



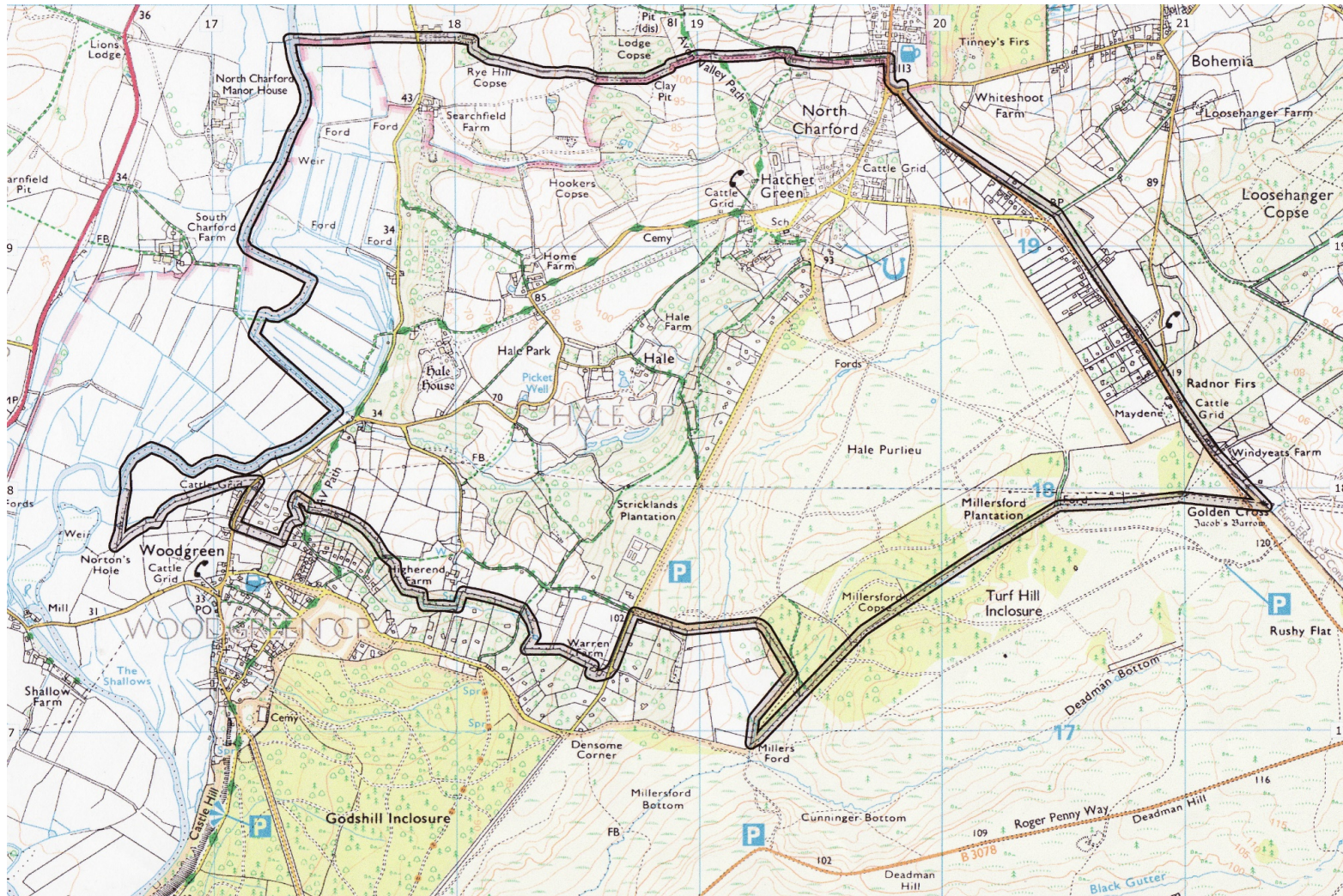
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Historical and Geological Profile of Hale



MAP OF HALE PARISH

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AERIAL MAP OF HALE



HISTORICAL & GEOLOGICAL PROFILE OF HALE

➤ NATURAL HISTORY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Hale spelt Healh in Old English means 'nook' or 'angle', often of an administrative area (*The Place Names of Hampshire*, Richard Coates). Hale lies within the Upper Avon valley, north east of Ringwood and Fordingbridge. It is part of the New Forest National Park with its boundaries being the River Avon to the west, the Hampshire/Wiltshire border to the north (and east) and the village of Woodgreen to the south.

