 28
M. F 5.0		M. F 3.0		
(Sundays, Christmas Day, & Good Friday.)				For W.D service see Post 35
Mansfield P.O.	a m 6.45	Whitwell S.O.	a m 10.30	
Mansfield- Woodhouse S.O.	6.55	* Cuckney S.O.	10.50	
Pleasley Vale S.O.	7.5	Shirebrook S.O.	11.10	
+ Shirebrook S.O.	7.20	Pleasley Vale S.O.	11.25	
+ Cuckney S.O.	7.40			
+ Whitwell S.O.	8.0	Mansfield P.O.	11.40	
M. F 15.0		M. F 15.0		

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Shown below is the letter which formed the first sheet of my display at the November meeting. I came across this in the late 1970s while looking for penny red plate numbers on cover on a stand in the old cinema on the Strand. The letter concerned the opening of the church in which I was christened and, later, confirmed. As I could find very little about the Ashby Penny Post in any books, I eventually visited Post Office Archives. Two books and a number of articles for Midland Mail later, I still find this hobby fascinating.

Ashby
Oct 9th 1838.

My Dear Sir,

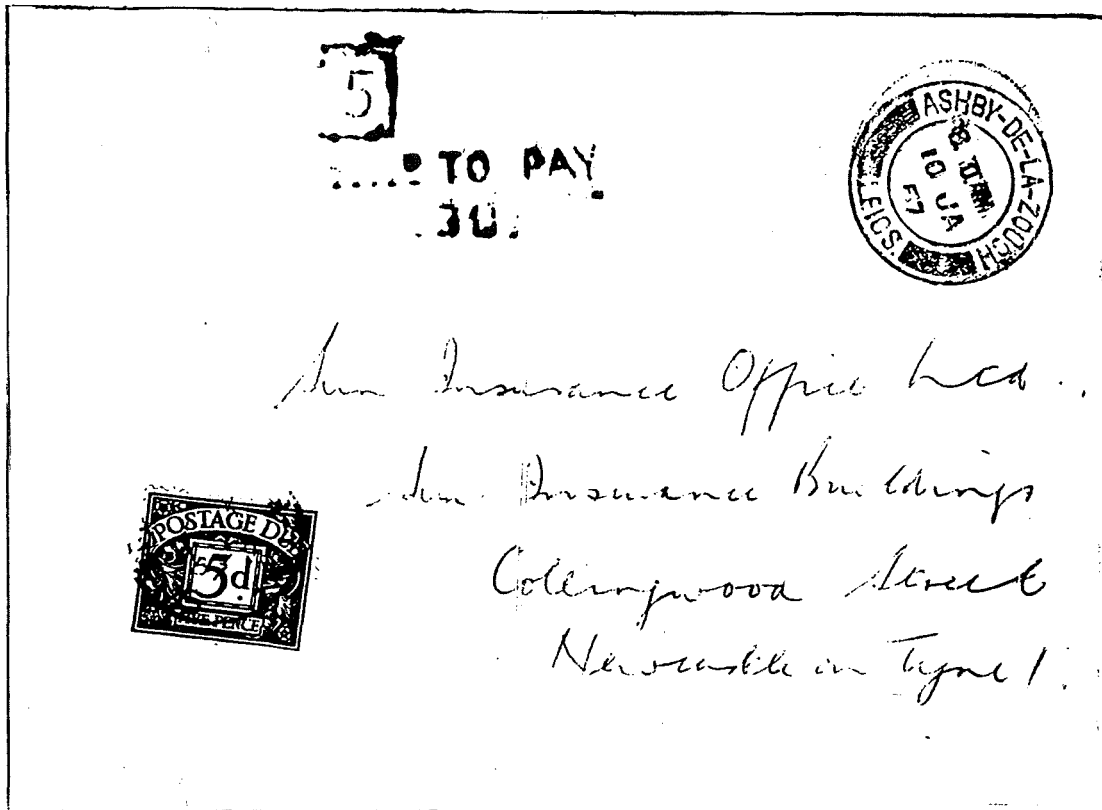
I am anxious now, as quickly as possible, to get all our things with the Ecclesiastical and for the new Church at Donington enclosed, & the only remaining step now is that of your respecting the rings, which Mr. Taylor of Office last week for the signatures of Mr. Hartley, Mr. W. W. W. — the young is more qualified for you in command as this is substantially the same as the former one, but the danger is like to make work the Ecclesiastical quite as much as the other. I shall feel exceedingly obliged by your getting this paper enclosed for me, as your candid attention & advice, as your truly &c

Yours truly &c
J. C. W. W.

