

# A Note About the Sheffield Penny Posts

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**The Sheffield Philatelic Society**

It is strange as it appears I am the only member of our Society and the Yorkshire Postal History Society who is interested in Sheffield postal history. It is fortunate that it was not always so. We can thank many famous postal historians in the not too distant past, namely Ron Ward, Bill Sedgewick, Eric Lewis, Eric Buckley and others who left us so much information in their published works. Sheffield compares very favourably with other towns and cities for the range of postmarks produced, and has a rich history relating to postal rates, routes, postmasters and postal procedures.

If this newsletter proves a success, and I am sure it will, I would like to offer a few articles on this fascinating but at present neglected subject. As an introduction I have chosen the Sheffield Penny Posts.

The Penny Post was a service by which letters were carried within a certain area for the sum of one penny. For letters to be sent outside a Penny Post area an additional fee would be required. The early Penny Posts were private ventures set up by William Dockwra in London and Peter Williamson in Edinburgh. Following an Act of Parliament in 1765, Penny Posts were placed under G.P.O. administration, and from 1808 they began

to be formed with increasing rapidity all over the country.

The first Sheffield Penny Post (Figure 1) was established in 1817, later to be extended to Norton and Dronfield. A different type of hand stamp was in use between 1825 to 1827 (Figure 2). This mark was not 'rediscovered' until 1968, apparently having been forgotten (it is not mentioned in some postal history reference books). A third type of hand stamp (Figure 3) was used for the same route from 1827 to 1828 in black, and 1828 to 1840 in red.

A very unusual Two Penny Post mark is recorded (Figure 4), only one example is known on a part cover dated 19th June 1833. A Two Penny Post was ruled to be illegal outside of London, which may explain the lack of examples. Attercliffe Penny Post was in use from 1834 to 1840 (Figure 5). Hathersage Penny Post was in use between Hathersage and Sheffield from 1837 to 1839 (Figure 6).

I am sure more information will be found in time regarding Sheffield and the adjacent Penny Posts, so keep your eyes open, and if a Sheffield Two Penny Post cover should be discovered, and is surplus to the finders' requirements, I am sure I could find a good home for it!

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

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You can find more articles on Sheffield's postal history at our web site.

The Sheffield Philatelic Society meets at 7.15 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month (except August) at the Central United Reformed Church, 60 Norfolk Street, Sheffield, S1 2JB.

For a programme of events please visit:

[www.sheffieldps.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldps.org.uk)