

MIDLAND MAIL

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDLAND (GB) POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY



www.midlandphs.org.uk



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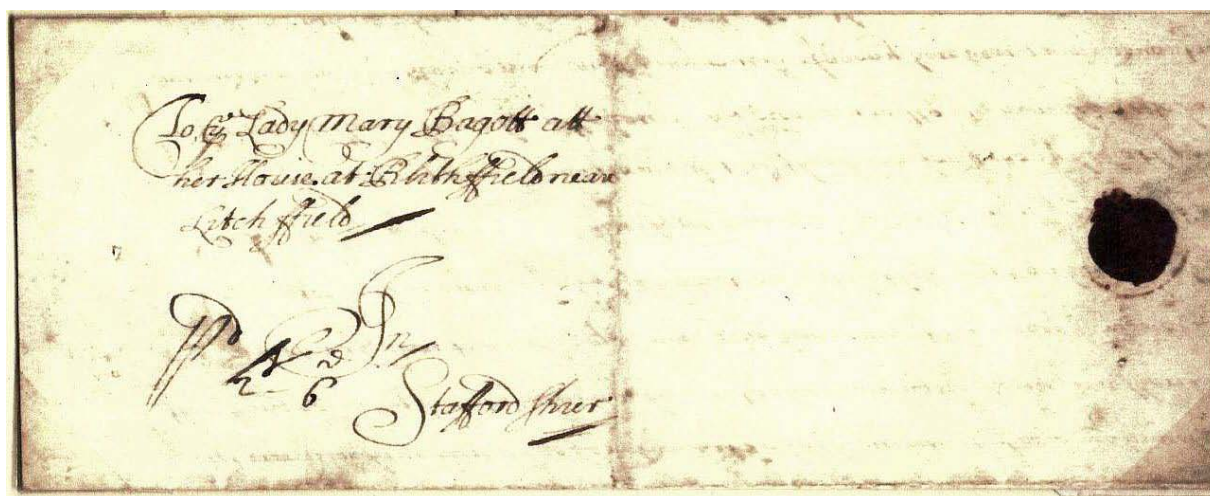
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A 4 NOV 1672 entire letter from Aleppo (now in Syria) to Blithfield near Lichfield paid 2s 6d, the correct rate according to the Act of 1660; 2 shillings double rate from Aleppo to London, plus 6d (double) London to Lichfield. See page 10 for early letters from Staffordshire, a Zoom presentation by Richard Farman

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ANNOUNCEMENTS,

From the Chairman: I hope you are keeping well and have had your jabs. It is now a year since we started running Zoom meetings and I have been very pleased how they have gone with a mixture of specific displays usually given by one of our members and subject meetings where members have actively participated. It has meant that we have seen more of members who cannot get to face to face meetings particularly those who live a long distance away or even overseas. The other big advantage is that everyone can help answer queries and it is quite normal for a member to disappear off screen to come back with a comprehensive answer to the query.

Midland Mail has kept those people who have not been able to attend meetings up to date and I hope that you have found something of interest for you. Please let Brian have any new findings or articles to fill the pages.

The confirmed dates to start face to face meetings again, so far, are:

16 Sept, Cavendish Auctions, 153-157, London Road, Derby, DE1 2SY 1.30pm **Member's Choice-two boards.**

30 Oct, Friends Meeting House, Cotteridge, B30 1JB, **11am Auction viewing, 1.00pm AGM & Auction**

13 Nov, Warwick & Warwick, Scar Bank, Warwick, CV34 5DB, **11am Committee Meeting, 1.30pm Member's Displays Large Items**

In December we have the popular Christmas lunch at Burton on Trent, date, time, speaker, etc., to be confirmed

These meetings may well be governed to a certain extent by the unpredictability and vagrancy of Covid19. I would like to see Zoom meeting continuing perhaps once a month as they do give an extra dimension to meetings and enable us to keep in touch with members we rarely see.

Our hobby has served us well, even in full isolation we have still been able to study new material, write up displays and research those items we did not fully understand, why it had gone on that route rather the other, are those two marks the same or different? Please keep in touch and keep safe, Gordon

From the editor, Future issues of Midland Mail – If enough members could be persuaded to help, I would like to try a 'theme' issue for a future Midland Mail. I did think about a 'County' issue, where all the articles are from (say) Warwickshire but it was suggested by a member that it might be of 'limited appeal or interest for the majority of readers'. Any comments on that? The other possibility is a subject theme, (say) Penny Posts. I have been promised a 'penny post' article and I know that another is ready. Do I have a volunteer (or even volunteers) to write a short or long penny post article for the edition of Midland Mail due at the end of January 2022? This gives plenty of time for a little research! The one article that is ready is 3½ pages, so 3 to 4 pages maximum. Any offers?

Report on Midpex – Congratulations to those members who felt secure enough to attend MIDPEX on July 3rd. The impression gained by this reporter as he entered the parking area on the shuttle bus from Leamington station was the number of cars suggested that there was a surprisingly good crowd in attendance, probably a little down in number on previous years but numbers had held up well! The society stand was well manned by several of our members; visitors to the stand were seen to browse through copies of Midland Mail and the books on display, resulting in three new members (see below) and 4 books sold with a total value of £100.50 to the society. There was plenty of space in the large hall, although social distancing was not easy at the tables of the more popular dealers, all of whom, along with their buyers, seemed very happy! I did not attend the Stafford show, which I heard had organised social distancing well but was slightly under attended and the York show has been cancelled, which leaves Autumn Stampex in London from September 29th to October 2nd as the only remaining large show this year.

New Members: We welcome four new members since the last Midland Mail, they are:

Gordon Richardson, Nepean, Ontario, Canada, whose interests include the Rural Posts of Derbyshire;

Garrie Naden, Macclesfield, whose interests are, The pre-coach route of the Chester Road and the coach routes from London to Chester, Liverpool and Manchester

Philip Quirk, Birmingham, who has a general interest in postmarks of all periods and

Greg Spring, Cavendish Auctions, whose interests are 'Many and varied' but especially The City of Poznan (Poland), pre-stamp France, Airmails to the Far-East and he is also 'a beginner of Derby'!

August ZOOM Meetings – 18th August Members displays **Items relating to the Post Roads or Carried over local or rural routes** and 25th August Julian Tweed with a display of **Registered Late Fees.**

The 21 April 2021 Zoom Meeting was a Member's Evening of *'Interesting contents of a letter or postcard'*, for which 19 members signed in.

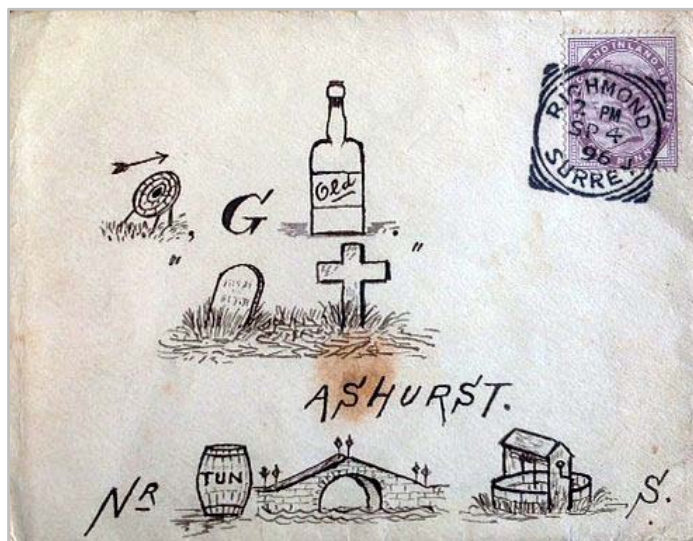
Julian Tweed showed express postcards and reply cards with thought provoking messages including a letter card sent in 1905 from one West Country clergyman to another about the sale and purchase of Martini-Henry rifles and another card of 1907 celebrating a colleague's wedding with a punning ditty which was signed by twenty-two staff from Oldham post office. Also shown was a March 1808 entire from Cavendish Square, London to Greenwich with an early use of a large, boxed mark showing it was to be delivered before 10am on Sunday. This was to ensure that Post Office staff had the opportunity to go to church and were not seen to be breaking observance of the Sabbath. Who knows what prompted the single word contents – *'Eureka'*.

Marc Oxley displayed an 1839 letter between brothers from Rio de Janeiro to Liverpool with a FALMOUTH packet stamp. The letter waxed lyrical about Rio's food (fried serpent, monkey - honestly!) countryside in general and the Organ Range of mountains (Serra dos Órgãos) in particular.

Jim Hammond's 'Messages' included a letter from Coalbrookdale to Birmingham with a boxed No1 of Ironbridge, asking the recipient to *'Please to address your letter to Shropshire not Salop'*! A ½d postcard had *'Why the - picture of Charles Dickens - don't you write to me.'* A telegram to Oxford had the following demand *'Come home today or stay down there for good. How dare you do this to me'* – signed MOTHER (yikes!!!).

Brian Atkins showed a 1715 letter from Shrewsbury to Trentham, Staffs, which had a gruesome account of an 'operation' on a deceased woman of extreme size, whose husband had given permission for it to happen. A 1906 postcard cancelled SHREWSBURY & ABERYSWYTH S.C. with a request to send 2lbs of sausages *'by the 10 o'clock train for Willie Fryer's tea'* was a little more light hearted.

Marion Turner showed a 16 October 1844 entire from Derby to Garendon Park, Loughborough, enclosing a letter from Laura Clifford to Mrs Ambrose Lisle Phillipps on the death of Walter Clifford at Trichinopoly, India.



Joe Cotttriall displayed an intriguing pictogram (see illustration left) dated 4 September 1896 from Richmond, Surrey to Ashurst; the addressee being **Miss Gold, Stone Cross, ASHURST, Nr Tunbridge Wells**. The writer wanted to see if it would arrive, even including the full address in the letter in case the post office opened it, being unable to decipher it. The writer had been very pleased to receive some mushrooms and was going to write at length later as a thank you. As Malcolm said, *'The challenge was to find a pictogram for Ashurst'*!

