The Old Post Office

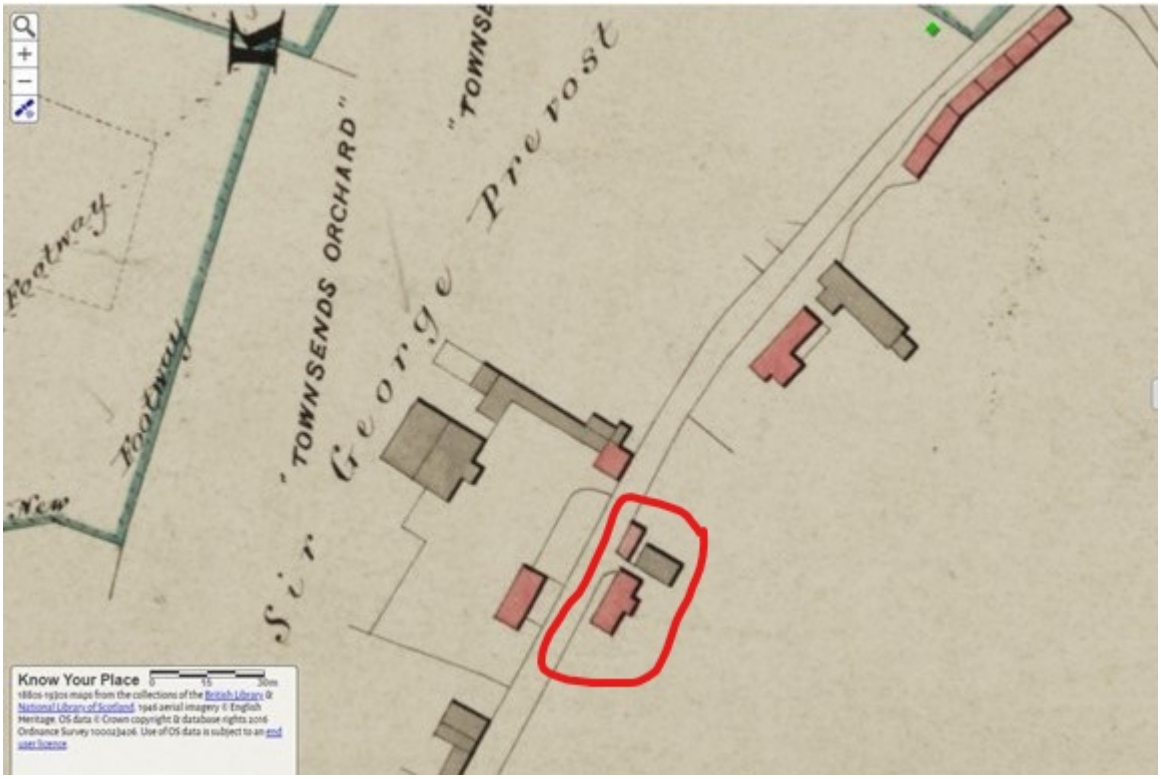
The history of the Stinchcombe Post Office and Telephone Exchange

Estimated reading time: 6 minutes



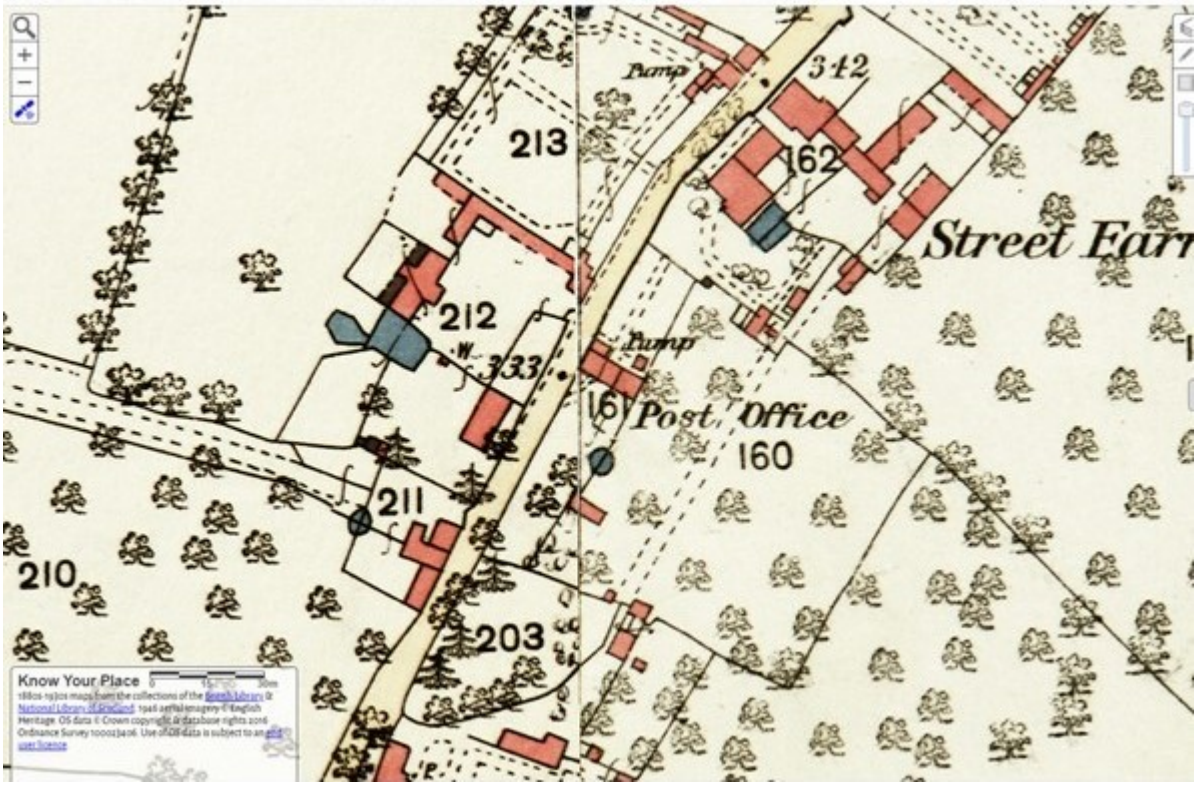
We are unsure of when this property was built and know little about it before 1839. If anyone can add any knowledge of occupants or when the property was constructed it would be much appreciated