THE NEW FOREST is the largest area of unsown vegetation in lowland England and Hale has a wide range of habitats including lowland heath, wetland, woodlands and a variety of grasslands. Hatchet Green, located on the north west corner, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Conservation Area and there are sixteen other sites of importance for nature conservation within space grazed by Commoners stock and used as a school playing field and cricket pitch as well as for recreation for many residents.



The oak at Hale Park

Most of the woodland areas are specified as ancient woodlands. These are sites which appear to have been continuously wooded since pre 1600, but these areas of trees and shrubs have been largely replaced by the planting of broadleaved and coniferous species, both native and introduced. The canopy of the trees contains sycamore, ash and alder amongst others and the shrub layer beneath is a rich variety of plant life, including holly, hazel, hawthorn, elder, and honeysuckle, among others. Much of the woodland is oak, beech and ash and the older trees support lichens, deadwood fauna, a wide range of fungi, a high density of hole-nesting insectivorous birds and provide roosting sites for several species of bats.

Hale has many old and beautiful trees, many around Hatchet Green. Six are recorded as Ancient Trees with the Hampshire Wildlife Trust: four oaks, one yew and a rare black poplar by the river. The oak in the Park near Hale House measured 28 feet 6 inches in girth at four feet from the

ground in 1997. The oak by the roadside at Fishpond Bottom is called Galley Hunter. The derivation and spelling of the name is uncertain, but Goff records that Gallibagger was a local name for a scarecrow, Gally-crow is the Wiltshire form.

Rosalind Pasmore, former Hale Tree Warden, grew an oak tree from an acorn taken from Galley Hunter and planted it near the Millenium seat by Hatchet Green in December 2000 to mark the millenium. This tree is known as the Millenium Oak or Galley Hunter Junior.



The Galley Hunter Oak



*The Millenium Oak or
Galley Hunter Junior
at 20 years old*

The magnificent Lime Avenue leading to Hale House is visible from some distance away. The oldest part was probably planted by Thomas Archer between 1730 and the 1750's. The trees were topped in 2016 to make them safer and the Avenue can be walked on the footpath beside it; it leads to St.Mary's Hale church.

To the west of the village are both ancient woodlands and grasslands. Grasslands include those that are agriculturally unimproved and may be used as pasture land, also hay meadows and water meadows. The water meadows are linked to a time when artificial flooding of the meadowland was an essential part of the farming system. The Hale water meadows are of high ecological significance and particularly important for breeding waders and over-wintering birds.



Cows in the Water Meadow

HALE PURLIEU, owned and managed by The National Trust, lies to the east of the village and can be divided into a main valley and slopes, and a plateau heath. Clumps and groves of gorse, pine and birch occur at the edges and along the ridge. The Hale Purlieu road bordering the western valley and slopes is screened with birch, gorse, rhododendron and bracken which also serves to mask the pylons which straddle the Purlieu. Tethering Drove road to the north is screened mainly with gorse.



Bell Heather

Cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*), bell heather (*Erica cinerea*) and ling (*Calluna vulgaris*), purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*), deer grass and bog mosses occur widely throughout the Purlieu, but a diverse selection of other plants and grasses is also recorded.

Millersford Plantation to the south east of the Purlieu is comprised of pine and spruce and is now being cleared of conifers and reclaimed as heathland. Millersford Copse in the south west of the Plantation is a pocket of deciduous woodland.

Hale Purlieu is a site of special interest for mammals, birds, reptiles and invertebrates which inhabit both the heathland and the wet bog areas. Important breeding populations of butterflies, moths, beetles and dragonflies can be found here.