Richard Farman produced three letters related to *HMS Ardent*, the first dated 18 August 1779 from Plymouth to Sunderland had an eyewitness account of the Franco-Spanish Armada attempt to invade Britain in 1779, a heavy off-

shore wind the only saviour from invasion. The letter contained a report of the battle and capture of *HMS Ardent*. The second letter, 19 October 1779, related to the American War of Independence sent from an officer on *HMS Ardent* to his brother and the third letter of 8 November 1782, endorsed *'p Ardent Man o War'* from Kingston, Jamaica was received in Portsmouth and London on 24th February. *Ardent* was recaptured on 14 April 1782 at the Battle of Saintes, a naval battle in the Caribbean between the British and the French.

Tom George displayed an interesting letter of 25 September 1845 from Stafford & Worcester Canal Company, Wolverhampton to the Navigation Office, Stowmarket about converting canal routes to railways *'in the Shropshire area'*, producing alarm about the potential closure of the canals.

Last but not least **John Soer** produced some disparate items including a 10 July 1832 letter from a prisoner in Leicester gaol, a Midland Express card of 9 February 1909 from Derby to a young lady, the letter written at 9.30am, postmarked 10.15am with the 'gentlemen' hoping to see his lady at 2.30pm! An 1828 letter from Loughborough to London had 3 samples of silk still attached and, as John stated, *'Still fresh in colour'*. His final offering was an aerial card of St Pancras but clearly titled Paddington at the base of the card.

The 28 April 2021 Zoom Meeting was a presentation by **John Soer** entitled *Charge & Explanatory Marks of Leicestershire*, for which 21 members signed in. This is John's account of his display:

It was almost inevitable that the first items shown were covers struck with the missent mark of Leicester which is unusual in that it contains the mileage to London of Leicester (97). There are two different handstamps, the first of which has an earliest recorded date of use of 1811 while the second (Fig. 1) was issued in October 1857. John commented that it was difficult to find good strikes of the 'PAID / AT / LEICESTER' and the two different 'TOO / LATE' handstamps of Leicester as they were usually struck in red ink which has faded.

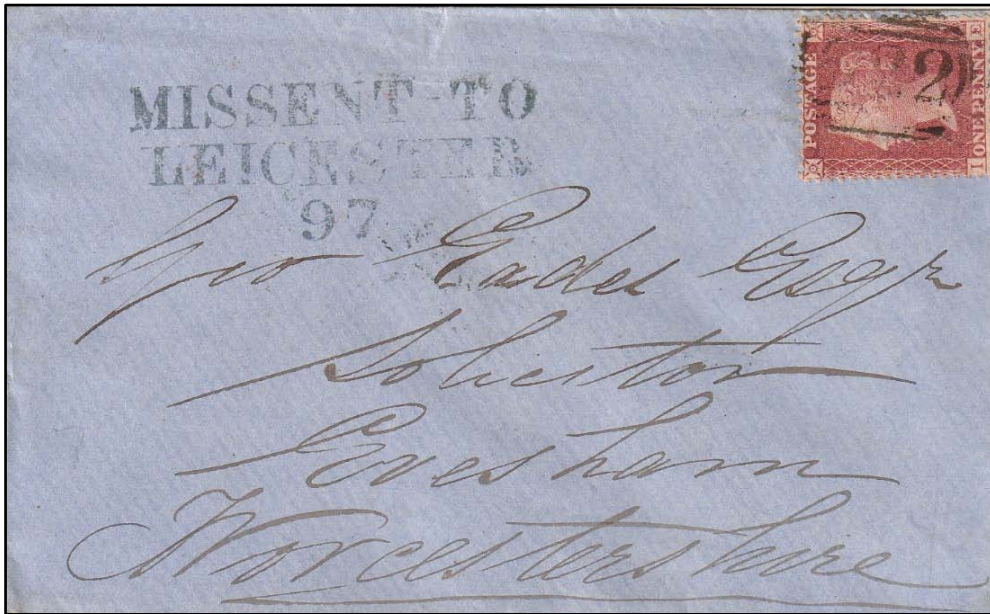


Fig 1, Melton Mowbray to Evesham, via London, June 1858.

Loughborough also had a missent mark used over a long period (1819 – 1851) and struck in a variety of colours. We saw examples from 1845 (black) and 1851 (green).

In December 1877/January 1878 all the post towns in Leicestershire received handstamps: 'More to pay / ___ / above ___ oz / X' where X is the office number. That at Lutterworth was used as late as 1924 on a letter weighing over 2 ounces.

The next few slides dealt with infringements of the rules regarding the use of postcards in the early 20th century, particularly those decorated with tinsel or too large in size. The cards were usually struck with either the 'Liable to Letter Rate' or 'Contrary to Regulations' handstamp of the office along with the surcharge handstamp (usually 1^D) such as the 1^D / 449 of Leicester. An unusual item was the use of the '3^D / 511' of Market Harborough on a letter sent in 1938 and franked with the 1½d adhesive of Edward VII. Such stamps had been invalidated in 1930. In 1922 the Post Office changed the office number of Coalville from H43 to 196. An underpaid postcard sent in 1923 carried an impression of the '1^D / H.43', while an unpaid card of 1935 showed the 2^D / 196. These surcharges as in other cases were twice the deficiency in the payment.

A Post Office notice announced the introduction of Postage Due adhesives 20th April 1914. We saw an example of the one penny stamp used on 24th May 1914, along with the '1^D / 449' of Leicester, on an unpaid postcard.

Postmarks in which the words 'TO PAY' were inserted between the sum to be collected and the office number first appeared in Leicester in the late 1910s. It seems unlikely that the 4^D/TO PAY/449 of Leicester ever existed. Although two unpaid Printed Paper items sent in 1956 were both correctly

surcharged 4d, on one 4 had been written over the '3' of the 3d mark, while on the second it appeared that the '1' of the 1d handstamp had been altered to look like a '4'.

Market Harborough and Ashby both used a two-line handstamp of a type not seen at any of the other offices – '....^D TO PAY / 511'. At Market Harborough it was used along with hand stamps such as '2^D/511', while at Ashby a boxed '5' was used on the one cover seen.

These were followed by a number of rectangular framed handstamps which showed the amount payable with explanations such as 'To Pay / Posted / Unpaid'. While Loughborough and Market Harborough had handstamps with a fixed value, at Leicester it was necessary to insert the numeral. Eventually the staff got fed up with doing this, for in later uses they wrote the figure.

Of note among a range of explanatory marks was a 'Posted out of Course / 449' of Leicester. This mark was applied to registered letters which had been put into letter boxes. They were treated as not having the registration fee paid and surcharged accordingly.

Two other items which drew comment were two unpaid covers sent at the Printed Paper rate but posted before the cut-off time for such items.

Among the other explanatory handstamps of Leicester (all with 449 as a second line) seen were 'Gone No Address', 'Insufficiently Addressed', 'No Such Street in Leicester' and 'Not to be Found'. One can only speculate as to why several covers with the last two marks were returned to the Leicester City Police. Multipurpose hand stamps (Fig. 2) did away with the need for so many different ones. In Fig. 2 'Not as Addressed' has been ticked.



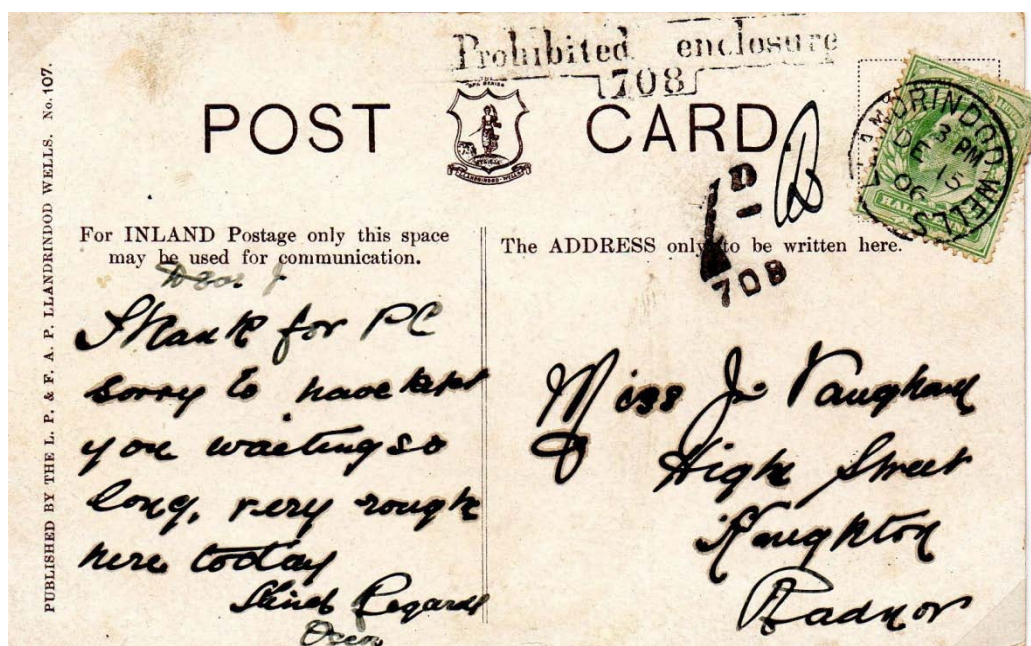
Fig 2, 1963 cover from Leicester showing two instructional hand stamps and 2½d to pay

The display ended with an item with only peripheral connection with Leicestershire. It was sent from Slough to HMRC in Reading. Three days after posting it received a Leicester machine cancellation. On arrival in Reading it was initially delivered not to Revenue and Customs but Reading Prison!

The 19 May 2021 Zoom Meeting was a Member's Evening of 'Prepaid Covers of any Period' for which 16 members signed in. **Marc Oxley** began the evening by showing a turned entire dated May 1823 between Norwich and Pershore, involving a request for life insurance from a 'gentleman', which was refused because of his dissolute life style!

Brian Atkins illustrated prepaid covers from several eras beginning with November 1713 from Market Drayton to Liverpool, *post pay^d* 3; followed by a Dec 1735 Bishops Castle to Antwerp, *Post Payd to London*; a uniform 4d post entire from Whitchurch to London prepaid 4 manuscript in red; a January 1843 registered cover from Wellington, Salop to Aberystwyth was prepaid 1/- in cash and 1d red for postage and an April 1845 entire from Shrewsbury to Florence was prepaid 10d to the border of the Kingdom of Sardinia but had to pay 19 crazie on delivery!

