

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



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Not only POSTAL history ...

The true postal historian is in constant need of information - names, dates and all the other bits and pieces required to write up his studies. How many collectors have tried to reverse the process ? It may not have occurred to them that their collections probably contain letters and documents that could fill a gaping hole in their local library or record office and that, once the connection is established, these local history sources can add many details for our own purposes. A few years ago, our local postal history study group made contact with our local record office to see whether we could be of mutual help to one another. The approach was received with open arms and we have since had much local 'colour' supplied from that office for our write-ups. They are the kind of snippets that make all the difference between mounting an old letter on a page and really bringing it to life.

But we have also seen the benefit derived by the record office from viewing and copying letters and other items from our collections. They keep them safe, clean and for a short time only - usually a couple of days for ten items. They keep us informed of interesting points obtained from the collections and they fill us in with extra details they already knew. They keep photostats on microfilm so that future students have the benefit of the information. Very occasionally, a letter throws up an entirely new topic. Recently, one from our collection turned out to be a detailed plan put to a local landowner in 1840 by a group of labourers for a self-help scheme (the first co-operative?) about which nothing had previously been known and the record office was delighted.

One of our rewards has been a behind-the-scenes visit to view some of

treasures that are rarely seen by the public including letters from King John and Queen Elizabeth 1. We found Bishop marks by the dozen on 1661 correspondence, much of which had been put together in a superb leather volume by a local aristocrat almost 200 years ago.

Your collection is postal history, yes, but it is also local history. Let your record office see it - you will both be pleased !

Derek Smeathers

(The above item was submitted for inclusion in the Bulletin but the content seemed so relevant - see Steph Stobbs' article on the Australian letter - that it became our first 'Guest Editorial'.)

The September Meeting

The first meeting of the new season on 18th September attracted ten members and apologies were received from several more who had to miss the date. The subject of the day was 'Undated Marks'. Five members displayed a wide selection of these marks from Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Northants and Birmingham: Eric Lewis provided the commercial breaks !

The Secretary is now preparing printed sheets which will be sent to all members. From these it is planned to produce a draft listing of undated marks of the midland counties which will hopefully produce plenty of constructive criticism from those who have not felt moved to take action so far. (Perhaps the Society can also look forward to producing an indexed binder so that the results of exercises such as this can be properly stored for reference ? Ed.)

The October Meeting

Not surprisingly, the attendance at the meeting on 30th October was the highest for some time. Expectations were not to be disappointed: Michael Young's display of 'Worcestershire' was a delight to the eye and presented with a rare combination of knowledge and humour. Not afraid to leave out some of his finest items if he thought they had been seen before, Mike found something for everyone and your reporter can only mention a few of the highlights that appealed to him. Among the ephemera, were notices relating to coaches and early photos of Bromsgrove and Malvern post offices. The 18th century material included a boxed Bewdley mark of 1740, examples of the alternative spellings of Broomsgrove/Bromsgrove, a cover from Hanbury Hall (Droitwich) to Madeira and marks of Evesham from 1713. We were then taken on a 19th century 'tour' of all the post towns of the county and discovered that there were four (not three) penny post marks of Bewdley and that "Missent to Gt Malvern" can be found in at least two shades of green. Items

from Worcester itself included 1827 and 1851 "Missent" marks, one with convex corners and the other with concave, no fewer than four examples of the first penny post mark and a howlingly rare handstruck '4'. By way of contrast we moved from the city to the villages and saw an 1859 single ring of Malvern Link and strikes of the undated seriffed 'Hagley' in red, green and blue. This was followed by a plethora of penny blacks on cover used in Worcestershire including one backstamped April 1840 (regrettably also April 1841) and some handstruck '2's including an unrecorded type from Worcester. A Bromsgrove 'traveller' of 1839 opened a section of skeleton marks and the display concluded with the Worcestershire 'spoons' including the scarce Kidderminster mark and examples, on cover, of the original Worcester spoon and each of its seven re-cuts. Steph Stobbs proposed an eloquent vote of thanks but even that failed to persuade Mike to present him with the Halesowen mileage mark struck on one of the penny black covers ! Members were only surprised that there was something that Steph hadn't got

Our Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting has been CHANGED ! Please note that it will now be a week later - on Saturday 11th December. The venue is the Bass Museum, Burton-on-Trent. Members who would like to have lunch at (hopefully) 'The Boathouse' are asked to get in touch with Richard Farman not later than the preceding Wednesday and he will make the necessary arrangements.

The meeting proper will begin at 2.00pm and the Society is delighted to have as its speaker James Grimwood Taylor (first and foremost a Society member but also an expert on the staff of Argyll Etkin Ltd in Bond Street) whose subject will be "Ireland". Connoisseurs will need no reminder that this is a fascinating topic for a postal history study and the congenial surroundings of the Bass Museum - with some free refreshment - should attract a good attendance. A Museum leaflet is enclosed with this Bulletin.



