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# COLWALL VILLAGE SOCIETY

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Newsletter

April 1999

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## Annual General Meeting

The second Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on **Monday 26 April 1999** in Colwall Village Hall, starting at 7.30 pm.

### Agenda

Apologies for absence

- 1 Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 14 April 1998 and matters arising therefrom
- 2 Review of the Year 1998/99 by the Chairman of the Society
- 3 Report of the Treasurer and presentation of accounts for 1998/99
- 4 Ratification of Constitution
- 5 Appointment of Officers - Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary
- 6 Appointment of 2 Committee members
- 7 Appointment of Auditor

After the formal meeting we shall be treated to a talk by Liz Taylour, Freda Ballard and Julia Boyle about the Charlie Ballard Nature Reserve - its History, Flora and Fauna, and Future. Refreshments will be served and there will be an opportunity to renew your membership. The subscription for 1999/2000 is £5 per person.

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## Village Design Statement

Nicky Carless

The Design Team of 8 has continued to meet regularly. The results of the questionnaire conducted over the Christmas period have been discussed at length. We have met Chris Botwright from the Forward Planning Office of Herefordshire Council, who gave us valuable advice and pointed us in the right direction to which policies the Planning Authorities are using. We have also spoken to other members of Herefordshire Council, including the Conservation Officer, about using maps within the design statement. A group from the design team attended a meeting in which the idea of a Parish Map was discussed. They found this project very interesting, and hope to take it up once the Design Statement is complete.

Members of the group also attended a meeting organised by the Parish Council at which a representative from the West Midlands Planning Aid gave a guide to the planning system. Much to our pleasure he stated several times that the best way that a village could influence the Planning System was through the production of a Village Design Statement.

We have now started in earnest to put pen to paper. The difficult job will be to reduce to a workable draft the 16 pages of A4 that we have put together. Our first effort will be available soon for your comments. At the same time we will forward copies to the Parish Council and members of Herefordshire Council asking for their comments. At this point we will be able to re-draft and work towards an acceptable document. So just watch this space !

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### **Well done, Colwall**

Colwall is more tidy than last year. That is the conclusion of the dozen litter pickers who scoured Colwall on 10th April and amassed 12 bags of rubbish - less than last year.

Apart from ubiquitous crisp packets and cellophane cigarette packet wrappers, there was generally less litter about. The intrepid group covered Evendine, Walwyn Road from Mill Lane to Upper Colwall on both sides of the main road and the village centre. The threatened rain held off and pleasant conversations were held *en route*.

It is very encouraging that so many of us are taking our litter home.

## *A feast of history*

Sue Hubbard, Head of Records at the Herefordshire Record Office, was the speaker at our general meeting on 4th February. She delivered a wonderful talk about historical documents related to Colwall and what these showed about people and ways of life in the past - progressing through particular periods from Domesday Book onwards. 'Wonderful' is the right word, as she was informative, interesting and humorous and clearly had devoted a lot of time to preparing our 'feast'. She chose to use the overhead projector to display many photographed pages of old documents and also many transcribed (typed) extracts - and at times simply to let them speak for themselves.

'Domesday Book' was described as a universal readily accessible indexed database (or some such words). Colwall extracts showed numbers of households, land measured in hines, existence of numerous slaves and so on. For many centuries slavery really existed, slaves being tied to the land and sold along with it whenever ownership changed. One screen showed the old names, for example 'woolpitt', 'Petty France' (meaning place of little ash trees) and so on.

Later, about the 16th century, records of the Bishop's Court at Colwall showed all manner of dreadful goings on, some unprintable, mostly about land quarrels and particularly men behaving badly with 'other women' - women not blameless either, naturally. Cases of unmarried mothers were numerous: during the birth of an infant, the midwife

was supposed? expected? to extract the name of the father from the helpless and suffering mother-to be.

Wool was valuable and there was a need at times to promote its use against other competing materials. At funerals, regulations enjoined that the body be wrapped in 'shirt, shift, sheet or shroud and this must be of wool...' Many families could not afford wooden coffins. Questions of support of widows and children were at times very vexed. When a husband died, the widow was considered to belong to his original place, wherever that might be - another town, another region. A Colwall woman who had married an 'incomer' would not be allowed support from the parish after her husband's death - on your bike, as our speaker said. She would travel as best she could to her husband's original place, where the parish might or might not accept her. On the journey she would carry a PASSPORT which she had to present to the supervisor at each stopping-place.

Later again, parish records had improved; we noted infant and child mortality rates among other matters. We also saw the lists of the Colwall fallen in two World Wars and the high proportion of all local families affected.

After the talk, we had an opportunity to view a number of old documents which Sue had very kindly brought with her from the Records Office - an unusual privilege for a lay audience. A warm vote of thanks was given to Sue for a fascinating evening.

*Michael Burke*

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## **Colwall Millennium Projects Group**

The Society takes part with other village organisations in the informal Colwall Millennium Projects Group. We provided a survey in the January 'Clock' to help to discover the village's priority for a major project. An extension to the Library was the easy winner - it was the majority preference of the organisations and the survey. The Group is now progressing the idea. We have made representations in the hope that if the project succeeds there will be space for the Society to set up an archive of documents, pictures, photographs and other items relating to Colwall's history.

### **Hedgerow Survey Group**

During the summer I am hoping to arrange some evening walks to look more closely at some of the hedges in Colwall. If anyone is interested in joining us on these walks please contact me. The next meeting is at Beacon View, Mill Lane on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May at 8.00 p.m.**

*Liz Taylour* 