

SUBJECT TO CONFIDENTIALITY UNDERTAKINGS

CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS & PROJECTS

Date	Event / Project / Report	Description / further detail
1999 – 2000	Horizon IT system rolled out	The system now known as “Legacy Horizon” was installed in Post Offices around the country.
2003	Wolstenholme case	Julie Wolstenhome was a Postmaster at the Cleveleys branch in Lancashire. POL pursued her for £25,000 through the civil courts and instructed IT expert Jason Coyne to assess whether there was evidence she was responsible for losses. Coyne found that there were defects with the Horizon system. POL settled the case.
2004	Castleton case	Lee Castleton was a Postmaster from Bridlington. He was found to have a £25,000 shortfall at his branch. He was subsequently made bankrupt after losing his case.
2006	Hamilton case	Jo Hamilton was a Postmaster accused of stealing £36,000 from a Post Office in South Warnborough. She pleaded guilty to false accounting.
11 May 2009	Computer Weekly Article	The scandal was first exposed by Computer Weekly revealing the stories of seven Postmasters and the problems they suffered due to accounting software: [HYPERLINK "https://www.computerweekly.com/news/2240089230/Bankruptcy-prosecution-and-disrupted-livelihoods-Postmasters-tell-their-story" \h]
2009	Formation of Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance (“JFSA”)	The JFSA was formed in 2009 by a small group of Subpostmasters from all around the country who had suffered problems with the Horizon system.

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		Founding member, Alan Bates' contract was terminated by Post Office in 2003.
2010	Misra Case	Pregnant postmaster Seema Misra, who ran a Post Office in West Byfleet was jailed after being accused of stealing £74,000.
August 2010	Ismay Report	Rod Ismay, former POL Head of Product and Branch Accounting, was commissioned to write an internal report concerning the reliability of Horizon, in response to the formation of the JFSA. The report was disclosed during the 2021 Court of Appeal proceedings and describes Horizon as "robust." Rod Ismay gave evidence to the Inquiry in Phase 3 and Phase 5.
March 2010	Horizon Online rolled out	New version of Horizon system rolled out across Post Offices.
July 2012	Appointment of Second Sight	Forensic accountants Second Sight were invited by POL to investigate the growing number of complaints about the Post Office's Horizon IT system.
12 June 2013	Helen Rose Report	Helen Rose, former POL Auditor and Investigator, was commissioned to investigate an issue raised by a Postmaster in Lepton who was concerned the Post Office had suggested he had made a fraudulent transaction. The report provided some of the first evidence that incomplete information was being used as the basis of Horizon prosecutions. Helen Rose gave evidence in Phase 4.
July 2013	Second Sight Interim Report	Second Sight were appointed in July 2012 to conduct an independent investigation of the Horizon system. POL provided a significant number of documents to Second Sight to assist with the Interim Report.

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		Second Sight's Interim Report published on 8 July 2013 found no evidence of system wide (systemic) problems with Horizon at that stage, though work was still to be undertaken.
15 July 2013	Clarke Advice	<p>Barrister Simon Clarke provided advice to Post Office on the use of expert evidence in support of prosecutions and led to the cessation of POL conducting prosecutions. In his advice, Clarke explained the issues around Gareth Jenkins as an expert witness and advised that he not be used in future.</p> <p>He subsequently gave advice on shredding documents on 2 August 2013.</p>
August 2013	Initial Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme ("ICRMS") established	<p>ICRMS had two phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An 'investigation phase' where SPM application complaints were investigated; and - A 'mediation' phase where POL and SPMs sought to settle those complaints. <p>There was an ICRMS Working Group which was chaired by Sir Anthony Hooper and met for the first time on 21 August 2013.</p>
September 2013	Griffiths case	Martin Griffiths and his wife ran Hope Farm Post Office in Ellesmere Port. They were accused of stealing £60,000 in 2009 and Mr Griffiths tragically died by suicide in September 2013.
March – October 2013	Detica Report	<p>Detica were instructed to conduct a review of fraud and non-compliance issues in POL: [HYPERLINK</p> <p>"https://www.jfsa.org.uk/uploads/5/4/3/1/54312921/document_25_-_detica_netreveal_fraud_analysis_011013_1.pdf" \h]</p>
March 2014	Project Sparrow	In March 2014, Post Office Board agreed to set up the Sparrow Board Sub-Committee which the Chairman would chair and would involve the CEO, Alasdair Marnoch (Chairman of the Audit Committee) and Richard Callard.