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SEND FOR A COPY OF MY LATEST LIST OF GB POSTAL HISTORY MATERIAL FROM 1840 ONWARDS. IT CONTAINS A WIDE SELECTION OF INTERESTING AND UNUSUAL ITEMS. "WANTS LISTS" RECEIVE MY PERSONAL ATTENTION AND I AM INTERESTED IN BUYING GOOD QUALITY POSTAL HISTORY ITEMS.

BOOK REVIEWS'The Postal History of Ashby-De-La-Zouch' by John Soer'Wiltshire and its Postmarks' by Dr John Siggers

Only a fool would attempt a joint review of two books so totally different in physical characteristic and content. John Soer's 'Postal History of Ashby-De-La-Zouch' tips the scales at a mere four ounces and costs £1-10; Dr Siggers' 'Wiltshire and its Postmarks' weighs not four ounces but four pounds and costs rather more - £28. One thing they do share, somewhat surprisingly, is a soft cover.

John Soer's book is a true postal history. In less than 60 pages, we have a literate and immensely readable account of the post at Ashby-De-La-Zouch from its beginnings in about 1700 to the present day. It is principally a straightforward story of developments in the 19th century but, in many respects, it is a model of its kind and is highly recommended. 'The Postal History of Ashby-De-La-Zouch' is obtainable from the author at 51D Barkham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 2RG or from Leicestershire Libraries Service, Thames Tower, Navigation Street, Leicester LE1 3TZ. In either case, the bargain price is £1-35 including postage.

Dr Siggers' book is not a postal history but a book of postmarks. It is tempting to describe it as the last word but nothing ever is in this field. In over 700 pages, it describes every one of the 4,234 known postmarks of Wiltshire - and a lot more besides. The illustrations are of the highest quality. Dr Siggers would have liked to see Martin Willcocks' 'County' books in a similar format but I suspect even he agrees that cost alone would have precluded the possibility. To be fair, I believe the publisher should mention in the publicity that the book is soft bound but I understand that hard covers might have added seven or eight pounds to the already substantial price. 'Wiltshire and its Postmarks' is published by Sandcliff Press, 21 Northgate Street, Devizes, Wiltshire and costs £29-57 including postage and packing. To add to the value, my copy arrived with a useful "Mis-sent to Cinderford" cachet struck on the parcel but you are not guaranteed the same luck !

'The Sideways Duplex Cancellation and its use in the 1860s'

There has been some interesting comment on this item in the last Bulletin but analysis of it will have to wait until the January issue. In the meantime, if you can add to the story, please drop a line to the editor.

MICHAEL JACKSON (PHILATELISTS) LTD.

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These Midland items are offered subject unsold.

	£
1677 letter from Aleppo, (Turkish Empire, Syria) to Litchfield	75
1764 STONE (N & E joined) entire	65
1841 Shirleywitch (Script type) & Rugeley c.d.s.	35
1796 CHEADLE horseshoe on cover to Lancs.	16
1764 entire, poor WORCESTER, on reverse M/S Pd 4 in red and scarce encircled PD of London, also on front of this entire.	25
1858 STOULTON u.d.c in blue and Worcester side duplex	25
1859 two envelopes, 1st with large BENGWORTH u.d.c, second with small single ring Bengeworth, as a pair	40
1861 notice of objection from Worcester, cover showing special 3d rate for notice paid by strip of three 1d reds	15
SHIRLEY STREET/P P in red on 1844 cover	57.50
Rugby shoe and NEWBOLD - ON - AVON u.d.c in green on envelope to Leicester with defective stamp	35

WE HAVE MANY MORE MIDLAND ITEMS AMONGST OUR G.B.STOCK.

Books that may interest you - 3.

An acknowledgement to Ted Heath for providing the information in this feature is long overdue.

MIDLANDS POSTAL BOARD. The Board issues a news sheet which gives details of past and forthcoming postcard issues of the region. The 'Midlands Picture Card Bulletin' appears several times a year (depending on the frequency of regional card issues) and will be sent free to anyone who forwards his name and address to Midlands Postal Board, 86 Lionel Street, Birmingham B3 3HQ.

PARSONS Cyril R.H., PEACHEY and PEARSON. Local Publicity Slogan Postmarks 2nd edition. Published by the authors 1981. Over 400 postmarks illustrated; valuation expressed as a system of coefficients. Gripband provided so that supplements can be added. 48 pages, £3-00.

PROUD E.B. History of British Army Postal Service, Volume 2 (1903-1927). A monumental three volume work covering 1882 to 1948. Clothbound, extensively illustrated. Proud-Bailey Co Ltd, Dec 1980, 312 pages, £25-00.

