

POSTAL HISTORY



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MARCH—APRIL 1972

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THE BULLETIN
of the
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

No. 173

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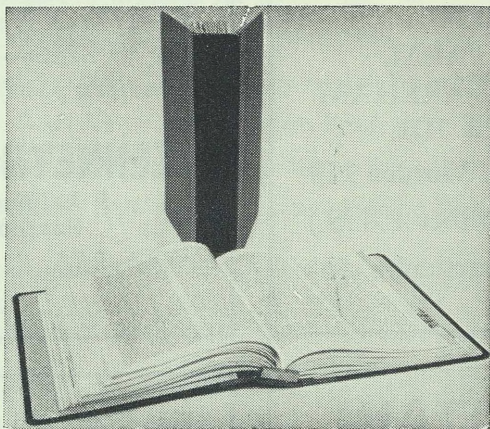
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POSTAL HISTORY

THE BULLETIN OF THE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MARCH—APRIL 1972 No. 173

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SOCIETY NOTES AND NEWS

The Society Cup

The Society Cup competition this year will be held on April 19th and entries should be in the hands of the Hon. Secretary by April 1st. Alternatively entries can be taken to the Shaftesbury Hotel, Monmouth Street, London W.C.2 on the day of the meeting, but members should advise the Secretary of their intention to do so at an early date.

RECENT MEETINGS

For its October meeting in London the Society had a visit from the **Forces Postal History Society**. The first of the four speakers was **A. L. Kennedy** who showed Great Britain material starting with the "AB" marking of 1745 and a range of other early items including the Transport Office/Crown G.R./Prisoners of War oval marking on a letter dated 1804. Other items were from the 1799 Campaign in Holland, the American War of 1812-14 and a letter from a Prisoner of War at Dartmoor in 1813. Later items included Crimean War covers, Aldershot Camp markings, a Sailor's letter from Malta of 1882, a Soldier's letter from Bermuda of 1887 and India Soldiers' letters of 1885 and 1887. A more recent item was from a Soldier participating in the Royal Naval and Military Tournament of 1910.

K. Tranmer showed Austrian-Hungarian Field Post material from 1832 to 1918 starting with the

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POSTAL SERVICES IN THE WEST COUNTRY BEFORE 1635

BY D. B. CORNELIUS

(Continued from Bulletin No. 172)

The "Jude Affair" was settled by the Privy Council order, but the decision must have been very unpopular with the Posts, who would have expected a clear cut decision in their own favour. But sensibly they soon decided that, having failed to force Jude out of business by their appeal to the Privy Council, they could only compete with him by providing a better service. In the following month, therefore, they proposed to the Privy Council that they should be authorised to undertake the "speedy despatch" of private letters once a week between London and Plymouth, and the faithful delivery of all letters and "despatch of other postal business" on the road or within 20 miles of it. The Privy Council considered and approved the proposal, and within a few days had instructed the Mayors of Salisbury, Exeter and Plymouth, and "all other His Majesties loving subjects" to assist the Posts in their endeavours¹⁶. This of course was a major event: for the first time, authority had been given for the carriage of private mail within the State Postal System. In addition, the reference to the delivery of the mail within 20 miles of the road allowed the establishment of bye-posts.

Twelve years later, Thomas Witherings (usually credited as the originator of the public postal service) paid tribute to Samuel Jude in the course of his own defence against the accusations of his enemies¹⁷: "The first attempt that ever was made of carrying letters this way was by one JUDE, and that only between London and Plymouth, who carried them in 14 days as the Carriers of Exeter did. Jude was displaced by an order of the Council table and the Posts put in, who continued it in the same way, once in 14 days, whereas an answer may now be had in five days. There is not so much as a colour of any attempt of carrying letters this way in any other Road in England but Plymouth, until it was settled by Thomas Witherings".

There is no mention in the documents I have seen of Jude being actually displaced by an order in Council, but there is little doubt that he would have found the competition impossible to face, as his overhead expenses must have been far too high when compared with those of the Posts.

So a public post, run as a private venture by the Postmasters, was officially authorised from 1630—but ONLY on the Plymouth Road. There is, of course, no way of knowing how efficient the service

was: but it was still in existence by 1633 and certain other details, including the rates of postage, emerge at that time.

The Barnstaple and Exeter post of 1633 is very well known and much quoted—often erroneously. All the quotes I have seen have been based on an earlier writer's research, and it seems that for many years no one has bothered to consult the actual document, which survives in Barnstaple¹⁸.

The North Devon area was not, even by contemporary standards, thickly populated by the early 17th Century: but it included the important port of Barnstaple. In the early years, as we have seen, posts were provided along the route Exeter—Chulmleigh—Barnstaple: but these were Royal Posts, had lapsed and had not been relaid. It is probable that the letter service by boat mentioned in the 1670s was already running by this time, but this service was erratic and the Bristol Channel was notorious for being the haunt of pirates. Approaches were made to the Mayor and aldermen of Barnstaple, as the lack of a postal service between Barnstaple and the Plymouth Road at Exeter had become a serious inconvenience, and by September, 1633 agreement had been reached. Negotiations had taken place with the "King's authorised Postmaster of Exeter" and terms had been reached, both for the carriage of letters to Exeter and for the entry of letters at Exeter into the mails travelling along the Plymouth Road. A document was prepared stating that with effect from Tuesday morning, September 17th, 1633, there would be:

"A footpost, to go weekly every Tuesday about seven of the clock in the morning from the town of Barnstaple into Exeter and to be there at the Post Master's house in Exeter on Wednesday morning, and there to deliver unto the post which is to go that morning toward London all such letters as shall be sent by him to be conveyed into London, for the carriage thereof the said Mayor and Aldermen of Barnstaple have compounded both with the Postmaster and with the said footpost, that there shall be paid but 6d for a single letter and 8d for a double letter, and no more."

The statement then continued that the footpost would stay in Exeter until that week's post from London arrived, would collect and pay for any letters addressed to his area of North Devon, and

would fetch them back to Barnstaple by the Friday night or Saturday morning, so that they could be collected in that town on payment of the appropriate 6d. or 8d. fee. It was claimed that this service would enable anyone living in North Devon to write to London and receive an answer within 11 days—this period including three days delay in London between the arrival of one mail and the departure of the next, in which the answer might be carefully considered or any necessary action taken.

