
COLWALL VILLAGE SOCIETY

Newsletter

June 2007

Recording in St. James churchyard

**1.30 pm on Saturday 7 July
and Saturday 1 September**

Herefordshire Family History Society will be continuing their recording of monumental inscriptions up to 1950. They have completed the area around the church to the left of the path from the car park, and are now working on the right. They would love to see you if you have further information about the people commemorated, as well as welcoming help with the actual recording. Contact: Angela Golding, [REDACTED].

Wyche and Colwall Horticultural Show

Saturday 11 August 2 – 5 pm

The Society will have a display at the show including information on the Geopark Way Trail which will pass through Colwall.

Archive group

We have now finished transcribing all the tape recordings of people's memories made by Mrs Mary Ritchie. Work continues on re-typing documents which are in poor condition – chiefly carbon copies of old typescripts (remember them?). Once these are on computer it will be possible to search these documents for any particular words, such as a name or a place. Some progress has also been made on producing a searchable computer catalogue, hopefully to be completed in the autumn.

Information wanted

David Alford is interested in any information that anyone has on the following families:

Alford (Halford), Spawton and Caines in the Colwall, Ledbury and Malvern area.

[REDACTED]

Mrs Emma Powell and Lockyear's Garage

We welcome new member Mrs Phyllis Benson (née Powell), who writes:

I wonder if you would be interested to hear about my Grandmother Mrs Emma Powell who lived at Stoneleigh, Colwall. This was a large house on the right as you enter the station yard from the main road, now pulled down and replaced by a block of flats. She was a formidable lady, born 1842 and died 1917, maiden name Firkins, married Thomas Powell who died 1907.

She kept stables at Stoneleigh and drove a four-in-hand. This was before the railway was built under the Malvern Hills, so she provided a service for train travellers. She would drive her team of horses and carriage full of passengers from Hereford and South Wales up from Colwall Station, round Goodwin's corner and the hairpin bend. Then through the Wyche cutting and down through Malvern to the railway station. Here they would get their connections to London and Birmingham. She would then pick up passengers coming from the above destinations, and bring them back over the hills to Colwall Station to continue their journey to Hereford and South Wales.

When cars appeared as the new form of transport she turned her stables into a garage which was eventually sold to the Lockyear family. When the next sale took place the house was pulled down and there was a large grey stone on which was carved the house name Stoneleigh. This stone was removed at the request of a great granddaughter, an American descendent Mrs I Russo, and shipped to California.

Emma Powell also managed to have 10 children, one being Martin Powell of the Oaklands, Colwall. His son was Harold Powell who kept the Post Office at Colwall Green. Here the Powell line dies out as he had only one daughter, Phyllis.

A Doctor in Colwall by Dr Jonathan Pearce

[An extract from 'The Surgery in Colwall', a talk given by Dr Pearce to the Annual Parish Meeting on 30 April 2007.]

I came to Colwall in February 1988 to replace my predecessor Ray Birkett, who had served 17 years here after he had left Kington. Nicky Smith had joined him some years before as a part time partner. When Ray retired it was very much in at the deep end as all the administration disappeared up the corridor into his house. I had a crash course reading the guidelines and regulations of running a practice. Unable to find the reasoning in how much had been done before, I ended up starting afresh and put the staff onto the appropriate official rates and regulations.

At this time we were housed in the old surgery off Old Church Road – really a room and corridor in Ray's house, with a portacabin extension. The premises were inadequate from the start and we were in the top two on the list for redevelopment. We managed in one consulting room without a sink, and an examination room separated by only a sliding door from the waiting room. We had inadequate records, office and reception area. When we later had to consult two at a time with a nurse or doctor we had to walk through the waiting room to the toilet which had an electric heater over the sink to wash our hands. The new surgery came later!

At this time we were in an agreement with Cradley Surgery to cover 'out of hours' for a total of 5500 patients. Although we did 'one in three', holiday times and sickness made 'on call' a great tie, and although the workload increased, joining in the 'on call' rota with the Ledbury practices became inevitable as the expectations of the emergency service increased. It was still tiring and with today's laws it would be illegal to be working half the night after a full day followed by another day's work. In a small practice it is not possible to have a morning off to catch up with sleep.

We took on Flora as our practice manager very soon. I had known her as the Worcester X-ray office manager, and she joined us in a post that was basically office manager. This work had been done by Ray's wife Bea. Practice nurses were rare in the early days, and Colwall had never had one. I had known Marion in my hospital days in Worcester, initially from casualty and then Malvern hospital. We took her on, not sure how things would work out, and were amazed at the speed she became an essential cog in the team. Taking on a practice nurse further strained the space in the Old Church Road surgery – we had to use the rooms in shifts. All repeat prescriptions were done by hand when I arrived. This would take all day now, and be at risk of all sorts of errors. I brought in our first computer really to perform this task. I think we are now on our third system at least!

Space came to a crunch in 1990 and new premises became inevitable. Finding a site was a nightmare. Most plots could be sold for building at a value far in excess of that which our 'Cost rent' system could afford. We looked at converting the old bakery behind Provisions of Colwall, Stone Holt by the Colwall Park hotel, and several other non-starters before the Ballard family were kind enough to agree to our purchase of our current site. Although smaller than I would have wished for parking, the plot sufficed and the building has adapted better than many of its contemporaries to the changes forced upon it over the 15 years we have used it. All will agree parking is still a major problem, though. When new the space was luxurious. At last we could all consult together, ablute in our rooms, and have letters typed on a desk rather than on a board over the note storage. Flora even had an office. However the opening day was a disaster – the main alkathene water inlet pipe separated inside the building, flooding the whole ground floor to a depth of 4 inches. The carpet tiles were floating around and the new furniture had tide marks. You can still see the marks on the plaster where the water rose to. Normal service was disrupted, everybody pulled together and we were soon in business. I hope that the space engineered into the design will last me out. I couldn't face the stress of building another one!

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

Newsletter editor: Susan Bond, [REDACTED] or c/o Colwall Library
