
COLWALL VILLAGE SOCIETY

Newsletter

November 1999

Tourism in Colwall – coping with ‘The Visitors’

Over 1,000,000 visitors per year come to the Hills. They walk the Worcestershire Way through Colwall, spend significant amounts in the towns and villages, delight in the countryside we sometimes take for granted, cause a few traffic problems (the two worst are both in Colwall parish) and create employment in the area.

A substantial visitor survey is going on this year, on the basis of which staff of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the Conservators, English Nature and the Tourist Office will be making decisions on how best to accommodate this pressure in sustainable ways, reconciling the interests of both the public and the flora and fauna of the Hills and their surrounding countryside.

There is to be substantial public consultation, so that everyone has a chance to have a say on the best ways forward. Colwall’s chance is at a public meeting on **Monday November 15th at 7.30 pm** in the **Village Hall**. Come and put forward your view - there will be an open discussion of the issues. Posters round the village give further details.

Archaeology

An archaeological survey of the Malvern Hills AONB started last February and will take about 15 – 18 months. More than half the AONB is in Herefordshire, and the whole of Colwall is in the AONB.

Herefordshire Archaeology will be walking the woodland areas and seeking to plot previously unknown sites - these could be woodland boundary banks, charcoal burning platforms, lime kiln sites or any other features that they notice that are obviously man-made. They will start this winter when the vegetation is at its lowest and before the spring growth and nesting season. All the features found will be plotted on maps and entered into the county Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

“How old is that tree ?”

How do you tell how old a tree is? Well you could count the tree rings, but that is rather difficult if the tree is still living. Alternatively you can measure the girth of the tree, and look at some tree measurement tables. I am interested in finding the oldest trees in Colwall, so as a starting point I have measured the large oak in the Downs cricket field. It has a girth of 23ft (7 m), measured at chest height. Using the tree tables this makes the tree between 400 and 600 years old. The better the growing conditions, the younger the tree. It may already have been a large tree when the Ale house was built!

If you know of any other old trees in the parish, I would be interested to know about them. *Liz Taylour* 

Conservation areas?

The Parish Council has been discussing with Herefordshire Council the possible designation of conservation areas in the village, in particular the area of Old Church Road. An assessment is being prepared to be agreed by both Councils as a draft for public consultation sometime next year.

Village Design Statement

Thank you all for your time in reading the first draft and for your helpful comments. We had a good response, mainly complimentary, with many constructive comments. The points made are being sorted and analysed, and will be taken into account for the final draft which we will be producing in the new year.

Willing volunteers wanted

The Parish Council is compiling a register of people in the village who would like to be involved in the upkeep of the Charlie Ballard Nature Reserve, footpaths and other village amenities. If you would be interested in a few days out in the fresh air with a modicum of healthy activity (for which full training will be given) look out for further details.

Hedgerow survey group

The next meeting will be on **Wednesday 24th November at 8.00 pm** at Beacon View, Mill Lane. We will be looking at how we can bring our results together.

Quarrying, brickmaking and lime-burning

Over fifty members heard Mrs Valerie Goodbury give an illustrated talk on the 'Extraction Industries' with particular reference to our side of the Hills. The earliest evidence of quarrying was on Midsummer Hill around 500 BC; much later the demand increased with the advent of the motor-car and the need for good roads. Types of stone vary from granite and limestone to sandstone.

Brickmaking was first introduced into this country by the Romans and then spread throughout East Anglia and to other parts of the country. In 1573 -1575, bricks were made in Malvern Chase and sent to Gloucester and Bristol. There were Ballard brickworks at Mathon, and in 1846 Robert Ballard brought in new equipment to make drainage pipes. Lime - burning is one of the oldest industries. There is evidence of a kiln at Mathon and on the edge of Park Wood and the Purlieu. The last surviving kiln in this area was filled in for safety.

A cassette recording of Mrs Goodbury's talk is available from Derek Turner (██████████).

Garden birds in Colwall

Colwall should be very rich in its bird life. A small village, surrounded by mixed farmland with plenty of woods and streams, not to mention the hills, should provide a variety of habitats to suit a wide range of birds. It is surprising how long a list of species you can make up just from visitors to the garden. Tits of course we have in plenty: there's a gang of four blue tits who raid the nut feeder, and a little flock of long tailed tits roams about and occasionally visit us. But there are some birds missing. Where are the sparrows, for example? I haven't seen one in the garden for a year or two - their numbers are obviously down. Haven't seen a starling for some time, and blackbirds don't seem to be as common as they used to be.

Bird numbers fluctuate a lot, so it's difficult to know whether these are just peculiarities of my garden, or represent a real decline. This is where Garden Birdwatch comes in. It's a scheme whereby you count the common birds seen in your garden and report the numbers to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). They correlate the figures for the country as a whole, so by simply watching the birds in your garden you can participate in a serious scientific experiment. It's quite good fun to do too - and trying to count blue tits as they flit from one end of the garden to the other in half a second must be good for the reactions! I wonder if anyone else is doing Garden Birdwatch in Colwall? If so, it would be interesting to compare notes.

Chris Sennett

Did you know

... about red boxes in Colwall? The telephone box at the Wyche cutting is listed, and the Parish Council has a written undertaking from BT that they will keep the other boxes in the village 'as long as spares are available'.

The post box at the end of the north wall of the mediaeval barn in Evendine Lane was installed in the reign of Edward VII (from 1901-10).

There will be a chance to find out even more odd and interesting facts about Colwall by trying the Society's *Colwall Quiz Sheet*. This will be on sale in the New Year in aid of the Colwall Millennium Project.

Does anyone have or know of a copy of Henry Meates 'Recollections' of Colwall 1850 - 1900?

Joyce Ingledew (██████████)

Colwall 2000 Domesday - it's not too late to let us have your photograph of your house with its occupants and anything else you'd like to include, with as much biographical and anecdotal detail as you like to give - it's up to you. Drop it off at John Goodwin's, Stockton's or the library, and if you'd like to help in the project, contact Graham Cowan (██████████)

Next meeting - 31 January 2000

The regional BTO representative (see left) is Harry Green of the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, who will be speaking at our next general meeting on **Monday 31st January 2000 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall**. He may be talking about birds, or perhaps about 'dead wood' - whatever, it promises to be informative and entertaining. Do put the date in your diary now.

Colwall Village Society Committee 1999/2000

Chairman: Susan Bond

Vice-Chairman: David Ward

Secretary: Ailene Hickman

Treasurer: Derek Turner

Membership Secretary: Joyce Ingledeu

History Projects (with Derek Turner)

Michael Burke

Village Design Statement :

Nicky Carless

Co-opted members:

Hedgerow Survey Group

Liz Tylour

Colwall 2000 Domesday

Nick Abbotts
