

THE POST OFFICE AT BRADWELL

140 YEARS OF SERVICE

by TOM BROWN Hope Valley Philatelic Society.

Editorial comment Most of this article supplements the information given in the Yorkshire Postal History Society's "Sheffield Posts in Peakland and the Hope Valley", long since out of print, and no one is better qualified to relate the present account than Tom Brown as he married Joan of the Ashbury family and thus had information not available to the Joint authors of the earlier Yorkshire work (see pp. 1/2). To bring it up to date the story concludes with the change that took place in 1986, a few days before the source of the information became available to the Bradwell locals and an influx of visitors, in the programme entitled "Bradwell Well Dressing and Gala Week 2nd -10th August, 1986. Costing 40p.

The post Office has played a very important part in the life of the people of Bradwell. The earliest record of letters being received and handed out in the village is in 1830. The person responsible for this was Mr. John Middleton, who lived in a small cottage at the bottom of Towngate. The house is now occupied by Mrs. Paling. John was born in 1796 and was appointed first Sub-Postmaster on 15th April 1846. The first post-mark, an undated circular mark (*fig. 19, see p 3*), bearing the word BRADWELL, was issued a year later on 6th May 1847. John delivered mail three times a week to Tideswell for forward carriage until 1850 when the collection centre was switched first to Hope and three years later to Castleton. Until 1857 letters for Bradwell arrived from Bakewell but the service was improved in 1860 when letters began to arrive from Sheffield at 9.30 am.

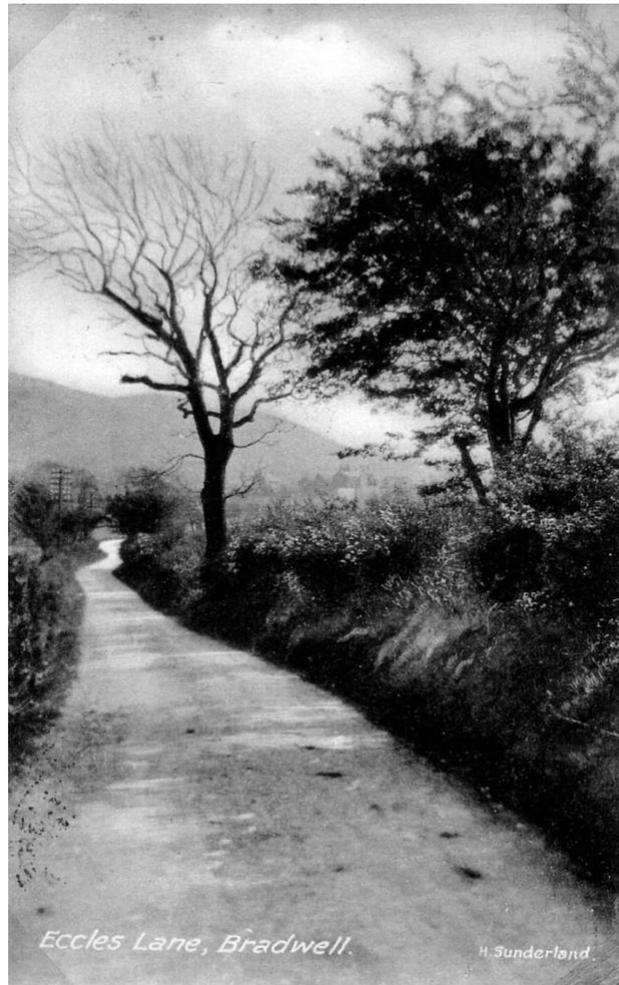
John Middleton was also the village barber, and was known affectionately as 'Shaver'. Being literate, another of his tasks was to read aloud from the newspapers to gatherings of local people who were not so talented as he. One of his descendants is Mr. Cyril Evans of Brookside.

About 1879 the Post Office was transferred towards the bottom of Smithy Hill and Mr. Thomas Middleton, no relation of John, took over. He was known as 'Tommy Post' no doubt, to distinguish him from all the other Middletons then in business. A Money Order Office and a Savings Bank were opened there in 1894. In July 1901 it was opened for Telegraphic business. A circulating library also operated from the premises. Relatives of the Middleton family, Mrs. F. Ashbury and her son Don still reside in what is now known as the 'Old Post Office' and daughter Joan married Tom Brown.



John Peacock who ran a grocery business in the building now occupied by Mr. Slater's video shop (*E13*) became Sub-Postmaster about 1907. He had an assistant Mr. Harry Sunderland, who took over in 1909, and established the Post Office just across the road in Brook Buildings. In 1916, during the First World War, he joined the pioneer section of the Royal Engineers. As Mrs. Sunderland was not fully qualified to run the business a young lady was sent from Sheffield to cover Mr. Sunderland's absence. She was Miss Lucy Young, a trained auxiliary, who took charge and remained there till Mr. Sunderland's return from the forces in 1919. Mss Young married Mr. Jack Middleton, a local butcher. Their daughter is Mrs. Joan Bates.

In the early 1920's Mr. Sunderland moved to the shop on Netherside now occupied by Mr. Spencer (*W12 in Bradwell Shops*). He was well known for the photographs he took in, and around Bradwell, many of which appeared on postcards.



Just after the outbreak of the Second World War Mr. Walter Bailey Rowland was appointed Sub-Postmaster and the office moved to his grocery and provision store in Church Street (*E19 in Bradwell Shops*). The shop is now a private residence.

