

# Newsletter

## April 2021

### Colwall Flower Shows and Horticultural Society by David Hodgson and Paul Picton

The first accounts of formal flower shows being held in England appeared in the 1830's. This was the period in which exhibitions and shows reflecting many varied interests evolved and were a popular form of entertainment. The first record of a flower show in Colwall is in 1847. Much earlier than such well known shows as Shrewsbury and Harrogate. The supreme show of all, Chelsea, was not held until 1913.

The show was held in a field at Colwall Green, by permission of Mr. Herring. Exhibitors from many neighbouring parishes took part in a wide range of classes. There were numerous sections, including those open to Nurserymen and Seedsmen. Cottagers, Amateurs and Gentlemen had their own range of classes to compete in.

Several large tents were erected. There was one for honey and hives, a refreshment tent, one for committee members and one for the rector and his friends where the prize trophies were on display and presented to the lucky winners. In the early years of the show prizes had to be given to the clergy of the various parishes, for distribution at a later date. The grandest tent was where all the flowers, fruits and vegetables were set out in their various classes, on flat tables. The tents were supplied by Mr. Horton, from Worcester, who later established the rope works at Fields End, in Old Church Road, Colwall.

Between the year of its foundation and 1900 the show was held under a variety of different names. "*Colwall Floral and Horticultural Society*" popped up in July 1859. "*Colwall Show*" was back in 1862. In 1871 it was called "*Colwall, Bosbury, Mathon, Coddington and Storridge Horticultural Show*". In 1872 it slips back to "*Colwall Horticultural Society*" and also held a poultry show. 1876 sees a reversion to the old name of "*Colwall Show*". In 1886 it moves up market to "*Colwall Flower Show and Lawn Tennis Tournament*". The year 1891 sees "*Colwall Garden Club*" and by August 1900 "*Colwall Flower Show*" seems to have become well established as a suitable title for the event in future years.

The Ballard family were well established as landowners and employers in and around Colwall. They were also numerous and most of them were avid supporters of the flower shows, which from the 1870's were often held on land at The Winnings Farm. Ernest Ballard, who founded the Michaelmas Daisy nursery, was show secretary for several decades.

Another prominent supporter of the shows was Mr. B. Bright of Barton Court, Colwall. He was the show president in 1892 and 1893 and the show was held on Barton Court Estate land. Unfortunately, Mrs. Bright became terminally ill in 1894 and the show was moved back to The Winnings.

There are many stories regarding a degree of friction between the Ballard family and Barton Court and one can speculate that who was the driving force running the local flower show might have played a part in this.

By the 1870's competitions for the best gardens in Colwall and the other parishes had become a popular feature. Classes included "*The Best Cultivated Garden*", "*Best Flower Border*" and "*Best Trained Vine*". The competition in 1876 was judged by Mr. Parr, from Ledbury.

Judges for the shows were often head gardeners from local estates such as Eastnor Castle, Upper Hall in Ledbury, Haffield near Ledbury, Underdown in Ledbury and Madresfield Court. Local members of the clergy were often invited to judge some of the classes.

Between 1862 and 1873 Phillip Clissett was a regular and successful exhibitor at the shows. He was born at Birtsmorton in 1817 and was a chair maker. He moved to Stanley Hill, Bosbury in 1840. In 1866 he was awarded five shillings for his well cultivated garden.



The 1865 show saw the innovation of the exhibits being displayed on raised stands in terraces. This was done to create the appearance of a full show. There is no mention of this being the case in subsequent years. Perhaps there was more interest in exhibiting.

Some of the prize money appears to have been quite generous. In the 1866 show, Mrs. J. W. Bowers won a guinea for a pound of butter, churned on the Monday of the show week. In the same year prize money for the show was donated by Mr. Henry Bright M. P. who owned Knoll Lodge in Hanley Castle.

#### Colwall Flower Show July 30<sup>th</sup> 1908

From the early years of the show poultry seems to have been an important aspect. *Chickens, Aylesbury and Rouen Ducks and Game Birds* were exhibited. One show even had a cage of *twelve pigeons* on display. In 1873 Mr. John Martin exhibited “*three fine Antwerp Pigeons*”. He released them at half past two, to find their way back to his home at Claines near Worcester.

In 1862 Mr. Benjamin Bright donated a prize of £1.00 to be awarded to the best cottagers’ pig aged 9 months.

Horse Jumping is recorded as an entertainment. Mr. Jakeman’s black gelding called *Satan* was a competitor along with *Frigate, The Squire and Mrs. Stubbs*.

Visitors to the show were charged an entry fee. In 1858 it was one shilling at the front gate and one penny at the side gate. Landed Gentry who arrived in their carriages were charged two shillings and sixpence. A mule or donkey chair was one shilling extra.

