
COLWALL VILLAGE SOCIETY

Newsletter

January 2006

When the Malverns were in the tropics

Our next Open Meeting

– 16 January 2006 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

For some time the Village Society Committee have been thinking that a good topic for an open meeting would be the geology of the Malverns, as the articles by the late Irene Southall in previous newsletters were very well received. The age and rock formations of the area provide fascinating subjects for study – as well as many myths. Have you heard the one about the water in the springs actually starting out in Norway?

Former research scientist John Payne will be our guest speaker. His talk will be illustrated with examples of the rock strata of the Malverns, some of which indicate that the region occupied a point on the surface of the Earth that was very much warmer than it is now. The formations that surround the hills also have an intriguing history.

Admission for members is free, guests £2.
There will be refreshments after John's talk.

Please help to run the Society

We are in real need of a couple of new members for the committee.

There's not a lot of work: a committee meeting once a quarter in one of our homes at which we organise the open meetings and discuss village topics which might need attention (though we are not an alternative Parish Council!) and future activities. Perhaps some writing for this newsletter, its delivery to some members' homes and participation in the annual village clean-up.

But anyone who cares about Colwall won't be bored and will find the little time needed well spent.

No matter how recently you came to live here, your assistance will be invaluable.

Please get in touch with the chairman, Derek Lewis,
[REDACTED].

Village Spring Clean

'If Winter comes can Spring be far behind?' Our annual 90 minute blitz to clear up the hedge bottoms and verges ready for the new season will be on **Saturday 18 March**. We shall meet at **10 am** opposite Colwall Stone. Please wear stout gloves: litter pickers and rubbish bags will be provided. This is a surprisingly enjoyable activity which should help to produce a virtuous glow. We finish with coffee at The Crown.

Dowsing course

During his video on the restoration of Park Farm at our last meeting, Keith Duddy mentioned that Peter Ewence had done some dowsing over the land surrounding the house. Although Peter is careful not to make any claims, the video commentary noted that 'when we dug into the ground we found everything Peter said was there'.

Some of Peter's results from dowsing the area between the house and the church were on display at the meeting. Following this, Peter has offered to run a one day course for the Society for up to 20 students. He would teach dowsing skills to novices, providing all necessary equipment. The course would entail students doing their own mapping of a prepared site, probably in two 2-hour sessions with lunch in between.

The cost would be about £5 per head, to cover Peter's time both for the day and for the pre-survey of the ground. Lunch could be provided at additional cost, or people could bring picnic lunches. If enough people are interested we hope to take up Peter's offer. The most suitable time would be late spring or early summer.

History recording

New topic booklet completed: The latest in our series, recently completed by Nicholas Neve, is a record of the people commemorated on the Colwall War Memorial, with others whose names appear on a scroll inside St. James church, and the four Commonwealth War Graves in the churchyard. A copy is available in Colwall Library, and a complete folder of information including the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Certificate for each person identified is held in the archive. The booklet has also been given to The Imperial War Museum so that the names can be added to the UK National Inventory of War Memorials, and made available online.

In progress: The National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS) Malvern Hills Branch has recently finished the field work for an inventory of St James' Church.

This is part of a national project started in the mid-1980s to record all aspects of the interiors of the 16,500 churches in England and Wales.

St. James is the 20th church that the group has recorded. They look at memorials, metalwork, stonework, woodwork, paintings, textiles, library (including hymn books, sheet music, bibles), windows and miscellaneous items including the organ and musical instruments. They produce descriptions of each item with its dimensions, take photographs, and record its donors and provenance, which involves quite a bit of research in archives. They hope to complete writing up in the autumn.

Herefordshire Family History Society will be arranging 2 visits to St James' churchyard later this year to continue their recording of monumental inscriptions up to the end of 1949.

Recent additions to the archive

'The Colwall Parish Magazine', January – December 1886.

A copy of an original kindly lent by Barbara Eagles.

'The Colwall Clock' parish magazine that started in 1980.

A complete set. Current issues will be added as they appear.

School Log Books of the Hill School, from 1906 to its closure in 1982.

A copy: the original Log Books have been deposited in the Herefordshire Record Office.

Hill Institute (Club) Minute Books, from its opening in 1910 to its closure in 1961.

'The Very House' by Mazo de la Roche, 1937. Given by Ann Sealy, who writes:

'Mazo de la Roche (1885–1961) the Canadian novelist, was tenant for a short time of The Winnings, Walwyn Road. She came to Colwall late in 1935 when her reputation was at its height; Macmillan had already published eight of her fourteen fictitious 'Whiteoak' family chronicles. Mazo was often on the move, always accompanied by Caroline Clement, her cousin of the same age who had been brought up by Mazo's parents. Their attraction to Herefordshire was for the sake of the two children Esmée and her brother René, who had been adopted by Mazo when infants and were now reaching school age. The Winnings was the very house Mazo and Caroline were looking for. It was large enough for all the family, the children's nanny and domestic servants and surrounded by a huge private garden where the children and pet dogs could enjoy themselves. Mazo observed the children's activities and what they had to say about their new home and the grown-ups they got to know. Soon after they left Colwall, *The Very House* was published, a book dedicated to the children as a record of their own perception of growing up, going to school and making new friends. The older people the children got to know appear only fleetingly in the book, but Mazo describes each Colwall character so vividly that the local readers identified them all in spite of Mazo having given everyone fictitious names. Even Colwall itself is never mentioned, but there is a clue that the owner of the house, 'Mr Tarrant', is one of the Ballard family.

Contributions, corrections and additions to the information in newsletters are always welcome.

Newsletter editor: Susan Bond, [REDACTED]

or c/o Colwall Library