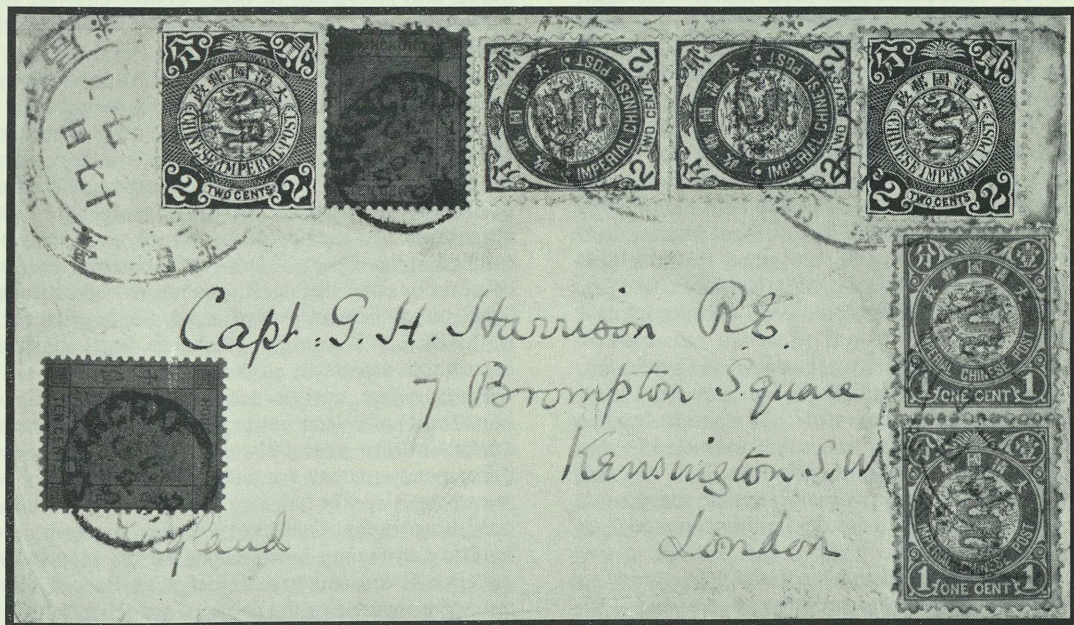
The name of Richard Simons of Lychton, Barnstaple is given as the organiser of the service, and a footnote states that he will arrange the carriage of letters to Exeter, and their delivery in that town, for the sum of 2d. per letter. It is therefore apparent that the postal charges along the Plymouth Road at this time were lower than those which Thomas Withering's was authorised to take, although the 1635 Proclamation allowed him to charge, on the Plymouth Road only, "the like postage that now is

paid, so near as possibly he can". This postage, until 1635, was 4d. or 5d. for a single letter from Exeter to London, a distance of about 180 miles. Letters from Barnstaple to Exeter were certainly charged 2d., but this included their delivery in that town by the footpost. It is possible that letters in the through mail (Barnstaple to London) were charged only 1d. for the straightforward journey from Barnstaple to the Postmaster's house in Exeter: and of course in this case the rate from Exeter to London would have been 5d. Under the rates authorised for the other Roads in the 1635 Proclamation, the minimum charge would have been 6d.: and a double letter would have received a minimum charge of 12d. instead of the earlier 6d. or 7d.

This document is, as I have noted already well known, from an earlier description, but often misquoted. The footnote does not appear to have been

(Continued on p. 186)

CHINA—UNITED KINGDOM MAIL



The above envelope shows a rate of 30 cents of which 10 cents paid by Chinese adhesive stamps covered the journey from Chefoo to Shanghai. The rate for a single letter from Shanghai to the United Kingdom from 1894 until Imperial Penny Postage was introduced was 10 cents for a single letter. The purpose of the second 10 cent Hong Kong adhesive stamp on this cover is therefore uncertain.

(contributed by G. F. Oxley)

The Archivist and Postal History

by R. M. WILLCOCKS

(A talk given to the British Records Association in December, 1971.)

I accepted this invitation with the idea of talking about the Post Office, and postal history which I am much more qualified to do. However, I agree that it is of more value to discuss the relations between archivist and postal historian.

It is my hope that the theme which will run through this meeting is the need for co-operation. Please bear this in mind if you do not agree with some of my points. It is a field in which co-operation is needed, for it is pointless to ignore the fact that our interests are opposed. If we recognise this, we can see how best to reconcile them, and in this I was greatly impressed by the closing words of your Chairman last year "that we must start talking to each other in a more understanding way". It applies equally this year, and I congratulate you on your choice of such controversial subjects. In your selection of two such topics as export of documents and postal history, I feel you prove your open minds; this is important because I believe the last time postal history was introduced here hard things were said. As it is eminently unreasonable to blame a large group of people for one man's actions, we were led to believe the remarks originated in your dislike of collectors simply because they collect. I hope we are wrong. To some of you, I must personify all that is worst in life, for I deal in letters from the postal angle, and also have formed a collection of historical letters. However, I have been able to help a number of archivists with copies of letters of local interest, and thereby have formed some very good relationships. And yet, on occasions in the early stages, I could feel them watching me, summing me up because I was a collector—is he likely to run off with a valuable box—is he human? I assure you, Ladies and Gentlemen, that we are human, although we may be postal historians and also collectors. You must realise postal history is a fairly new subject—in 1935 there was only a small handful of collectors, in 1945 a few more, but it has grown with increasing speed until now our main trouble is to find enough material to maintain our interests.

If a man cannot add to his collection, he tends to lose interest, and go to something easier to find. This is the main drawback, and is the reason we rather dislike archives.

I was fascinated last week when told that archivists dislike collectors because their collections are not available—it's dead if privately owned. Oh dear, that is precisely what we think about archives, and I think

with much more reason. A collector is proud of his collection, so he enters it for competitive exhibitions. There are two big ones every year in London, plus a host of other local ones all over the country. Once every ten years there is a vast international, with entries from all over the world—1970 at Olympia, 1960 at the Festival Hall. In nine days there were about 75,000 visitors and collectors had applied for 8,000 frames, that is over 100,000 pages. It was lucky they had to reduce this by half. There are usually two or more internationals every year in various countries, and collectors send from this country. That is just one side. In addition, some of us go all over the country giving a display to societies, most just show in a 50-mile area, and even the beginner is encouraged to show at his local society. For various reasons we may sell our collection, in which case a number of other people have the chance of owning bits of it. These are our reasons for saying that our collections live, always changing, on the move, and thousands of other people enjoying them each year. I realise it must seem a most peculiar world to you.

