

NEWSLETTER

Colwall Village Society

JULY 2009

Revealing Our Heritage

Peter Pedlingham

With the sudden death of Peter, the village has lost not only a much loved character, a shopkeeper extraordinaire and a cricket fanatic, but also a major source of village history. The Society would like to pay tribute to Peter's assistance on various matters and, in particular, for his knowledge of Colwall shops past and present. He recently supplied us with a location map and a long list of shops, many of which have now disappeared. We hope to publish this in a future newsletter.

Michael Milne

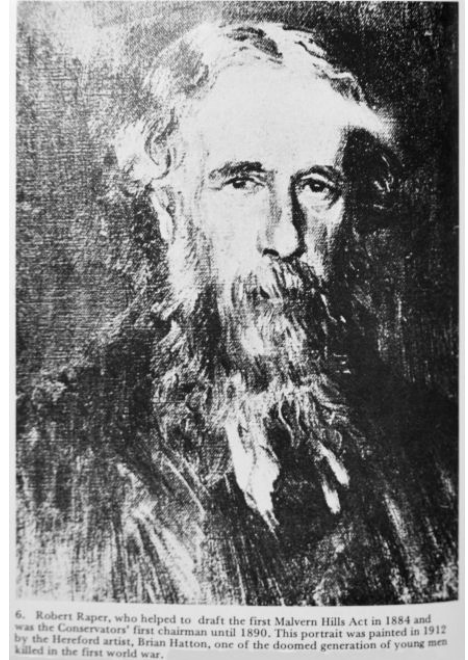
BALANCING ACT *by Ian Rowat – Chairman of Malvern Hills Conservators*

Managing the Malvern Hills and Commons isn't just about managing the land. Although the mechanics of cutting the grass around the commons and reducing the spread of tree growth, together with overseeing the stock does take up the majority of the time of the six Field Staff under the experienced supervision of the Operations manager. They carry out much of the routine management which carries on steadily from year to year without many knowing that it is being done.

Our full time workforce is now supplemented by a large group of volunteers who regularly come out twice a month doing a variety of conservation tasks.

The Malvern Hills Acts give us four statutory duties:-

- To stop encroachment; only a small area of Malvern Chase is left today and we are charged under the Malvern Hills Act to make sure that it doesn't get any smaller. Hence we do take seriously any enclosing or purloining of the Common.
- Secondly we should not do anything or act which will take away or adversely affect the right of any commoner. Not a major force today but nevertheless they have rights traditionally and culturally to graze the Hills and Commons. We are supporting the significance of this today having entered into a management agreement with two commoners to graze the Northern and Central Hills.



6. Robert Raper, who helped to draft the first Malvern Hills Act in 1884 and was the Conservators' first chairman until 1890. This portrait was painted in 1912 by the Hereford artist, Brian Hatton, one of the doomed generation of young men killed in the first world war.

Robert Raper – first Chairman of Malvern Hills Conservators



Balancing Visitors Needs with Wildlife



Marble Butterfly common on hills and Colwall Green

(Photos by kind permission of Ian Butler)

The next two duties are where the balancing act comes into play:

- Protecting tree, turf and bush which we update calling it *Conservation*,
- And keeping the Hills and Commons open for access for people to enjoy with historic rights on horse back. Mountain bikes are allowed on bridleways; these are designated by local authorities and there is a high density on the Hills

Decisions and policies are made within the framework of the Acts. Staff write reports recommending a course of action, the reports are then considered by Land Management Committee and are then acted on by staff.

Colwall is well represented by Conservators, Dr Terry Hunt and Will Watts are directly elected, Helen Stace is appointed by the parish and Roy Stockton is Herefordshire Council's representative.

Upkeep Of The Railway Gardens

In conjunction with the Parish Council and the Horticultural Society, the Village Society is exploring the possibility that the Railway Garden (all along the platform) could be maintained by volunteers from the village. The PC would purchase all plants and materials required and assist in removing any prunings, etc.

If you could offer assistance (relatively little time involved) would you please contact the CVS Co-ordinator, Anne Finlay-Baird, on 01684 540379.

History In Your Garden *by Conrad Shail.*

If, like us, people get out and dig around in their gardens, what do they find? Some finds may give them a clue of what was there before or who was using the land. My wife, Diane, found a German coin dated from the early forties, with a little research we found that land drains (some running across our land) had been put in by German prisoners of war - had the coin been dropped by one of them?

The Ballard Family *by Freda Ballard*

Stephen Ballard was the first member of my family to make his home in Colwall and he moved into the Winnings house, in 1856 which he had designed and had built in 1855. His family was originally a Worcestershire one; he was born at Ivy House near Link top in Malvern, a house which is still there on Malvern Link Common.

