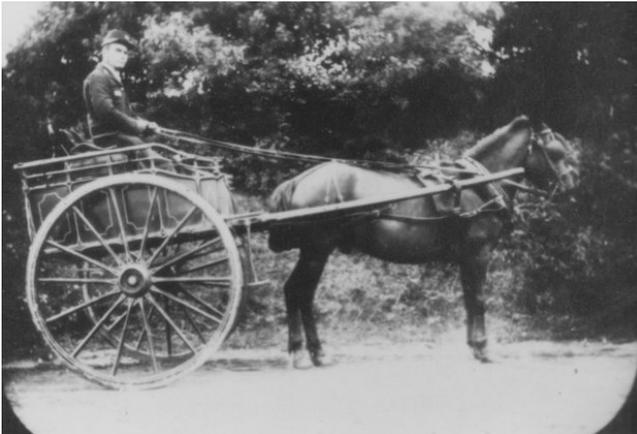**Round and About in the Parish**

In a previous article I mentioned Chelwood Gate and the comings and goings about their sub post-office and Patrick Awcock has again provided me with a wealth of information, but this time about Danehill courtesy of P.O. Archives, now the Postal Museum.

In 1852 a sub post-office was established at Danehill but in November 1861 the Messenger's wages are reduced as the neighbourhood is considered agricultural - and the authorities suggest 'perhaps 14/- a week would suffice to procure the services of a competent man for Messenger between Uckfield and Dane Hill' (then spelt as two words). In 1864 it is recorded 'Messenger wages increase refused'. It is pointed out that the walk between Uckfield and Dane Hill is rather a long one but 'I cannot recommend for approval this proposal to raise his pay from 14/- to 14/6d a week'. [A messenger appears to be an early word for what we now call a postman].

In 1863 a Savings Bank is established which appears successful for about 20 years but in 1883 the records state 'Embezzlement of Savings Bank by Sub Postmaster - with a Conviction in November 1883.'

In 1886 another Sub post-master is required to resign. It is recorded 'As this is the second occasion on which the sub Post-master of Dane Hill (who

was appointed as recently as September 1883) has been brought under 'notice' for being a defaulter, it is obviously desirable in the interests of sureties, for no other reason, that the office should be placed in other hands. I accordingly beg to submit for approval that the sub Post-master be required to resign as the Surveyor recommends (4 May 1886)'.

This photo from Peter Kirby shows Mr Sitford 'Mail carrier from Uckfield 1880 - 1890'. The mail to Danehill came via Uckfield.

The late Shon Bennett in his memoir entitled 'Word Picture of Danehill' confirms the daily post came to Danehill in a red two-wheeled box from Uckfield, driven by a postman wearing, as they all did, a coal scuttle-shaped hat.

Whilst it looks as if the Rural Messenger's wages are kept down, in 1891 the allowance for 'Horse Keep' is raised. I don't know what happened to the poor old horse but in 1910 Dane Hill mounted rural post is made a cycle post and there is an allowance for 'cycle cleaning'. The photo left is believed to be Frank Ridley posing

in front of the finger post at Nutley which has Chelwood Gate 2 miles, Danehill 4 miles. He appears to have a mail sack but is not in a clearly defined uniform.

The photo below is of Will Wheatley postman 1890-1896 who is in standard uniform:- (photo 3)

From about this time the Post Office becomes more modern and another instalment will follow in due course. Everything seems to be in order from hereon.

It does appear to be quite common that things are not as they should be at sub post offices. There are comings and goings not only at Chelwood Gate and Danehill, but also 'tampering with mail' occurring at the sub post-office at Wych Cross around 1896. - more about this another time.

My thanks to Patrick Awcock to Laurence Hardy and to the late Peter Kirby.

Jill Rolfe 740446