

Bethia Hinder was the second child (of at least three) of Robert and Elizabeth Hinder. She was born in Broad Town between July 1831 and July 1832, and she apparently grew up there.

In the 1841 Census, she was described as a 12-year-old agricultural labourer (although she was actually aged only nine), living in 'Cotmarsh, near Broad Town'.

Little is known about her parents, except they were both born in Wiltshire. Stephen Hale, the sixth child (of at least eight) of Stephen and Jane Hale (nee Mortimer), was born between April 1827 and July 1829 in Nursteed, close to Devizes.

Stephen's mother, Jane Mortimer, apparently originated from Worton (pronounced 'Wertun'). His father's side of the family - apparently going back several generations - were from Stert (about a mile from Nursteed).

It's Jane's connection with Worton which seems to have been responsible for the Hale connection with the village.

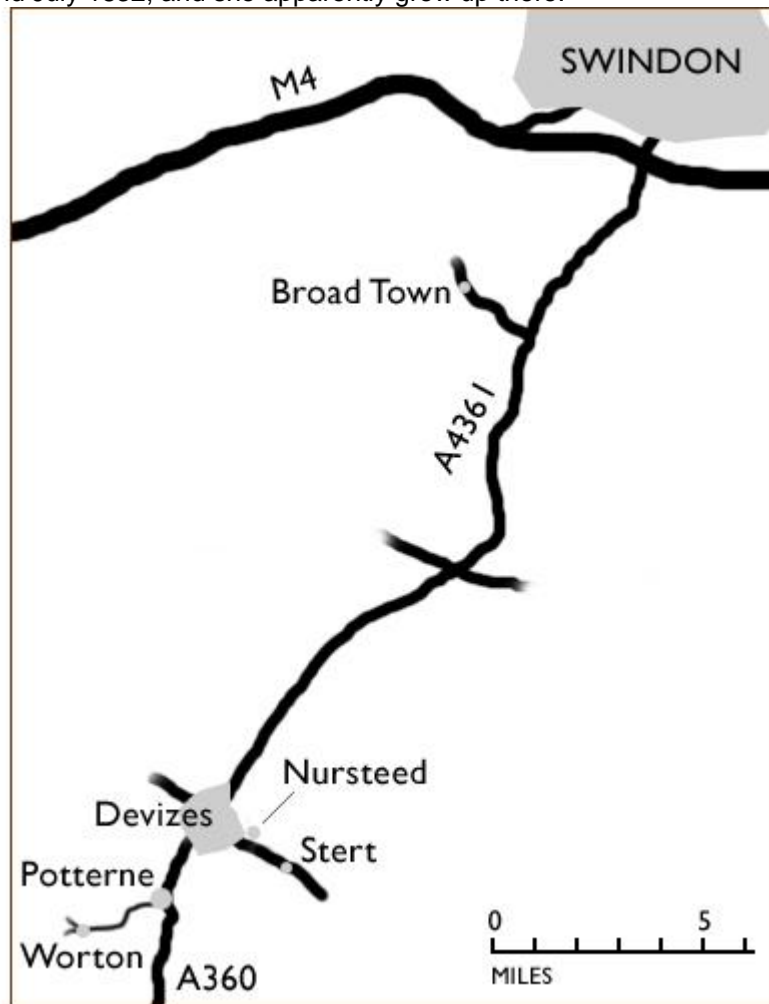
Stephen's parents lived in Stert during the early part of their marriage, but the family moved to Worton in the 1820s when they were both in their early 30s, and Stephen Jnr. was very young (it's actually possible that they were living in Worton before Stephen was born and that they only returned to Stert for his birth).

It's not known how Bethia and Stephen's paths crossed, but they were married on March 31, 1849. Stephen was about 21 and Bethia only 17. They were to spend the rest of their lives in Worton - Stephen as an agricultural labourer and Bethia as a wife and mother to at least nine children.

It's almost certain that Bethia was pregnant when they married, because it's likely that their first child, Henry Albert Hale, was born before the end of September the same year.

In total, they had at least nine children, all of whom were born in Worton:

- Henry Albert Hale - born in 1849
- Ezra John Hale - born in September 1850
- Elizabeth Hale - born between April and July 1854
- Mary Ann Hale - born between March and November 1855
- Charlotte Jane Hale (later Charlotte 'Granny' Staples) - born between April 1858 and March 1859
- William Hale (our great grandfather) - born 5 March 1860
- Alice Hale - born between November 1862 and March 1863
- Jabez Hale - born between April 1864 and April 1866
- Arthur H Hale - born between April 1866 and April 1867



In 1871, three out of four consecutive houses in Worton High Street were occupied by the older generation of Hale siblings:

Stephen and Bethia Hale (plus their children: Henry, Charlotte, William, Jabez and Arthur)

John and Hannah Hale (plus their children: Frederick, William, Mary, Henry and Alfred)

Jane and Aaron Burbidge (plus their children: Francis (Frank), Mary and Gilbert)

By 1891, Stephen and Bethia were living close to the Post Office in Worton High Street, and by 1901 at Grange Lodge (possibly always at Grange Lodge).

Living with them in 1891 was Beatrice Charlotte Staples, their seven-year-old granddaughter. It's not known why she wasn't living with her parents, Stephen and Bethia's daughter Charlotte and her husband George Staples, who by now were living in Swindon.

In 1901, there were apparently four different groups of people living in Grange Lodge, including Stephen's (now widowed) sister Jane Burbidge and two of her grown-up unmarried children.

Stephen Hale was living on Parish Relief by 1901. He died on July 17, 1902 at Wiltshire County Asylum. The cause of death was 'Hemipliga years' [Hemilpiga = paralysis of one side of the body - probably what we would now call a stroke].

Beatrice Staples seems to have remained close to her grandfather because she was registered as the informant of his death (she is described as "Grand daughter, The Rectory, Great Cheverell").

Stephen was buried at Worton on 19 July 1902, although there is no visible stone to mark his grave.

Bethia survived her husband by four years and four days. She died on 23 July 1906 and is buried in the churchyard of Christ Church, Worton.

Bethia's son William later moved to Upper Stratton - according to oral evidence, walking to Swindon to find work at the railway factory - and his daughter Lucy (our grandmother) was born in Upper Stratton in 1892.