On the other side, we feel that a letter goes into an archive and is absolutely dead. If you consider the individual letter, a large majority of your material, I guarantee, is not looked at once in five years—much of it never. This shows another difference in approach—we consider the individual letter whereas you think of the correspondence as a group. I noticed in the report of last year's meeting that some of you consider size is all important—an attitude of "get our hands on everything we can; gather it all in" which is the modern tendency, but I consider it regrettable despite its current popularity.

Size, in fact, can be a definite handicap, for the important gets lost amongst the mass of the unimportant. For postal historians this can make a big difference, as most are busy people who can only spend their weekly half day in the Records Office, or only lunchtimes. One man I know has spent every half day and many lunch hours for ten years digging out postal information. I feel that Record Offices tend to be geared to the needs of students, subsidised by the state and with all day to spend on research, and in this I congratulate Gloucester on being willing to open on Saturday by arrangement—I hope it is appreciated.

I would go further, and suggest that small size can have distinct advantages. I, like Mr. Chinnery,

come from Leicester, and I always remember in the last war the coalfield that won every month the award for highest production per man was the smallest—Leicester. Let me give an example of this applied to Archives. Some time ago I wanted to check on Cartel ships from America during the War of Independence—surprisingly I discovered nothing had been written, so I went to the Public Records Office who thought I should find details and facts in the “X” papers. When I asked how large were these papers, I was told “it will probably take three weeks”, so I did not start.

Having mentioned the Public Record Office, I will say here that I have the greatest possible admiration for them and the work they are doing. In my experience they have open minds, and treat each question on its merits; refreshing and very unusual in a Government Department I do not know how they will be able to cope in the future, for interest and demands for tickets are sure to increase, but I would add that despite this admiration all Postal Historians are solidly against the Post Office records going to the Public Record Office, and will do their best to prevent it. It is self evident that we can have much better facilities in the Post Office with everything to hand on request and rarely more than a half dozen people at the same time; they can give us personal attention which is physically impossible at the Public Record Office.

Postal research divides into research in records and research into the actual letters and postmarks, and usually they fit like a jigsaw if your direction is right. In the Whitley letter books, he says to Robert Tayer (about 1673) “you must use a distinctive stamp on letters from your road”, and this is almost certainly the explanation of a stamp similar to a hot cross bun, only found on letters in the Farnham/Chichester area a few years later. As this stamp had always worried us, it was nice to be able to explain it. At the present time, the problem which has caused my Free Editor and myself considerable trouble and weeks of work, is still unsolved. In the commonest of all Free hand-stamps, every county archive must have thousands of them (a circle and a crown on top, which was used from 1807 to 1840) there is a very rare variety with “O” under the date. It is known it stands for Official, but to the best of my knowledge it is the only pre-adhesive stamp which was forged at a contemporary period, it had also an improper use, and we still cannot find what type of official letters had it. He has been into the background of all the people who sent them or to whom they were addressed, every possible clue has been followed, and we can only suggest it might be connected with Naval intelligence. A number that were found with no date inside are probably forged by an autograph collector of the period who liked

a nice red hand-stamp on the free fronts in his collection; the other red herring was almost certainly shortly after the franking privilege ended, and the free stamp lost all meaning. A number have been found, all addressed to Lord Anson, and the “O” in these is sideways. Again after considerable research, it is almost certain that Lady Lichfield (from whose collection all the known examples have come) asked her husband to take these down to the Post Office and get some Free stamps on them. As Post Master-General he was in a position to do this and obviously saw nothing wrong.

It seems that the postal official was very conscientious, and to ensure that they could be identified later if any query arose, he put in the “O” sideways. I had considerable help from the Stafford Record Office on this problem.

Collecting in early days was fairly general, but is much more specialised now and is normally aimed either at an area or a particular type of stamp. In the former, County Archivists can be of enormous help. It seems to me there are three main ways in which collectors can help archivists, first by showing their collections of the post in the county, telling the archivist the reason for the postmarks, and letting him have copies of interesting letters they may have in their collections. Secondly by dating letters which are undated, if their knowledge of the periods of use will do so, and thirdly by giving the archivist advice as to which are really rare in the hand-stamps. I believe that the first of these adds a new dimension to the archivist's understanding of the letters in his care, and is important. It should be quite a help to him if he can get copies of letters in private hands that are of local interest; the approximate dating of undated letters if possible, can also be most helpful. Quite often auction catalogues I have seen give approximations of dates that I know are wrong by 30 years. Advice on the very rare letters I shall deal with in a minute, but I am sure this is most important of all.

I would rather leave the question of how the archivist can help us for later consideration, for example I am not sure exactly which form of indexing of the postmarks in their archives is the helpful—this needs discussion. In general, I would just say that anything apart from the Bishop mark (a circular hand-stamp with a line across, and the month and the day in the two halves of the circle) earlier than 1690 is of considerable interest to us. Also the town stamps up to about 1750 are extremely difficult, and it would be very helpful if we could have help about these. Another way I can see is to record local information on the post, or notices concerning it, I suggest here archivists could easily keep a postal folder in which they could put photo-stats of this information.

It would also be very helpful if archivists would give talks to the local philatelic societies on their work and what they have in their care, I am sure this would arouse considerable interest. I would think it possible that the large quantities of letters which are thrown out of archives as useless could be sold with considerable benefit to both sides: it is tragic to destroy them.

Security is a thing I must really talk about. It is an unfortunate sign of the times and I speak with some considerable experience as you may have seen references to the stamp squad that we set up in Scotland Yard. This was forced on us by the activities of two gangs, and the thefts were more than we could accept. I was rather hurt that an archivist, without realising he was saying this, automatically assumed that thefts from archives are by collectors. I agree it is possible the odd one can be pilfered by a collector, but I am sure that all thefts of any size are stolen for sale and certainly not by postal history collectors. I speak from 20 years' experience, and continually I have taken great risks with collectors and have never yet been let down. I heard recently of an appalling case of an archive which had a big robbery; they had no details of some of the letters that were stolen and there was no warning given after the theft was discovered. Unless you want this to continue and increase, and lose all the best of your material it is vital you do something about it. If there is really big money involved, as there is, you are sure to get a security problem, and this problem will be very much worse than the pilfering of prints and illustrations that you have always had. The first thing is that you must look after the valuable letters; they must *not* be left in the correspondence unguarded, and you must have details of them recorded so that you can identify them immediately they are found. In this robbery I mentioned, for example, I gather that a beautiful letter from Henry VIII was included, and yet the Record Office had no details whatsoever of it, either the date or the contents or a photograph, and they cannot find anyone who had seen it to recognise it. I suggest that all valuable letters are photo-copied straight away for identification purposes, removed and stored in a strong room (cross referenced by inserting a note in the space) and this implies that you must know which are the valuable ones.

