

## Telephone

### Introduction

Sir Alexander Graham Bell secured a UK patent for his telephone late in 1876. However, it was 1903 before a telephone exchange was opened at Malton.

It would appear that the telephone could have been in use around ten years before the telephone exchange in Malton was actually opened. Early in 1893 [1] it was reported that the National Telephone Company had begun to lay the trunk line from York to Scarborough, possibly two years or more earlier i.e. in 1890. However, the Earl Fitzwilliam did not allow the wires to cross the town. An opinion was voiced at the annual meeting and dinner of the Malton Farmers' Club when a Mr. Page, a corn merchant of York, spoke about the town and district suffering from the want of telephonic communication because Earl Fitzwilliam would not allow it to pass through .... and further

that no one man should have so much power in any town, village or hamlet as to cripple its trade. A telephone exchange and call office were eventually opened at Malton on 25th March 1903 and looped in to the York - Scarborough trunk line. The exchange offered a service during the week from 5am to 10pm, and on Sundays from 6am to 10am and from 5.15pm to 7.30pm. There was no direct dialling. Rental of a line was very expensive with few, if any individuals being able to afford rental and the cost of calls. The call office at the Post Office gave residents the opportunity to try the service.

The telephone was expensive and competed with the postal service. A postcard could be written in the town in the morning and delivered to a Malton address by the evening. A Post Office telegraph system was also in use and then there was always the Town Crier.

### Malton's First Telephone Directory - 1903

This shows a significant correlation between the listing and the prominent landowners and businessmen of the time. Note that the fire station was not on the telephone system. It was however connected in 1908. [2]

Ancestry has digitised all the telephone directories held by BT Archives and these can be searched – fee payable. Telephone directories are useful for tracking individuals as they give an address (which may be limited to the street).

# Post Office Telephone Directory 1903

## Malton

The Exchange is open from 5.0 a.m. to 10.0 p.m. on Week Days, and from 6.0 a.m. to 10.0 a.m. and 5.15 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. on Sundays.

Postmaster – H.J. PENNEY.

Superintending Engineer – G.M. CARR, post office, Leeds

Engineer – A. LONGDEN, Post Office, York (to whom all faults on wires and Apparatus should be reported).

1	CALL OFFICE	Post Office
2	Beckett & Co., Bankers	Yorkersgate
24	Binnie, W., Trainer	Horton Cottage, Norton
9	Boulton and Cooper, Auctioneers and Valuers	Cattle Market
10	Bower, Major Chief Constable	North Riding Police Station
40	Buckle, J., Chemist	Market Place
3	Clarke, J.W., Grocer	Yorkersgate
4	Colby, W.T., M.D., Surgeon, &c.	Yorkersgate
17	Dawney, Hon. G.N.	The Lodge
38	Dent, J., Fishmonger	Commercial Street, Norton
11	Dent, J.W., Fishmonger	Wheelgate
6	Haley, A.	West Lodge
35	Haley, A.A.	Stud Farm, Whitewall
8	Hartley, Dr. A., Surgeon	Market Place
16	Laverack, W.H., and Sons, Chemists	Butcher Corner
26	Legard, Colonel James D.	Welham Hall
25	Lyons, A., Builder and Contractor	Langton Road
21	Malton Gas Company	Castlegate
18	Markham, G., Land Agent	Estate Office
33	Mennell, Clarkson & Co., Timber Merchants	Wood Street
31	Metcalfe, R., J.P.	West Royd
23	Metcalfe, W., and Sons, Ltd., Millers	Castlegate
32	Murray, E., Veterinary Surgeon	Langton Road
5	Pearson, H.W., Solicitor	Westgarth
x5	Pearson, H.W. & R., and Russell, Solicitors	Yorkersgate
36	Police Station (East Riding)	Norton
10	Police Station (North Riding)	Malton
41	Rose, W.H., J.P.	The Browse
20	Russell and Wrangham Ltd., Brewers	Castlegate
12	Sadler, T., Publican	Clarence Vaults
13	Slater and Sons, Florists	Yorkersgate
14	Smithson, H. & Co., Printers and Stationers ("Malton Messenger")	Yorkersgate
39	Snarry, T.S., M.R.C.V.S.	Castlegate
30	Snow & Sons, Drapers, &c	Yorkersgate
29	Spiegelhalter, E.K., Jeweller, &c.	Yorkersgate
37	Stephenson, G., Butcher	Market Place
27	Suddaby, A. & W.M., Hotel Proprietors	Crown Hotel, Wheelgate
7	Tate Smith, T., Wine and Spirit Merchant	Market Street
x22	Taylor, H., & Sons, Grocers	12, Castlegate
22	Taylor, H., & Sons, Grocers	45, Wheelgate
19	Taylor, T., & Co., Grocers	16 Castlegate
34	Wood, Alfred, Grocer	Town Street, Old Malton
28	Wray and Thompson, Chemists and Aerated Water Manufacturers	Wheelgate
15	Yates, R., and Sons, Agricultural Engineers	Derwent Foundry

*By courtesy of BT Archives*

## References

[1] Leeds Mercury, 14 January 1893

[2] Yorkshire Gazette, 28 November 1908