

History of the Postal Service and its development in Moseley

Post Early for Christmas!

Sir Henry Cole from Bath commissioned some Christmas cards in 1843. They sold for 1/- each (1/- in 1840 was worth c., £3 in 2017) and an annual tradition was founded.



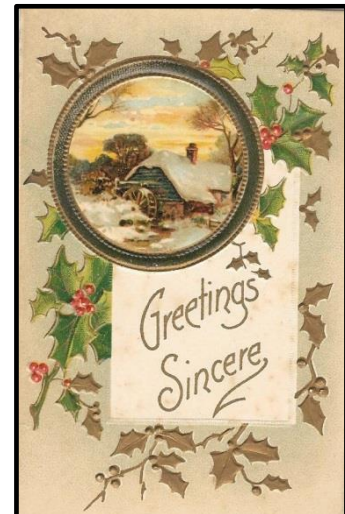
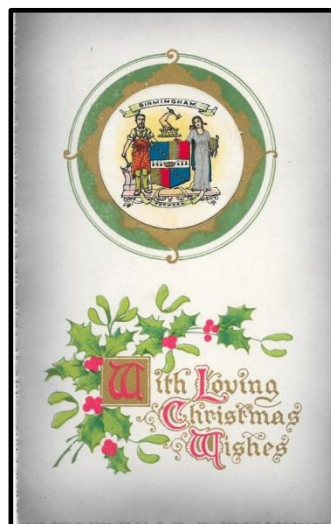
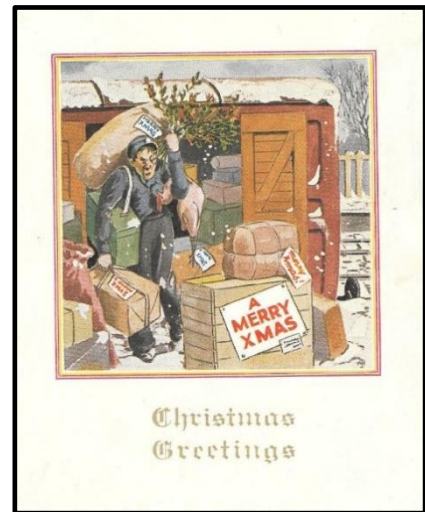
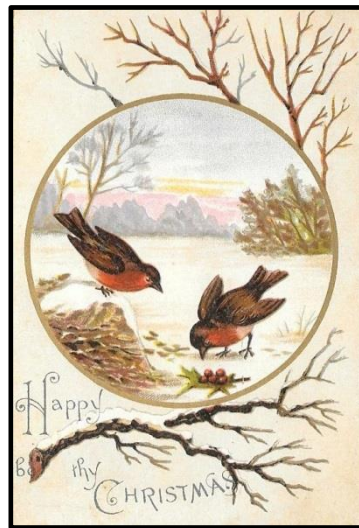
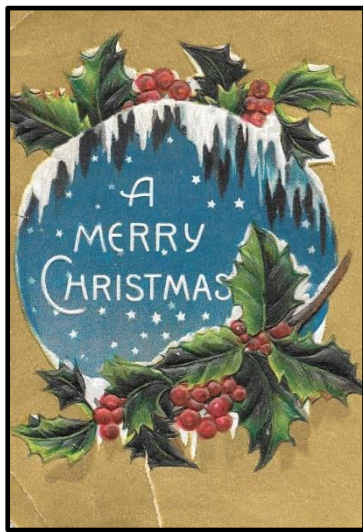
The Penny Black was the world's first adhesive postage stamp used in a public postal system. It launched a revolution in communications that enabled people to communicate from all levels of society and business to flourish. It was a runaway success when it went on sale on 6 May, 1840. In 1839 there were 76 million letters posted in the United Kingdom, whilst in 1840 after the introduction of the Penny Post there were 168 million and ten years later this had doubled to an incredible 347 million letters. A letter weighing up to half an ounce (14 grams) could be sent to any destination in the country for a flat rate of 1d (1d in 1840 was worth c., 25p in 2017).

Before this communications were complex and expensive with the recipient usually required to pay on delivery. Sir Roland Hill proposed a simple prepaid postage system using a stamp. The image of Queen Victoria on the stamp was based on a sketch by Henry Corbould of her aged fifteen and was engraved by Charles Heath and his son Frederick. It remained on stamps for more than sixty years until her death in 1901. The Penny Black was $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide by $\frac{7}{8}$ " tall (approx., 19x22 mm). It lasted less than a year, because the red cancellation was hard to see on the black design and the red ink was easy to remove making cancelled stamps easy to reuse. In 1841 a Penny Red was issued instead. Post cards were introduced in 1870 and some 75 million postcards were sent in 1871.

Post first came to Moseley by stagecoach or mail coach. From 1849 omnibuses brought post to Moseley, including parcels. Parcels by omnibus under 14 lbs cost 2d; above 14 lbs and under 28lbs cost 3d, which had to be prepaid. Moseley village had a Post Office and Postmaster, Thomas Bird, and a daily footpost in 1850. Footpost deliveries went to two deliveries daily in 1871 and three in 1875 while dispatches from Moseley went from one to two in 1868 and to three in 1879. Thomas Hadley, Grocer & Spirit Merchant, continued as Post Master until 1878, and was followed by George Johns. In 1871 Moseley Post Office also became a Post and Money Order Office and Post Office Savings Bank and, by 1875, a Telegraph Office. Telegrams cost 1/- for twenty words, including delivery within a mile of any post office. The Telegraph Boy would have been a familiar sight in Moseley.¹ A cheap parcels service was introduced in 1883 with parcels costing 3d for the first 1lb weight with a limit of 7lb at 1/-. There were three arrivals and three dispatches in the 1880s, increasing to four from 1886.

¹ Currency: 1/- in 1870 was £2.29 in 2005, <http://www.nationalarchives>.

Pillar and Wall Boxes were introduced to Moseley by 1886 for the convenience of residents. At first, pillar boxes were installed in five roads (the number of daily collections being shown in brackets after): Church Road (4 collections), Moor Green Lane (4), Wake Green Road (5), Park Hill (4) and Stoney Lane (5), and wall boxes in four locations: Oxford Road (3 collections increased to 4 in 1892), Greenhill Road (4), Trafalgar Road (4 collections increased to 5 in 1898) and Moseley railway station (4 collections increased to 6 in 1897). In 1894 additional pillar boxes were installed in Springfield Road (3 collections), College Road (4), Park Road (4 collections increased to 5 in 1897), Mayfield Road (4), Woodbridge Road (4) and Woodstock Road (4) and an additional wall box in Clarence Road. On Sundays throughout the nineteenth century, pillar and wall boxes were cleared only once, and there were no arrivals at the Post Office and only one dispatch.



Examples of Victorian Christmas cards

Janet Berry

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