Uncovering the Secrets of Oakhaven

Learning objective: To develop historical enquiry skills by investigating local history and the significance of physical landmarks.

Read the passage below carefully and answer the questions using evidence from the text.

Ellie the elephant loves visiting the Oakhaven archives. She is currently researching how her local village has transformed over the last century. In 1920, Oakhaven was a bustling center for the wool trade. The old mill by the river, which now stands silent and covered in ivy, was once the heart of the village economy. Men and women worked long shifts spinning yarn, and the rhythmic clatter of looms could be heard for miles.

During the Second World War, the mill was repurposed to store grain for the village, ensuring everyone had enough to eat during shortages. When Ellie looks at old photographs from the 1950s, she notices the transition towards small shops and a local mail office. Today, the mill is a protected heritage site, teaching visitors about the lives of those who came before. By examining maps and parish records, Ellie has discovered that local history is not just about old buildings; it is about the stories of the people who worked, lived, and grew up in the very streets we walk along every day. Every brick in Oakhaven tells a unique story.

Word bank: archives · landmark · industrial · chronological · heritage · primary source

1. What was the primary industry in Oakhaven in 1920? (2 marks)

2. What was the old mill used for during the Second World War? (2 marks)

3. Why does the author describe the mill as 'silent' today compared to the past? (2 marks)

4. What do the changing uses of the mill suggest about how the village of Oakhaven has changed over time? (2 marks)

5. Why is it important to protect old buildings like the mill? Give a reason for your answer. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'then and now' split-screen image of the Oakhaven mill: on one side, show the busy 1920s wool mill, and on the other, show the peaceful, ivy-covered heritage site of today.

Extension challenge: Research a historical building in your own local area. Write a short paragraph explaining its original purpose and what it is used for today.