

LEEDS CORPORATION PUNCTURES

By.H. Clarkson.

Leeds, or in its earliest form Leidis, a latinised form of a Celtic or Saxon word, is situated in Yorkshire and is nowadays often called the "Industrial Capital of the West Riding", or the "City of 99 Industries".

Its first inhabitants were said to be a Celtic tribe which occupied part of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Durham, although it is the Romans who have left the more apparent traces of their occupation with one of their roads which forded the river Aire.

A number of Charters have been bestowed upon the town throughout the years but it was Queen Victoria who, in 1893, finally conferred the title of "CITY" upon Leeds, and who again, in 1897 by Letters Patent created the Chief Magistrate the Lord Mayor.

Leeds has been the birthplace of a number of notable people among whom, to mention but a few, were, the builder of Eddystone Lighthouse, John Smeaton; the discoverer of oxygen, Dr Joseph Priestly; and the inventor of Portland Cement, Joseph Aspdin. It has also been the site of a number of experimental tryouts, for example, Leeds was the first town to introduce the system of a public water supply in 1693 and the first to try out the rack principle on which most modern mountain railways operate, at one of its collieries in 1811.

Postally, Leeds is something of a mystery. I have never seen a complete list of the Postmasters although, Thomas Woodrow, 1677, appears to be the earliest one recorded. The first permanent Post Office was opened in City Square during the year 1896.

Since Leeds is some 8 to 10 miles off the line of the Great North Road, the early mails had to be taken over at Ferrybridge, a petition to carry mails for Leeds from Fexrybridge having been made at the time of Ralph Allen's Cross & Bye Posts. Palmer ran a Mailcoah from London to Leeds, via Nottingham and Barnet.

At the time Leeds was created a Conuty Borough we find perfins being adopted, Lcn being the first form that I have recorded. As far as it is known the perforating has always been done by Slopers but how, they will not, or cannot, say. I asked whether the process was of a rotary or flat bed form and how long they had been doing the work for Leeds, but to no avail. Perhaps in some respects their inability to supply the answers is understandable for all their earlier records were destroyed during an air raid in 1941.

I believe that the current die is becoming slightly worn. My reason, for suggesting this is that normally the puncture is placed centrally on the stamp and lately I have seen some which are to the top, bottom, or top right corner. I also have a copy in which a pin hole is missing the 3rd in from the top on the letter "C".

This type of thing is most unusual for Leeds and it would be interesting, to compare this contemporary type among all the other known users to see if the variety occurs on theirs also.

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