As usual **John Soer** produced a wonderful array of items beginning with a Nov 1676 entire prepaid 3d from Long Whaddon to London. Leicester items included one prepaid 5d with a 99 LEICES / TER 1st type mileage and a March 1805 prepaid entire to Rochdale with a boxed mileage. A lovely July 1839 item from Bradford to Liege was prepaid 2/1, Bradford to London 11d, packet to Ostend 1/4, all abated by 2d to make the 2/1 rate. A Dec 1845 cover from Snarestone to Connecticut, USA with an Ashby / Penny Post mark was prepaid 1/-.



Jim Hammond displayed a few Shropshire items beginning with a prepaid uniform fourpenny post from London to Much Wenlock, followed by a first day uniform penny post addressed to Lord Berwick at Attingham Hall. A 15 March 1827 entire from Broseley to Bewdley was inscribed *P^d 8^d* only in red but *More to Pay* 7 was added as it

was deemed to be a double weight. He finished with a remarkable boxed *Prohibited Enclosure / 708* (see above *Ed* - has anyone seen this instructional mark before?) and *1^d / 708*, both of Shrewsbury, on a postcard from Llandrindod Wells to Knighton, Radnorshire.

Chris Jackson went back to 1757 with an entire from Worcester to Bristol, prepaid 3d for up to 80 miles, the letter being used as evidence in a court! A 29 Nov 1784 letter with a Droitwich first type mileage to Madeira was charged 3/2, Chris reckoning that it was a 1/8 double rate plus 1/6 packet. He also showed a prepaid uniform fourpenny post dated 23 December 1839 (*Ed* - prepaid uniform fourpenny post items not as scarce as a certain person thought!!).

Marion Turner presented a 1 April 1829 cover with a mileage removed MELTON MOWBRAY to London, paid 9d but with a double ring MORE TO PAY, so 9d added for a two-sheet double rate.

Richard Capon showed an item with an undated WANDSFORD, paid 6d. Some discussion ensued about the spelling of Wandsford, or was it Wansford?

Richard Farman displayed a 1d prepaid Government penny post from Bishopsgate to Soho Square about 1700; it had a circular W / Af /6 of Westminster. A 5 May 1716 from Ombersley Court to Naples was prepaid 1/- and a 10 May 1824 soldier's letter prepaid the 1d concessionary rate from Stone to Wolverhampton. A nice registered from Cheadle to Birmingham was prepaid 1/1, a shilling registration and 1d postage. A 1oz Money Letter of 1835 from Boston to Grantham was prepaid 2/- treble the 8d rate for 50 - 80 miles (1812 Act). It was endorsed 1oz and '8d More to Pay'. The 1oz letter rate was 2/8, letter was 8d underpaid, BUT as it was a Money Letter it should have been 2/8 x 3 or 8/-. Richard reckoned 5/4 had been saved.

The 26 May 2021 Zoom meeting was a presentation with 58 slides by **Toby Mottram** entitled *Leamington Postal History to 1860*. (Ed - I hope that the rest of Toby's presentation 'with a Survey on the Usage of the Maltese Cross Cancellation' will appear in the next issue as a stand-alone article). This is Toby's account of his display:

Today, the village called Leamington Priors to 1838 is the provincial town of Royal Leamington Spa. Its rapid growth in population from 315 in 1801 to 15,724 in 1851 would have resulted in an increase in post office needs. Before 1870, the main post office changed location three times. The first was a Receiving House (RH) at Satchwell Place, which closed after 1814. Two other RHs opened as the town developed; the first (Upper Parade) became operational in 1832 and the second (South Parade) 18 years later in 1850. There was a Post Office on Clemens Street after 1814 to 1830 and then to 1870 the main Post Office was on Bath Street. The presentation covered postal items that had received hand-stamps when passing through these five Leamington post offices.

Peter Sharp, a past member of the Midland (GB) PHS, wrote a short history on the Leamington Post Office⁷ and his excellent contribution was a strong source of information used in the presentation. There is a link to download at the end of this account (Ed – a thoroughly recommended read).

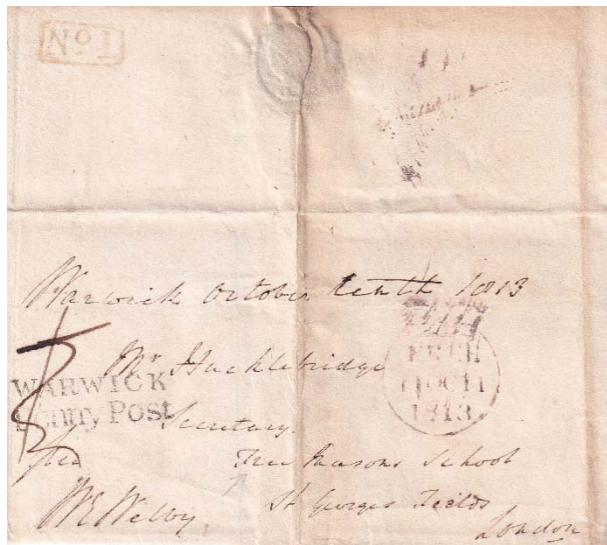


Fig 1, No1 of Leamington Receiving House with Warwick Penny Post, 11 Oct. 1813

Leamington received its first hand-stamp of a boxed No 1 in 1811 (WA202d, 17x 9 mm, 29 Sept. 13 to 21 Aug. 25; from the BCC) and until 1830 it was in the Warwick Penny Post. The wrapper at Fig 1 was sent FREE by William Earle Welby, 2nd Baronet of Denton Hall, with a red boxed No. 1 for the Satchwell Place RH on the reverse. The postal charge was 1d for the 2-3 miles from Leamington to Warwick. The first of three Warwick Penny Post hand-stamps (Fig 1) is WA410 (36x12 mm, 25 May 1812 to 16 July 1828), in black.

The Fleuron was the first hand-stamp to include the town's name and is recorded from 5 April 1826 to 28 May 1828 (WA203). It was followed by a small circular undated stamp (WA205), used in black from 21 June 1828 to 27 Dec. 1829 and a larger circular undated (WA207) also used in black from **14 Sep 1831** to 01 Apr. 1834 (Dates in **bold** are earlier or later than in BCC). Fig 2 is a solicitors' letter of 1828 to Haynes in Warwick, with the black 23 mm circular undated, applied at the Clemens Street Post Office. The *Warwick Penny Post*

hand-stamp, in blue, had changed to WA414 (34x11 mm, 12 Mar. 25 to 12 Feb. 30). There was a local agreement that the rate was 1d for the local delivery and not 4d, the 1812 Act postal rate up to 15 miles.



Fig 2, Undated LEAMINGTON (23mm) with Warwick Penny Post, 2 Aug. 1829

Leamington became a postal town during 1830, at the same time as the main post office moved to Bath Street. During 1832 the town opened a RH at Bettison's Library & Reading Rooms (Upper Parade). From June 1833, the Post Office started to apply, on the back and in black, a 26 mm dated double arc stamp (WA209, **5 June 33** – 25 Apr. 44). Fig. 3 is for an entire of 5 June 1833 for the earliest known usage of this dated double arc stamp. The other postal hand-stamps with this item is for a combination of, in red, the Boxed No1 (WA210d, 18x8 mm, 7 Apr 33 to ?? 1837) for the Upper Parade RH, and, in black, *Leamington Penny Post* (WA217, 46x13 mm, same dates); presumably applied at the main Post Office, now in Bath Street. The postal charge is 10d with 1d for penny post and 9d for a single sheet to London that is between 80 and 120 miles from Warwick; the town had a mileage hand-stamp for 107 miles. The letter is from the sister of Sir John S. Forbes, 8th Baronet, of Monymusk, of Fettercairn and Pitsligo, in which she mentions the work

of the famous Leamington physician Dr Jephson (the formal gardens are named after him owing to his important impact within the thriving Spa town).



Fig 3, Circular dated LEAMINGTON with boxed Leamington Penny Post, 5 July 1833

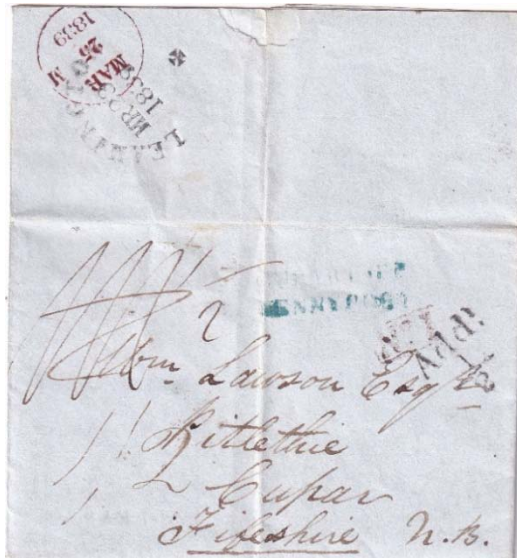


Fig 4, LEAMINGTON skeleton on back of entire to Cupar, Fifeshire in Scotland,



Fig 5, red Leamington Maltese Cross on 2d Blue Plate 2 (LI), entire to Preston, 11 Aug. 1840

Fig 5 shows the earliest known use of a 2d blue; note that the dda inset is on the reverse. With this figure is the image for this Distinctive Maltese Cross from page 101 of the Gibbons Specialised catalogue². The 13 Feb. 1841 cover (Fig 6) has a 1d black with the dda now on the front. Hughes⁴ research concluded that the change from red to black ink for the provincial towns happened on Sunday 14 Feb, an example on a Monday

15th cover has a black Maltese Cross. In Fig 6 the dda is red used for a maximum of 9 days. The third finding is that examples can be posted at the Upper Parade RH, and for this item the RH hand-stamp, in red, is UPPER PARADE / LEAMINGTON (W212, 36x12 mm, 10 Jan. 41 to 27 Oct. 51).

The LEAMINGTON skeleton, used for seven days in Apr. 1841 and two days during Jan 1844^{3,5} is seen in Fig 4 dated **23 March 1839** (WA210), with the skeleton replacing the Leamington dated double arc stamp. This entire also has, in a brownish colour, the boxed No1 for the Upper Parade RH. A Sharp⁷ drawing is also in May⁵ for the same date. However in March 1839 the skeleton was in use for a total of five days. The postal rate of 1/2½ is for a single sheet sent 400-500 miles to Cupar, Fifeshire, in Scotland. The entire travelled via Edinburgh, which is shown by the Edinburgh transit hand-stamp dated 25 Mar 1839 and the Add¹ ½d hand-stamp for Scotland's mail-carrying vehicle tax. The boxed No1 (WA210d) cancellation, coloured red or red-orange, for posting at the Upper Parade RH has been seen used into March 1840.

