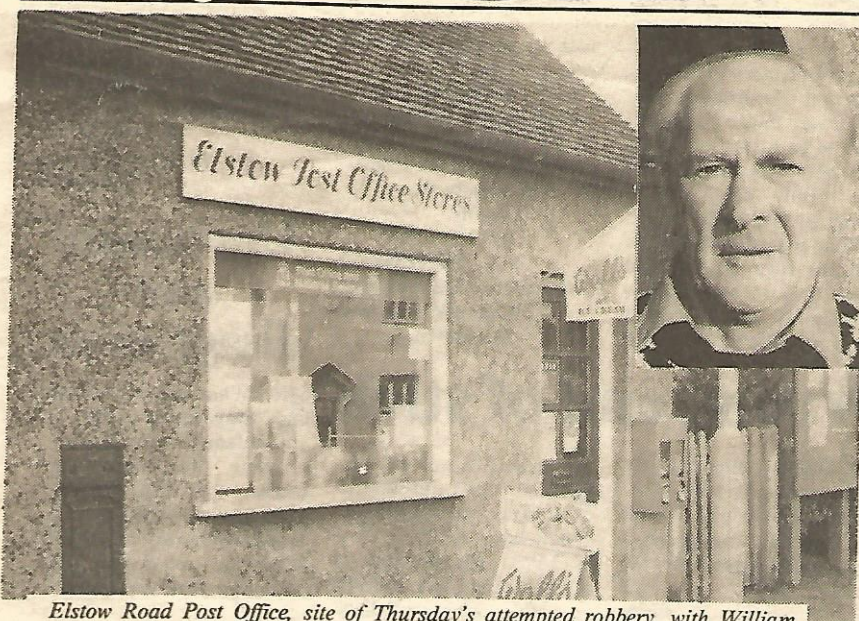


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*Elstow Road Post Office, site of Thursday's attempted robbery, with William Benson (inset) who foiled the attempt.*

# Pensioner foils raid by armed gang

**AN ARMED gang attempted to rob Elstow Road Post Office on Thursday but were foiled by an old age pensioner.**

William Benson, 69, of Moss Lane, Elstow, went into the Post Office at about 12.30 in the afternoon to collect his pension of £61.

"I had just been paid the money," the retired joiner told BoS. "It was still on the counter, under the grill. All of a sudden somebody pinned my arms up behind my back and said, 'Come on let's have some money.'"

"As he said that, another man on my right reached across to grab my money from the counter. I thought, well, he's not having that. I snatched my arm away from

the fellow who was holding me and grabbed the other bloke's wrist before he could pick up the money."

At that point, Mrs. Jackie Taylor, who runs the Post Office with her husband Trevor, saw one of them hit Mr. Benson with a gun. "It all happened in a matter of seconds," she said. My husband was on the telephone. He heard me shouting, but before he realised what was going on they were out the door."

Mr. Benson, who had been knocked to the floor, didn't see the gun. "Whatever they hit me with, it was very hard," he said. "But I was up straight away and ran outside.

"The two fellows got into a car that was already moving away. It pulled one of them off his feet as he was getting in." A passerby

noted the registration.

Mrs. Taylor had pressed the alarm and the police arrived minutes later. The getaway car was found later in Preston Road, Queens Park. A police spokesman said an attempt had been made to set it on fire.

"The car had been hired from a firm in Luton on December 15 using false documents, probably a stolen driver's licence," the police spokesman said. "It also had false number plates. We would like to speak to anyone who may have seen the car from the time it was hired or who may have seen anyone answering the descriptions of the men involved."

The car was a yellow Vauxhall Astra. It's real registration was RUR 336W. The false one was TXD 812X. One man was about 20 years old with short, curly dark hair, possibly permed, wearing a bomber jacket and blue jeans. The other was in his early 20s and about 5'5" tall.

Mr. Benson was treated at South Wing Hospital for a cut on the back of his head and then released. A spokesman for the Post Office said: "Cash and stock amounting to thousands of pounds were at risk. It was largely Mr. Benson's actions that prevented the loss."