A LETTER FROM AUSTRALIAby S.Stobbs

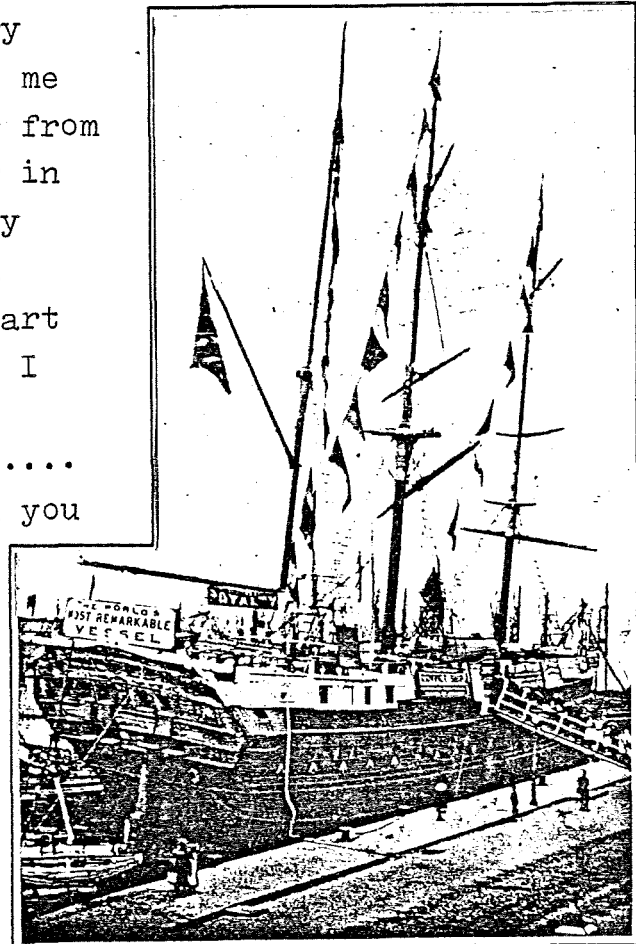
In 1838, a son wrote from Australia to his parents in the English village of Hordley. Hordley lies 3 miles south-west of Ellesmere and 8 miles east of Oswestry in North West Shropshire. It is described by Arthur Mee in his delightful book on the county:-

"A cluster of farms and cottages with an ivied church which has a Norman past, it rests among little rolling hills and looks out to the sterner splendours of the distant heights of Wales."

The letter was written from Invermein, Hunters River, New South Wales on 30th October and reads:

"Dear Parents,

I write you from this part of the world to let you know that I am in good health, wishing that this may find you all well. I have every reason to be thankful to Divine Providence for his goodness towards me. I arrived in this country by the ship Lady Harewood in March 1831, 7 years ago. I wrote you since I came to this country and had no word from you in answer. It leaves me very uneasy not hearing from you. It would afford me the greatest consolation in the world to hear from you and learn of your welfare. I am gardener in this place and doing well, I expect my liberty soon and when I get liberty I shall write you again. Altho' I am removed to this distant part of the habitable globe I have not forgot you. I bear you all in mind. I wish to be kindly remembered to my brothers and sisters and to When this comes to your hand I earnestly wish you to write me in answer and let me know how you are situated and how my brothers and sisters are and all other particulars. Dear Parents accept my good wishes, keep up your spirits, in a few years I shall be with you. Altho' in a far country I have not forgot you. This country is situated about 14,000 miles from England, the largest island in the world, about 1,000 miles long and 1,500 miles broad, the climate very fine and healthy and abounds with wheat, corn, all sorts of fruits and vegetables plenty cattle, sheep, horses, pigs, fowls wild and tame, the summer is in