I saw two superb letters in the Chichester Record Office, carried in the Dockwra post before they had stamps; these should certainly be kept on their own under lock and key, and only shown on request. In the identification of the valuable letters from the postal angle, obviously a local postal historian can be of considerable help, and I do implore you to look after these.

The other important side of security is that you will have to set up a warning system, as it is a recognised fact that if you make it difficult and risky to sell these letters, people are much less likely to steal them. In our case, an early warning system was set up so that immediately a robbery is found a warning is sent to dealers and auctioneers who are likely to be offered this material. It will be very much easier in your case, as the numbers involved are so much smaller, and it is vital that this is done. In this, I know you will have the full co-operation of the dealers and auctioneers, and you will probably improve your relationship with them considerably. If you do not take these steps, I am afraid that you will have to spend a lot more on staff supervision, and you will still lose a lot of your best letters.

In closing, I would just give you an idea of the landmarks in the post; I did not intend to do this, but I was rather horrified yesterday afternoon talking to one of your historians, who was amazed that there was a post earlier than 1750. Although the Royal Mail goes back to earliest times, it was not open to the public until 1635, and although I disagree strongly with most experts (and the Post Office) in this, I am convinced that it was forced to close or allowed to die in the Civil War. It would obviously be impossible to run any post as we understand it in this period, and certainly no letters have been found yet with any indication of a postal carriage. It was opened to a limited extent in 1649, and re-opened on a proper basis in 1652. It seems that after the Battle of Worcester the Parliamentary leaders had regained their confidence, they knew there was no further possibility of a counter rising, and they risked the post running. On the restoration in 1660 there was very little alteration, but Henry Bishop was made Postmaster-General and in 1661 introduced the first hand-stamp in the world, always called the Bishop Mark. This was a circle containing the month and the date, and was only used by the three capital cities. It continued unchanged for over a hundred years, apart from growing slightly larger, a remarkable record considering that it did not show the year.

The only other hand-stamp I will mention is the penny post: before 1680 it was easy to send a letter from London to Edinburgh, but impossible to send a letter inside London or any other city as there was no post. In that year, a merchant, Dockwra, organised a local post in London with some friends, he charged a penny per letter and normally he delivered within three hours. It was based on some hundreds of receiving houses, and was so successful that in 1683 he was suppressed, and the post office continued his organisation with the identical receiving houses, and almost identical hand-stamps.

(Continued on p. 183)

Marking in Postal History Exhibitions—Part II

By MEMBERS OF THE FEDERATION. EDITED BY W. RAIFE WELLSTED

The earlier article which appeared with issue No. 11 (*reprinted in issue 171 of the Bulletin*) has raised a great deal of interest and has resulted in a complicated editing job for the Editor! The bulk of comments were concerned with the actual marking scales and I shall deal with these first. Two other very lengthy comments were received from P. C. Pearson and C. Angus Parker and the after marking has been discussed I will comment on their two letters and then add some final comments of my own. In view of the space involved, this will have to run through two issues and so comment in this article is limited to markings only.

Readers will recall that in the first article, I laid out the markings presently operating in the two main National Exhibitions, the proposed marking for the B.P.E., which has since been used for the first time and the marking of the P.H.S. Society Cup. I think before we discuss the problems of the actual marks it would be as well to consider the headings under which marks are allocated.

Philatelic Knowledge

Almost all correspondents felt this term to be inappropriate in a Postal History Exhibit. Suggestions ranged from "Knowledge of Subject", "Interest of Subject", "Knowledge", "Knowledge and Personal Study". The real snag is the difficulty in dividing how much of this section should also include Original Research.

In the P.H.S. Cup Competition there is a high loading in this area but it is basically a Research Award. Marks were suggested in this category ranging between 15 and 35 with the average at 25-30.

Original Research

Many of my correspondents question whether it is possible for the Jury to know whether or not the Research is Original. As a personal view and as a National Juror, I don't believe this is as difficult as many of you would suggest.

However, one group felt so strongly that they have chopped this section altogether and have marks allocated to "Interest" on one hand and "Knowledge, Study and Information" on the other.

Markings on Original Research vary between 10 and 30.

Condition

No problems here—markings between 15 and 30 except in two cases where it was omitted and included in the overall mark for Presentation.

Presentation

Markings suggested range from 10-40 but an average of 20.

Rarity

This is a much more difficult problem and suggestions ranged from total omission to 20 marks. Again the basic mark was about 10 and probably linked with condition would come in at 25.

Treatment of Subject

Really a Thematic heading but probably a better way of describing the P.H.S. cup heading of Representation of Subject. Here marks varied from 10-20 marks.

Importance and Significance

One correspondent points out that it never states whether these marks are allocated for the material or the subject! Perhaps a valid point. Three or four correspondents included this category and markings varied from 10-15.

At the Judge's Discretion

Several members have indicated a desire to have a range of marks for each subject or alternatively a range of 10 marks left to the Judge's discretion. A bit more on this subject will appear in Part III with the next issue.

To summarise, the general concensus was that the Stampex Markings were the more acceptable, but it was felt that knowledge was too high and that the Importance and Originality section needs re-wording.

The Summary of Suggestions would be as follows:—

	Society Level	National Level
Knowledge of Subject	30	30
Research or Study	15	—
Originality of Subject	—	15
Condition and Rarity	25	25
Presentation	20	20
Treatment of Subject	10	10

Sir Andrew Agnew & the Sunday Posts

by J. G. S. Scott, B.A.

During the 19th century the expansion of the economy and the improvements in communications contributed to growing infringements upon the Sabbath as a day of rest, despite the numerous protestations of the clergy many of whom organised petitions amongst their parishioners. In 1835, when Sunday posts were already common, Francis Freeling appears to have given the more popular view when he wrote that, "If he, (the minister of Balfron, Stirlingshire), disapproves of it he need not avail himself of it, and I think it would be hard to deprive respectable gentlemen residing in the district of their Post on Sunday which is common all over the country merely to satisfy the religious scruples of anyone¹". With such an attitude gaining increasing currency among the entrepreneurs of the Industrial Revolution, bodies such as the Lord's Day Observance Society fought a rearguard action against labour on the Sabbath, not only in the Post Office but also in other forms of industry or enjoyment, the tipping houses being a principal target for the local minister.

