

SEDLESCOMBE POST OFFICE

STILL AT THE HEART OF THE VILLAGE



Shirley (on the left) worked in the shop in the 1960s and was still working there in the 21st century.



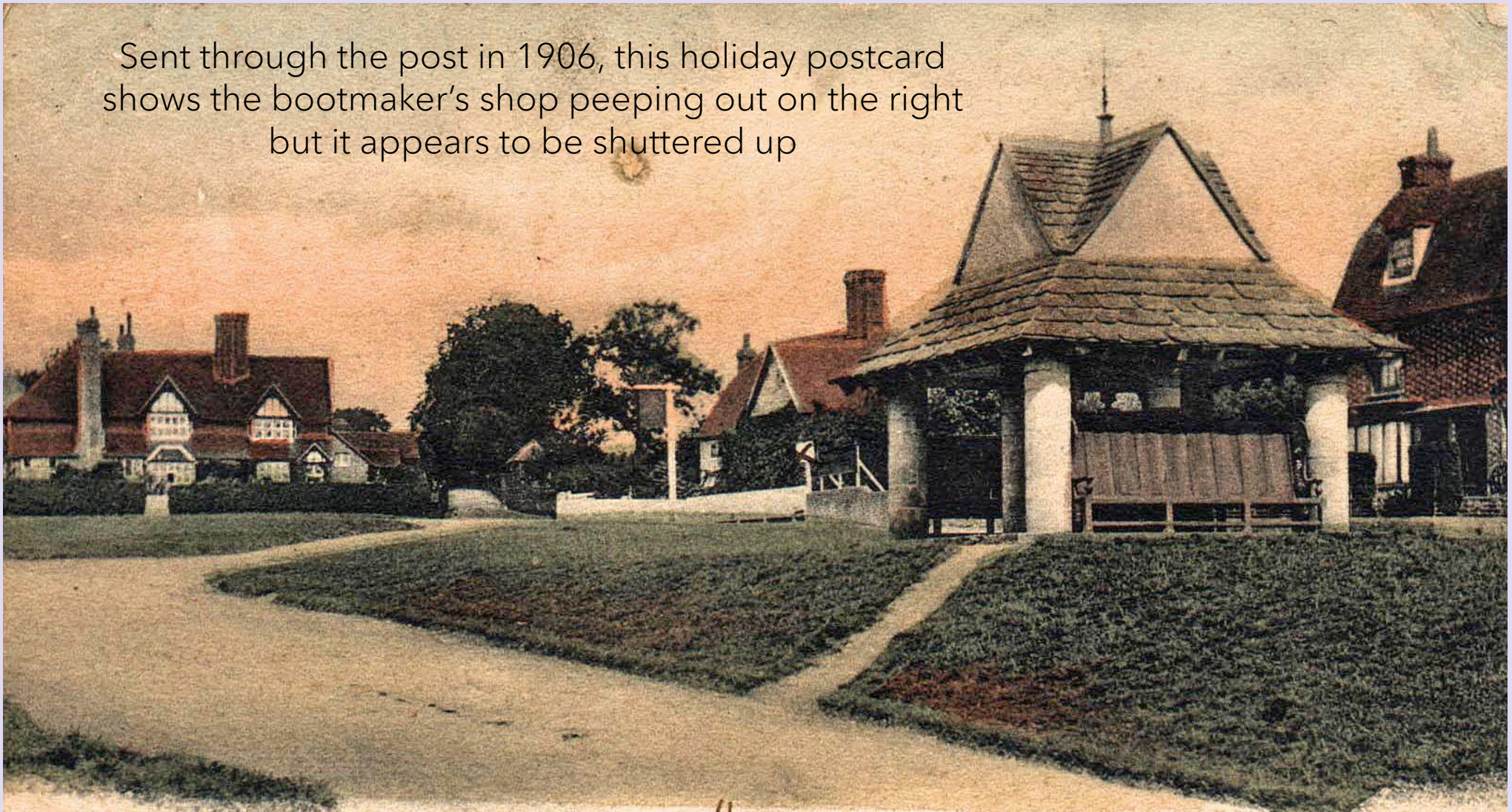
Here is the building that is, today in 2020, well-known to us as "The Post Office", but when this photo was taken by young George Stokes, around 1905, it would have been better known as Archers the bootmakers or even "Archers the Snob".