In 1942 Mr. Rowland acquired the house on Netherside of Mr. Charles Clarke Hallam (*W9 in Bradwell Shops*) who had been an auxiliary postman in Bradwell between the years 1904 and 1911. Mr. Hallam, incidentally, left a bequest to pay for the Rood Screen which can be seen in the Parish Church.

Mr. Rowland, as well as being postmaster, also served for many years as Chairman of the Parish Council and also Chairmen and member of Bakewell Rural District Council.

Many well-known Bradwell people served behind the counter of this office; included among them: -

Mrs. W B Rowland.

Miss Rita Andrew, became Mrs. Walter J Rowland. Mrs.

Agnes Straw

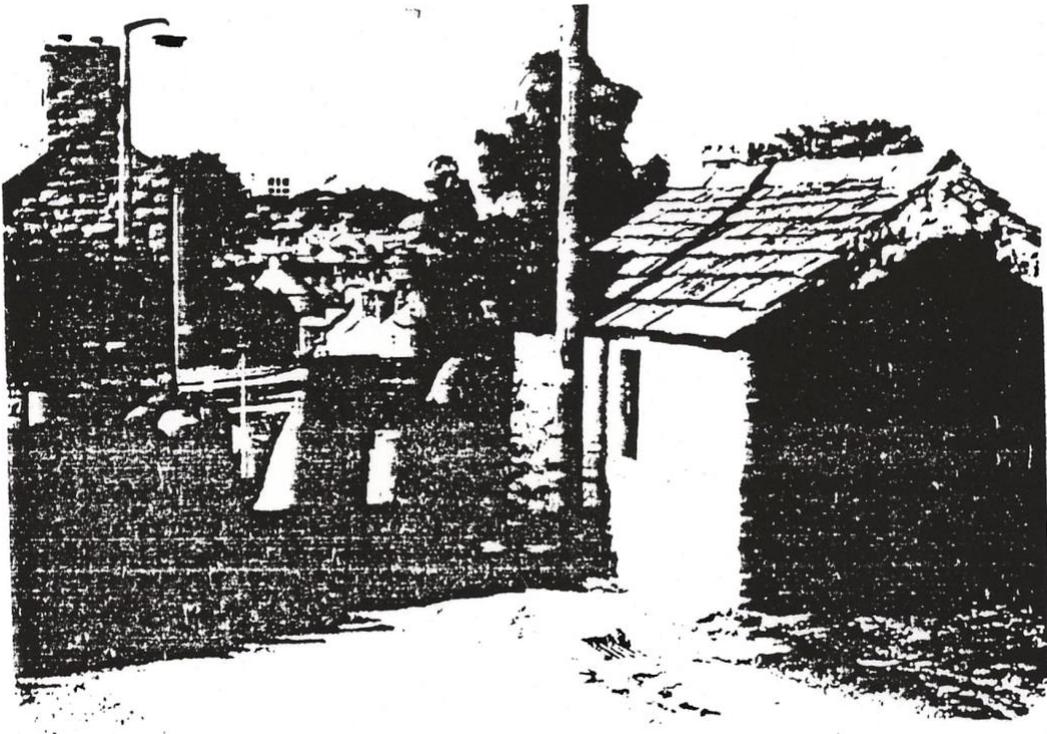
Mrs Crapper

In 1971 Mr. W B Rowland retired and Mr. John Lindley became Sub-Postmaster. He left in 1974 and although Mr. Lindley had retired from work, Mrs. Lindley ran a Post Office somewhere on the Welsh-English border.

Mr. Dawson who had a newsagent's business in Church Street (*E20 in Bradwell Shops*) acquired the premises, and he in turn became Sub-Postmaster. In 1977 he moved to the present site and there today he and his staff continue to serve the public in that time honoured way we have all come to associate with the Post Office.

Addendum. Mr. Malcolm Dawson finished in office immediately prior to the Gala Week of 1986, and Mr. Brian Johnson (not the BBC "Down your Way" presenter and cricket commentator) took over the running of Bradwell Post Office from 20th July 1986 assisted by his wife Marion,

The photograph below was taken by a Buxton member of the Hope Valley Philatelic Society 2 or even 3 years ago, and shows the position of a V.R. posting box, quite high in the building wall, known locally as "The Hills". The building is used as a coal shed just above the steps.



BRADWELL POST OFFICE: POSTAL MARKINGS OVER 100 YEARS



Fig 21



Fig 22



Fig 23.



Fig 24



Fig 25



Fig 26.



Fig 20



Fig. 19.

Figures are shown by courtesy the Yorkshire Postal History Society

Fig. 19. Sent to Bakewell on 6th May 1847, and seen used in 1859.

Fig. 20. Single ring issued via Sheffield on 16th December 1884, recorded in Proof Book No. 42 seen used with Code B to 1901. With Code A a few days earlier is a fairly recent 'find' by the afore-mentioned Buxton member. Still used in June 1901.

Fig. 21. Single ring seen 1903 to 1931 with time codes, AM or PM only and blank.

Fig. 22. Slightly larger single ring seen from 1930 to 1936 with Code B only.

Fig. 23. A slightly smaller stamp than Fig. 22 (more the size of Fig. 21.) recorded in 1936 with Code A.

Fig. 24 Double ring handstamp seen from 1946 to 1970 with time codes and B.

Fig. 25. Single ring with * above the date, seen from 1950 to 1970 and the type still in use in 1987.

Fig. 26. Special one-day handstamp to commemorate the Centenary of the Church School of St. Barnabas.

(Locations W9, W12, and E19 can be found in [Projects>Completed Projects>Bradwell Shops](#))