

Rednal Village

The village was referred to in a charter of King Offa of the Saxon kingdom of Mercia in 780AD, earlier than any mention of Birmingham.



The summit of Bilberry Hill, Lickey

1 THE OLD ROSE & CROWN

This is probably the oldest inn in the area.

There is an early reference to a court case held before the Sheriff of Worcestershire in 1665 at "the Rose and Crown at Lykehay".

This coaching inn was situated at the foot of Rose Hill, one of the steepest hills for stagecoaches. Much of the current building dates from 1880 when it became a private residence. In 1921, the building and grounds became part of what is now the Lickey Hills Country Park.



1 The Old Rose & Crown

2 THE BARRACKS INN

The dates of the Barracks Inn are unknown, but an inn of the same name stood on this site until at least 1915. The name may have come from the use of the Lickeys for artillery training by the Worcestershire Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry in the early 19th century.



The regiment was financed and commanded by Other Archer, the 6th Earl of Plymouth. They held exercises on the Lickey Hills, much of which belonged to the earl. Guns were fired from a site at the top of Rose Hill into the side of Cofton Hill. Musket and cannon balls dating from this time have been found on the hills.

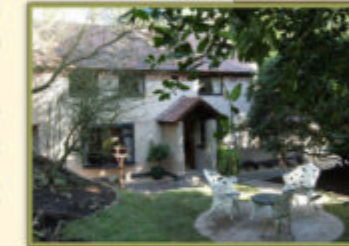
Following the earl's death, the regiment erected the obelisk, in 1834, on what is now Monument Lane.

3 THE POSTMAN'S COTTAGE AND JRR TOLKIEN

Between the Hare and Hounds and the amusement arcade is a short private driveway which gives a glimpse of a cottage. This was owned by the village postman when, in 1904, the 12-year-old Tolkien stayed there with his mother and brother for a few months.

This stay was the start of Tolkien's love affair with the Lickeys, aspects of which are thought to have inspired parts of his fictional world. The name of the Elfen village of 'Rivendell' may well have been adapted from Rednal.

It was in a Rednal tea shop that the 17-year-old Tolkien was seen with his girlfriend, Edith Bratt. He had been forbidden to see her by his guardian, one of the Oratory Brothers. As a result it was arranged that Edith would move to live in Cheltenham. This was not the end of the story, they eventually married in 1916 and often visited the Lickey Hills area.



4 THE POST OFFICE

The post office was located at the start of the footpath from Lickey Road onto Rednal Hill. Its opening date is unknown, but it would have been a sub post office given its rural location.



Most sub postmasters and mistresses were not employed by the Post Office but ran other businesses, usually a shop, which offered Post Office services. It was a significant building both for locals and visitors.

There they could buy stamps and postcards, write them and have them stamped with the local post mark. The post office closed in the early 1960s having served Rednal for over 100 years.

6 THE ORATORY RETREAT

The English Oratory was founded in Edgbaston, Birmingham by John Henry Newman in 1848. In 1854, he purchased land on Rednal Hill on which was built the Oratory Retreat. This provided a cemetery, chapel and house built as a place of quiet retreat. These can be seen from the footpath that heads up onto Rednal Hill from Lickey Road.



John Henry Newman was a theologian, scholar, poet and a cardinal in the Catholic Church. Following his death in 1890 he was buried in the Retreat cemetery.

He was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on 19 September 2010 in Cofton Park, and pronounced a saint by Pope Francis in 2019.

6 The Oratory Retreat

7 THE OLD HARE AND HOUNDS

Thought to be the oldest public house in Rednal Village. The name refers to the hunting that took place in the area from at least Saxon times. The current facade encloses the much older, simpler structure dating back hundreds of years.



As a coaching inn, it would also have served locals, travellers and carters carrying agricultural produce and other goods between Birmingham, Bromsgrove and Alvechurch.

By 1913 this was the terminus of the bus route from Birmingham.

8 THE AMUSEMENT ARCADE

The development of Rednal Village as a destination for leisure and recreation saw the arrival of at least two amusement arcades.

The longest lasting was founded by Joe Fletcher in 1920. Later generations of Fletchers continued to entertain visitors, evolving the entertainment to meet the needs of the time.

In 2024 it was still owned by the Fletcher family, operating as Joe Joe Jims - affectionately named after past Fletchers.



In Saxon times Rednal was called 'Wreodanhalle'. It was probably comprised of a few scattered dwellings on the lower slopes of Rednal Hill.

The villagers originally worked on the land and later, in the 18th century, many supplemented their income with nail making in small workshops added to their homes. Nail making became one of the foremost industries in the area in the 19th century. Quarrying for roadstone was also important.

The route of Lickey Road that passes through the village was part of a Roman (and later Medieval) saltway which passed over the Lickeys. From Droitwich this route ran through Bromsgrove, roughly following the line of the Old Birmingham Road and Rose Hill, through Rednal and on to the Roman fort at Metchley in Edgbaston.

The road was the major route between Birmingham and Bristol.

12 THE BILBERRY HILL TEA ROOMS

In 1904, Mr and Mrs Barrow Cadbury built, equipped and donated to the people of Birmingham, the Bilberry Hill Tea Rooms at the bottom of Rose Hill. Some 370 people at a time could have tea there - but no beer as the Cadbury brothers were teetotal Quakers.



The basements, which also had a photographers' dark room, could store 195 bicycles. The large stable yard could accommodate the horses that brought coachloads of visitors on their day's outing.

By 1960 the building had become disused. It was then managed by the Birmingham Federation of Boys Clubs, later the Birmingham Federation of Clubs for Young People. It closed in 2019.

12 The Bilberry Centre prev. Bilberry Tea Rooms

13 Footpath prev. original road



You Are Here

Cofton Park

10 TERMINUS TOILETS

Once an important amenity, the building has subsequently been used for tourist information and more recently a restaurant.



Terminus seen from the road



More info over