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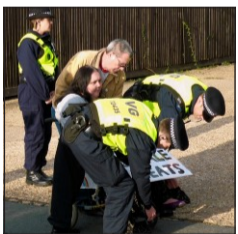
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# POSTIES GET NEW 'PUSH STICKS' TO STOP DOG ATTACKS

Royal Mail issues devices after eight workers bitten

Exclusive by Paul Ainsworth

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BRENTWOOD postmen and women are being issued with special sticks to protect them from vicious dog attacks.

The bright red "push sticks" have been made available to all Royal Mail staff delivering across the borough, where there have been eight bite attacks already this year, one of which was to the groin and required hospital treatment.

The lightweight device grips letters at one end and the postal worker holds the other as they push it through the letterbox.

They are not intended to be used by postal workers to fight off vicious dogs.

**Treatment**

Postman Danny Attfield, who is assistant area representative for the Communication Workers Union, said his colleagues had been bitten outside homes in Hutton, Kelvedon Hatch, Doddinghurst, Herongate and the centre of Brentwood.

He said: "All of these attacks have required time off work and at least four of them needed hospital treatment."

"Postmen in Brentwood have just started using the sticks and some on the rural deliveries have been given sonic dog alarms but they seem to aggravate the dogs more than make them go away."

"I have never been bitten but if a dog is loose I will not go through."



CANINE CONTRAPTION: Postal workers Danny Attfield and Ben Binding with one of the 'push sticks'

"That is what postmen are told, if they don't feel safe they don't go there."

"We do write to some homes to say your dog has bitten a postman so we won't be delivering your mail any more. We don't want postmen with horrific injuries."

Mr Attfield said a majority of the attacks happened when dogs were left untethered in front yards and gardens.

He said one of the attacks in Brentwood this year was through a letterbox.

He said posties want to send a

clear message to owners to keep pets locked away during their rounds, however well-behaved they think they might be.

Mr Attfield said they are also calling for a change in the law to finally allow prosecution under the

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**Save Our Sanctuary**  
**Popstar is behind our Hopefield rescue bid**

THE Gazette has teamed up with popstar Leona Lewis to raise £100,000 for Hopefield Animal Sanctuary by Christmas, following the death of founder Ernie Clark on Sunday.

With much of the residents' housing in desperate need of replacement, urgent investment is required to ensure safe accommodation for many of the 200 rescued animals over the winter.

It's been a rollercoaster week for staff and supporters at the animal centre, who rejoiced at landing the support of their new celebrity patron, while mourning the loss of 84-year-old Ernie to cancer.

Up until recent weeks the grandfather, who set up the sanctuary with his late wife Paula in 1983, was still helping out at his Sawyers Hall Lane centre, despite doctors giving him just two months to live in July last year.

See a tribute to Ernie on page 5 and a full story on the SOS campaign launch with Leona Lewis on pages 6 and 7.



LEGENDARY: Ernie Clark

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