This article was initiated by a series of Sabbath questionnaires in the author's possession which were sent to parish ministers throughout Scotland in April 1840 by Sir Andrew Agnew. Sir Andrew himself had a considerable reputation for campaigning in this cause and it was noted in January 1833 that, as a member of parliament, he was "at the head of various societies and committees for checking the profanation of the Lord's day, has smelt us out, and means to be at us for the sin of eating our radish and our egg and drinking our cup of cold water upon Sunday²". Sir Andrew was a benefactor of both the Scottish and English Observance Societies and he was in the chair at a meeting held in Edinburgh on January 12th 1839 when the "Scottish Society for Promoting the Due Observance of the Lord's Day" was formed. Although no specific reference to these questionnaires can be found in the Society's records it seems likely that they were a product of this group.

The printed questionnaires are headed "Queries regarding the Observance of the Lord's Day" and consist of 35 questions on three sides of paper the right-hand half of each sheet being reserved for the minister's replies. Not being specifically connected with the post office the questions are concerned with every aspect of 19th century community life, but some give information of considerable interest to Scottish postal historians. The questions asked of the ministers include, "What number of mails or other coaches travel in your parish on the Lord's Day/. . . How many Post Offices in your parish,

and how many people employed within them on the Sabbath Day; are letters delivered from door to door on the Lord's Day; what proportion of your parishioners take out or put letters into the Post Office on the Lord's Day/. . . How many branch, cross-road, and by-post, and penny-posts, and how conveyed, in your parish, and what steps have been taken for procuring their immediate cessation on the Lord's Day?". Many of the parish ministers answered simply "no" to most of these questions but other provided more detail, and these replies follow.

Abercorn (West Lothian)—"No post office or penny post in the parish with the exception of a private runner whose hour of departure permits him to attend church. The Earl of Hopeton is his employer".

Broughty Ferry (Angus)—"There is one post office. The letters are not delivered on Sabbath, and few I should think either put in or take out letters".

Chryston (Glasgow)—"One penny post. The letters conveyed to Glasgow by the Perth mail".

Collace (Perthshire)—"There are no regular deliveries, letters being left at two houses on the roadside—I believe no person is employed to deliver any letter on the Lord's day. I try to dissuade the people from asking for or opening their letters on the Lord's day. The Aberdeen Defiance has been the only coach or mail that passed through the parish on the Sabbath day".

Eddlestone (Peeblesshire)—"There is one post office, and one person employed on Sabbath days. There is no delivery from door to door. Those who wish their letters may have them by calling for them, but the numbers that do so are very small. No mails or other coaches travel in this parish on the Lord's Day. The post bag from Edinburgh to Peebles is conveyed by a boy on horseback".

Gargunnoch (Stirlingshire)—"There is no post office in the parish. One foot mail passes through the parish. Means have been used for the cessation of the Post, but as yet without effect".

Girthon (Kirkcudbrightshire)—"The Galloway mail arrives from Portpatrick at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 p.m. and Dumfries at 1 a.m. The coach is drawn by 2 horses only so that few are thereby deprived of the rest on the Sabbath day. One (post office) kept by one female—letters not delivered from door to door on the Sabbath—but they are taken out and put into the post office on that day, tho' I hope not to very great extent".

Rachan-Mill (Lanarkshire)—"My advanced years and great feebleness which renders me incapable of

any pulpit exertions, or of carrying on intercourse with my parishioners, puts it out of my power to give you any active assistance”.

Rogart (Sutherland)—“Neither mails nor coaches of any kind travel on the Lord’s Day”.

West Linton (Peeblesshire)—“There is a post thrice a week—the Sabbath day is NOT one of the days”.

Wigtown (Wigtownshire)—“One Post Office and one person employed in it about an hour on the Sabbath—No letters delivered from door to door. One banker and a few others send for their letters but the banker does not open them on the Sabbath day”.

The results of these questionnaires were used by Sir Andrew at a public meeting in Edinburgh in March 1841, the outcome of which was a report headed “A respectful appeal to the Most Rev. the Archbishops and Bishops of the United Church of England and Ireland”. The post office must have emerged as the greatest threat to the peace of a Sunday since the meeting was called “for the purpose of giving to members of all religious communities an opportunity for explaining the National Profanation of the Sabbath by the labours of the Post Office Department, and also the aggravation of that evil which has been realized in England, and which is apprehended in Scotland, namely, the carrying of the Royal Mail on Railways on the Lord’s Day³”. Although the railways were behind those of England in their development the replies on the part of the ministers showed a worrying trend.

Abercorn—“The Edin. & Glasgow Railway traverses a small portion of this parish and most lamentable Sabbath breaking has occurred on the part of the workmen employed in its formation . . . I am not aware of what way be contemplated as to the conveyance of mails or passengers on the Sabbath when the railway opens”.

Broughty Ferry—“One (railway) between Dundee and Arbroath passes thro’ this parish. It is not open on the Sabbath but it is rumoured that this will soon be attempted in which case I doubt not the Presbyteries of Dundee & Forfar will endeavour to remove the nuisance”.

Chryston—“The Glasgow & Garnkirk railways pass thro’ this parish and the Edinburgh & Glasgow railway is also to intersect it. No carriage yet is run on any of them on Sabbath”.

Gartsherrie (Glasgow)—“The Monkland & Kirkcaldy railway passes thro’ this parish—but no passengers carried on Sabbath”.

Slamannan (Stirlingshire)—“There is a railway progressing in this Parish from Balochnie near Airdrie to Causway-end on the Union Canal, what

effect, when opened, on the keeping of the Sabbath, cannot as yet be ascertained”.

Many postal historians will already be familiar with the campaigns for Sabbath observance from the pictorial envelopes printed by Mitchell of Pater-noster Row⁴, from the wafers affixed to the flaps of letters, and from envelopes with printed propaganda inside the flap⁵. The result of this activity, together with the growing humanitarianism of Victorian England, was that in 1849 the functioning of the post office on Sundays was restricted, although the controversy continued unabated⁶.

The questionnaires themselves were sent out in the early months of 1840, thus taking immediate advantage of the new uniform penny postage, without which such a project would have been prohibitively expensive. As a result, while none of the circulars bear adhesive stamps, they do show a considerable selection of hand-struck marks, up to 12 on one letter when opened out, since they were re-addressed to Edinburgh after completion.

¹“Three centuries of Scottish Posts”, A.R.B. Haldane, Edinburgh, 1971, 139.

²“The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club”, Edinburgh, Vol 3, 1911, 119.

³Report of the Lord’s Day Observance Society 1841, Appendix, 52.