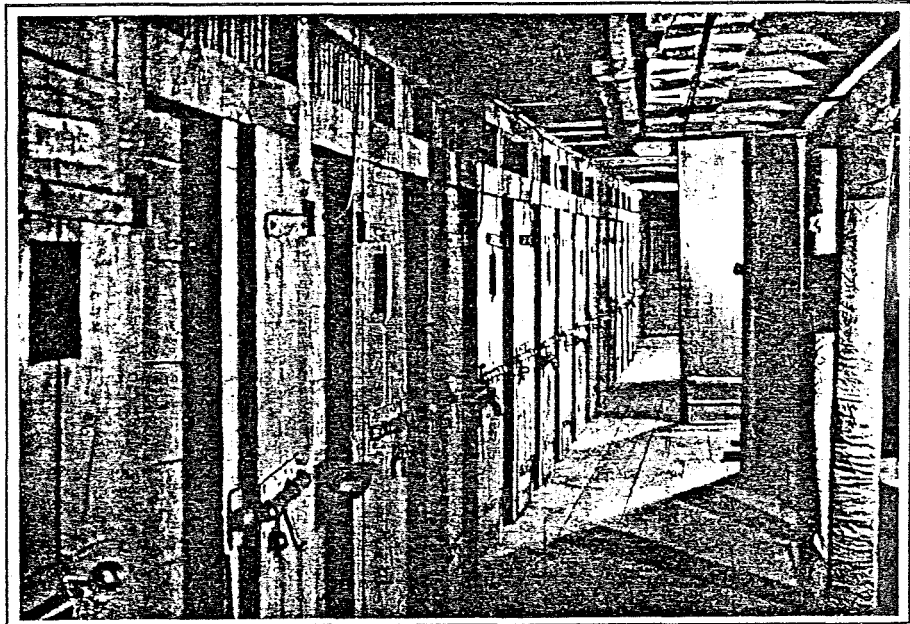
A Convict Ship

December and winter in June, but very little winter, there is great many free people emigrating from England, good wages given, a good country for free people. There is shipping of all nations trading to it, a valuable whale fishery on the coast, and the wool is very fine and valuable. Agriculture and commerce flourishes, religion and education valued, the laws and religion the same as England, seminaries of learning established in the colony in the hands of the English since 1789 and governed by Military Chieftains, the antecedents I shall omit. Great changes anticipated, the country will soon be free. It is and hath been the penal colony of England, those transported to the colony for life must serve a master 8 years in bondage after arrival; 14 years for 6 years; 7 years for 4 years; with good conduct gets a ticket of leave to work for their own benefit, for a District, Parish or County, no wages while in bondage and for a little fault are liable to be brought before a Magistrate and punished; on 6 years holding a ticket gets a Conditional Pardon but not to leave the country. Write me on receipt and pay the inland and foreign postage in order to reach me safe. Dear Parents the same God over rules this country as well as England and all the world The Bible is my constant companion, offer your prayers for your Son, Dear Parents, I am your affectionate Son till death. Direct as below and pay the postage

Thomas Chetwood,
Pr Lady Harewood,
in the employ of Dr Bowman,
Segenhoe,
by Invermein,
Hunters' River,
New South Wales. "

The markings on the cover are:

1. INVERMEIN
POST PAID (in red & boxed)
2. PAID SHIP LETTER
5 NO 1838
SYDNEY (in red)
3. GENERAL POST OFFICE
5 NO 1838
SYDNEY (in black but very faint)
4. SHIP LETTER
FALMOUTH (in red, unframed)
5. London Arrival Mark of 6 MY 1839 (circular and in red)



Accommodation On Board Ship

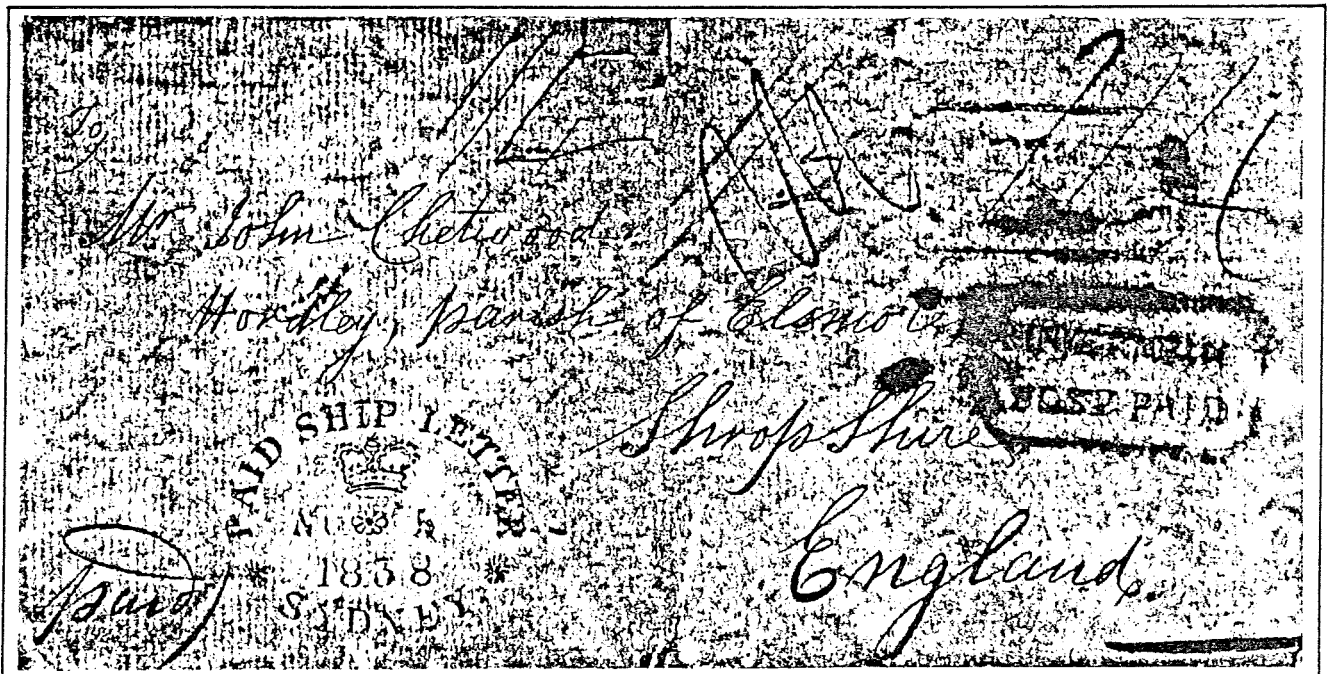
From these dates, it will be seen that the time taken was almost exactly six months which can be considered quite good for almost 150 years ago.

