

Redlynch & District Local History Society

Bramshaw Telegraph and Toll Gate

by Georgina Babey and Peter Roberts

Zoom Presentation on Tuesday 2nd February 2021

Two Committee members Georgina Babey and Peter Roberts prepared a You Tube video for members in place of their proposed talk on the Franchises Lodge 'Secret Forest'.

This 30 minute presentation showed something of the history and memories of people who have lived and worked on the new RSPB site. The talk covered the former Bramshaw Telegraph and Toll Gate, being adjacent areas whose workers lives and tales were intermingled with those of the various keepers and woodmen who were at the nearby Lodge and Cottage.

One family, who spent nearly twenty years at the isolated Franchise Cottage, described the difficult conditions that were endured without mains power, electricity or water let alone telephone, before, during and after the war. It was little wonder that they choose to emigrate to Australia. This cottage, (pictured below) now being renovated as Cameron's Cottage for the [Cameron Bespolka Trust](#), will bring new young life to appreciate the woodlands and wildlife.



Most of the area was originally open to the free roaming stock of the New Forest but was enclosed two hundred years ago. Much of the land was difficult to tame, this was seen in abandoned farms and small holdings. Some only lasted a few decades, others survived until relatively late into the 20th century. Deep in the dense rhododendrons is a beautiful four acre lake that few members seemed to know existed. Once used for catching ducks generations of local youngsters bathed there (probably without permission!). It may now be used to attract wildfowl to the area for conservation purposes.

The video, a new departure for the Society was well received by more than 50 members. A booklet entitled 'Secret Forest' is available from the authors for £5 plus postage at peter.robertsnf@tiscali.co.uk

Bob Inns, Secretary

February 9th 2021