⁴“The Mulready Envelope”,—E. B. Evans, London 1891, 221.

⁵“An ABC of Welsh Rarities & Oddities”, M. Scott Archer, *Philatelic Magazine*, July 1971, 615.

⁶“Sunday Labour in the Post Office 1849-50”, H. W. Smith, *P. H. S. Bulletin* No. 78, 1955.

THE ARCHIVIST AND POSTAL HISTORY

(Continued from p. 180)

Either these original Dockwra stamps, or the earliest of the Government ones, are among the extremely valuable postmarks, and worth £1,500 or thereabouts. It is essential that you are warned about the value of letters like this, so that they can be properly cared for. The earliest provincial town stamps came in 1698 (only Bristol and Exeter, which had the first cross post) and other towns started using them occasionally from 1700, more generally from 1705.

I hope that this will start a period of much closer co-operation between the Collector and the Archivist.

EARLY COLONIAL POSTS

BY L. T. HORNE

(First published in the *St. Martin's le Grand* magazine in 1901 and reprinted by kind permission of the Post Office)

The early history of the Posts between this country and the Colonies, as well as of the Posts in the Colonies, is somewhat obscure. Mr. Hendy, the indefatigable curator of the Muniment Room at St. Martin's-le-Grand, has got together a good many particulars on the subject, which will no doubt be published sooner or later; and it is to him that the writer is mainly indebted for the following notes.

Not until the beginning of the 18th century was any attempt made by the British Government to provide postal communication between the Mother Country and the Colonies. Before that time everyone who had a letter to send to North America or the West Indies had to make his own arrangements for its conveyance. For a gratuity the captain of an outward-bound ship would carry the letter across the sea; and, as time went on, regular arrangements for the collection of such letters were made, bags for their reception being hung up at Lloyd's and the other coffee houses in London frequented by sea captains. The law which gave the Post Office a monopoly of the conveyance of inland letters did not apply to letters for places abroad, and such letters rarely fell into the hands of the Department.

Letters *from* places abroad had by law to be handed over to the Post Office at the port of arrival, and the captain of the ship which brought them was entitled to a gratuity of 1d. per letter. Moreover, in London, two men were appointed to visit incoming ships and collect the letters from them. Such letters were delivered by the Post Office, and the inland postage was collected on delivery.

The first local post offices in the Colonies seem to have been set up chiefly for the purpose of dealing with letters passing to and from places abroad. Thus in 1639 the General Court of Massachusetts published the following ordinance:—

“It is ordered that notice be given that Richard Fairbanks his house at Boston is the place appointed for all letters which are brought from beyond the seas or are sent thither to be left with him; and he is to take care that they are to be delivered or sent according to direction and he is allowed for every letter a penny; and he must answer all messages through his neglect in this kind.”

In Virginia according to a law of 1657, every planter had to provide a messenger to carry dispatches as far as the next plantation on pain of

forfeiting a hogshead of tobacco in default. The first Colonial inland post of any extent appears to date from 1672, when the Government of New York established a monthly mail to and from Boston. In 1683 William Penn not only set up a post office at Philadelphia but arranged for the conveyance of mails in some parts of Pennsylvania and Maryland. With none of these arrangements had the Imperial Government anything to do; but by the end of the 17th century communication between the Mother Country and the Colonies was becoming too important to escape Government supervision.

Accordingly, in 1688, James II by an Order in Council authorised the setting up of a Post Office in Jamaica and “in such other of His Majesty's plantations in America as shall . . . be found convenient for His Majesty's service and the ease and benefit of his subjects”. The postage between the United Kingdom and Jamaica was fixed at 6d. for a single letter (*i.e.* a single sheet of paper without any enclosure), 1s. for a double letter (*i.e.*, a letter with enclosures but weighing under an ounce), and 2s. an ounce. It is not clear when and in what conditions a Post Office actually established in Jamaica; but in 1692 a license to set up posts in North America was granted to one Thomas Neale, and he delegated the work to an energetic man named Andrew Hamilton, who was appointed Deputy Postmaster General. In 1693 Hamilton arranged a regular postal service between the principal places in the scattered settlements on the American coast from Portsmouth in New Hampshire down to Virginia, employing five men on horseback to cover five stages twice a week in summer and once a fortnight in winter. The enterprise proved an unprofitable one to Neale, whose expenses largely exceeded the revenue from the postage, and in 1707 he surrendered his patent to the Crown for £1,664. The posts in America were thereafter administered as a branch of the British Post Office down to the Revolution, at which time one of the joint Deputy Postmasters General of America was Benjamin Franklin. Even at that time the operations of the Post Office were practically confined to places on the Atlantic coast. As to Canada, Franklin stated in 1760 that: “there is only one post—between Quebec and Montreal; the inhabitants live so scattered and remote from each other in that vast country that the posts cannot be supported among them”.

While in ordinary times there were sufficient private ships sailing to and from the Colonies to carry the few letters then sent, in time of war, when oversea trade was almost at a standstill, the need arose for some other means of communication. It was the outbreak of the war with France in 1702 which called into being the first mail packet service with the Colonies, sloops of war being provided by the Admiralty to carry the mails to and from the West Indies. These vessels sailed at uncertain intervals, and the voyage out and home occupied from 90 to 116 days. Mr. Dummer, Surveyor of the Navy, was so pleased with the result that he undertook a contract for the service. For £12,500 a year he was to build five boats of 140 tons each (about twice the size of a large fishing boat), carrying 26 men and 10 guns. These boats were to sail to and from the West Indies once a month. Dummer's venture proved to be an unfortunate one. The first packet under the contract fell into the hands of the enemy; a few months later a second was wrecked and a third captured by a privateer. By 1710 he had lost nine vessels, six to privateers. His traffic receipts were disappointing, and in 1711 the service was discontinued. Some other similar services were projected about the same time. For example, in 1703 Sir Jeffery Jeffreys received permission to establish a packet to sail from the Isle of Wight to New York, two voyages to be performed every six or seven months. This project seems to have come to nothing; but in 1710 a monthly service was commenced between Bristol and New York, where a chief letter office was established. The total charge on a single letter between London and New York was fixed at 1s., of which 9d. was sea postage. The earnings of the contractors amounted only to £188 the first year and £252 the second year, and the service came to an end in 1714, from which time to the war of 1744, and again during the few years of peace after 1749, there were no colonial packets.

(To be continued)

Correspondence to the Editor

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POSTAL HISTORY AT EXHIBITIONS

Dear Mr. Oxley,

In Postal History No. 170 there is a definition of Postal History.