**THOMAS ARCHER,
BOOT AND SHOE MAKER,
SEDLESCOMBE.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen's Boots and Shoes of every description
made to order. First-class Stock of ready made Boots
and Shoes on hand.**

Orders will be punctually attended to.

Sent through the post in 1906, this holiday postcard shows the bootmaker's shop peeping out on the right but it appears to be shuttered up



The Pump & Village Sedlescombe.

so where we had our tea where I marked the cross
goodbye from M.

185

This advert dated August 1905, tells the story that Thomas Archer was selling up

FOR SALE, 6ft. 6in. SHOP COUNTER, mahogany top, six large drawers and panel front; also nest of small drawers, 6ft. high 3ft. wide; cheap.
Thomas Archer, Sedlescombe, Sussex.

Although by 1909, another Archer bootmaker was advertising in the Sedlescombe Parish Magazine, maybe for different premises

**H. ARCHER,
BOOT, SHOE, & LEGGINGS MAKER,
SEDLERCOMBE.**

By 1928, Mr Wilton was running a newsagents in the shop. His van marked up with his name is outside and on the front wall of the building is a large newspaper advertisement.



Reproduced by the courtesy of Mr. Wilton, Sedlescombe
THE PUMP, SEDLESCOMBE

This 1930s wintry picture of Sedlescombe shows the start of some changes to the shop front.



Sedlescombe Village. 12.

This picture is dated 1935, by which time what looks like a bit of a monstrosity had been built onto the front of the old building which remained for the next 20 years.



And a Wilton was still there in 1939, at the outbreak of the Second War, with a wide range of goods for sale. He was even advertising early morning delivery of papers and magazines. Was this delivery done by young children on their bikes first thing in the morning, which was still going in the 1980s?