Grazing by Commoners stock is the key element in the management of the heath. Grazing maintains the high quality of the open vegetation while aiding the control of invasive trees and shrubs, although at times it is necessary to manually cut the old gorse, birch saplings and rhododendrons to prevent encroachment.

Grass verges and hedgerows alongside the roads are grazed except for Hale Lane and part of Hale Road which are outside the cattle grids. There is a rich abundance of wild plant life in Hale Lane and the verges are only cut back when the flowers have seeded.

Within many gardens of Hale there can be found a wide diversity of insect, bird and mammal life because of deliberate set aside areas for wild flowers and scrub. Garden ponds ensure continuity of aquatic plant and animal life.

Local building materials include timber, red brick and thatch. White painted cottages with slate roofs are also typical of this area. Although the community of Hale is a scattered one, the existence of much open green space is both appreciated and protected.

▪ **Geology of Hale**

In outline, the geology of Hale is fairly simple. A series of sands and clays laid down in the Eocene period (40 – 60 million years ago), largely under shallow marine or estuarine conditions, occupies a depression in the chalk. The latter lies deep beneath Hale but appears at the surface in the north west corner of the parish at Searchfield. To the south it emerges again, folded nearly vertically, in the Isle of Wight. The sands and clays have been raised high above sea level by geological forces and have later been eroded, first by huge long-vanished rivers, perhaps carrying melt water from the retreating ice, and later by the streams and rivers we see today.

The early rivers deposited large sheets of gravel (flint eroded from the chalk) across the parish and these sheets were then segmented by the development of later drainage. Some gravel was redeposited in lower seams such as those on the floor of Avon Valley. The landscape we see today is therefore rather like a layer cake, with the plateau gravel as the icing, surviving on the hilltops such as Hatchet Green and Hale Purlieu. Beneath is a series of sands and clays called the Bagshot Sands. These occupy most of the parish from Higher End to Hale Park. A little further to the north are heavier clays – the London Clay beneath the church and part of Home Farm. Oldest of all are the Reading Beds which are to be found around Searchfield, forming the bottom layer of the cake. In the Avon Valley there are later gravel deposits derived from the higher terraces.

From an economic point of view, this most important. Gravel of a sticky nature known as hoggin, has been dug from pits all over the parish and, north of Hatchet Green, attains a depth of about fourteen feet. Its quality is very variable. At Oaklands Farm (and presumably in the overgrown pits on the Green), it was of a high quality small-grained red gravel and supplied the paths and drives of Hale Park. North of the Green and on the Purlieu, it is much coarser and suitable only for road bases.

At Searchfield the brickworks were served by deep clay pits to the east – probably Reading Beds, although the big brickworks at Redlynch and Morgans Vale were on the London Clay. Ironstone has been quarried extensively in the area, but the source of that used in Hale Church and some of the cottages of the village has yet to be positively identified. There are many ironstone pits in the Forest to the south of the parish. Small amounts of sand have been dug for building purposes (as at Inner Plantation), but the Hale sands tend to be silty and not ideal for construction. Finally, of course, the clays have been used extensively for cob barns and cottages in Hale, although sadly many of these have now been demolished. Searchers for fossils in the few exposed areas of solid geology are likely to be disappointed. Shell fragments have been found in exposed clays of a stream just north of the parish boundary

and others may be present in streams on private land such as Hale Farm or Inner Plantation, but no search has been undertaken. Occasional well-preserved sea urchin fossils are found in the gravels derived originally from the chalk.



Red Rise Pond on the Hale Purlieu

- Fossil Evidence

The fossils so far found in Hale are all Cretaceous Echinoids. The Cretaceous period lasted from 65-135 million years ago and the fossils listed below probably date from between 70-95 million years ago.

Type	Found by	Location
Conulus albogalerus	Valerie Marlow	Hale Purlieu
Micraster coranguinum (or this could be Micraster cortestudinarium)	Valerie Marlow	Hale Purlieu
Conulus albogalerus	Mrs Smeeton	Woodgreen
Conulus albogalerus	Frances Maynard	The Plot
Micraster cortestudinarium	Frances Maynard	Hale Purlieu
Echinocorys scutata	Frances Maynard	Flint field
Micraster cortestudinarium	Rosalind Pasmore	Hatchet Gate Farm
Echinocorys scutata	Rosalind Pasmore	Hatchet Gate Farm
Echinocorys scutata	Rosalind Pasmore	Hatchet Gate Farm

It is mentioned in Gerald Goff's account of Hale that he made a 'small collection' of fossils in the 1870s.