Enclosed please find our definition dated Spring 1968 when it was published first in our Postal History Digest.

"Postal History is the study of letter sheets, covers, cards, and related items in reference to written communications transmitted by recognized means."

As corollary to this comprehensive definition, the Board approved the following:

"Collectable items or categories include:

Postal Markings, Postal Rates (fees, postage stamps as representing fees paid, franks), Decrees and Documents (including postal forms) pertaining to postal service, Censorship of mail, Military Mail, Field Post, Seige Mail (pigeon, balloon), and V-mail, P.O.W. and Concentration Camp Mail, Disaster Mail, Disinfected Mail, Ship Letters, Postal Propaganda, and collateral material pertaining to the subject matter collected."

"It is also understood that the subject matter of Postal History properly includes the development of routes (roads, rivers, sea, air, etc.); the administration of postal affairs (local, national, U.P.U.); postal families, Postmasters, postal agents, postal personnel; postal buildings, facilities, and equipment (machinery, wagons, trucks, mail cars, boats, planes, etc.); and postal statistics."

This definition was presented to the members of the Collectors Club when the writer was the member of a three-panel discussion on the "Three Faces of Philately", i.e., stamp collecting, Postal History and topical (thematic) collecting. My "topic" was Postal History and apparently it met with the approval of the members present.

Priority rights are considered important in the sciences, etc., but in Philately we should not be too serious as to which organisation came out with a fairly good description of the type of collecting. There should be pride only in what we accomplish for the advancement of the hobby and not with specific emphasis who is doing it.

Some other definitions were also published among those, one of which includes first day covers. Since all of us know that first day covers are de facto most of the time not first day covers we do not feel that they have a place in Postal History. Of course, there are a number of old first day covers which are acceptable.

Very sincerely,

DR. WM. REINER-DEUTSCH.

* * *

Postal services in the West Country before 1635

(Continued from p. 177)

mentioned before but is the only indication I have seen of pre-Witherings postal charges. The same collection of documents contains one equally as interesting as the "Simons" paper, and I have seen no previous reference to this one at all. No year is stated, but it seems to be slightly later than the other: it follows the same format and makes the same claims as to speed of reply, etc., but the Post's name is given as John Gribble, of Well Street, Barnstaple, and states that his service will commence on August 17th. It makes no reference to the agreement between the Mayor of Barnstaple and the Exeter Postmaster, and is therefore probably later than the Simons document—but claims the same postal charges, which would place it before or during 1635. The confident assertion, by both Simons and Gribble, that an answer could be obtained from London within 11 days—which includes the transit time of the footpost between Barnstaple and Exeter and his return—throws doubt on Withering's assertion in 1642 that the normal transit time between London and Plymouth before his reorganisation was 14 days. Whatever the truth of the matter may be, it is apparent that the combination of the semi official posts on the Plymouth Road, and the private or municipal bye-posts such as the Barnstaple one provided a reasonable postal service for the well-to-do citizen in the West Country between 1630 and 1635. The late J. G. Hendy, in his unpublished MSS, claimed that other towns in Devon organised similar postal services at the same time. This is almost certainly true, but I have seen no documentary evidence. Certainly Cornwall's major towns in the centre and north of the County were using similar 2d. bye-posts until at least 1704, and Kingsbridge in South Devon had such a post until 1798.

The private Carriers have been ignored so far in these notes, rather unfairly as they were perhaps the most important means of carriage of private letters before 1630, and were for many places the only available postal service. The only reason for their omission is, quite simply, ignorance of the way they operated within the area at that time. Letters are occasionally found bearing such endorsements as "per Exon Carrier", but the vast majority of the letters that have survived bear no postal endorsements of any kind. Advertisement at that time was

mainly by word of mouth and the only printed reference that I know of to the Western Carriers is John Taylor's "Carriers Cosmography" of 1637, which mentions that Carriers travelled between London and such towns as Wells, Exeter, Yeovil, Barnstaple and Tiverton. Plymouth and Dartmouth, and probably other ports, had a regular service by sea to and from London. There must have been a web of short distance carriers within the County even though, at that time and for several Centuries later, Devon and Cornwall contained some of the worst roads in England.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

15. SP Dom 16/180/29: 16/187/30
16. As (14) above
17. Pamphlet entitled "A Full and Cleare Answer to a False and Scandalous Paper" 1642
18. The Chanter transcriptions of documents relating to letter post held in the Barnstaple archives, and Xerox copies of the original documents.

The background and facts which are too well known to need cross reference are taken from the standard works of Joyce Hyde, Hemmeon and Howard Robinson. It's worth noting that Hendy's Manuscript, had it reached publication, would have joined the works by these authors as a standard reference for any student of Postal History.

I am indebted to Martin Willcocks for finding the time to read the manuscripts and for making me rephrase some rather ambiguous passages.

THE POSTMAN (in the 1700s)

Dressed in blue with horse and horn,
Which he sounds the populace to warn,
Come the Postman. Behind his back
Are all the letters in a sack,
Look out, Beware, no time to sleep,
A wary eye he must always keep,
For the robber lurks his mail to steal,
This is true, I know it's real,
A robber tried, alas, alack,
His body hangs beside the track,
The Postman passes on his way,
His mail is safe, at least today.

by A. R. LLOYD.

RECENT MEETINGS

(Continued from p. 175)

Field Post at Mainz in 1832. Field Post rebellion in Hungary in 1851 was followed by postmarks on adhesives during the period 1850-58, a letter from General V. Kusmanek and a card from Feldpilot Warneck from Przemysl to Hungary over the Carpathian mountains.

G. Crabb showed Great Britain material including early concessionary rate items. Other material was a printed envelope of the Seaforth Highlanders, of 1891, an Ashanti wars cover of 1898, mail from British troops in Ceylon and Burma in 1889 and 1893 respectively. World War I was represented by The Chinese Labour Corps items. An item of the Irish Rebellion in 1916 showed that times do not change much in some areas. This display was concluded by Suez War items of special interest was a registered envelope with censor mark.

J. A. Smith concluded the evening with his display of R.A.F. mail. There were items from Aden, Azores, Bahamas, B.N.A.F. Ceylon, Burma and India and one item which was admired by many was a wreck cover from India to England bearing the framed cachet "Recovered in damaged condition, Mil. plane crash". An Xmas Air letter dated 1945 from Rangoon Postage Free (usually 4s.) completed the evening which was enjoyed by those attending.

