



*Opening of the
Automatic Telephone Exchange
and the
Inauguration of
Subscriber Trunk Dialling Service
at Leek*

by

*Councillor F. H. Jackson
Chairman of the Urban District Council*

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Thursday, 22nd August, 1968

The telephone came to Leek in 1892 with the opening of an exchange by the then National Telephone Company. By 1900 the exchange was serving 47 subscribers.

With the growth of the telephone a new exchange was opened in Haywood Street in 1904 and remained there until the mid 20's when it was moved to the Post Office. At that time the exchange was of the "magneto" type and, in 1927, was serving 365 lines. It was replaced by a "Central Battery" type exchange in 1928 when it was moved again to its present position in a separate building in the Post Office yard. Initially four switchboard positions served some 390 lines.

During the next four decades the exchange has grown to 16 positions serving nearly 2,000 lines.

The opening of the new exchange with capacity for 3,000 lines and with full STD and '999' emergency facilities, marks a further milestone in the development of the local telephone service. The Post Office is confident that the ease of communication that the new exchange makes possible will be of great service to the business and social life of Leek.

ARCHITECTS

*John Heald
of Ministry of Public Buildings and Works.*

BUILDING CONTRACTORS

C. Cornes Ltd.

EQUIPMENT CONTRACTORS

G.E.C. Ltd.

Programme

Guests will assemble in the Public Library.

The ceremony will commence at 1.05 p.m.

MR. K. GRAY, B.SC., C.ENG., M.I.E.E.,
*Telephone Manager, Stoke-on-Trent,
will open the proceedings.*

MR. W. L. A. COLEMAN, B.SC.(ENG.), C.ENG., F.I.E.E.,
*Director, Midlands Telecommunications Region,
will speak on behalf of the Post Office.*

COUNCILLOR F. H. JACKSON,
CHAIRMAN OF LEEK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL
will address the assembly.
*He will then make the inaugural call from the new exchange
to his son in Brighton.*

0273-52355

*At 1.30 p.m. he will give the signal to transfer from
the old to the new exchange.*

MR. J. A. HART, Area Engineer, Stoke-on-Trent,
will propose a vote of thanks.

A Buffet Luncheon will be served at 1.45 p.m.





The Telephone Manager, Stoke-on-Trent
requests the pleasure of the company of

Mrs J. H. Jackson

at the opening of the Automatic Telephone Exchange
and inauguration of

Subscriber Trunk Dialling Service

at LEEK

Thursday, 22nd August, 1968
to be followed by a Buffet Luncheon

*Guests please assemble in the
Public Library Leek at 12.55 p.m.*

R.S.V.P.

End of 'number please' era at Leek exchange

At 1.30 p.m. yesterday the bustle and whirr of activity in the Leek Telephone Exchange in Stangman-street suddenly stopped.

Silence descended as the girl operators looked at each other, slowly took off their headsets and sadly left their positions. No more would the subscribers in the area hear from the Leek Exchange, the familiar "number please?" from the operators there.

About one-quarter-of-a-mile away, in the public library, the Chairman of the Leek Urban Council, Mr. F. H. Jackson, had dialled his newly married son Mr. Edgar Jackson in Brighton, to mark the switch-over to the S.T.D. system at Leek and close a chapter in the history of the Leek Telephone workings.

After making his call to his son — who with his wife is emigrating to Canada on Saturday — Mr. Jackson pressed a button and within two minutes of doing so the transfer to automatic and S.T.D. system was effective.

A milestone

Representatives of the different industries and organisations and general services in the town were present at the opening ceremony, at which the Telephone Manager of Stoke-on-Trent, Mr. K. Gray, outlined the history of the telephone system at Leek.

He said the telephone went to Leek in 1892 and by 1900 the exchange was serving 47 subscribers. A new exchange, he said, was opened in Haywood-street in 1904 and remained there until the mid-1920s when it was moved to the present post office. In 1927, it was serving 365 lines and this developed to the present day with 16 positions, serving nearly 2,000 lines.

He added that the opening of the new exchange with a capacity for 3,000 lines marked a further milestone in the development of the

local telephone service.

Mr. Gray paid a tribute to the operators and his staff generally. He said that there were 23,000 staff in the Midland region.

The Director of the Midlands Tele-communications region, Mr. W. L. A. Coleman, said that there would be a loss of personal touch and "off-the-record" service. There had been enormous demand for telephones which had created immense difficulties. They had been unable to build enough exchanges and cope with the big growth.

It would take five years to get an exchange built and equipped, and in addition the equipment manufacturers had been unable to cope with the demands, he said.

Mr. Coleman went on to say that there was planned a capital expenditure of £300 million in exchanges, cables, and radio systems, and in the next five years this would rise to a total of £2,000 million.

He added that in the Midland region there were

120,000 new subscribers to the system this year which represented an installation of $1\frac{1}{2}$ telephones every minutes, $1\frac{1}{2}$ telephones every minute, which meant $1\frac{1}{2}$ to two million of the telephones in the Midlands were automatic and 83 per cent. had S.T.D. facilities. The fault rate was lower than it had ever been.

Referring to tariffs, he said that the money to meet the expenditure for the developments had to be found from some source. There had not been a rise in tariffs for some time, he added.

Mr. Jackson said that two years ago the new post office was opened at Leek and the new exchange — costing a total of £125,000 with equipment — now occupies the site of the old post office.

Speakers expressed appreciation of the work of the telephone operators and engineers.

A bouquet was presented to Mrs. Jackson by the youngest telephone operator on the Leek Exchange, 17-years-old Miss Carol Leese, of Werrington.

Honeymoon couple will receive Leek's first STD phone call

FIRST CALL from Leek's new £125,000-plus automatic telephone exchange which opens this (Thursday) afternoon, will be to Brighton. To a honeymoon couple who are shortly going to live in Canada.

This inaugural call through the new exchange, will be made by Coun. F. H. Jackson, chairman of Leek Urban District Council, at the official opening ceremony — which will be performed not at the exchange itself but at the Public Library, Stockwell-street.

Which is just as it should be, for after all, the object of the new system is S.T.D. — subscriber trunk dialling — getting your own number.

So Coun. Jackson, accompanied by his wife, will dial the Brighton trunk call code number 0273 and the number where their son, Mr. Edgar Lionel Jackson and his bride of a fortnight (they were married on August 10) will be waiting to say "Hello."

Two days later, on Saturday, Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Jackson are due to go to Canada, where Mr. Jackson will study for a further degree in Icelandic Geography at the University of Calgary, Alberta.

Whatever Mum and Dad, son

and daughter-in-law have to talk about will have to be completed by 1-30 p.m. when Coun. Jackson is scheduled to give the signal for the switch over of the Leek telephone service from the old to the new exchange.

Telephone operators will disappear from the Leek scene, but although redundant at Leek, the Post Office is not dispensing with the services of the displaced operating staff. Work is available for them at the Stoke-on-Trent exchanges and telephone manager's office.



Mr. Edgar Lionel Jackson, of Market Place, Leek, and Miss Christine Frances Durrant, of Brighton after their wedding at Brighton Register Office. The bridegroom's father is Chairman of Leek U.D.C.