An announcement in the parish magazine in 1886 gives details of the forthcoming show for that year. “*The Colwall Flower Show. Exhibition of the Horticultural and Cottage Garden Society for Colwall and all neighbouring parishes will be held in the Recreation Ground Colwall Green on Wednesday 26th August. A poultry show will also be held. A tennis tournament will take place. The Band of the Worcestershire Artillery will play a selection of music in the afternoon and dance music in the evening. Cottagers Tickets 3d each. Children’s tickets 1d each*”.

The show took place in August 1900. It included a class exclusively for cottagers on the theme of “*Creepers*”. The prize money was donated by Mr. Fred. Ballard. This same year’s schedule has the first mention of an *Open Class for “A Table Decoration”*.

In November 1900 a fruit and chrysanthemum show was held in Colwall. This appears to have been a one-off event. Probably not surprising when you had to exhibit *12 dishes of apples and 6 dishes of pears and a group of Chrysanthemums in pots*. Prominent prize winners included some well-known Colwall residents such as Mr. R.C. Cave-Brown-Cave, Mrs. Frederick Ballard and Mr. H.M. Wilson.

In 1901 the flower arranging classes seem to have been dominated by the ladies of the Ballard family who won all the prizes for “*A Table Decoration*”, “*A Vase of Flowers*” and “*A Hall Decoration*”. The only exception being W. Smith who won first prize for a “*Bouquet of Garden Flowers* “. It should be noted that the table decoration class was judged by popular vote.

In 1903 the members of the Colwall Show Committee were as follows - Mr. E. Ballard (hon. secretary) S. Ballard, E. Holland, H. Meates, A. Pedlingham, Rev. F. W. Carnegie, R. Cave-Brown-Cave. The Special Committee for Open Classes consisted of Rev. F.W. Carnegie, F. Ballard, S. Ballard, J. Brain, W. Bray

Throughout the nineteenth century some of the exhibitors' names will still be familiar in the village - Stallard, Beard, Gittens, Timbrel, Brimmell, Manton, Kendrick, Drew, Morris, Baldwin, Wilson, Condor.

The 1927 show included a *Village Pageant*. Miss Kitson was a notable entrant. She was the daughter of Mr. A. J. Kitson, a signalman at Colwall Railway Station. Miss Kitson was dressed as a *Delphinium* and was noted for previous appearances as a *Dewdrop* and *Peace*.

To be concluded in our next newsletter...

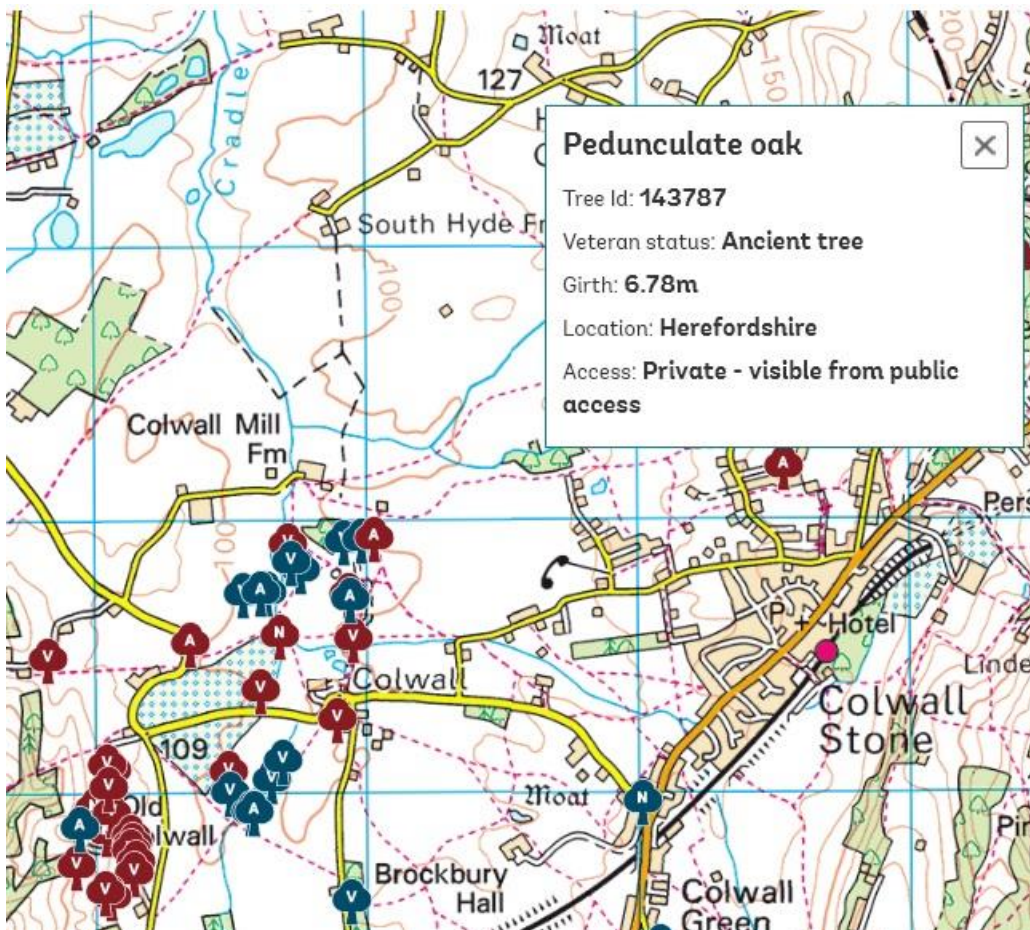
## Latest News on Colwall Village Society Annual General Meeting and Membership by Liz Hill

