
COLWALL VILLAGE SOCIETY

Newsletter

June 2001

Around and about the Hills ...

Aftermath – The Good News

David Ward

It is difficult to talk of good news against the background of the Foot and Mouth epidemic, and yet it's an ill wind ... Several weeks of isolation from humankind have to some extent rebuilt the confidence of other species to come a little more into the open. In particular, birds which might otherwise overfly our landscape may have been encouraged to stay and rest. One example has been a sharp increase in the number of pairs of redstarts and pied flycatchers using the nest boxes provided at the south end of the Hills.

The bad news is that the progressive re-opening of the Hills and Commons has put more than usual human pressure on each site in turn as folk renew their acquaintance with their favourite walks. This has, temporarily, shattered several weeks of tranquillity for fauna and ended the rest allowed to flora at a period of maximum growth. There are fears for the safety of ground and low nesting birds such as skylarks and corn buntings as dogs, relishing renewed freedom, range over the open tops – and skylarks for example are presently in decline for a lack of such habitats. So now that 'our' middle hills from the Wyche to Blackhill are open again, it would be kindly if we exercise some restraint and caution during the rest of the nesting period to encourage re-colonisation, particularly over open grassland, and to help, up there, to avoid a too 'Silent Spring'.

Final good news is that a new excrement bin has been installed at Blackhill so that, armed with scoops and disposal bags, we can avoid our dogs fouling the footpaths, particularly the Easier Access path for wheelchairs and pushchairs which is now fully in use.

Help with the jigsaw

The Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) authority is seeking input from every part of the large and varied AONB community to fit together in the 'Jigsaw' project to update the Hills Management Plan.

What do you think is special about the AONB and should be protected? What are the negative aspects in the landscape which could be improved? James Ferguson is co-ordinating the input from Colwall and would welcome your views and comments, ideally with pictorial evidence. He is particularly seeking photos taken last year from footpaths, as it's not been possible to take any new photos so far this year. *Contact:* James Ferguson, [REDACTED]

All the Fun of the Fair?

The size of the Iron Age hill forts on Midsummer Hill (19 acres) and British Camp (1¼ miles long) – has led to theories that a sizeable permanent population lived in them. The latest issue of NEWSEUM, the newsletter of the Malvern Museum Association, airs another theory, however:

'Lack of evidence for internal trackways, domestic refuse and general farmyard activities at the sites is puzzling if large populations lived there over hundreds of years' writes Faith Renger. 'The current theory (M. Bowden) is that the hilltop sites were used seasonally for large social gatherings such as fairs, markets and religious events. The hut platforms that are clearly seen on a late sunny afternoon may mark the sites of temporary stalls, ritual ceremonies and temporary accommodation for people and livestock.'

Joyce Ingledew has sent a timely reminder that part of a Romano-British quern, a stone handmill used for grinding corn, which was found on the crest of the outer rampart of British Camp in 1940 can be seen in Malvern Museum.

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From the Archives

Margaret Freed came to live at Stamp Cottage in the village in 1940. She writes:-

To see houses and people and to reach the village shops, meant a walk up the lane onto the Old Church Road and thence along Stone Drive to the Stone itself. After a few visits to the shops with my mother I was entrusted with a purse and our ration books and went on errands by myself. I felt important as I collected the week's grocery rations from Wilkes' shop at the far end of the main street, or called at Mr Hill's little hardware shop in a large shed near the clock tower. I got to know Mr Bishop our butcher (there were three butchers in the village then, the others being Tustin's and Pedlingham's, but you could only buy your meat ration from the shop where you were a registered customer and we were registered with Mr Bishop), Mr Moore the cobbler, Miss Humphris at the wool shop near the Stone and the three Misses Plowman who ran the

Post Office. A little farther on was Mr Button the chemist and then on the other side of the road, near to the Park Hotel, was my favourite shop – truly a department store in miniature, kept by the three Misses Armstrong. At one end was the drapery where you could buy sewing cotton, summer dresses and other garments (provided you had enough clothing coupons) and in the main shop were pots and pans, china, cutlery, tools and little luxuries like ornaments which I could enjoy looking at even if I was only there to buy some Mansion Polish for my mother. There were several other shops including Workington's bakery, and Mr Evans' combined greengrocery and fish shop, but I did not go very often to these. My mother baked her own bread and cakes, while my father grew most of our vegetables and fruit in our garden.

The Misses Armstrongs' shop, now York House, featured in the engrossing slide show 'Colwall Now and Then' presented by Graham Cowan after our AGM. The photos generated many reminiscences from the audience which unfortunately we were not able to record. If you were there, please drop Graham a note with your memories – he would like to make up an album of the show for the archive. Contact: Graham Cowan, [REDACTED]

Bird survey group

Derek Turner

We are now in our third six-month bird survey period and it will be interesting to compare the results with last summer when 41 households sent in their survey reports. The numbers of species recorded in our gardens varied from 13 to 41, depending on whether the member lived in the middle of the village or towards the outskirts. In total 58 different species were recorded, the most rare being brambling, stock dove, heron, lark, linnet, mallard, moorhen, partridge, reed bunting, swallow, swift, garden warbler and Canada goose.

Village Spring Clean

The number of black bags of rubbish picked up from the village verges in the annual spring clean never fails to amaze. About a dozen volunteers took part on 21 April, marshalled by David Ward.

A wide range of confectionery and snack packaging was in the haul, and the zigzag down into the village is still playing havoc with wheel trims. That's enough detail, though: you may be eating as you read this. Afterwards, The Crown provided coffee 'on the house'. Now that is appreciation!

Dates for your diary - 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

Thursday 28 June Bird Survey Group

A talk about Owls by Alan Peace

Monday 24 September Next general meeting

Guest speaker Ruth Richardson: 'Field names are fascinating'

Colwall Village Society Committee 2001/2002

Chairman: Susan Bond [REDACTED]
Vice-Chairman: Derek Lewis [REDACTED]
Secretary: Lis Kirkness [REDACTED]
Treasurer: Derek Turner [REDACTED]
Membership Secretary: Joyce Ingledeew [REDACTED]

Committee Members:
Michael Burke History projects [REDACTED]
David Ward Environment [REDACTED]
Nicky Carless Village Design Statement [REDACTED]
Graham Cowan Colwall 2000 Domesday [REDACTED]