WILTON

Newsagent, Confectioner, Tobacconist

SEDLSCOMBE. Tel: 50

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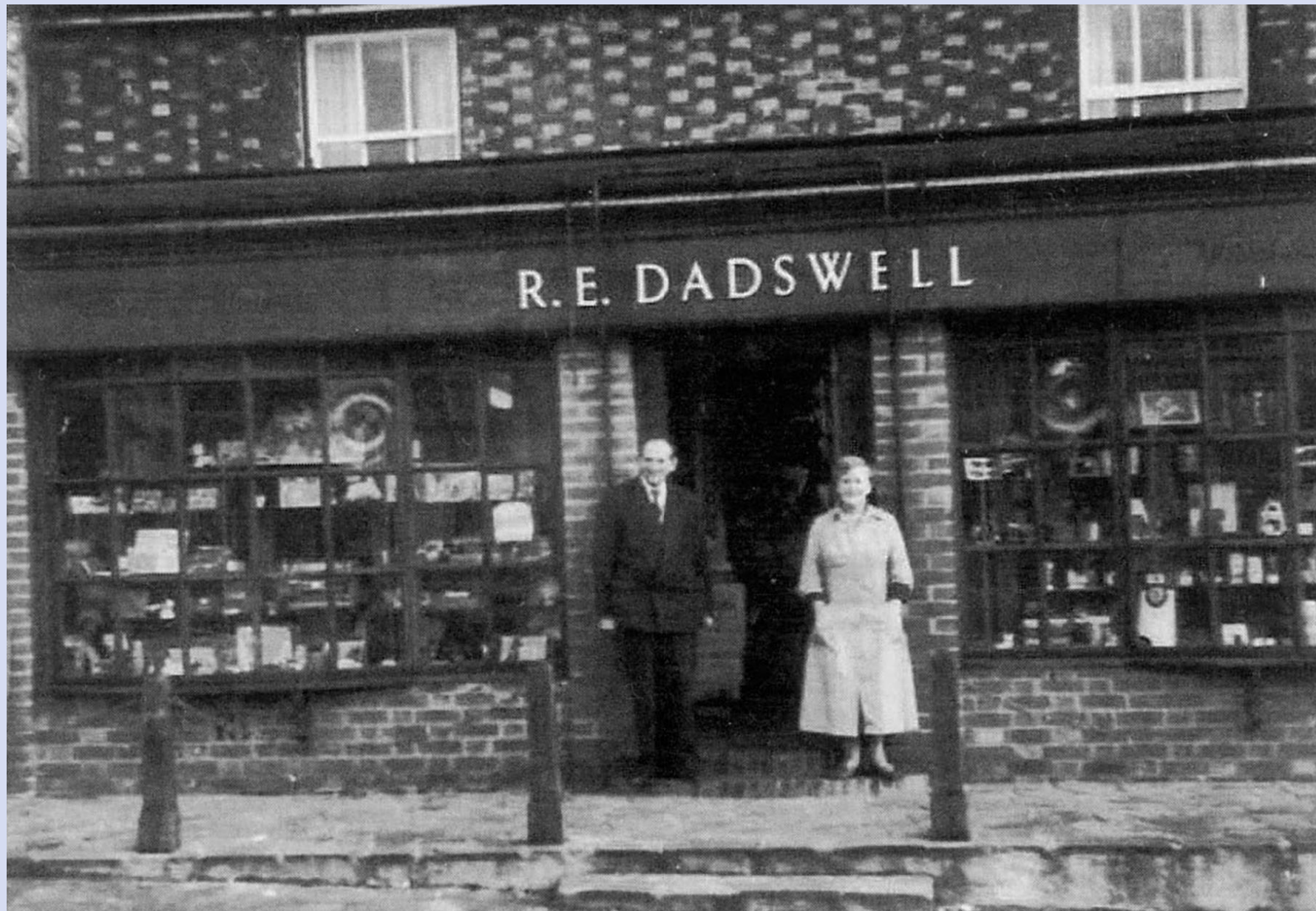
**Early Delivery of all NEWSPAPERS, PERIODICALS & MAGAZINES
to any Address.**

Lending Library. Books Lent at 2d. Per Vol. per Week.