The Leamington Maltese Cross is catalogued by Gibbons² as Distinctive (see Fig. 5). 93 examples of it are recorded in Volume 1 of the *Encyclopaedia of The Maltese Cross Cancellations of Great Britain and Ireland* by Rockoff and Jackson⁶, where it is shown not to be distinguishable from several other crosses. By June 2020 Toby had identified 253 examples and has 188 images for them. Up to sometime in November 1840 the accompanying dated double arc stamp (dda) (WA209) was struck on the back (Fig 5), while afterwards it is found on the front (Fig 6). It can be speculated that this change was made because the volume of items passing through the Bath Street Post Office were getting too high for its staff to have the time to turn them over to follow standard practice of striking the dda on the back. We'll continue to have a taster of the information that can be gleamed from an analysis of the survey's results.

Of the 255 cancellations, 69 are on 1d blacks (with 42 having a red coloured cross), one each with a Hume's comic or Southgate No 1 envelope, 5 are cancelling 1840 2d blues (three in red) and one with 1841 2d blue (in the Phillips Collection with British Library), 137 are on 1d reds (no red crosses and 21 on black plate stamps), 9 are on Mulready envelopes or letter sheets, and 32 are on 1d pink stationery envelopes. The earliest is dated 10 May 1840 and the latest is for 30 April 1844; the change to the town cancel number 444 was the day later, May 1st.



Fig 6, Leamington Maltese Cross in red on 1d Black Plate 10 (state 2 CH) to Ludlow, 13 Feb. 1841

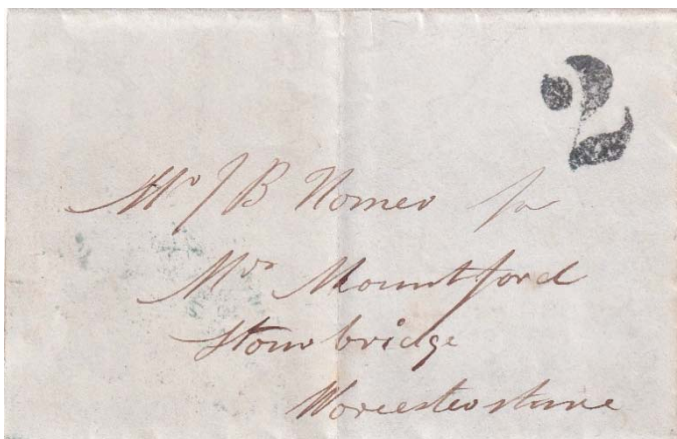
Alcock and Holland¹ state that from early 1841 a second hand-stamp was used until April 1844. Peter Sharp maintains that in February 1843 there was a replacement to the original hand-stamp that can be recognised because the centre diamond and inner lines are thicker than the 'normal' impressions. Gibbons doesn't provide a date range for the Distinctive cross. A comparison of seven dimensions of two red and five black examples suggests that the hand-stamp's overall shape and geometry had not changed.

A spoon cancellation was followed in March 1858 with the short-lived Leamington sideways duplex recorded 24 Mar 1858 to 24 May 1858, with codes C, D, E and F (Parmenter). An example of 21 May 58 is addressed to Lady Shelley, who was the wife of the son of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, the writer of *Frankenstein*.



One of the rarest of the Leamington hand-stamps is the beautiful MISSENT TO LEAMINGTON having an ellipsoidal outer border (WA223, 36x18 mm), recorded from 23 May 1838 (black) and, as seen in Fig 7, a last known date of **11 MAY 1855** (in green). Toby showed one example for the three used colours, each being for the latest date known. The two envelopes not shown here have MISSENT TO LEAMINGTON coloured black on 26 July 1844 and in blue on 19 May 1852.

Fig 7, MISSENT TO LEAMINGTON hand-stamp in green to a Warwick solicitor, 11 May 1855



The final item (Fig 8) is the large 2 postage due hand-stamp (WA225d, 01 Jan. 43 to **28 June 1849**) in black, blue or green. The **28 June 1849** entire was posted by Edward Pinder, a builder and buyer and seller of land. Pinder continually made losses in business and was a bankrupt. The lack of prepayment suggesting he could not afford the one penny postage and the 'Rambling' content in his letter is to plead for a delay of three months in paying a creditor.

Fig 8, Postage due 2 to Stourbridge, 28 June 1849

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- 3) BCC (2013), *The British County Catalogue of Postal History: Midlands Edition* Midland (GB) PHS, No. 6.
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- 5) May, I. M. (2020). 'Early Warwickshire Skeleton Hand-stamps', Midland Mail, 208/5.
- 6) Rockoff, S. D. and Jackson, M. (2006). 'Encyclopaedia of The Maltese Cross Cancellations of Great Britain and Ireland,' Volume 1, MJPublications.
- 7) Sharp, T. P. L. (c. 1990). 'A Short History of the Leamington Post Office,' Leamington & Warwick Philatelic Society. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rJ2B50_38ow84_XxQEOZt6n0kTUcSsyt/view

The 16 June 2021 Zoom Meeting was a Member's Evening of *Straight-Line & Penny Post Receiving House Numbers*, for which 19 members attended.

Alan Godfrey headed up proceedings by showing an 11 April 1845 Leamington / Penny Post cover put into the mails at the Upper Parade TSO. He followed with a 1 Dec 1840 1d black cover with a st-line ATHENAEN / UPPER PARADE. By 5 March 1841 the mark had changed to UPPER PARADE / LEAMINGTON in black and a 28 Feb 1855 cover showed the mark had become UPPER PARADE only, a scarce mark apparently. Two examples of SOUTH PARADE were dated 1 Dec 1848 and 16 Feb 1849. Turning to Coventry he illustrated straight-lines of BISHOP ST, two different PARK ST marks, HILL FIELD and JORDON WELL. Penny posts included those of Wolston, Stratton and Barford as well as a boxed No1 of Nuneaton dated 5 May 1840 and a fancy No1 of Kenilworth / Penny Post dated 29 May 1844.

Brian Atkins provided a power point of Oswestry numbered receiving houses to show the changes within the Oswestry system. No1 was used at Chirk from Dec 1811 until August 1829, when it transferred to Llanymynech. In Dec 1811 No2 began life at Llanfyllin but was used at Llansaintffraid from August 1829, when Llanfyllin became No3 and Chirk No4 (probably!). In May 1830 Meifod became No5 and Llanrhaeadr No6. Finally in January 1833, Llanyblodwell, firmly in Shropshire despite its Welsh name, took over the No4, Chirk having post town status!



Boxed No1 in red of Llanymynech

Recorded 21 FEB 1833 to 11 AUG 1838

5d for 15 to 20 miles (1812 Act) to Shrewsbury plus penny post

Ian May showed Coventry sub-offices and receiving offices of HILL FIELD, and JORDON WELL and like Alan, he illustrated two PARK ST marks 8 Dec 1851 (smaller) and 16 April 1859 (larger). SPON•END and BISHOP ST followed. He stated Coventry had 8 sub-offices in penny post, numbered, not surprisingly, 1 to 8! But a manuscript No9 is known from Fillongly on covers of 8 Nov 1839 and 29 Feb 1840. No4 was Allesley and No6 Packington on a 11 Jan 1840 cover to Bedworth with a Coventry / Penny Post mark. No 8 was Brinklow and No 3 Bedworth.

Frank Walton took us to Sheffield straight-line marks of 1841. The Archives show 5 such marks GIBRALTER ST / SHEFFIELD, THE WICKER, DURIE ST, SOUTH ST and GLOSSOP RD. He also showed a HOOD HILL, apparently a farm at the first ascent north out of Sheffield, where horses were changed.

Marc Oxley had found a Shropshire item, a Whitchurch / Penny Post with a boxed Malpas, one of its two receiving offices, charged 1/-, 11d in the General Post plus 1d post. A Bristol / Penny Post of 20 July 1836 had an outlined oval No1; one to Falmouth (24 May 1830) had a boxed No10 and to London dated 16 Feb 1832 had a blue boxed No1.

Chris Jackson produced a No1 (Malvern to Edinburgh 7 Feb 1819) and No2 (Malvern Wells, 13 Aug 1822) in the Worcester / Penny Post. A Shrewsbury to Ombersley cover of 25 March 1829 had a red, boxed No3. Powick (No2) to Bewdley on 27 Nov 1832 (apparently first day of new No2 use) and new No3 to London Road was seen on a 3 June 1836 cover. No4 St John's 18 Nov 1836. Covers with *manuscript* No5 (Kempsey to Bewdley on 21 July 1834) and No6 (Broadwas to London 11 Mar 1834) were particularly noted.

Richard Farman displayed a Sudbury.D (Derbyshire) in black (12 Jan 1842) & blue (13 Mar 1852). An italic Shirleywich followed on a Sep 1840 cover to Ireland. A Trysall / Penny Post on a 21 June 1840 cover to Wolverhampton was misspelled as the village is actually called Trysull! HIGH-ST, West Bromwich was in red on 28 Aug 1854 and blue (1 June 1858). OCKER-HILL of 20 Jan 1860 showed the st-line still in use though a udc had been issued in 1858. A TIPTON mark on a 9 Nov 1844 to Coventry brought matters to a close!

The 23 June 2021 Zoom Meeting was a presentation by **Richard Farman** of *Staffordshire covers from 1584 to 1701*, for which 17 members were signed in to view some remarkable entires.

Richard began with an April 1568 letter from John Carpenter, one of the Queen Majesty's Ordinary Messengers, asking for an allowance for riding to Yarmouth & Ipswich with letters from customs searchers. His bill was for 2/8 a day and £4 in total. Alongside was a piece with the signature of the Lord Marquis of Winchester followed by an etching of said marquis and 4 examples of his signature for checking. His first Staffordshire item was a c.1584 private letter from Edward Lyttleton of Pilaton near Penkridge to Richard Bagott of Blithfield Hall to which many of his letters were addressed. A 4 March 1594 letter from Leek was addressed to 'Mr Edwarde Drakeforde Sub Sheraiiffe of Stafford, yeane theise'. Moving in to the 17th century we saw a letter to 'my worthy loving coufon Walter Baggott esquire give these' from Jo Ferrers of Walton, near Burton. Maps by John Speed (1627) and Van Lengeren (c.1640) noted only towns, churches and rivers, no roads! Another private letter dated 22 Feb 1648 was carried from Stafford to Reanalds Hall near Walsall. A most interesting document dated 13 March 1653 named the postmasters at Birmingham, Coleshill, Tofister (Towcester), Chester and Namptwitch along the Chester Road.

