

## **IVY HOUSE : Church Street – TELEPHONE OFFICE**

Ivy House (with a similar house attached to its left side which is never named) once stood in Canterbury Road opposite the Church and on the corner of what was known as Gas Row or Gas Alley. There is a terrace of new red-brick houses which now occupy the area and Nos: 227 and 229 Canterbury Road now fill the Ivy House and its partner's site.

The property was built in about 1896, first appearing in Kelly's Directory in 1897–8. The earliest occupant was William Edward Austin, a 'house decorator', but there was a shop in the front room from very early on. By 1902, there was a National Telephone Company base installed here with Mr William Walker in charge of the office. Until 1895, there had been a post office in the last shop in Park Lane, just round the corner from Ivy House, but in 1903, the new Post Office was built in the Square (now the site of a betting office).

By 1911 – 1912, Harry Stedman was running the Telephone Office from Ivy House and continued to do so until sometime between 1920 and 1924. By this date it is no longer listed under this address, although 'Henry Stedman' was still living there. It would seem that the Telephone Office had been moved over to the new Post Office site in the Square. The purpose built exchange was erected in Albion Road in the early 1930s.

Ivy House was later pulled down and the site remained empty until the 1970s, when the red brick terrace of five dwellings was built in Canterbury Road.