**Cadbury's and Pascall's always in stock and other Leading Makers
of Confectionery**

**Large Selection of Tobacco and Cigarettes, stationery, local views,
novelties, etc.**

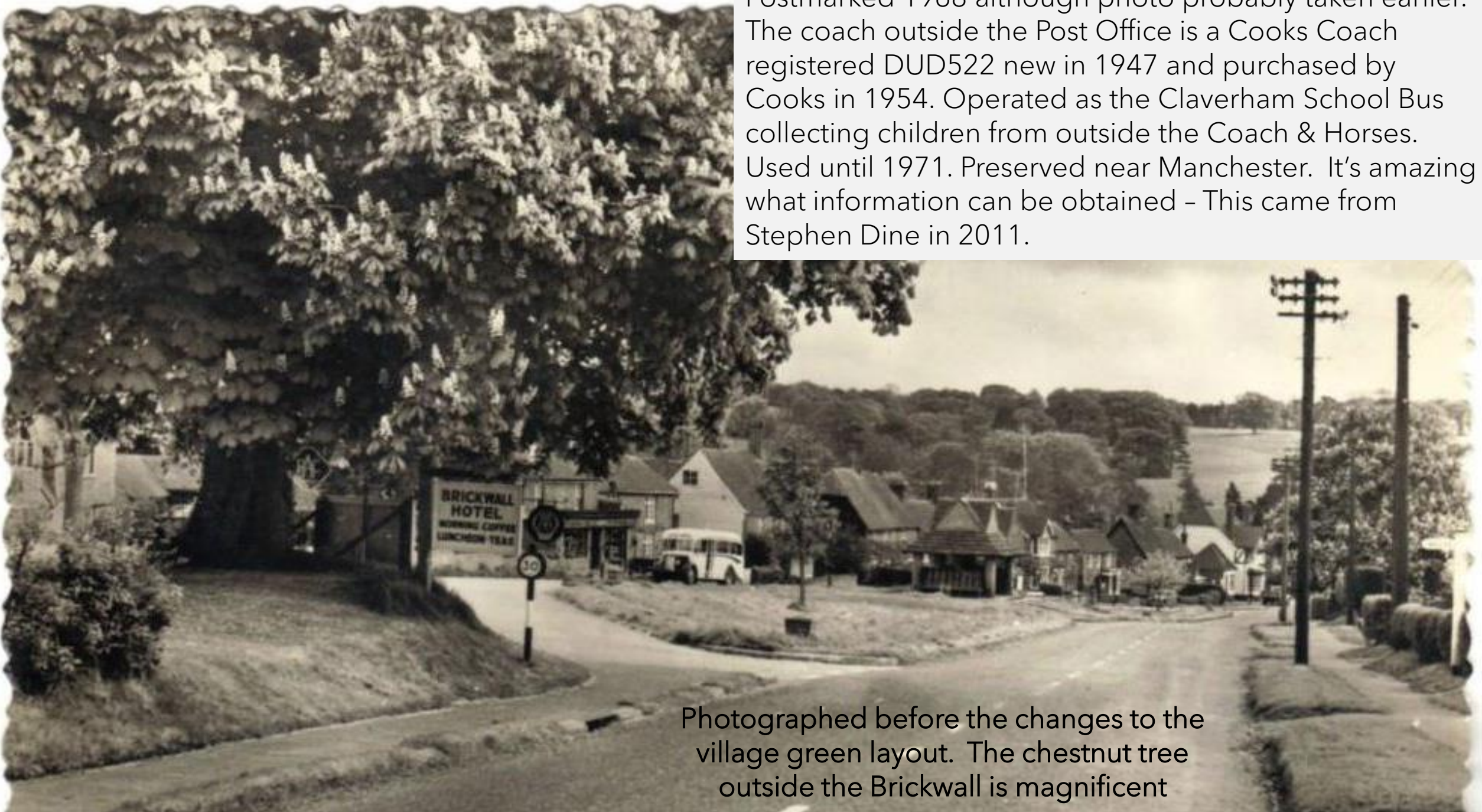
The 1939 census shows John P Wilton (born 1891) as the Newsagent and Tobacconist living over the shop with his wife Lily. The census states that John had an RAF Disability Pension.



Taken in 1958, Reg and Doris Dadswell were in charge. Thankfully, previous owner Vincent Feraro had changed the shop front to a more traditional style. (Thanks to Julia Chapman for this information.)



Postmarked 1968 although photo probably taken earlier. The coach outside the Post Office is a Cooks Coach registered DUD522 new in 1947 and purchased by Cooks in 1954. Operated as the Claverham School Bus collecting children from outside the Coach & Horses. Used until 1971. Preserved near Manchester. It's amazing what information can be obtained - This came from Stephen Dine in 2011.



Photographed before the changes to the village green layout. The chestnut tree outside the Brickwall is magnificent

This postcard postmarked in
1966 shows the post box
outside in the shop





Janet and Michael Drury ran the shop in the 1970s. In 1979, they and their family moved to Suffolk to run an hotel

It is with great regret that your resignation has been accepted. You have served the parish loyally and well and with tireless energy over the last seven years. You will be greatly missed - The Sports Association, The Village Hall, The School, The Tennis Courts, the embryo swimming pool have all benefitted from your energetic attention - and we are so glad that your last year was crowned with winning the Best Kept Village Competition. It was a most fitting ceremony you laid on for the reception of the award.

Michael was Chairman of the Parish Council and he was sent this letter of thanks from the Council on his resignation

1970s



Morris Dancers outside the shop

Michael Drury's obituary in 2001 Parish News

Michael was a dynamic businessman whose energy spilled over into the many projects he became involved in. Together with his wife Janet, he ran Sedlescombe Post Office and newsagents and had another newsagents shop in Battle. When Arthur Hodsoll died in 1974 he took over as Chairman of the Parish Council, a post he held for five years. I am sure he would have been pleased to see the completion of Sedlescombe's new village hall as this was a project he strove for during his time on the Council. In the early 1970s, the Village Hall Management Committee was struggling with no funds behind it and out-of-date facilities at the hall. Michael began attempts to find a site for a new hall involving himself in negotiations for land in Brede Lane. Eventually, this attempt to find a site failed and Michael pushed on encouraging improvements to the existing hall. After much effort, funds were raised and in 1976 improvements were made to the toilets and kitchen and the front extension was built on providing two small committee rooms, an entrance hall and an enlarged main hall. He was also involved in drawing up the Charity Commission Scheme for the hall.

