

Redlynch & District Local History Society

Hale Tales by Georgina Babey

Until 1920 most residents in the village of Hale would have been tenants of the large Hale Park Estate, many working at Hale House (right) and on the land. When the estate was divided into lots and sold some were able to buy their properties and remain in the village, whilst others had to move away.



Memories of residents interviewed by Georgina during an aural history project, together with photographs and other village archives, provided an interesting glimpse into life in Hale after this time.

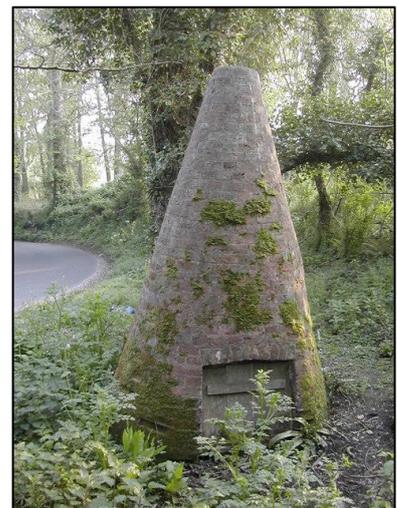
New houses were built and people moved into the village, some working at Hale Nurseries (the House of Flowers), which employed many local people.

A village store and tea room were opened, the precursors to the shop at Woodfalls Cross, and in 1926 a Post Office was opened in one of the thatched cottages facing the Green. Children attended the local school, which had been built by Joseph Goff of Hale Park, following the 1870 Elementary Education Act. In the 1930s a village hall, designed with a verandah so that people could park their prams, was built as a place where people could meet together.

During World War Two troops were quartered at Hale House and eleven Nissen Huts were built in the grounds. A Heinkel bomber crashed into the bedroom of a house on Hale Purlieu, where a young refugee from Southampton was sleeping. He was unhurt, but returned home shortly afterwards!

The father of one of the residents interviewed had been the last Hale 'drowner', maintaining the hatches which drained the water meadows near the river Avon. He himself had worked as a 'saw doctor', mending saws from the local wood mills.

Georgina finished her presentation about the village with a short quiz, asking the audience to identify places of interest including the Galley Hunter Oak, one of the largest and oldest trees in the Forest, the Picket Well (right) and Windmill (Whyman's) Ball.



Our next meeting is on January 3rd 2017, 7.30pm in Morgan's Vale and Woodfalls Village Hall, when George Purcell will be talking about "Downton Water Mills".

All are welcome.