The Tithe map of 1839 shows two close but separate buildings owned By ***John Mabbett*** on the present site of the cottage. There is no current tenant but the previous tenant is named as William Nelmes. In what is now the garden is another building owned by John Mabbett which is occupied by the Hill family.



The Tithe Map of 1839 – by kind permission of [Know Your Place]

On the OS map surveyed 1881, the separate buildings have been joined together and marked as a Post Office. This is likely to have been the cottage containing the Post Office and a barn. The other house has disappeared but the former tenants are shown living at the Yew Tree in the 1841 census.



1881 Ordnance Survey Map – by kind permission of Know Your Place

Census data and Kelly's Directory

The 1881 census, shows Isaac Woodward, aged 34, as sub-postmaster and grocer living in the cottage with his wife, Mary. They are still living there in the 1891,1901 and 1911 censuses. Kelly's directory of Gloucestershire mentions the post office, shop and Isaac Woodward in the Stinchcombe listings for 1897 and 1914. Kelly's directory also noted that 'It is an excellent postal service with two collections per day Monday-Saturday and one on Sunday'.

Auction of the late Mary Mabbett's Estate on 7th August, 1890.

Mary Mabbett owned many buildings and considerable amounts of land in the area. Lot 5 in the auction held at the Old Bell Hotel in Dursley was the Post Office. It is described as a 'genteel residence' with Isaac Woodward named as the sitting tenant.

Isaac Woodward bought the Post Office and became the owner on 29th September 1890. This could be the same Isaac Woodward who rented a strip of land by number 1 The Buildings where it is thought he started ***Woodward's Grocers.***

The Great Stinchcombe Robbery!

In 1902, news of a burglary at the Post Office appeared in the local paper –

> ***Alleged Burglary Near Dursley***
>
> *The Post Office at Stinchcombe was broken into on Sunday evening while the people living there were at church, and*

about £2 5s. in money was taken. The post master is Mr. Isaac Woodward, who also keeps a little shop in addition to the postal management. The burglar, or burglars, chose a very suitable night for their nefarious work, it being pitch dark on Sunday between seven and eight in the evening. The money stolen did not belong to the Post Office, and the miscreant was evidently a wide-awake customer, for he left about £20 worth of postal orders, which would have been dangerous property to remove.

From Gloucester Journal 1st November 1902

The 1920's onwards

In 1920, Isaac Woodward sold the Post Office to John Dimery. In 1927, the Post Office changed hands again and was bought by Henry Baldwin. Henry Baldwin sold the post office and grocery business to Thomas Fussell, aged 19, in 1924 but he only kept it for 3 years. It appears Thomas Fussell was not a good businessman as he later went bankrupt. According to an article in the Citizen in 1935, reporting that he was granted a discharge from bankruptcy, he had used most of the savings of his father, a Dursley postman, investing in businesses. Whether Henry Baldwin bought the business back is not clear but he sold the buildings and garden to Charles Conroy in December, 1948.



The Original telephone Connection on the Old Post Office is still there.
The Picture also shows that the Post Office was build on to the back of the house.
In 1967, Charles Conroy sold the buildings and garden to Mr and Mrs Gloster-Smith and a year later it was sold again to Richard Whittal. When Richard Whittal bought the property, the post office had ceased trading but the post office paraphernalia was still in place. To this day, there is still a ring on the house wall, where we are told horses could be

tied up, and the original telephone connection.



The ring for tying up your horse at The Old Post office is still there today

In 1972, the property now known as the Old Post Office was

sold to Mr Robert Hodgson and Mrs Joyce Kempster. It was during the time of their ownership that the roof of the barn joined to the cottage was raised to accommodate two bedrooms and one of the bedrooms in the cottage made into a bathroom. A double garage was also built at the end of the garden. In 1986, Mr and Mrs Robinson bought the property. At that time, there was no access from the front to the back garden except through the building. During their occupancy, they bought a piece of land from the owners of Melksham Court which enabled them to have access round the end of the house.



The Old Post Office today

Graham and Cherry Brown bought the property in January 1997. They replaced the old garage with one with a pitched roof and added access steps to it from the garden.

Then and now!





Trying to get the right position on the road and not get runover is HARD!

The Photo on the left thought to be taken in the early 1900’s. (when you could play in the street!) The Photo on the right is the Present day. Notice how the The Old Post Office is now obscured by the foliage and the change in the properties on the left. Is that a haystack in front of Townsend Farm? Also, The Old Post Office used to have a tall chimney. Has the Street narrowed? The house at the back of the picture is presumably the one that was on the Combe Gardens Kitchen Garden site where the gardener to ***Lady Bowlby*** resided. Is that the Barn on the right behind the Old Post Office mentioned above? The roof is certainly is lower that the house today.