Our AGM is traditionally held in April, but because of current government restrictions on social gatherings the committee has decided that the Annual General Meeting will be held again by correspondence this year. We will send out more information with our next newsletter.

Due to the current uncertainties around when we will be able to restart our talks, the committee has agreed that members whose subscriptions ended on the 31st March 2021 will be extended until the 31st March 2022. No further payment is required, but please let Liz Hill ([cvsmember@colwall.info](mailto:cvsmember@colwall.info)) know of any changes to your details.

## Colwall's Veteran and Ancient Trees by Liz Hill

*Three hundred years an oak expends in growth  
Three hundred years in majesty stands forth ;  
Three hundred years declines and wastes away :  
Then dies, and takes three hundred to decay.  
From Iolo ancient Welsh Manuscript*



Veteran trees look old and may have missing branches, hollow trunks, deep crevices, but they are still very much alive and home to many wildlife species.

An ancient tree is a tree which has great age when compared to trees of the same species. Ancient trees are also veterans, but not all veteran trees are ancient as there may be other reasons that they are ageing more quickly.

The ancient tree inventory can be seen at <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk>, which maps the veteran and ancient trees around Colwall. Clicking on a tree symbol brings up a box with information about the tree. Clicking on that box leads to a page with more information and photographs. One of the trees in the inventory is the Oak in the



Down's Cricket Pitch, which can be seen from Footpath CW13A. It shows many of the hallmarks of an ancient tree.

About the tree		<a href="#">Show more</a>
Species:	<b>Pedunculate oak</b> <small>Quercus robur</small>	
Form:	<b>Pollard form (natural)</b>	
Standing or fallen:	<b>Standing</b>	
Living status:	<b>Alive</b>	
Girth:	<b>6.78m at a height of 1.50m</b>	
Veteran status:	<b>Ancient tree</b>	



Estimating the age of trees is not an exact science unless you cut it down and start to count the tree rings. The Woodland Trust has a ready reckoner for oak trees and puts the age of this oak as about 500 years.

## **News from the Archives Co-ordinator - Susan Bond**

The pandemic has given me the opportunity for a lock-down project to review the Colwall Village Society archive. All the documents and photographs have now been sorted and re-packaged in archival sleeves where necessary. Duplicates and items not relevant to Colwall or Coddington have been removed. Groups of items have been identified, such as auction sales particulars and estate agents' sales brochures, memories of the village, information about schools, and short histories of various topics. These groups will be stored together so that they can be more easily retrieved.

Amongst them are copies of the six auction sale catalogues of the Barton Court Estate from 1902 to 1921, histories of Walwyn Meadow and the library, and notes on the Ballard enterprises by Stephen Ballard, transcribed from papers he deposited at the Hereford Record Office. Recent acquisitions include a collection of local postcards and personal papers from the late Barbara Eagles, a war-time Identity Card, and programmes of all the concerts given by the Colwall Ladies Choir, who sang together from 1971 to 2009.

The Society welcomes donations of papers and photographs relating to the history of Colwall and Coddington. If you have had your own clear up during lock down perhaps you have come across some items you might donate or lend to us for copying.

All acquisitions to date have been entered in the computer catalogue. The next task is to make this available on our web site with a search facility. In the meantime, if you are researching a Colwall topic or family and would like to know if the archive has any information please email me at [cvsarchive@colwall.info](mailto:cvsarchive@colwall.info)

Newsletter Editor: Andy



email: [cvsnewsletter@colwall.info](mailto:cvsnewsletter@colwall.info)

Colwall Village Society website address: [cvs.colwall.info](http://cvs.colwall.info)