He was born in 1804 and died in 1890. His father was a solicitor, who had 8 children in all, only 6 of whom survived to adulthood. Two of them later moved to Ledbury. Tom, became an artist as did Philip, and Robert became an engineer, as did Stephen, eventually. Stephen was the fifth child. He began his working life working for a nurseryman and landscape gardener in Hammersmith. After leaving this employment he apprenticed himself to a builder in Cheltenham for three years and then had his first major project to manage, which was on the Hereford and Gloucester Canal, where he was in charge of the extension and completion of the canal from Ledbury to Gloucester.



Stephen Ballard

In 1837 he was elected an Associate of the institute of Civil Engineers.

His next project was resident engineer for the Middle Level Main Drain in the Fens for Walker and Burges and then in 1846 he was elected a Member of the institute of Civil Engineers.

Soon after this he was introduced to Mr Thomas Brassey, the contractor for the Great Northern Line. Brassey was faced with the problem of the line passing through a marshy area and was advised to consult Stephen Ballard on this. The solution was proposed and the result was successful, with Stephen being made responsible for the works carried out in the Fen country. It was while supervising this project that he met Maria his future wife, whose home, in Yaxley, he passed during the course of his work.



Thomas Brassey

A brief time in India followed, to inspect an area for a railway line there, but he stayed only a few months, because the climate didn't suit him. Work in Holland followed, between Arnheim and Rotterdam and finally in the 1850's he bought the Winnings Estate in Colwall to settle there with his wife. He moved into the Winnings House in 1856. Later houses built on the Winnings estate were The Quarry and Linden, and their lodges. His early experience at Kew and at Hammersmith, encouraged him

to landscape his estate imaginatively. He set up a model farm there and then began his next work, the Worcester and Hereford Railway, the line of which ran through part of his land, before entering the tunnel which was took it under the hill. He was fortunate enough to find the limestone fault which made drilling the tunnel under the hill simpler. In 1862, the Evesham and Ashchurch railway engaged him, and in 1864 the Evesham and Redditch line. The London and Bedford line was his last undertaking in 1865, although he was involved in a number of his own projects in Colwall after that, a spring water supply, a Temperance Hotel and Workmen's Hall, The original Colwall Flower Show, which used to take place on Broadwood Meadow, The Vinegar Works, a piggery, further development of the farm, and finally the Jubilee Drive, which was his last engineering project before he died in 1890. He had taken a great interest in the preservation of the Malvern Hills, because of the original threat from enclosure and particularly encroachment, and with Robert Raper of Colwall in 1876 had formed a Malvern Hills Preservation Society and then had been involved in the process which led to the Act of Parliament in 1884 which set up the Malvern Hills Conservators.

Stephen had four sons and four daughters. Of his sons, Fred became a farmer and a builder, George became a farmer, Stephen managed the Vinegar Works, which he expanded to become a Fruit Cannery and Ernest became a nurseryman, famous particularly for his Michaelmas Daisies grown at Old Court Nurseries.

His three elder daughters were equally active locally. Fanny, who was married to the Revd. Cornelius Hedgeman from Nottingham, Mary and Ada with their mother worked in setting up two Chapels in Colwall and many other good works in the village. Ada particularly was a strong supporter of the Temperance Movement and with Mary, set up the Colwall Band of Hope. Gertrude, the youngest sister, married the Reverend Arthur Abel, but died at the age of 24, at the birth of her baby son, who also died. The Winnings was known locally as a place where the destitute would given a bowl of nourishing soup and there was a particular Blind Organ Grinder from Ledbury who would walk from Ledbury, because he couldn't afford the fare, but would always be given his fare back to Ledbury by Stephen, when he visited the Winnings.

Maria, as an elderly lady was the first person to register a motor car in the County, although she herself would have never driven it, it would have been driven by a chauffeur, or her son Fred, who had previously had a motorised tricycle and George or Ernest. By 1902 the family had at least five motor vehicles between them, one at least being a farm vehicle. In 1903 an act of parliament required all motor vehicles to be registered and Maria's car at this time was a 1902 10hp Chenard Walcker.

Fred, my grandfather was the eldest son, who was born in 1860, the first two children Fanny and Mary were daughters. He continued his father's tradition of farming and building on the Winnings Estate, and when he married

in 1906 his wife Beatrice who had qualifications in agricultural management and dairying, started a dairying school for a time at the model farm in Colwall. There are a number of photographs of the farm and Colwall dating from that time.

Fred also started a Brickworks at Orlin Road in Colwall in the 1890's and the Labour Rest, which is now a private house, but then was accommodation for workmen, still exists. There are a number of houses in Colwall, which have the characteristic smooth surfaced and hard baked, Orlin Road red bricks, and some have bricks with floral decoration designed by Fred's sister Ada. There was also a Colwall Gas works and subsequently gas street lighting in areas of the village.

