

Hele Society Report to Parish Meeting 28/04/14

The Hele Society in the last year, in addition to our ongoing activities, has been preoccupied primarily with two issues.

1. Composting: - After a couple of false starts we currently have a potential site on offer, but we need someone to lead the development and co-ordination of this project.

2. (a) Old railway building at Hele Crossing: – The Hele Society currently holds a licence from Network Rail to allow us to explore the potential of this building for Community use e.g. possibly as a Heritage Centre.

The Industrial and Community Heritage Legacy of the late 18th century to the present time is significant. The Mill at Hele has consistently produced a paper product from the late 1700's to the present day. Some significant dates to illustrate this Heritage are as follows:- As already mentioned paper production since late 18th century, 1844 the arrival of the railway, 1851 paper for the catalogues of the Great Exhibition, 1870 material for first postcards in UK. A Historical Legacy which we think is worth celebrating. The Society and others hold an ever increasing number of artefacts relating to paper making, cider making, the railways, agriculture and the wider environment. This aim is consistent with item 2.(iii) of our constitution to preserve the historic character of the hamlet.

2. (b) The creation of a garden: – on the site of the former Hele and Bradninch Signal Box . This will improve the general appearance of the entrance to Hele, which is, after all, the Gateway to Bradninch! To carry this forward we have formed a small steering group which to aid the promotion of this project has commissioned an artist's impression of what the building and garden will come to look like, at least externally, from local artist Clare Nash. This will be available in May.

Finally on a more humorous note you may recall the Network Rail teams at Dawlish were referred to as the Orange Army. Perhaps we should see ourselves, given our average age, as the Orange Home Guard having been issued with Network Rail orange volunteer tabards!!