At this point Richard stated he liked incoming letters as they illustrated the routes available at the time. Such a letter was sent from St John's, London dated 14 Feb 1653, during the Commonwealth period, to *John Ferrers at Walton, neare Burton on Trent* was *post payd* (4d). The next item Richard produced caused much discussion; it was a reproduction of a sketch of the Chester Road (1677) from the Earl of Dartmouth's 'Book of Post' (see below, reproduced for those who may not have a copy of Alan Robertson's book or other reference on early post roads).

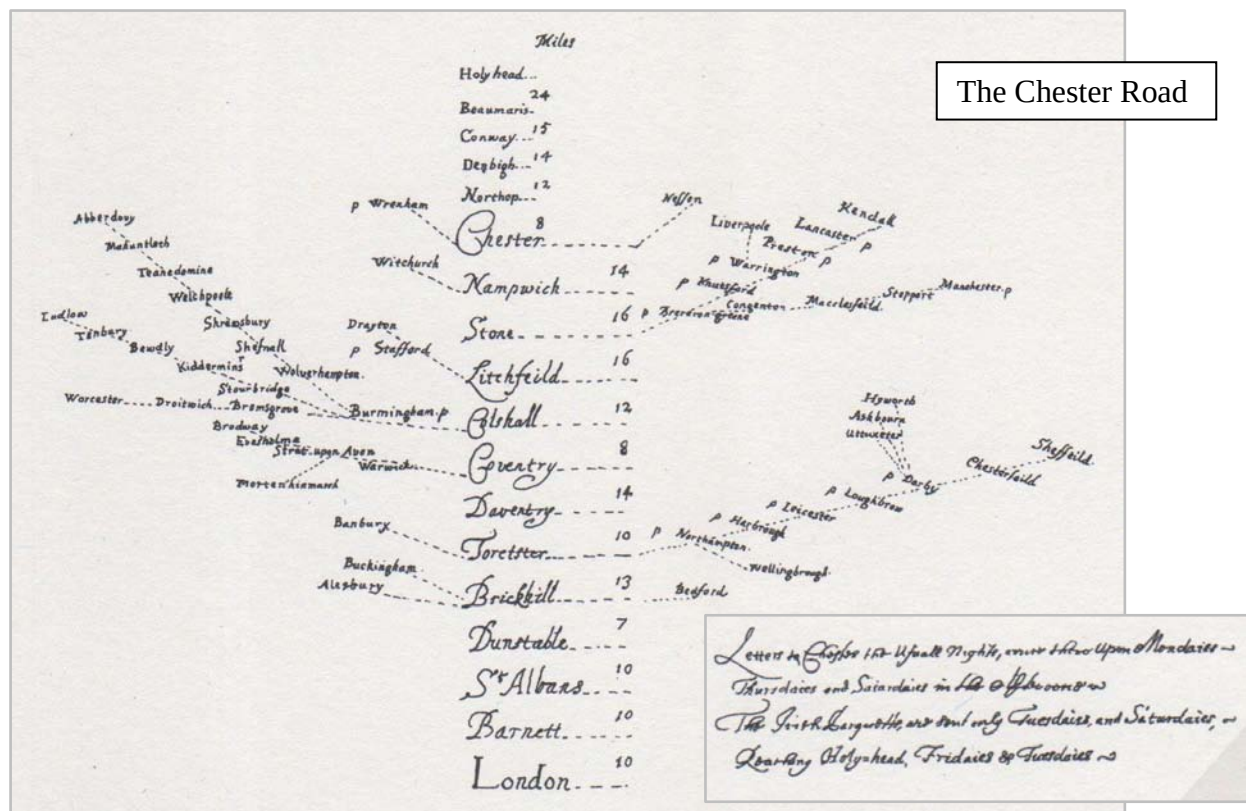


Fig 1, A sketch copy of the Chester Road referred to above (1677)

The road was illustrated by a 9 March 1660 entire from Drury Lane, London to Hamstall Ridware, near Yoxall in Staffordshire, pt pd 3d (post paid 3d) and endorsed 'Leave this at the post house in Litchfield to be sent'. Further illustrations of the route were a 5 April 1662 entire from London to Stone and a 30 October 1664 entire also to Stone, both correctly charged 3d and addressed to The Lady Gerrard, the latter written in French. A treble letter rate of 9d was seen on a similar letter but addressed to Lady Garrard dated 28 December c1675, an enclosure was mentioned. At five times the 3d rate, a 28 October 1673 letter was charged 1s 3d 'To be put in Lichfield Bagg and left at Sand Cross'; it also showed the OFF / 4 in a circle showing the receiving house which received the letter (see next page), later the initials of the receiver were used.



Fig 2, The 28 October 1673 letter, referred to on previous page, put into Receiving Office 4 (recorded 1671 to 1675) and showing the 1/3 rate to the left of Staffordshire. Wrinkling of the paper does suggest enclosures.

A Free letter addressed to Sir Walter Bagot at Blithfield was franked by Jon Gray, MP (1689, 90 & 95) with a Bishop mark for 11 / DE but no year date visible. The first written authority for free mail to members of either House of Parliament was the 1652 Council of State.



Fig 3, Addressed To Sir Walter Bagot Member of Parliamt att Blithfild near Rudgely in Soafort Sheer Litchfield Post

It is a wonder the letter reached its destination with the spelling in the direction (Rudgely for Rugeley and Soafort Sheer is presumably Staffordshire!).

4d rate crossed out, letter went free from London (London forwards) as the letter is to an MP whilst Parliament was sitting.

No year date but OC / 29 Bishop mark. On 29th October Parliament was sitting in 1680 or 1685.

For those relatively new to postal history, the 3d charge of many of the letters was laid under the Act of 1660 (12CarII Cap35) for letters sent over 80 miles. There were many other entire letters of a similar vein, some charged, some sent free, but the last letter stood out, sent from BOLTON south through Staffordshire down to Stone, where it was turned north onto the Chester Road to Nantwich and Chester (see sketch provided by Richard), an excellent example of early routing on the post roads of the time (all post roads led to London – more or less!). The letter is dated 21 July 1701 which makes the **BOLTON** strike the earliest known example of an English town cancel.

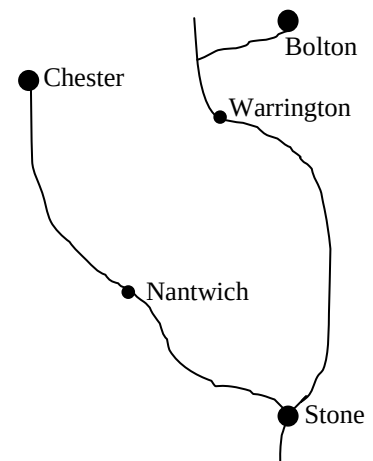
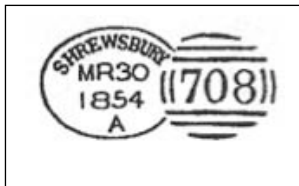


Fig 4, 21 July 1701, Bolton to Chester endorsed *By the way of Stone* and *post paid 2^d* (under 80 miles, 1660 Act)

LATE USE OF THE SIDEWAYS DUPLEX CANCEL

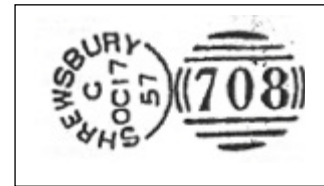
by John Calladine

It is almost thirty years ago, when I was editor of Midland Mail that I wrote about late use of the sideways duplex cancel. Fortunately few, if any, members will recall what was written and some duplication is likely to pass unnoticed. Use of the sideways duplex cancel was one part of a widespread experiment to speed up processing of mail, principally by combining the functions of cancelling the adhesive and dating the item in a single operation. Others have commented how surprising it seems that cancelling an adhesive with one stamp and dating the letter with another stamp was allowed to continue for no fewer than thirteen years from 1840 to 1853. However, the 1850s saw big changes, not only in the style of the cancel but in further attempts to improve efficiency and reduce costs by the use of such innovations as smaller ink pads (and therefore stamps) and the introduction of the earliest cancelling machines.



A Shrewsbury “spoon” cancel and a Shrewsbury sideways duplex cancel type VIII.

(taken from The Postal Markings of Shropshire and Traill & Holland.)



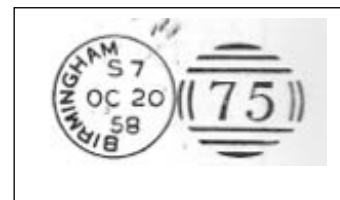
Double stamps, are widely referred to as duplex stamps but only the so-called “spoon” cancel ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ is strictly a duplex stamp, with the two elements, the date and the cancel, combined in a single design. The sideways duplex stamp has two separate elements combined on a single base with the date portion touching, or almost touching, the oval cancelling element. It is therefore technically a double stamp. Spoon cancels first appeared in the provinces at the end of 1853 and the first sideways duplex cancel was issued shortly afterwards in May 1854 but the majority of sideways duplex stamps appeared between 1855 and 1857. Although there is no surviving report to tell us how the cancellation trials were planned or reported, it seems clear the intention was to determine, after extended use, what the optimum design of a new cancel might be. The resulting 3 bar duplex stamps were not widely introduced until 1858 so it cannot be said the trials were not extensive and thorough.

22 of the 29 offices in England and Wales issued with spoon cancels were also issued with a sideways duplex. It is believed postmasters of these offices were instructed to use both types and report their preferences. The distribution of the sideways duplex was much more widespread than spoons and, apart from five stamps sent to London districts, was entirely provincial. 24 offices in our Midland area of interest were among them.

Although there were eight different designs of sideways duplex, the datestamp always formed the left hand element and the numbered obliterator the right. Both the office name, on the left, and the office number with bars forming the obliterator were, on the vast majority of stamps, placed so that they had to be read sideways. Only five offices had stamps with the office name upright: all the office numbers in the obliterations are sideways and facing right (except for one with the number facing left). Why a sideways design was preferred has been a matter of some speculation but it could be that letters reached the stamping clerks with the narrow edge leading. The different types of sideways duplex were given Roman numbers from I to VIII by Traill and Holland,⁽³⁾ whose 1975 book has been regarded as the standard reference. However, a newer monograph by Ray Barton⁽⁴⁾ illustrating every stamp and every re-cut, has added much to the pioneer work.