Considering that we call ourselves postal "historians", I often feel that we do not pay as much attention to the contents of the letter as we might. From this particular letter, we can see that convicts are addressed by the vessel which carried them to Australia and that it was advisable for the sender to pay "inland and foreign postage" to make sure of the letter being delivered. But, in addition to the postal history content, the letter gives a wonderful account of conditions in Australia approximately 150 years ago. It also shows how savage were the sentences imposed by the courts in England in those days. This is further confirmed by a section of a General Gaol Delivery Notice I have in my collection which is postmarked "York, 28 MR 1842" and which, incidentally, has a beautiful handstruck York "Pd 2" thereon.

Degree of Instruction.					
Imp 60	JONATHAN TAYLOR, ...	Guilty of murder		To be hanged.	
Imp 30	ROBERT NALL, ...	Guilty of murder		To be hanged.	
Imp 24	CHARLES RHODES, ...	Guilty of burglary, and cutting and wounding a person in the house	}	Judgment of death	
Imp 25	THOMAS LEATHAM, ...				
Imp 21	HENRY WILSON, ...	Guilty of burglary, and wounding a person in the house			
Imp 30	HENRY TIMMS, ...	Guilty of manslaughter		To be transported	
Sup 47	ANDREW MACLEAN, ...	Guilty of feloniously setting fire to a church			
R 30	JOHN RAWLING, ...	Guilty of cutting and wounding, with intent to do some grievous bodily harm, and to resist his lawful apprehension			
N 13	THOMAS HADDLETON, ...	Guilty of stabbing, with intent to do some grievous bodily harm			

A Part of the Gaol Delivery Notice

The vessel on which the writer of the letter was taken to Australia, the Lady Harewood, was a ship-rigged 429 ton vessel and was built at the Thames Dockyards in 1791. She sailed from London on 8th August 1830 and, after a voyage via the Cape of 246 days, reached Sydney on 4th March 1831. The Master on this voyage was William L. Goodwin and the Surgeon was Thrasyacles Clark.