POST OFFICE. When the Robinson Family retired from running the Post Office and shop in 1985 after 8 ½ years, Mr and Mrs Rhodes took over.

LISTING IN 1987
In 1987, the building was given a
Grade II listing

TQ 7817-7917

SEDLESCOMBE

THE STREET
(east side)

44/2

Sedlescombe Post Office
and Robinson's Stores

TQ 7817-7917 SEDLESCOMBE THE STREET (east side) 44/2 Sedlescombe Post Office and Robinson's Stores
GV II Early C19, much altered. Two storeys and attic. Two windows. Two dormers. Red brick and grey headers
alternately. Mansarded tiled roof. Modern shop front built out on ground floor. Grade II for group value.

See next picture.

The chequerboard pattern on the front of the building can be seen on other properties in Sedlescombe. The grey headers are a legacy of the extensive use of wood fire brick kilns in this area with the colouring resulting from the reaction which took place at high temperature within the kiln between the iron oxide in the brick and the potassium in the wood smoke.

The Mansarded roof refers to a roof with two slopes and dormer windows set within.



This was taken in 1988 when Mr and Mrs Rhodes ran the shop. The post box had moved onto The Green. See newspapers hung on outside of the door of the shop



Rosemary Farley (who used to be at the shop very early to make up the newspapers for delivery) and Rose Mowat

May 1997 THRIVING VILLAGE POST OFFICE ON THE MARKET

SEDLSCOMBE'S 17th century village Post Office is up for sale as owners Harvey and Barbara Rhodes plan their retirement.

Sedlescombe Post Office and Stores is up for grabs with an asking price of £360,000 for the freehold of the property and guaranteed security of income of running a sub post office.

The price includes 5-bedroom owner's accommodation, landscaped garage and a garage. The property was built from timber frame, brick and weatherboard over 300 years ago. Other features include exposed timber beams and an Aga store. As well as being a post office, the shop offers groceries, newspapers, confectionery and cigarettes.

In 1997, Harvey and Barbara Rhodes were retiring and the shop was up for sale.

Agents Christie and Co predict huge demand to buy the store. "We are experiencing unprecedented demand for all kinds of small retail businesses, especially Post offices" they said.



By 1999, John and Jenny Mainwood had taken over the running of the post office and shop



1999 Fete Tug of War

PUBLIC NOTICES 13/09/1999

Application for the grant of a Justices Off Licence

TO whom it may concern. We, John Hunter Mainwood and Jennifer Ann Mainwood, now residing at The Post Office, The Green, Sedlescombe, Battle, East Sussex, having during the past six months carried on a trade or calling of shop proprietors, do hereby give notice that it is our intention to apply at the transfer sessions for the licensing district of Hastings and Rother, to be held at The Law Courts, Bohemia Road, Hastings, on the 12th October next, the grant to us a Justices Licence authorising us to sell by retail intoxicating liquor of all descriptions for consumption off the premises situate at The Green, Sedlescombe, Battle, East Sussex and known by the sign of The Post Office.

Given under my hand 13th Day of September 1999

PROPOSED CHANGES FOR THE POST OFFICE OPPOSED

In 2000, there was a Government proposal to pay all pensions and benefits through banks only. A petition against this proposal was available in the Post Office. It was signed by over 700 people.

In April, John Mainwood attended a rally at Westminster when a 3-million signature petition was handed to Tony Blair at No.10.

The same year, John Mainwood announced in the Sedlescombe Parish News that a new computer system would be "going live" in the Post Office.

He also said that he was appealing against Rother's refusal to allow him to extend the shop because it would affect the appearance and character of the listed building.