A type II sideways duplex (of Nottingham) and the unique type VII of Birmingham.



21 of the 24 Midland Towns had a type II sideways duplex. The principal characteristics of this type is that the name of the office forms the left-hand half of the circumference of the date stamp and both it and the number in the obliterator face right. It is by far the most common type of sideways duplex stamp. Five of these 21 offices also had a second stamp of a different type, details of which can be found in Traill and Holland's book. The Birmingham stamp was unique. Three offices had a single stamp that was not of type II. The proof books in the Royal Mail Archive, with perhaps a couple of exceptions, record the issue of each sideways duplex stamp but, unfortunately for us, after August 1856 we do not know which issues are of new stamps and which are recuts of existing stamps. Since the proposed new Society collaborative project, listing all stamps used in the 1840s and 1850s, will require

recuts to have separate catalogue numbers, it will be up to our County Editors to identify them and their usage. The majority of our offices had only one or two stamps (or recuts) and the task may not be difficult but Nottingham used five stamps, Northampton six and Derby nine. If that seems excessive, consider that Sheffield had 19 stamps or recut stamps and Manchester no fewer than 89! Birmingham and Northampton were issued with sideways duplex stamps in May 1854 but our other Midland offices received theirs' between 1855 and 1857.



The first 3 bar upright duplex of Stourbridge used in November 1858.

The first Midland office to receive the familiar 3 bar duplex stamp was surprisingly Great Malvern in September 1857 and there is no obvious reason why it was chosen. However, once a general issue of these duplex stamps began in 1858, they had been sent to all but a small number of offices by the spring of 1859. Duplex stamps continued in use, albeit in four different styles, until the end of the century. Putting together all the useful information about the issue and usage of spoons, sideways duplex and conventional duplex stamps are the five volumes of English "Barred Numerals" by John Parmenter⁽⁵⁾. This work has been updated several times, most recently in 2011, and is highly recommended.

Once the 3-bar duplex stamps had been issued there would appear to be no reason to either recut or re-use sideways duplex stamps. The last office to have a sideways duplex stamp issued that we know to be a new stamp was outside the Midlands at Wrexham on 25th January 1858, (Were any new stamps issued after February 1858?). However, a dozen of our Midland offices had their sideways duplex stamps re-cut after they received a 3-bar duplex. Nationally, perhaps 40% of offices with sideways duplex stamps continued to use them into the 1860s. A similar percentage never struck one after the issue of a 3 bar duplex. Only a few years earlier, an instruction to postmasters had said:

'If you have been issued previously with a stamp, you will return the old one to me immediately'

It is evident that no similar instruction could have been issued with the 3 bar duplex stamps because several Midland postmasters sent a sideways duplex stamp for re-cutting within weeks of a 3 bar duplex being sent to them in what would surely have been seen as an act of open defiance.



The two proof book entries for the Stourbridge sideways duplex.

It will surprise few who know me that it was the unusual usage of the Stourbridge duplex stamp that triggered an interest in the subject. The proof books record a sideways duplex stamp issued to Stourbridge on 31st January 1856, the impression of the stamp bearing a date of 9th February. A second issue is shown as being sent on 13th March 1856

(with the impression bearing the same date). The opinion of Ray Barton is that these are one and the same stamp, notwithstanding the proof book page stating the March issue to be of a new stamp, and they certainly appear identical. Unfortunately, the earliest recorded usage is not until 26th April 1856 so usage provides no direct evidence. The latest use I have of a Stourbridge sideways duplex during what I term its first period of use is 31st January 1858. A 3 bar duplex was issued to the office on 12th May 1858 and it has been recorded in use until 1872, notwithstanding the issue of a 4VOD duplex in 1869.



The re-cut Stourbridge sideways duplex.

However the Stourbridge sideways duplex stamp was one of those recut soon after the issue of the 3 bar duplex and, although it and other stamp impressions in the proof book are dated 3rd June 1858, the proof book states they were sent out in May, on an unreadable day but certainly after the 14th. At the time of the first article in 1982, liaison was made with Dudley Philatelic Society, whose members were believed to be among those likely to have examples of the Stourbridge stamps. Between us, notwithstanding the recut, we could not provide a single example of sideways duplex usage at the Stourbridge office between the issue of the 3-bar duplex and its sudden reappearance in August 1862. It was then apparently used for four months and the last recorded strike is on 21st November 1862. What, we debated, was the most likely reason for its four-month-long reappearance after more than four years of disuse? Ian Baker has now kindly supplied additional information and this includes recorded use of the Stourbridge sideways duplex on 2nd July 1861, still more than three years after the recut but important because it makes it more unlikely that the second period of use was linked to any special event or unusual demand. It made it more necessary than ever to look at the other Midland offices with recorded late use of a sideways duplex stamp to see if there was any pattern and I am most grateful to those County Editors who helped so willingly.

The editors were asked to provide the very latest sideways duplex usage information from Birmingham, Coventry, Leicester, Northampton, Shrewsbury and Wellington, thus sampling two-thirds of Midland offices with recorded 1860s usage. Birmingham might be considered a special case because it had two stamps and the type used into the 1860s is the unique type VII, (Our Birmingham County Editor, who should know best, regards this stamp as a spoon rather than a sideways duplex, principally because the numeral is upright, but Birmingham was also issued with more conventional spoon stamps.) A series of twelve 3 bar duplexes were issued to Birmingham from 12th April 1858 to 22nd September 1859 and these were used concurrently with the sideways duplex, whose last recorded use is 24th June 1865.

At Coventry, a 3 bar duplex was not issued until 27th May 1861 so use of its sideways duplex stamp into the 1860s is unsurprising. The County Editor reports that he has not seen usage of the sideways duplex after 1860 but Parmenter has a record of 16th May 1861. The stamp was then almost certainly re-cut on 4th July 1861 (although Parmenter suggests it is a new stamp). There is no recorded usage of a sideways duplex after the 3-bar duplex was issued.



The re-cut Leicester type VIII sideways duplex, as used in 1861.

Leicester was another office that was late receiving a 3-bar duplex on 24th January 1861. It had several sideways duplex stamps including a type VIII, probably re-cut in 1859. The last recorded date of use of this handstamp is 8th April 1861, not significantly later than the issue of its first duplex. Perhaps we should note that the numeral is also upright, not sideways, in this type of sideways duplex



Use of the Northampton type Vb stamp with worn letters in January 1864.



Use of the recut Northampton type Vb stamp in May 1864.

At Northampton three different types of sideways duplex were used. What appears to be unusual at Northampton is that the 3-bar duplex was issued on 23rd February 1859 but its last recorded use is on 19th July 1861. A 4VOD duplex was not issued until 24th June 1864, almost three years later. Use of sideways duplex stamps, of which Northampton had several into the 1860s does not therefore seem surprising and the County Editor has provided examples of a worn type Vb used in January 1864 and a re-cut stamp on 10th June (see above). The latest recorded use of this type is 4th July 1864.

Finally the Shropshire County Editor provided the latest information about sideways duplex usage at Shrewsbury and Wellington. In January 1983, MM 28/7 following the original article, Steph Stobbs, a doyen of the Society, provided a breakdown of simultaneous usage of the Shrewsbury sideways duplex and the first duplex (issued December 1858) between 1859 and 1864. (It was commented at the time that there was more use of the sideways duplex than might have been expected.) However, we have much more information available today and it is all systematically dealt with in the excellent publication "The Postal Markings of Shropshire, part one⁽⁶⁾". What was not mentioned at the time is that Shrewsbury made much more use of spoons than its sideways duplex stamp, type VIII. The Shropshire book suggests there are two stamps, one re-cut, but it is more likely to be a single stamp re-cut twice. The County Editor has almost forty records of use but none between 26th September 1861 and 3rd January 1863. The last recorded date of use is 29th September 1864. Wellington, Salop, had a type II sideways duplex, issued on 29th April 1857 and used until 25th July 1862, without the need for re-cutting. Its first 3 bar duplex was issued on 11th August 1862, suggesting use of a sideways duplex stamp ceased when a duplex became available.

Summing up the evidence available from the record of late usage of sideways duplex stamps in the Midlands, it seems clear that a number of offices continued to use their stamp into the 1860s because of late issue of a 3-bar duplex or because it had been withdrawn for some reason. However, that did not apply to use at Stourbridge, or at Birmingham or at Shrewsbury. The evidence of sideways duplex stamps being re-cut soon after a 3-bar duplex became available indicates that postmasters or surveyors believed these stamps to have a possible future, if not an immediate, use, (A stamp at Bath was re-cut in 1870.). It would be tempting to believe they were held to be used as a temporary stamp when the regular current stamp was being re-cut, as skeleton stamps were used in previous decades, but we have no clear evidence of that. Neither can they be seen to have been used for special events. The most likely explanation is simply that they were expensive stamps, too good to discard, and they were kept at the back of a drawer as a useful back-up if, on any occasion, more stampers were required than the available number of current stamps. In fact, both Birmingham and Shrewsbury found an immediate need for them until an adequate number of duplex stamps was available to them. At Stourbridge, the sideways duplex stamp had lingered at the back of the drawer for several years before it returned to use.

1985 was the centenary of the main post office building in Stourbridge (and coincidentally the third centenary of the first mention of a Stourbridge postmaster in Royal Mail records). The opportunity was taken to carry out some modernization of the building and, from the back of a drawer, emerged three handstamps of the Victorian era. Sadly the sideways duplex stamp was not among them!

References:

1. The Spoon Experiment 1853-1858, Willcocks and Bentley (1960)
2. English and Welsh Spoon Cancels 1853-1870, Arundel & Taylor (2015 - amended 2020)
3. The Sideways Duplex Cancellations of England and Wales, Traill and Holland (1975)
4. The English and Welsh Sideways Duplex Handstamps and their Recuts, Barton (2015)
5. Barred Numeral Cancellations, Parmenter & others (2013)
6. The Postal Markings of Shropshire Part 1, Atkins (2008)

MESSENGER & Co. of LOUGHBOROUGH

by Marion Turner

Whichever county one collects, the chances are high that a registered envelope sent from Messenger & Co. of Loughborough will be found amongst dealers boxes (see Fig 1)



Fig 1, March 1901 Registered letter mailed at Ashby Rd, Loughborough to Staines

Although the firm Thomas Goode Messengers & Co. closed in 1980, examples of their work in the form of coverings for sewers and drains can still be admired on the streets of Loughborough. The majority of the envelopes to be found stem from the end of the Victorian era through the Edwardian period up to the 1930's.