Fossils found in Hale

▪ Field Archaeology of Hale

Our knowledge of Hale's archaeology is divided geographically between the common lands where detailed fieldwork and survey has been undertaken and the private enclosed property where only a few chance finds have been recorded. If a comprehensive survey of the private lands were to be undertaken, there is little doubt that they would prove as rich as the commons.

The plateau gravels which cover the higher parts of the parish are not known to have yielded any Palaeolithic flint implements, although just across the boundary in a gravel pit at Woodgreen is one of the most important sources of such tools in the New Forest. Similarly, there is no confirmed find of Mesolithic or Neolithic flintwork. On the other hand, Bronze Age worked flints have been found in the vicinity of Hatchet Green and such scatters are common throughout the Forest. The Bronze Age is perhaps the best represented period for surviving remains in Hale. A group of round barrows in Millersford Plantation was destroyed in the early 1960s although a Middle Bronze Age bucket shaped urn was discovered at Millersford Plantation. There are no other known burial mounds of the period within the parish, unless one counts the Windmill Ball on Hatchet Green once referred to as Whymans Ball. This may have been a round barrow, later altered and converted to a windmill mound. A damaged barrow (Jacob's barrow) forms a marker on the boundary line at Golden Cross.

Bronze Age boiling sites, by contrast, are very numerous. Hale and its surroundings has one of the greatest known concentrations of such sites in Southern England. There are several fully developed 'horned' boiling mounds on the Purlieu and a great many lesser sites there and in Millersford. On private land, only four such sites have so far been identified – two near Hatchet Green, one at Home Farm and the mound at Archer's Folly. There must be a great many others.

Boiling sites were places used for heating water on a fairly large scale, by transferring heat from fired flints into water-filled troughs. They are likely to be about 3500 years old.



Examples of the worked flint that has been found in Hale

Of uncertain period and purpose is a series of three linear earthworks on the Purlieu. Possible suggested uses have included, inevitably, a ritual origin or something to do with hunting or stock driving. The Purlieu also contains an abandoned rectangular earthwork enclosure.

There are a few uncertain references to finds of Roman coins in and around Hale – probably on private land – but the only well recorded Romano-British settlement is on land belonging to Hale Park. This produced a scatter of New Forest Ware of perhaps 3rd or 4th Century date. Its extent has not been ascertained although the following interesting items have been recorded: a sertereus (161-80AD), five Roman coins dating from the 3rd and 4th Centuries AD, a Mediaeval spindle whorl, a 17th Century powder measure, and a 17th Century crotal bell (its likely use would be as an animal bell). A piece of Iron Age or Bronze Age pottery is supposed to have come from Hatchet Copse.

From more recent times there survives a very complex series of earthworks in the form of at least seven segmented and one plain pillow mounds which dominate the western side of the Purlieu and extend through Millersford and onto the Crown lands. They are man-made rabbit warrens of uncertain date, but probably fairly recent, in that they are associated with Warren Farm, the ancient warrener's house. Also surviving are several rare and very slight earthwork vermin traps contemporary with the mounds.



Pillow Mounds

Minor silvicultural earthworks of the 18th and 19th Centuries are to be found in the plantations surrounding the Purlieu and are of increasing interest as heathland restoration progresses, because they record a vanishing land-use.

Artificial landscape features associated with Hale Park include the fine brick structure of Archer's Bridge, Picket Well and the small earthwork at Archers Folly which is drawn on a 1789 map as a circle of trees. It may have been a boundary marker but recent archaeological inspection found it to be a boiling mound of burnt flint around which trees were planted about the time of the death of the last Archer and contained, according to Gerald Goff, an assortment of trees including white plums 'which bore fruit plentifully and which was much appreciated by the youth of the parish'.

