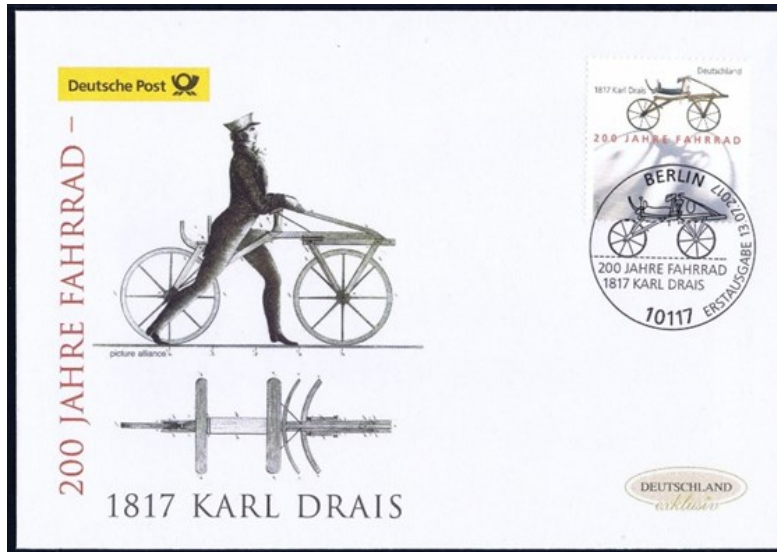


Bicycle History & the Mail

By Michele M. Bresso, PhD



Germany 2017 FDC with pictorial cancel depicting the Swiftwalker and celebrating the 200th year of the bicycle.

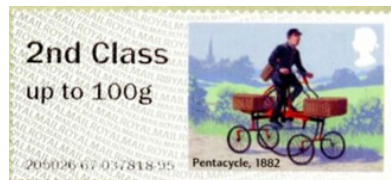
The Swiftwalker was invented by German Karl von Drais in 1817. It consisted of a wooden beam connecting tandem wooden wheels with iron rims and leather-covered tires. The rider straddled the beam and pushed himself along in a running motion. By 1863 in Paris, the Velocipede incorporated a seat and pedals. Bicycles improved with the introduction of pneumatic and rubber tires, providing much needed shock absorption to the ride.



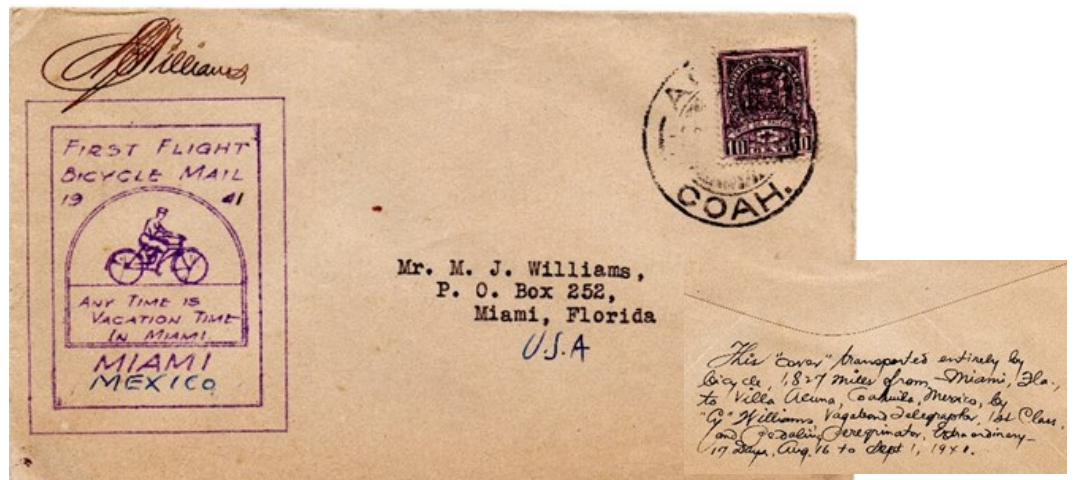
(Above) 1 of 6 stamps on France 2011 minisheet "The Velocipede from its Origins to the Present Day." (Left) Great Britain 2018 Post & Go error stamp: 2nd class identification printed on 1st class stamp.



(Above) Corner card, 1897 commercial cover. (Below) 1964 Indonesia, mail carrier with bicycle and saddle bags.



The bicycle became a tool for mail delivery in the late 1880s. Cargo carriers were added to these bicycles to facilitate carrying commercial and private mail.



1941 Miami to Mexico "1st Flight Bicycle Mail." Reverse reads: "This 'cover' transported entirely by bicycle, 1,827 miles from S. Miami, Fla. to Villa Acuna, Coahuila, Mexico, by 'G' Williams, Vagabond Telegrapher, 1st Class and Pedaling Peregrinator, Extraordinary—17 Days, Aug. 16-Sept. 1, 1941." Hand signed by Williams on front.