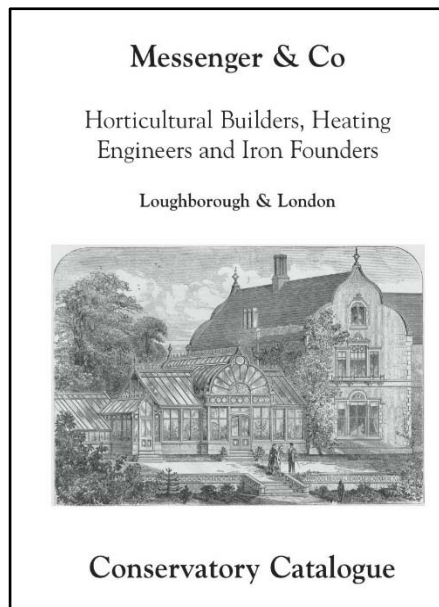


Fig 2, Company Catalogue

Thomas Goode Messenger, a young man of 25, is first recorded as a plumber, glazier and glass fitter on the High Street Loughborough in 1855. Three years later he formed his own company Messenger & Co. and by 1863 is listed as a plumber and hydraulic engineer. Up to this point it was a local business but in 1874 Walter Chapman Burder an engineer from Battle in Sussex bought the firm, and signing a partnership with local engineer Alfred Adolphus Bumpus formed the company Messenger & Co.Ltd. They moved to a larger site on Cumberland Road just off Ashby Rd. the main artery west from Loughborough. A foundry was built and further extensions led to the closure in 1895 of the High Str. branch. By now they were advertising themselves as Horticultural Builders, Hot Water Engineers and Founders (Fig 2). It was in the last decade of the 19th century that the firm became famous and records show that work was carried out on at least 850 properties nationally, plus many Government properties abroad in various countries of the empire.

So far the types of registered envelopes I have seen are the Queen Victoria 2d with the embossed head on the front flap as

shown in Fig.1 and the King EdwVII 2d registered envelopes with impressed head stating both registration and first step inland postage. The envelopes were always posted from the sub office at 47 Ashby Rd. They carry the same type of single ring handstamp used during this period, although there are slight discrepancies, eg, different code letters or a star instead of a letter. The date 22 March 1901 is also on the



Fig.3, The only marks on reverse of Fig 1

Loughborough thimble added at the head office. Travelling to Staines in Middlesex it gained, on the same day, an oval registered handstamp as it passed through London and on arrival in Staines a neat oval registered handstamp dated 23 March 1901 struck on the reverse, partly covering the boxed Messenger&Co.Ltd (Fig 3 above). The postage rate is paid by a 1d lilac (SG.172) showing a part company perfin M&C (Fig 4, below).



Fig 4, Enlargement of cancellations

The addressee is an employee of Messrs. Messengers & Co. working for Sir. E. Clarke at 'Thorncote', all the envelopes I have seen are addressed in a similar fashion. This opens up a number of avenues for research. In this case 'who was Sir. E Clarke' and secondly 'is the house still standing'?



Fig 5, Thorncote House

'Thorncote House' (Fig 5) was demolished and replaced with a housing estate sometime after WWII. From a limited research (due to Covid restrictions) it would appear that the house stood less than 100 years, but during that time it had two most interesting owners. Sir Edward George Clarke KC (15 Feb.1841 – 26 April 1931) recalls in his autobiography how he was already considering purchasing another property when he saw an advert for the auction of 'Thorncote' a house he had long admired.

Apparently the owner had, on expectation of an inheritance from an elderly aunt, bought the land around 1869 and had the house built. When the aunt died and left her inheritance to someone else he was forced to sell. Sir Edward

Clarke was able to buy it for £6,500 – what a lucky chap! He moved into the house in 1890 and Messengers & Co record work undertaken on Structure, Conservatory and painting in 1901 & 1902.



Fig 6, Sir Edward Clarke

Sir Edward Clarke came from a relatively humble background, his father was a tradesman in Moorgate, but he graduated from Kings College (London), becoming a barrister in 1864, appointed to the Queen's council six years later and a bencher of Lincolns Inn in 1882. He played an important role in a number of famous cases including the Royal Baccaret gambling scandal of 1891 which involved the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII. He is, perhaps, most remembered for representing Oscar Wilde in his ill advised prosecution of the Marquess of Queensberry in 1895. The case became world famous and eventually led to the arrest, trial and imprisonment of Wilde. Sir Edward entered parliament as an MP in 1880 and later served as Solicitor General in the Conservative government of 1886-92. In 1899, after a disagreement with the party about the Government's South African policy he resigned his seat in Parliament. Sir Edward lived at Thorncote for about 20 yrs. Why he moved is not known but with children now into adulthood the house was perhaps too large.

Sir Edward lived at Thorncote for about 20 yrs. whereafter he sold the property for £30,000 to the Indian cricket player **Colonel H.H. Shri Sir Ranjitsinhji Vbhaji 11, Jam Sahib of Nawanagar GCSI, GBE** (or Ranji) who played for England, but that is another story.

Returning now to Messengers & Co., there is an exciting restoration project being undertaken at Holkam Hall. The Messenger Building is a large two section glasshouse in the walled garden that was installed in 1930 having been removed from a previous location. The north stories including the bell tower have now been completed and a new bell has been re-cast by, guess whom - John Taylor & Co., of Loughborough! It is hoped that the whole project will be completed before the summer of 2021. With so many envelopes from Messengers & Co. in circulation, there must be many other interesting stories lurking behind the address.

References:

<http://www.spelthornmuseum.org.uk/>
<https://www.holkham.co.uk>
http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/merl/TR_MES_full_catalogue.pdf
 Sir Edward Clarke, The story of my life: EP Dutton 1919

A CUT ABOVE (The Normal Postal History)

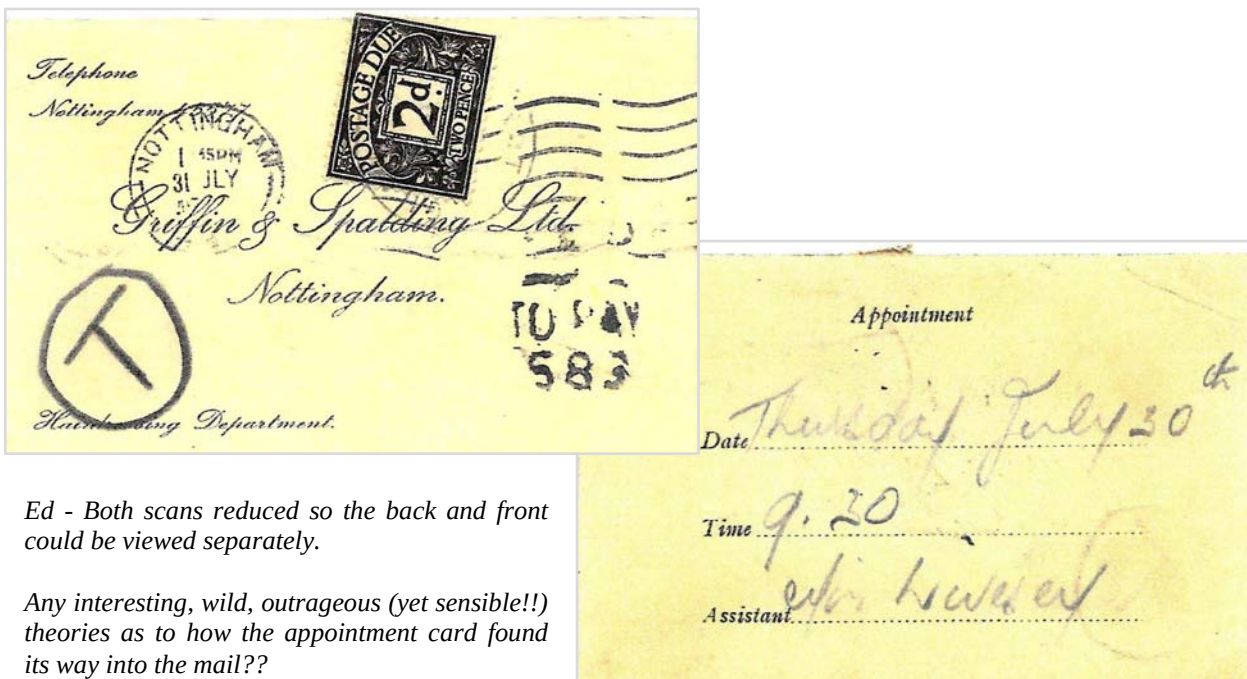
by Mick Gill

An item found at MIDPEX is something rather different – in fact a cut above our normal postal history items. It is an appointment card from the Hairdressing Department of Griffin & Spalding Ltd., Nottingham, which somehow found its way into the post and was returned to the store incurring a charge of 2d.

I assume the unknown lady attended her appointment with Miss Livesey at 9.30am on Thursday July 30th and was satisfied with the result. How the card found its way into the post next day is open to question – perhaps the card was simply placed in the ladies handbag and was inadvertently posted with her mail. Whatever the route, the card turned up at Nottingham's Huntingdon Street Sorting Office, where it received a Nottingham Universal cancellation for 1.45pm on 31st July.

Although the year is not clear from either the Universal die or the datestamp cancelling the Postage Due label, very close examination reveals it to be 1942, proven when Thursday 30th July is checked with a very handy 'What day of the Week is it' card from a well-known postal history dealer.

With a manuscript 'T' in circle and 2^D / TO PAY / 583 charge mark of Nottingham as well as a Postage Due label, the appointment card has a story to tell. It is a pity we don't have the name of the lady who had the appointment.



Ed - Both scans reduced so the back and front could be viewed separately.

Any interesting, wild, outrageous (yet sensible!!) theories as to how the appointment card found its way into the mail??

FEEDBACK ON REGISTERED COVERS

In the previous edition of Midland Mail (211 / 16) an enquiry was made as to whether anyone had a cover with both postage and the registration fee paid in cash when registration first became available. **Chris Jackson** has responded to that request as follows in his own words:

To recap, the 1/- rate applied from 6th January 1841 to 29th February 1848, registration had to be paid in cash but postage could be paid in cash, stamps or postal stationery (*Ed – even a Mulready, see Alan Holyoake's booklet produced for a joint meeting with the Midland (GB) PHS, the Somerset & Dorset PHS and the Bristol PHS on 12 Sep 2013*).