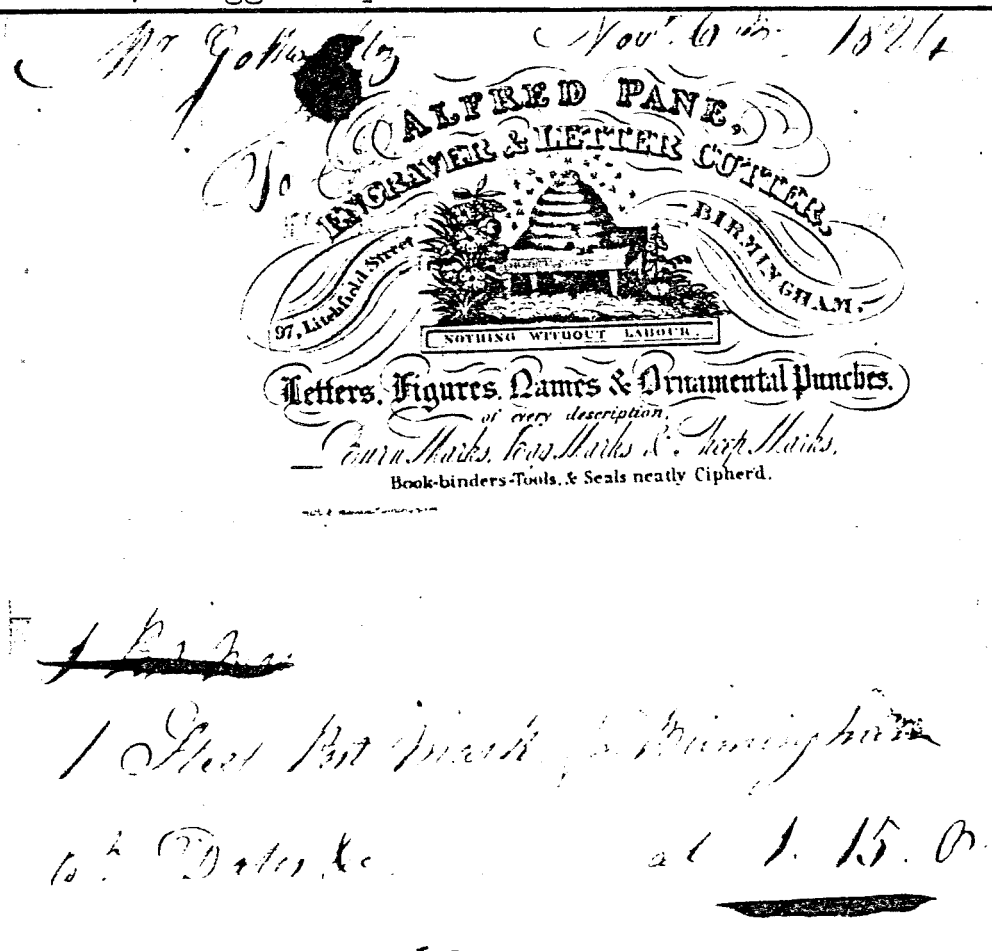
A BIRMINGHAM STEEL POSTMARK

by John Soer

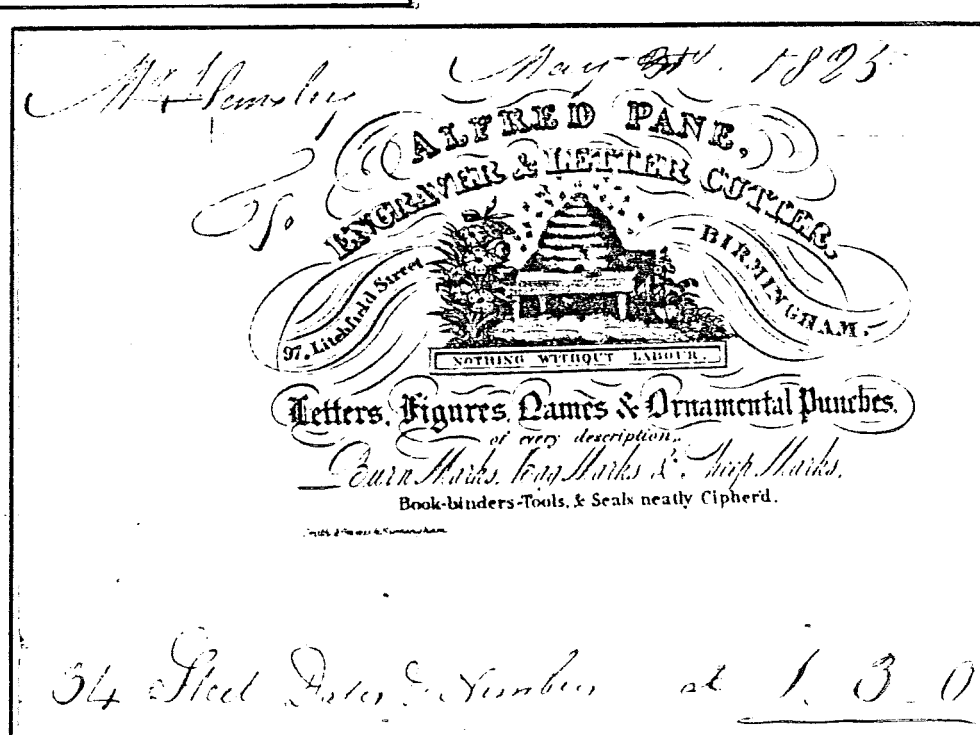
When Freeling complained, in 1824, about the poor quality of the impressions produced on the stamping of letters, the Surveyor for the South-Western Division reported that steel stamps, which gave clear impressions, were used in the offices at Bath, Exeter and Plymouth. He had noticed that, since brass was a soft metal, a handstamp of it wore quickly and gave a thick, clogged impression when it was used a lot in a busy office like that

at Bath. Accordingly, he had applied to a Mr Helmsley in the Birmingham Office to obtain for Bath a steel stamp with brass moveable figures. This stamp had been used successfully since February 1823 and similar stamps had been tried out in the Plymouth and Exeter post offices. All were found to preserve their original surface better than brass.

So as to form a better judgement, Freeling ordered a stamp to be made at Birmingham similar to those supplied to Bath.



The impression produced by this (see above) was compared with those produced by three new brass stamps and found to be sharper and clearer. The steel also cost 1/- less ! Is it coincidence that the Steel Impression Books of the PO Archives start in 1825 ?



SELLING POSTMARKS An occasional series on dealers in GB postal history.

No.3 MICHAEL JACKSON

The Strand has never been the same since the distinctive 6ft figure of Michael Jackson moved his premises to the new London International Stamp Centre. Less frequently does it now disappear behind clouds of pipe smoke or resound to his loud voice and hearty laugh.