On the right-hand side of Hale Lane going down towards Woodgreen there is a tall brick cone that caps a well (Picket Well). In Gerald Goff's book there are the alternative spellings of 'Picqet Well' and 'Pichet Well', referring to the pond in the Park from where the water was taken for an underground cistern outside the west stable door which he says was included in the inventory of 1837. The current owners of Hale Park believe that Picket Well was dug to provide water for the horses in the field there and that it is fed by water off the Forest.

Finally, modern archaeology recognises no end-point, so the wartime range of the Armaments Research Department at Millersford must be mentioned. Little of it fell within Hale beyond an observer's hut and part of the high-fenced safety zone, but many Hale people worked there and have vivid memories of its operation. Extensive remains of the range are to be found in the adjoining Forest.



The Armaments Research Department at Millersford

▪ Hale Park

The earliest records indicating the name of Hale appear in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles when the invading Saxon warriors Cerdic and Cynric defeated the British King Natan Leod at Cerdic's Ford in 508 AD. Over the ensuing centuries Cerdic's Ford became Charford. This name has persisted on Ordnance maps to the present day linked with the parish of Hale.

In mediaeval days these lands stood within the New Forest being linked with the Religious Foundations contained therein. By 1135 when Henry 1st died these foundations controlled the land on which Breamore Priory had been built. Records from the Priory show that the parish of Hale, together with the churches in north and south Charford were paying tithes to this Priory.

Approximately 250 years later there are records of a Baron West owning a Manor House adjacent to the ancient thatched chapel of Hale. The Manor remained in the West family until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 when all the lands reverted to the Crown. These were subsequently sold by the Crown to families with Royalist sympathies. Hale Manor House and Chapel were bought by Sir Edward Penruddocke in 1538 and remained in their family until sold to the architect Thomas Archer in 1715.

During the Penruddocke's ownership of the Hale Manor House, the advowsons (the rite in ecclesiastical law to appoint clergy to a benefice) were owned by the Doddington family of Breamore House who, in 1631, transferred them to the Penruddocks. The combined families then rebuilt the dilapidated Hale church. In 1715 Thomas Archer purchased Hale Park Estate and commenced a comprehensive re-model of the Penruddock's house and gardens in the Palladian style. In 1717 the St. Mary's church register records that building works were undertaken, with Mr. Archer constructing North and South transepts and a chancel adjoining the existing nave. This was the same church that was designed by Inigo Jones for his friend Thomas Penruddock in the manner of his own St. Paul's church for the piazza in Covent Garden, London.

In 1770 Lady Elizabeth Archer, the wife of Thomas Archer's nephew who had inherited the estate following Archer's death in 1743, carried out alterations to the house, asking Henry Holland junior to make it more architecturally fashionable. Additional large-scale works were undertaken by the May family in the 1790s. The May family then owned the property until 1837 when, again the lack of a male heir enforced its sale to the Goff family. To the last member of this family (who was killed in the Boer War) we owe a manuscript, in four volumes, describing the history of Hale House and Estate, the latter extending to about 3000 acres (1200 hectares).

This manuscript remained in safe keeping until it was made available to Mrs Rosalind Pasmore who prepared part of it for publication as a book in 1999. With no direct male heirs, Hale House and estate remained with Lady Adela Goff until her death in 1911 and then with her unmarried son Algernon until the estate was sold in May 1920. The whole estate was bought by Major Fitz-Herbert Wright who retained Hale Park and House and then quickly sold off the remaining land. In 1926 the House and Park were bought by Major and Mrs Booth-Jones who lived there until 1974 when the Hickman family took over the Estate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Most of this report was in the Hale Parish Plan of 2008, having been compiled by a number of dedicated and knowledgeable parishioners, some of whom, sadly, are no longer with us. As it is such a valuable and informative piece of work, we are adding it as an appended document to the Hale Parish Plan 2020 and would like to acknowledge the contributions made by:

John Davies

Mary Davies

Rosalind Pasmore

Frances Maynard

Ruth Tonkin

Sue Bowser

Valerie Marlow

Please let us know if anyone else should be credited here.