The Woodford Valley Post Offices



Blanche and George Dear with their children; Harold and Reginald. 1911



Harold, George and Reg. Dear. 1920



George and Blanche Dear on the bridge at Middle Woodford



Blanche and George Dear

My grandparents, Blanche and George Dear, started the Post Office in Middle Woodford in the late 1800s. And then my father ran it - my father died in 68, that's when it closed. The shop as I remember it then - as a small child - was filled with sweets, tobacco and cigarettes. And I remember in the old Post Office, coming through the shop at night, on the way to bed, the sweet jars on the shelves and if I was lucky and I was particularly good I might be given one. In the Post Office they had a telephone exchange, people used to ring in. It was the old cable one, if you remember from old films, that you had to plug in and say "number please." So that meant that during the war it had to be manned 24 hours a day and they had to run a shift system. One end was filled with all the GPO stuff and he used to sell things like gun licences, postal orders and all that stuff. He also used to sell salt. So, if you wanted to salt down some vegetables or something for the winter, you'd come in and he would cut blocks off with a hand saw. And then you'd be off with your several pounds of salt. Out the back he had a paraffin tank. So if you wanted a gallon of paraffin for your heater, you could go in and get a gallon of paraffin. Another thing that used to go through the post office was game, pheasants and hares. They would be stamped and put in the old mail bag with all the rest. Then at 5 o'clock in the evening the postman would take it all away and this game would be sent all over the country.

Des Dear

I remember the Post Office in Middle Woodford, you went in the front door and on your right as you went in was a long counter; it was quite a high counter and we as youngsters we couldn't see over it. The shelves up the back had all those big tall jars; square jars with rounded corners and screw tops on with all the sweets in them. And, of course, on the counter was the brass weighing machine with the scoop and the weights. Those were the days when paper bags weren't as common as they are now. You picked a bit of this blue paper and made a cone and you poured the contents of the weighing scoop in and you folded the tops in. So, if we were given a couple of coppers we thought we were in clover, and if you were given sixpence that was a king's ransom as far as we were concerned – what we could buy with that!

Mike Penny



John Hazzard delivering the mail in West Amesbury

I was born down the Post Office at Lake. My mum's dad, John Hazzard, he had the Post Office in Lake, from when we were tiny. My Granddad used to deliver the letters and I remember when I was a child, we would stamp the envelopes and sometimes the registered envelopes and seal them with a wax seal. I remember that.

Betty Evans



1 Hazzard, Grocer, Woodford



The Hazzards, The Old Stores Lower Woodford



John Hazzard and Betty



The Post Office, Great Durnford



George & Blanche Dear outside The Post Office, Middle Woodford. Early 1900s



The Old Stores, Lower Woodford. 1933



Fanny Hazzard outside Lake Post Office. 1880s