The Save Our Village Post Office Campaign has brought people together even more in our close knit community. And the joy of this has been the new friends we have made, and the stories coming to light. And nothing could be more relevant to the fight for the Post Office than this one -

We’re in the dining room of a cottage in the heart of Felpham village with Mike & Judy Armson, who is the great-great-great-niece of Sir Rowland Hill (1795-1879), stamp pioneer and creator of the post office as we know it today. A remarkable man indeed, in the true tradition of Victoria entrepreneurs. He was an inventor, teacher and governor in Australia in an era when it took months to get there by boat; his brothers were also pioneers; one in prison reform and an MP, another, Edwin, invented the envelope! Judy is truly bringing the past up, close and personal.

Sir Arthur’s great triumph was to make the sender pay for the stamp (previously the receiver had to, which was extremely inefficient and open to fraud), and to make it affordable for those less well-off. Business expanded hugely and letter-writing became a daily communication.

Judy’s magnificent archive, after years of research, is extensive; books, photographs, folios, press clippings of, not just Sir Rowland himself, but also the generations which followed; there are stories everywhere you look – her mother and father’s time in India, for example, and not least her own tale. Hovering over all the generations which followed is the legend of Sir Rowland himself. Judy doesn’t believe that his achievements were passed on through the family verbally so much, but there were occasional moments; mum thought she might find a penny black hidden away in some dusty corner – in mint condition today it would be worth thousands of pounds! She did not find the precious stamp.

Sir Rowland is buried in Westminster Abbey; He’s remembered worldwide too. Judy showed me a book by Jack Zhang which was a best seller in China. Mr Zhang lives in South Ruislip. Everywhere in our families there are stories waiting to be told. Judy brought her story alive in the unique way only a family member can. [Let’s hear yours!]

We have also reached out to another important section of our community for their views on the post office - the DOGS! Watch out for their incisive comments in a series of videos on social media.