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		<p>The remit of Project Sparrow was separated into two workstreams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ICRMS for which Belinda Cortes-Martin (previously Crowe) was responsible. She was Programme Director of Project Sparrow; and - The Business Improvement Programme (which was run by Angela van den Bogerd.
May 2014	Project Zebra	<p>Report by Deloitte in May 2014 which showed remote access to sub-postmasters' accounts was possible.</p> <p>The Zebra Report was not disclosed in the GLO due to privilege.</p>
3 February 2015	POL appearance at Select Committee	<p>Paula Vennells and Angela van den Bogerd appeared before the BIS Select Committee to answer questions relating to the issues with Horizon: [HYPERLINK "https://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/d05cb9e7-04d0-4d05-8a43-ddd74b1eccc0" \h]</p>
9 April 2015	Second Sight Final Report	<p>The Second Sight Final (Briefing) Report was split into two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part One (22 May 2014) – explained variety of reasons why a branch may encounter a discrepancy, beyond BEDs or a lack of robustness in the system. - Part Two (9 April 2015) – 19 common thematic issues were identified from case reviews. The report was highly critical of POL. Whilst not identifying any BEDs, it concluded that in some circumstances Horizon could be systematically flawed from a user's perspective and POL had not necessarily provided an appropriate level of support.
August 2015	Panorama programme	<p>BBC aired a programme called "Trouble at the Post Office": [HYPERLINK "https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0675m1j" \h]</p>
8 February 2016	Swift / Chairman's Review	<p>On 10 September 2015, Baroness Neville-Rolfe, then Minister of State for BIS, wrote to Tim Parker on behalf of the Government as POL's sole shareholder requesting that, upon assuming his role as POL Chairman, he</p>

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		<p>investigate the concerns raised in relation to the Horizon system, determine whether any further action is necessary and, if so, take steps to ensure it happens.</p> <p>Former First Treasury Counsel (top government lawyer) Jonathan Swift QC (now Mr Justice Swift) was commissioned to investigate allegations raised. It was not disclosed during the GLO or to the Board (so as to maintain privilege).</p>
March 2016	Project Bramble	<p>Following the Swift / Chairman's Review, POL engaged Deloitte to examine POL's position in response to a number of the technical allegations in relation to the Horizon system.</p> <p>The remote access findings mirrored largely those findings of the Zebra report.</p>
11 April 2016	Commencement of Bates v Post Office (Group Litigation Order "GLO")	First claim forms were issued in high court proceedings. Group action involving over 550 current or former sub-postmasters and sub-postmistresses who sued POL in relation to its treatment of them, particularly in relation to alleged losses as a result of the Horizon system for which they were blamed.
15 March 2019	Bates v Post Office Common Issues Judgment (No 3) ("CIJ")	This trial concerned 23 issues relating to the contractual relationship between POL and its sub-postmasters. Mr Justice Fraser's judgment found that contracts were 'relational', meaning there was an implied general duty of good faith in which Post Office was to operate.
16 December 2019	Bates v Post Office Horizon Issues Judgment (No 6) ("HIJ")	This trial related to technical matters about the Horizon computer system since the original version was introduced in 1999. The court found the Horizon system contained a number of "bugs, errors and defects."
10 December 2019	Settlement of GLO	The Post Office agreed to pay out £58 million to the 555 Postmasters.

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September 2020	Public Inquiry established	The Government established a non-statutory public inquiry to investigate the issues arising out of the CIJ and HIJ.
June 2021	Public Inquiry converted to Statutory Inquiry	The existing non-statutory public inquiry was converted to a statutory inquiry. This gave the Inquiry statutory powers, including to compel evidence and witnesses.
2021	R v Hamilton and others [2021] 1 Cr. App. R. 17	The Court of Appeal quashed the convictions of 39 sub-postmasters and found their prosecution by the Post Office to be an <i>"abuse of process"</i> and an <i>"affront to justice"</i> .
	Bugs, Errors and Defects ("BEDs")	Frequently referenced BEDs: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Callendar Square / Falkirk Bug – affected legacy Horizon. Was a problem with Riposte (the database Horizon was built on, owned and operated by an American firm, Escher). It could cause discrepancies in branches and it was known internally as the "Riposte lock or unlock" and would create duplicate transactions.2. Dalmellington Bug / Branch Outreach Issue – surfaced in a number of branches between 2011-2016. The screen would freeze as the user was attempting to confirm receipt of cash.3. Receipts and Payments mismatch bug – Horizon Online bug which arose in September 2010.