The fine wrapper above, dated 18 August 1846, was sent from Worcester to Birmingham, prepaid 1/2d for 1/- registration and 2d postage for the over ½oz and under 1oz rate. Endorsed in manuscript *Registered Letter* and 1/2 in red and *Registered & Paid for* in black. Presumably there was an enclosure making the letter over half an ounce.



Embossed stamp cancelled with the 68 numeral of Bewdley and on the reverse a BEWDLEY date stamp for 6 MAY 1847.

Another unusual combination of the registration fee and postage is seen in the illustration above, which shows the postage paid using a postal stationery envelope to carry the entire from Bewdley to Birmingham on 6 May 1847. It is prepaid 1/- in cash for the registration fee, the embossed 1d stamp covers the postage with, again, manuscript *Registered Letter* and 1/- in red and *Registered* in black.



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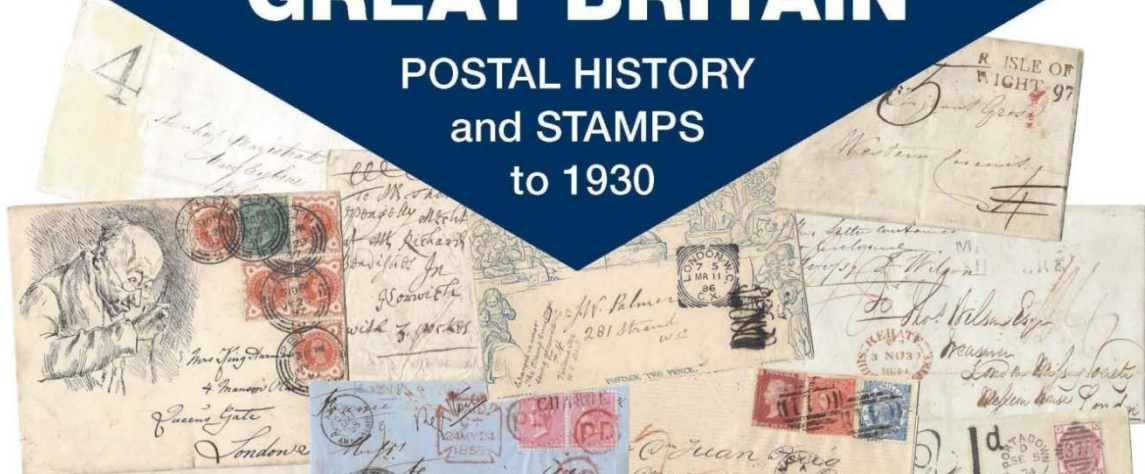
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EARLY LUDLOW MARKS in the COUNTY CATALOGUE

by Brian Atkins



Fig 1, 10 JUL 1723 – no LUDLOW mark visible on either side, 12 / JY Bishop mark on the reverse

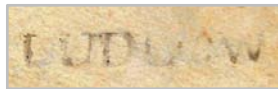


Fig 2, 15 JUN 1728 (SH208)



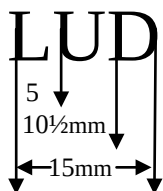
Fig 3, 25 JUN 1732 (SH211, or is it?)

The early marks of Ludlow have been difficult to catalogue because most that exist are very poor quality strikes. The earliest Ludlow mark is 1724, when an earlier one might be expected considering that an office / receiver was present in Ludlow from c.1674 (Shropshire Post Offices - Ken Smith's website). The earliest known Ludlow entire passing through the post has no discernable town mark on either side (Fig 1); the 4d rate was doubled to 8d (over 80 miles, Act of 1711) and the arrival Bishop mark of 12 / JY is clear on the reverse (Fig 1), so it has been through the mail.

From 13 August 1724 to 25 September 1733 there are 7 records of Ludlow marks on entire letters, four recorded as SH208 (one albino, when little or no ink has transferred to the paper but there is an indentation) and three as SH211 (*all* albino). A 1728 entire (Fig 2) produced *by far* the best strike of any example of SH208; two recorded from the late Ed Druce's collection had indentations and a few ink marks. All SH211 are albino strikes, Fig 3 is the best!

Photocopies were initially used for the Midland edition of the County Catalogue and the Shropshire postmark book; albino marks do not photocopy well, if at all. Figs 2 and 3 are from high resolution scans, not photocopies.

The point of this preamble is that I have a nagging feeling that the early Ludlow marks may have been incorrectly catalogued in the Midlands County Catalogue and the Shropshire postmarks book. The indents of LUD on Fig 3 are relatively clear, though not sharp, the second L is just about visible but the O & W have not impressed into the paper. It has been stated elsewhere that measuring is a 'dark art' but with every measurement I have tried, using the same set of criteria each time on the *actual examples*, the internal and external measurements of LUD from Figs 2 and 3 are so similar that strikes of SH208 and SH211 may be from the same stamp.



The sketch shows three of the millimetre measurements used between the sides of letters LUD from Figs 2 and 3. Millimetres are not very accurate, plus it was not easy to measure the albino mark and maintain objectivity to avoid a 'preferred outcome' but the measurements did match very closely. Anyone have any sharp, clear, early examples?!

Using actual examples or high resolution scans rather than photocopies is so important; I fear something similar may have happened with early Shifnal marks.

AN ORDER FOR STAMPS FROM THE PRINTERS PERKINS BACON & PETCH, MAY 1840

by Marc Oxley

The printers Perkins Bacon and Petch of 69, Fleet Street in London had been responsible for printing banknotes for a number of Provincial Banks for some time before they were contracted to print the first adhesive postage stamp by the General Post Office. They had perfected the technique of engraving on steel plates, which cost 1/10th of the price of the old copper plates, as copper was softer and had to be regularly re-engraved. The stamps were launched on the 6 May 1840. All London post offices received official supplies of the new stamps but other offices throughout the United Kingdom did not, continuing to accept payments for postage in cash for a period.

On 7 May 1840 an order for postage stamps and envelopes to the value of £20 was sent from the Shropshire Banking Company in Shifnal to Perkins Bacon and Petch, Engravers, Fleet St, London, signed by S. Summerfield, who asked for £5 of 1d labels, £5 of 2d labels, £5 of 1½d covers and £5 of 2½d covers with payment to be made on application at Messrs Canbury & Co. I am not sure how many covers they expected to get from £5 when they each cost a penny farthing and twopence farthing respectively. The letter arrived on the 8th May 1840 with the SHIFFNAL date stamp being over stamped with a London Tombstone stamp. There is also a handwritten 1 to show postage paid.



Fig 1, Letter from Shifnal to London dated 7 May 1840

The letter has a hand written receipt on the back from Perkins Bacon & Petch with date sent, date arrived and the name of the bank and the sender as per usual. There is no date for the reply but there is an enigmatic scribble which I haven't been able to decipher, which may be explained by the fact that Perkins Bacon & Petch were not authorised to sell stamps on request, only printing them and then sending them to the Post Office for distribution. The covers also ordered in the letter were presumably referring to Mulreadys which were not printed by Perkins Bacon & Petch.

The letter heading is pre-printed SHROPSHIRE BANKING COMPANY, *Shiffnal*, and manuscript 7 May 1840 with the 3 in a pre-printed 183 for the year overwritten with a 4. Presumably they still had stocks of headed notepaper dated for the 1830's to use up. The ink has faded but it reads as follows:

Gents, We shall be obliged if you can send us in a day or two some postage stamps to the amts of £20 as stated below. We have desired that amount to be paid you on application at Messrs Canburys & Co

I am Gents, Your most obedient servant, S Summerfield

Labels 1d each -- £5
Ditto 2d each -- £5
Covers 1½ each -£5
Ditto 2½ each -- £5

We can only guess at the reasons why they decided to order direct from the printers. Presumably Perkins Bacon & Fletch were already contracted to print their banknotes (I have a letter to them from the Uppingham Bank with an order dated 1848) and having built a good working relationship they thought it was perfectly reasonable to ask them to supply them with postage stamps.

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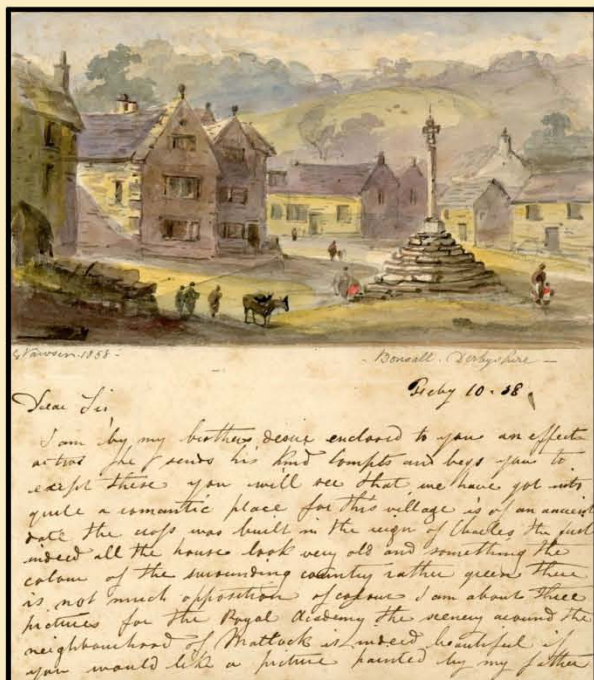
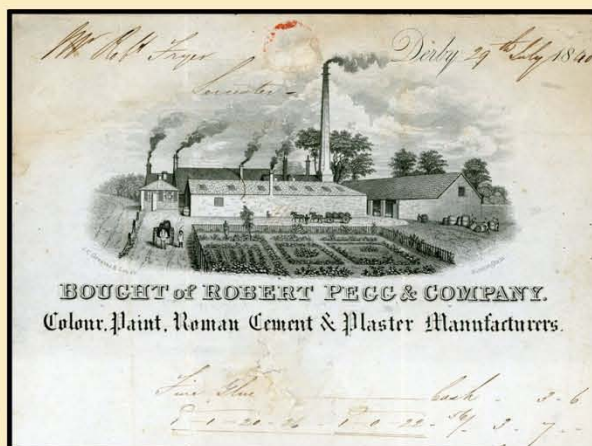
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