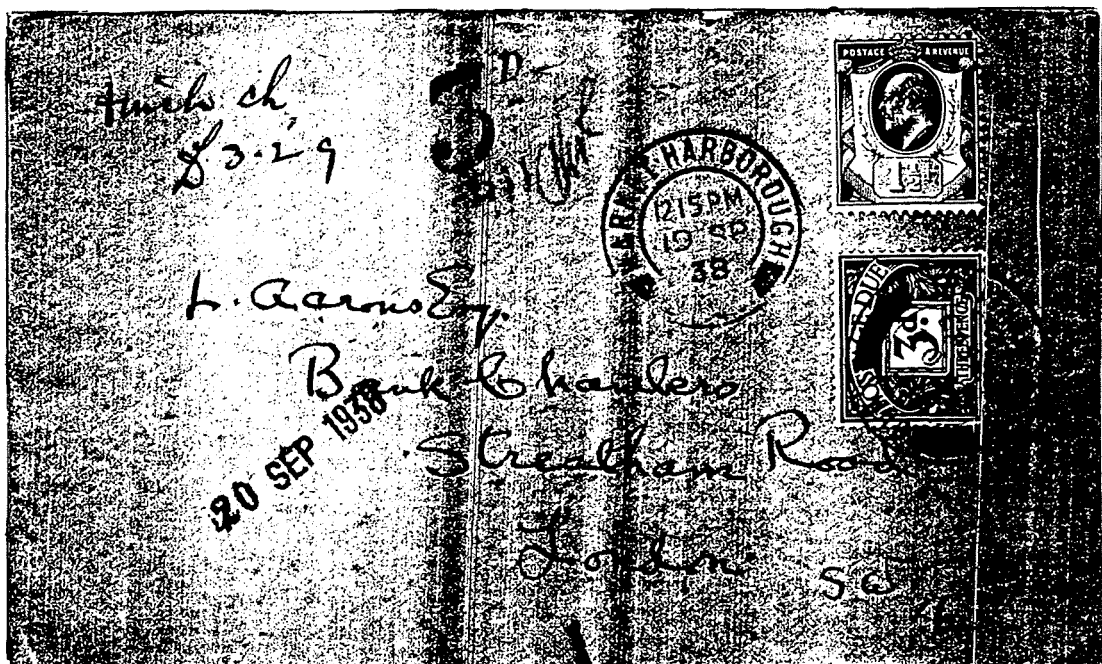
Rev. J. C. W. W.
Oct 9th 1838
Ashby
Penny Post
J. C. W. W.

TWO POSTAGE DUE ITEMS

The only other example I have seen of the '.....D TO PAY' handstamp is that used at Market Harborough but I have not seen a boxed 5 used in this way before. Have any other members come across such a handstamp?



Can anyone tell me when the stamps of Edward VII were demonetised. I was sure that I had seen combination covers with such stamps used later than 1938. I wonder why there was no explanatory mark applied to the envelope. Still, I have not seen the 3D/511 mark of Market Harborough before.



JON BAKER TROPHY

Nominations are needed for the trophy awarded for the best article to have appeared in Midland Mail during 2001. The definition of best is left to you, but all nominations should be sent to the Editor by the date of the March meeting at the latest. Possible nominations include *"Midland Post Offices opened or closed during 2000"* by Ken Smith (MM118/8), *"Nottinghamshire Inverted"* by Alan Marshall (MM118/12), *"Birmingham's London Mails: The Transition from Road to Rail, 1837-9"* by Christopher Beaver (MM119/6), *"Nottingham - A Survey of Scales"* by Dennis Humphreys (MM121/14), *"Bakewell's Posts - 1841"* by James Grimwood-Taylor (MM122/4), *"Nottingham Post Offices"* by Alan Marshall (MM122/6), and *"Contract Payments and Other Mailcoach Statistics"* by Christopher Beaver (MM122/9). In case there are any that I have missed, have a good look at your copies of Midland Mail and let me know your decision before the date of the March meeting.

INTER-SOCIETY COMPETITION

As we are not holding our usual competitions this year, we are looking for a member to produce a nine sheet entry to represent the Society at the Spring Convention of the Midland Philatelic Federation which is being held in Loughborough on 11th May. If you are interested in producing an entry would you please contact Eric Lewis. Should more than one member express an interest, the entry will be chosen by drawing lots.

MEMBERS' PHILATELIC INTERESTS

You will recall that last May a 'members' interests sheet' was printed at the bottom of the subscription renewal sheet. The Society is extremely pleased with the response from about two-thirds of the membership. If you did not return a completed form, a second copy is enclosed with this Midland Mail. Please complete and return it by the end of February so that an updated list of members' interests can be produced before the AGM. If you cannot attend the AGM, a copy will be sent to you along with the subsequent Midland Mail.

THE NEXT MIDLAND MAIL

I hope that this will be published by early April. I have a little material in hand at the moment, but there is plenty of room for articles of any length. Why not write a few words about your favourite cover and send it to:

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

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