The dairy farm continued until 1924, when there was a sale of the dairy cattle owing to the construction of the new Colwall tunnel, which affected a considerable area of the meadows around Broadwood, until the new tunnel was opened in 1928 and in fact some of the land passed into railway ownership, in particular the area behind the station which was open field before the new tunnel. There was still a herd of Aberdeen Angus beef cattle until the 1930's but the farm buildings were let to Kia Ora Orange juice, and the farm land let out to Walter Bishop at the beginning of the Second World War.

My Grandfather, Fred, took a keen interest in the work of the Malvern Hills Conservators serving on the board, as did three of his sons in later years, and he also served on the County Council as Chairman from 1927-1937. There are photographs of the Conservators Lunch in 1922, and the opening of Queens Wood, by Queen Mary and also the Lunch given for the County Council employees on the occasion of Fred Ballard's retirement.



The plaque on Fred Ballard's seat along Jubilee Drive

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My Grandfather died in 1940, while all three of his sons were serving in the war, but all three survived to return to Colwall to and carry on the family interest in local affairs and his daughter Marion took up a career as a silversmith, which she taught for many years at Malvern College of Art, now Malvern Hills College.

Chairman's Report for Annual General Meeting on 27th April 2009

The Society has enjoyed a very interesting and successful year, and currently has just over 200 members! We began, following last year's AGM, with Cora Weaver's gentle wander around the Springs of the Malvern Hills.

The Society held a logo competition and from entries sent in by members – the one featuring Aunt Alice and designed by Derek Rees was chosen. This has spawned a redesign of the Society's publications, notably the Newsletters. These are now in four pages with attractive colour photographs – thanks to Derek again, as the Editor.

September's talk by Mike Paulson drew a large audience who was fascinated by his knowledge of the evolution and eventual building of the Worcester to Hereford Railway.

In December Elizabeth Lloyd unveiled the first of the Society's commemorative plaques – the attractive green roundel fixed adjacent to the Colwall Park Hotel entrance is in honour of Dame Laura Knight and will, hopefully, be followed by others – perhaps one a year.

We exhibited at both the Wyche and Colwall Horticultural Show and the Coddington fete. With the help of the Parish Council we mounted a display in the Millennium Room to celebrate the overhaul of Aunt Alice, attracting a large number of visitors.

Our archive collection in the Millennium Room is being re-organised and eventually will be accessible by members on-line via the Society's computer.

The January 2009 meeting, celebrated via the genial commentary of Paul Picton, the history of Old Court Nurseries and the Picton Garden.

My thanks to all my enthusiastic and hard working Committee members – John, Margaret, Derek, Marion, Conrad, Susan, Terry and Deb – who keep the Society vibrant and forward looking – and to Liz and Penny who look after the refreshments. We have a full and attractive programme for the coming year and look forward to seeing you all at these meetings.

Michael Milne

The Mystery of the Missing Milestone! *By Marion Percy*

It happened sometime in 2003 or 2004 that the milestone set into the grass verge on the A449 near Chances Pitch, went missing.

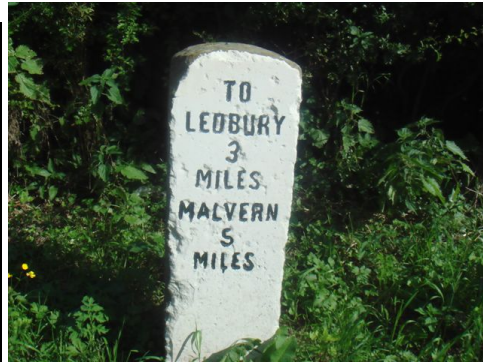
The keen eyes of Suzanne Keen, a member of The Friends of Malvern Hills, spotted it moved from its base, lying in long grass a short distance away.

It had possibly been hit by the Council verge trimmer or, was its removal connected with the stolen car which had remained on the side of the road for weeks, enveloped in blue and white police tape?

Suzanne requested the Village Society to replace it before it was purloined by someone to use in a garden as a bird bath base.

The Village Society sought the assistance of the Parish Council as it was no mean task, physically, to reinstate it securely and thus ensure its future safety.

Eventually it was once again restored to its former position by Graham Carless



and today it continues to indicate the mileage to Malvern and in the other direction to Ledbury. It is constantly checked and is under the watchful eye of the Parish Council Chairman.

Have you spotted other milestones in our Parish?

Future Talks

21st September 2009: Paul Remfrey, British Camp, The Herefordshire Beacon.

19th January 2010: Keith Duddy, Park Farm II.

26th April 2010: Graham Cowan, Colwall Past and Present.

20th September 2010: Dr. James Ferguson, Historical Map

If you have any suggestions for future talks and/or speakers, please contact a member of our committee, and we will investigate.

Your Contribution Here?

My thanks to the contributors. Next issue there will be an article about a local family and, of course, your article...?

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Corrections and additions to the information in newsletters are always welcome, as are CONTRIBUTIONS!

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