
COLWALL VILLAGE SOCIETY

Newsletter

September 2002

Next meeting – Monday 16 September
at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

'Houses and other vernacular buildings'

A distinguished expert on Herefordshire buildings is our guest speaker at the Society's next meeting. Jim Tonkin is the Buildings Recorder of the Woolhope Club, and contributor of 'Mediaeval houses in Herefordshire' to the Club's special 150th anniversary publication. His talk will provide a good reference point for our buildings researchers, particularly those interested in Evendine. There will be a chance for questions and refreshments afterwards. Do come if you can.

Jubilee Pictorial Map

The full colour illustrated souvenir map has now arrived from the printers, and complimentary copies will be made available over the next few weeks to all Colwall households and members of the Society.

This Jubilee Souvenir map is a companion project to our Millennium Souvenir booklet. The map was produced from an original water colour by Ron Hill; it was transferred to computer by Graham Cowan and further images superposed, and printed from CD by Orphans Press, Leominster; the project has been carried through by David Ward. Many thanks and congratulations to them all.

Archive group

The archive group is currently busy sorting out and recording all the items in the storage boxes, ready for moving into the Millennium Room. Also included in the archive are the documents which have been held in the library since the exhibition of local history arranged by Marjorie Thomas of Colwall Green and Meriel Tomkinson, then librarian, in 1977. The Head of the Herefordshire Record Office, Sue Hubbard and Archivist Elizabeth Semper are giving us valuable advice. New members of the group would be welcome; if you are interested in helping please contact Susan Bond [REDACTED]

Discovery Walks

James Ferguson

The Society and the Parish Council have been cooperating with the Malvern Hills AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to produce a series of Discovery Walks. Members of the history group have made a number of valuable suggestions to improve the first two walks which will be published as leaflets this autumn.

The first is the Martin Brent Walk which goes around the parish (Station to Chase Inn to Downs School to Church, then past Brockbury to the Yew Tree Inn, Cave's Folly and onto the slope beyond Oldcastle before returning to the old houses in Evendine Lane, Baxhill and back to the Station). The second is to be called 'Two Churches and a Vineyard' and goes from Colwall Church to the Cradley Brook and then past Moorcroft to Coddington Church, Coddington Vineyard, above Hope End and over Oyster Hill before dropping down back to Colwall Church.

Two more walks should be published next year and I would be grateful for extra information about points of interest on the routes. The third walk will be called 'Hill and Valley' after a phrase in an Elizabeth Barratt poem and aims to include those who have a cultural connection with the parish. It goes from the station up to Gardiner's Common and onto the ridge passing Wynd's Point and the Barry Jackson stone. It then passes over the British Camp before dropping down and returning past Oldcastle, Evendine and The Kettle Sings and then the Station. I have managed to mention Housman, Cobbett, Lind, Jackson, Masefield, Langland, Barratt and Elgar, but have been unable to find a *relevant* Auden quotation. Can anyone help?

The fourth and fifth walks only exist in rough. The fourth will be 'Ancient and Modern' which aims to contrast Victorian and twentieth century Colwall Stone with the very old village of Mathon. The route will be Station to Stone to Clock to Brickworks and onto footpath CW7 up to Mathon, then back via Brockhill Road to take in concrete houses and other Victorian points of interest. I would be very grateful for suggestions about what should be included in Colwall.

The fifth walk will be based on William Langland and Piers Plowman and will be an attempt to recreate the parish in 1340 based on the monograph by Allan Bright. A lot of the paths they would have used are no longer rights of way. At the moment I aim to go Station, Baxhill, Evendine, Lime Kiln, Oldcastle, Green, Yew Tree, above Barton Court, past Barton Farm, Langland, Petty France, Church, Brockbury, Ghost Meadow, Village Hall and Chapel and back to the Station, but would be grateful for any suggestions as to how the route could be improved.

Colwall Green – an update

Last year the newsletter contained details of a flower survey of Colwall Green, carried out from August 2000 to September 2001. Following this, in December, the hundred households nearest to the Green were consulted about its management; half responded. Some wished the Green to remain as an amenity for the children (and others) with regular cutting. Others wished for the cutting to occur only once a year to allow different flora to become established. The result of the consultation has been a compromise with the southern end and the edges cut regularly, and a triangular area at

the northern end left to be cut once a year at a time to be decided by the Malvern Hills Conservators (who manage the Green on behalf of the Parish Council). The north-south path has continued to be cut through the triangle. The flower survey will be repeated in a couple of years time to find out how the two cutting regimes have affected the flower populations.

There is a strong case for a similar consultation exercise to be carried out in Colwall Stone to decide how the Charlie Ballard nature reserve should be managed.

James Ferguson

From the archives

From beacons to telephones

Colwall has been relatively untouched by war, but nonetheless preparations have had to be made. In 1642, when war between King and Parliament was imminent, the beacons all over the country were examined, including the principal Herefordshire Beacon, on the hill of that name. The beacon was a tall post from which was suspended by chain and pulley a pan drawn up by a rope and containing materials for firing. The beacon was in the care of the chief constable of the hundred of Radlow, who had to keep the machinery in repair and provide the requisites for firing it, the expense being defrayed by the county. A note of money laid out for materials, 22nd October 1625 reads:

	L.	s.	d.
Int' mis for xxy pownds of pitch	0.	5.	0.
Ite for a rope to draw up the pan	0.	1.	10.
Ite for iii pownds of rassen (<i>resin</i>)	0.	0.	6.
Ite for iii pownds of Hurds (<i>hemp</i>)	0.	1.	4.
Ite for iii pownds of Tallow	0.	1.	0.
Ite for the carriage of these from Ledbury to Malverne Hill	0.	0.	6.

Whether the beacon was ever fired in the war is not known.

Contrast this with the arrangements in the event of invasion almost 300 years later. Telephone numbers were given for six people who were named as the 'Invasion Committee', with their whereabouts in emergency:

"All telephone numbers are for the Colwall Automatic Exchange unless otherwise stated. The Headquarters of the Invasion Committee will be at the ARP Warden's Post, which will be manned day and night; Mrs J.W. Wilson as Chief Warden will be there. Mrs Rowland James will be at James' Yard, The Wyche, to disseminate news and advice to that part of the village; she will be in telephone communication with the Warden's Post. Cadets in uniform with bicycles will be available as messengers; 8 have been assigned to the Food Officer, 4 to The Wyche, 2 to the Police Station and 8 to the Warden's Post."

Sources:

'A History Of the Parish of Colwall' by Marjorie Thomas, 1977
Parish of Colwall: Emergency measures for invasion, 1940

From: Daniel Paterson: 'A New and Accurate Description of all the Direct and Principal Cross Roads in England and Wales'

(Published in the mid-eighteenth century, this book ran to 21 editions and became the standard road book, providing a wealth of information.)

The route from Aust Ferry (now superseded by the Severn Bridge) to Worcester is given as going via

	From Aust	
Ledbury, <i>Heref.</i>		39½
Lower Michel	1½	41
Colwa Green	2½	43½
The Wytch, or Malvern Hill, <i>Wor.</i>	2	45½
Malvern	1¾	47¼

A footnote draws the attention of travellers to:

'At Great Malvern, curious painted Glass in the Priory Church. From the Hill, a most rich and beautiful View of the Vale of Evesham.'