Michael has had a lifelong interest in philately which began when he covered his bedroom wall with an enormous map and set out to stick stamps on it from every country. The interest became more serious when, in competition with a school friend, he attempted to win a race to completion of all Falkland Islands issues to 1/-. With school behind him, a few years in Insurance in the City left too little time for philately and he got a job at Wingfields under Mick Michael. Six months later, Wingfields merged with Gibbons and Michael Jackson went into their General Sales and then their Specialist Sales departments. Eventually he became Head of the GB Department. However, in 1968, the sale of a certain Falkland Islands collection saw the financing of an independent dealer and philatelic advisor. His professional advice helped to build two collections, in particular, both of which won International Large Gold Medals. One belonged to the late Mr A.R.Mills of Leicester.

From about 1971, Michael used an office off Chandos Place and, on one never-to-be-forgotten occasion, had to be rescued by the London Fire Brigade. Apparently it was not his infamous pipe that had caused the problem - just a caretaker who had neglected to check whether one engrossed philatelic dealer had left the premises. In 1974 he moved into the Strand Stamp Centre and, soon afterwards, went into partnership with W.E.Lea Ltd. In those days he specialised in early GB stamps but became particularly interested in covers following the purchase of some Isle of Wight material. Then came the stroke of luck that all collectors and dealers dream about: he was able to buy an original correspondence. It included six Civil War letters (two smuggled from France by the Underground Post), several first year Bishop marks and the First Day Cover to end all - a first day Bishop mark ! The remaining item from that purchase of 1975 was sold only last month to a delighted collector.

In 1979, a female customer asked Michael if he needed help to sort out the, by now notorious, chaos at Stands 4 & 5. Being too gallant to refuse, Vivien Sussex (of Norfolk PH fame) was given a part time job which led to her being made a fellow director. When Michael Jackson Ltd moved to Covent Garden, the link with W.E.Lea Ltd was amicably broken.

Michael's own collecting interests have never waned: even football now takes a back seat with Crystal Palace no longer in Division One. Visitors

27/11

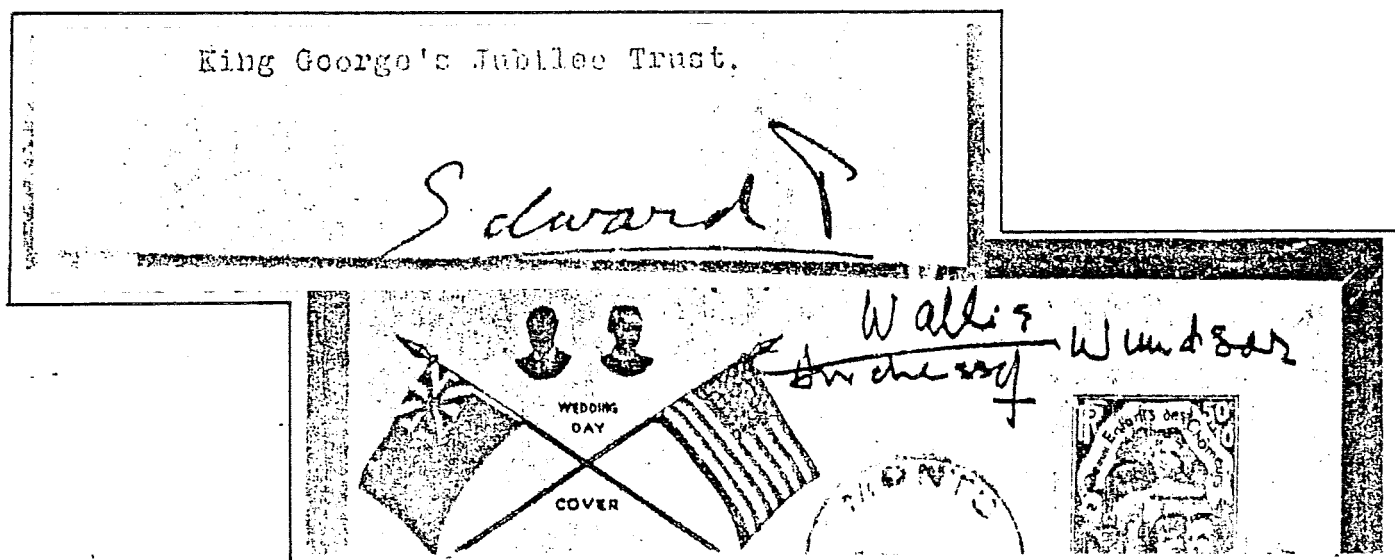
to BPE may have seen his thematic entry of 'London, Brighton & South Coast Railway. He has a large collection of 'Sussex' awaiting mounting and his 'Foreign Branch' is said to be in the best of health.