2002 Sarah Jane Rolfe
behind the counter

YOUNG RAIDERS FLEE EMPTY- HANDED IN BUNGLED RAID

One evening in 2003, knife-wielding robbers threatened shop assistant, Sarah-Jane Rolfe, and Ron Taylor who was sweeping up, telling them to get to the back of the shop.

John Mainwood bravely challenged the would-be attackers who, after smashing the glass in one of the freezers, ran out of the shop with worthless National Lottery scratch cards.

John Mainwood spoke of his worry about more crime in the Village following the loss of Sedlescombe's own community support officer.

This attempted raid was similar to others on small shops in rural areas at the time.



SUPERFAST
BROADBAND FOR THE
SEDLSCOMBE
EXCHANGE?



2003 POSTER

In 2003, Young Jeff Mainwood led the campaign for high-speed broadband in Sedlescombe

Jeff, 13, leads Broadband bid, Published on Thursday 4 December 2003

INTERNET users in sedlescombe could soon be enjoying high speed access to the net – thanks to the efforts of a local youngster. 13-year-old Jeff Mainwood is leading the campaign to bring Broadband internet access to the village. This would enable residents to be on the telephone and on-line at the same time on the faster, continuous service.

The goal of the campaign is to get the local telephone exchange ‘enabled’ for broadband, by generating interest in the form of pre-registrations. If demand is high enough then British Telecom has promised to bring Broadband to the village. Jeff’s campaign needs just 81 more names from Sedlescombe residents to fulfil BT’s trigger target of 200 pre-registering their interest in broadband. Enterprising youngster Jeff is leader of ‘Broadband 4 Sedlescombe’, an independent campaign group coordinating support for broadband access.

“We’ve worked really hard to get to this point”, said Jeff, “and along the way we’ve had support from all kinds of people in the area. A lot of people are really looking forward to Broadband access – there’s teenagers who want to use the Internet to help with their homework and small businesses who need always-on email. Even though we are very close to success, we can’t relax until we get past the 200 name target.”

Jeff’s determined efforts meant that last week the total number of pre-registrations reached 119, putting success tantalisingly close.

In 2006, John & Jenny Mainwood carried out a major refurbishment of the shop during which time they temporarily relocated to the Clockhouse



SAVE OUR
POST
OFFICES

In April 2007, Government plans to close some rural post offices met fierce opposition from Sedlescombe

More than 100 demonstrators gathered in Sedlescombe to send a defiant message to the Government: **“We love our Post Offices and will fight to save them”**.

MP Greg Barker turned up and spoke passionately about how Post Offices should be supported. He said that since 1999, seven Post Offices had closed in Bexhill and Battle. New plans proposed further closure of 2,500 sub-Post Offices across the UK because they were not financially viable.

In 2007 Rosemary Farley retired after many years of working in the Post Office and shop. John and Jenny arranged a retirement tea party in the hall. Here they are with Valerie Wright, Chairman, Sedlescombe Parish Council



In 2008, Jenny & John held a tea afternoon to promote local shops



Local Proud

Local Proud

Local Proud

Fancy a Brew?
It's National Cuppa Day.

Tetley

McVitie's

Proud sponsors of

My shop is your shop
LOCAL BUSINESS

GREEN

Courier

SEALES ROAD
DARLINGTON
LAMA VISITS
VILLAGE TIME

**2009
JOHN AND
JENNY
MAINWOOD**

**AT ONE OF THE
SEDLESCOMBE
BUSINESS
TABLES AT THE
ANNUAL
PARISH
ASSEMBLY IN
THE VILLAGE
HALL**

**VERY SADLY JOHN
PASSED AWAY IN 2023**



THANKFULLY, THIS IS NOT THE END AS THE SHOP CONTINUES
TO BE AT THE HEART OF THE VILLAGE, THANKS TO THE
EFFORTS OF MANY OVER THE YEARS



PART OF THE 2020 SEDLESCOMBE LOCAL HISTORY VIRTUAL EXHIBITION
COLLECTION ADDED TO BATTLE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEBSITE
2024

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