"Gaol Mail and Frees" were the subjects of the December meeting of the Society in London. The former subject was presented by the **Reverend W. E. Davey** who showed how the discovery of a batch of correspondence could lead to research into a wider field. The story concerned the Wildgoose Lodge murders in Ireland during 1823 which had a background of intrigue, conspiracy and public hanging. Before and after the trial some of the wrong-doers were located at Kilmainham gaol and a number of the letters bore Kilmainham penny post markings.

J. W. Lovegrove's collection of "Free" markings started with the hand-struck types in 1764. Fronts and letters with various types of manuscript addition needed to meet the requirement of the privilege were shown. A selection of the scarce types used in the 1790s was included. Other items had been carried through the country penny posts and therefore bore "To Pay Penny Only" markings some of which were very unusual. Later items had "Above Weight", "Above Number" and "Breach of Privilege" markings and franked Royal Mail items completed a display which well represented the subject.

Recent Books

Those collectors whose interests are in Travelling Post Offices will find a vast amount of detailed information in **T.P.O's—A History of the Travelling Post Offices of Great Britain, Part 1: England, the Specials and Associated T.P.O's** by H. S. Wilson (pp. 76, price £1.65, available from A. J. Lowe, "Rookwood" Bentinck Road, Altrincham, Cheshire).

This work traces the history of the conveyance of mail by rail from the 1830s when it all began to the present day. Each T.P.O. is examined in detail and over 200 illustrations are included.

A very high standard has been achieved in content and presentation and we look forward to it being maintained in the subsequent parts.

* * *

Whenever we wish to start a new interest in philately or postal history, the first thing we want to know is what has been written about the subject. So far as Great Britain is concerned we can enlarge our knowledge of permanently published matter by reading "**A List of Books on the Postal History, Postmarks and Adhesive Postage and Revenue Stamps of Great Britain**" (Second Edition), compiled Arnold M. Strange, F.R.P.S.L., 48 pp.+four prelims. Obtainable from P. J. D'Arcy, 67 Cissbury Ring South, London, N12 7BG, price £1, post free. This publication under 15 headings, lists in alphabetical order of author, the titles and publishers of books and pamphlets from the mid-18th century to the present time.

Members' Advertisements

Wanted. Gibbons "Philatelic E" peg fitting Album (leaf size 11 in. x 9½ in.), new or secondhand, with or without leaves or dust cover. Please send details and price required to: Geoffrey F. Maunsell, Homestead Farm, Melton Road, Queniborough, Nr. Leicester LE7 8FP.

* * *

Correspondence to the Editor

*The Mill House,
Bray, Berkshire.*

POSTAL HISTORY AT EXHIBITIONS

Dear Sir,

As everyone knows *Postal History* is really the name given by far-sighted purchasers to Cinderella material which has at last come good. To the Semantic purist, however, *Postal History* must include all stamp collecting which is as much postal history as the dates of the Kings and Queens of England is British History. Finding another definition seems therefore to be superfluous, but in view of the accepted misuse of the words, something must be done.

The definition mentioned in Newsletter No. 52 does not properly cover all the material which seems to be lumped under the sobriquet "*Postal History*". Thus it is difficult to assert that "*rates*" or "*markings*" can include "*methods*". The question also arises of the use of the words for which a definition is required—noun or adjective and whether "*History*" is to be understood in the sense of "*past events*" themselves or the study of them. If it is defined in the latter sense only, the use of the term "*Postal History*" to describe events would be non-admissible or confusing. If the definition is confined to the words with Capitals it would give *Postal History* a status which it does not warrant. Certainly Philately which presumably enhances *Postal History* would also have to be spelt. Although this may be satisfactory for the use of the words as nouns it raises problems when they are used as adjectives. In view of these comments the following definitions are suggested—

- (1) *Postal History* is anything concerned with the use of the Post and Postal Services
or
- (2) *Postal History* is anything concerned with the Post and Postal Services in operation.

These definitions may well have been considered already and rejected, but they do not preclude the use of the words as either an adjective or a noun in the wider sense.

Yours sincerely,
W. A. WISEMAN.

Wicks, Yapton,
Arundel, Sussex.

Dear Sir,

I personally, consider the suggested definition of "*Postal History*" to be much too narrow as it is often the study of the correspondence or campaign that is the greater interest.

I would prefer something like "A study of the history of items connected with the Post", and I would almost go so far as to add "however remotely"!

Yours sincerely,
PETER LANGMEAD.

21 Rue de Bragance,
Luxembourg-Ville,
Luxembourg.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to comment on the definition of *Postal History* as suggested in the November issue of the G.B.P.S. Newsletter.

In my humble opinion, such definition ought to take into account not only the existing routes but routes as they develop because surely that is what *History* is all about: evolution or deliberate development.

Furthermore, post offices or post-office services form, I think, an interesting part of *Postal History*. Examples: the opening and subsequent abandoning of sub-offices in Wales in the early years of the 19th century (influencing the routes along which mail was carried); the succession of Postmasters in the U.S. and elsewhere the numbered markings of Napoleon's Grande Armée as its divisions advanced through Germany and into the North and East of Europe (say, in 1808), stayed the same throughout the advance but what varied was the position of the encampment and, consequently, where the soldiers' mail was handed over to local post offices.

My attempt at a definition reads as follows:

Postal History is the study of the development of regional, national or international postal communications, postal rates, post offices and their markings.

Yours sincerely,
KURT KUCHLENZ.

(These letters are reprinted by kind permission of the Hon. Editor of the Great Britain Philatelic Society Newsletter.)

* * *

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The Editor was rather outspoken about our advertisement, he said another 76 years and it would qualify as an antique, and we should really change it. He said so years ago: we tried, and then forgot, but we had to when an American friend wrote for details of the Scottish local collection. Calamity, it had been sold four years before (and we said "Just arrived for sale" which was true when we put it in) but luckily he accepted our word that we had forgotten it was mentioned. Even then we only cut out the offending words, nothing radical.

Now the time has come when it is really worn out, but it is discarded with the same regrets you feel when your favourite shoes can't be repaired any more. It seems best to say that

WE REALLY DO WANT TO BUY GOOD POSTAL HISTORY

will pay a very good price, and do hope you will offer it to us. It's a quick job to value and make an offer, so let us see it. Soon we shall advertise the first volume of the catalogue—everything is altered again and this will be a general catalogue of types, similar to Robson Lowe's Encyclopaedia but completely rewritten. It is hoped this will be out in October, and we shall then start on the Counties, publishing them either individually or in groups. More news later.

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