



## PAST TIMES

### The Seaton Ross Post Office

By the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century towns throughout England and Wales were connected by a postal service. Letters were carried along the principal highways by horses, which were changed at regular 'posts'. Mail coaches were used from 1784 onwards until the railways superseded them. A countrywide penny post was introduced in 1840 using the famous 'Penny Black' stamp and contracts for running village post offices were first offered in the 1840's and 1850's. Before the days of the 'Penny Post' uniformed postmen were paid to deliver and collect letters.

The 1857 Post Office directory vol.3 for the North and East Riding states, "Seaton Ross" – letters through Pocklington, Melbourne or Hayton, as directed. Pocklington is the nearest money order office and there will be a foot post shortly.

The earliest record of a post office at Seaton Ross is from the 1872 Post Office directory of the North and East Riding. It was situated at the North End of the village, which is now "The Cottage". The first postmaster was Timothy Jackson. He was also a shoemaker and farmer of 9 acres employing 1 man. The ordnance survey map of 1910 for Seaton Ross (surveyed in 1889) clearly shows the letter's P.O. at North End.

In 1872, letter's to the village arrived at 11.00 a.m. from York and were dispatched at 2.30p.m. by postal letter carrier. Holme-on-Spalding-Moor was the nearest money order office.

By 1892 letter's arrived at 9.50 a.m. from Pocklington being despatched at 3.50 p.m. (Sundays excepted). Holme-on-Spalding-Moor was still the nearest money order and telegraph office. The wall letterbox, half a mile north of the village was cleared at 4 p.m. (weekdays only).

Timothy Jackson continued to be the postmaster until the late 1890's when Walker Fentiman took over with the post office still at the North End of the village.

By 1901 the post office had become a money order office, savings bank and annuity and insurance office with letters arriving through York via Pocklington by mail cart at 9.40a.m. and dispatched at 3.35p.m. Everingham was the nearest telegraph office. The postal letter carriers were Samuel Fentiman and his daughter Josephine who lived at The Cross. In 1903 a postal letter carriers (postman in today's terms) rate of pay was 20 shillings a week starting at 16 shillings a week rising by increments of 1/6d. To this was added 5 shillings a week if the carrier had "stripes"

The Fentiman family continued to run the post office with Samuel 'Harry' Fentiman running the post office for many years and by the 1920's the post office had moved to Field View at the South End of the village. Harry Fentiman was also a joiner/wheelwright, undertaker and shopkeeper. He was also a carrier to Market Weighton every Wednesday and York and Selby markets. Harry Fentiman retired in 1947 and the post office was taken over by Mrs Winifred Johnson who was the postmistress at the house next to Field View at South End then known as West Leigh for over 30 years retiring in the 1980's. "The Old Post Office" where Mrs. Johnson lived and ran the post office is now a private house at South End.

By the late 1980's the post office at Seaton Ross had become a sub-post office and villagers will remember in recent years "Ashlands" and the "The Corner House" being sub-post offices.

The sub-post office at Seaton Ross was closed in the late 1990's and Melbourne became the nearest local post office.

The illustration above shows a copy of the original Seaton Ross hand stamp which was issued on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 1857.