Michael Jackson shares recently voiced worries about the parameters of postal history collecting. He feels that there are too many collectors who have such a narrow geographical compass that they never understand the postal service as a whole or see their material in its widest context. Often, the same expenditure could lead to wider knowledge and much less frustration. He thinks it fortunate that the folly of investment did not spread to postal history: the gentle rise in prices over the years has come solely from collector demand. There is now enormous interest in stamps on cover and pure postal history as collectors turn from the often garish stamps of today. Michael's company now deals only in postal history of Great Britain in its widest context with postal notices and other ephemera, transatlantic and maritime mail that went through or into our postal services and the more traditional county material. Long may his distinctive figure grace the postal history world.

(The editor gratefully acknowledges the help of a former female customer of Michael Jackson Ltd.....)

FOR SALE

A member has for sale a unique pair of 'Royalty' items: a signed acknowledgement from HRH The Duke of Windsor (no envelope) and a very rare wedding day cover illustrated with the wedding chateau and postmarked at Monts.



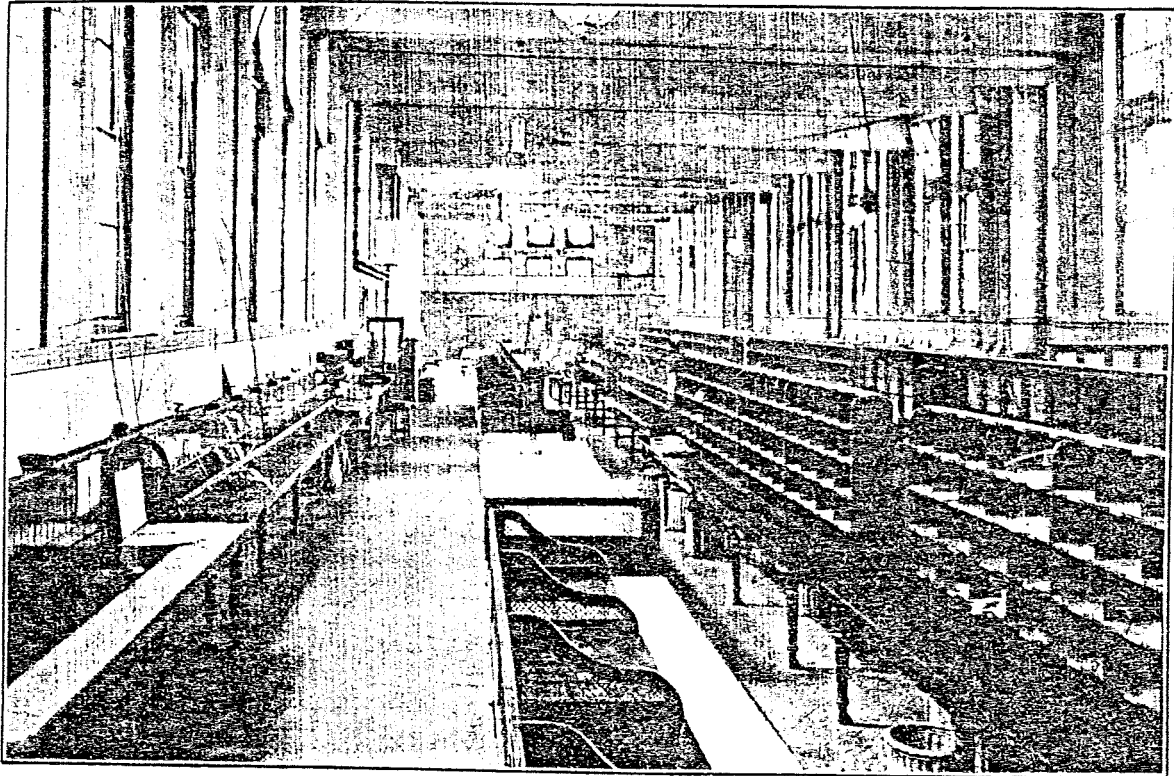
This cover was signed by the Duchess of Windsor and proof of authenticity of the signature can be provided. "Sensible offers only" please via the Editor.

WANTED By the same member, any material from Coventry pre 1710, Atherstone pre 1794, Bedworth pre 1846 and Nuneaton pre 1852 and between 1916 and 1950.

Merry Christmas !

As this is the last issue of the Bulletin before Christmas, it is appropriate to include a Christmas card.

It is taken from a fascinating scrapbook compiled by staff of the Paddington office in the mid-1890s and now preserved in Post Office Archives by whose courtesy it is reproduced.

V.R.

SORTING OFFICE.

The Officers of the Birmingham Post Office send hearty Greetings
with best wishes for the New Year to their Brother Officers at
Paddington.

Christmas, 1893.

The Next Bulletin

The next Bulletin will appear on 11th January 1983. It will include a report of the December meeting, details of the forthcoming meetings in January and February, and a book review with a difference - an 1898 critique of an early postal history publication. There will be some talk of early postal routes and much more. How much more depends on you !