

RUGELEY TIMES

**COLTON
VILLAGE**

**In the
NEWS**

Press Cuttings Volume VI

Village history is told in book

YOU may not know it to see it today, but the small, tranquil-looking village of Colton has had an eventful, sometimes volatile, past.

During an extremely long



The Colton history book

by **LESLEY GOODERIDGE**

history, dating back to well before the Norman Conquest of 1066, it has witnessed many notable events.

The village outside Rugeley has been home to a distinguished 17th century courtier, has witnessed a number of murders and has been the scene of an alleged plot to overthrow a king.

All these fascinating facts and more can now be found within the pages of a new book Colton - History of a Staffordshire Village.

It is the result of long hours of meticulous research and recording by members of Colton History Society.

Since the group formed in 2002, members have had an aim of updating a book written by the Rev Parker, Rector of Colton, in the late 19th century.

Recording the village's history from pre-historic times right through to the

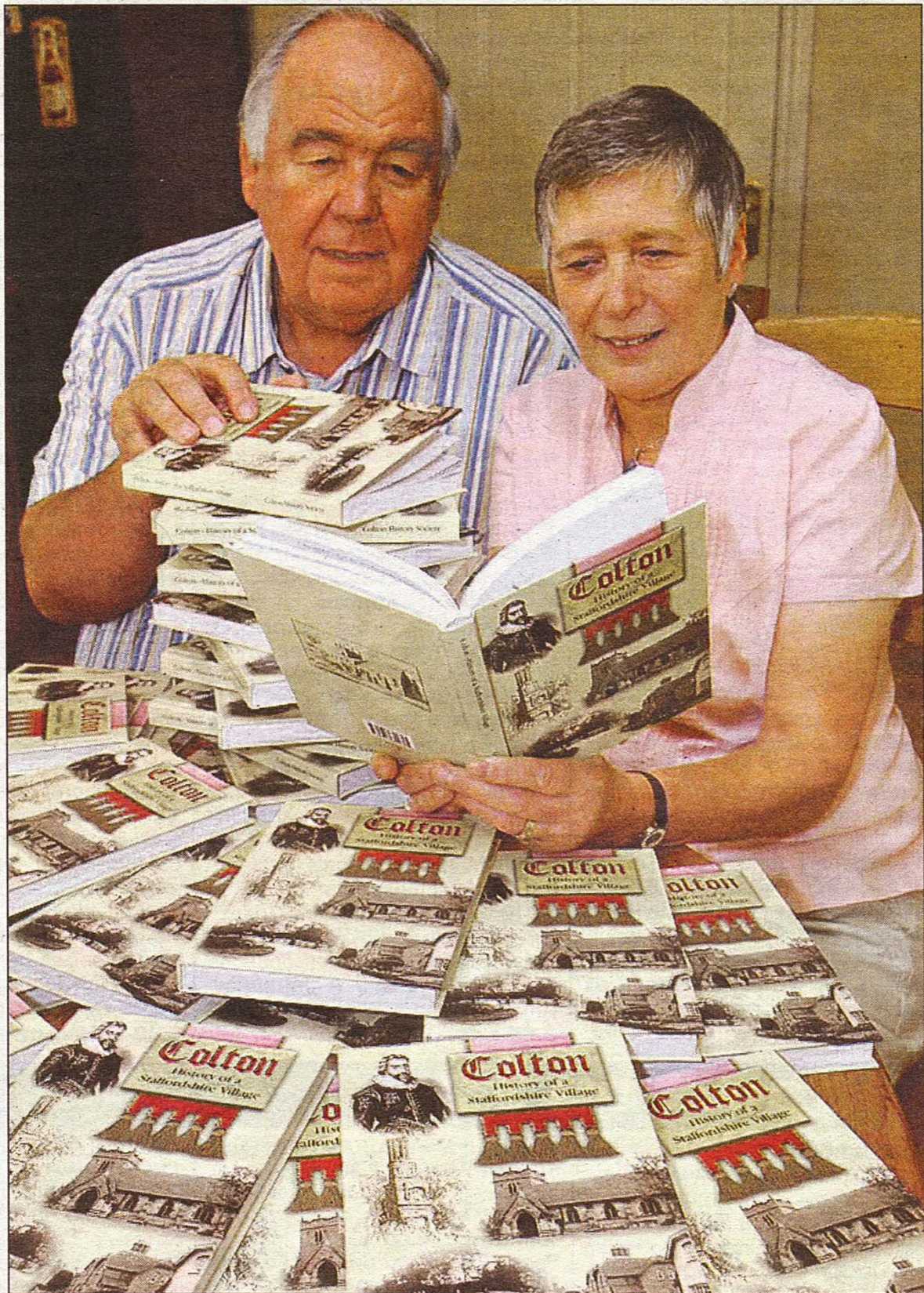
21st century, the publication is illustrated with numerous pictures and sketches from the society's extensive archives.

The book has been published with the aid of a grant from the Countryside Agency, with funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund and supported by the Nationwide Building Society.

It will be officially unveiled at a book launch and small exhibition on Sunday, May 18 at Colton Village Hall from 2pm to 4.30pm attended by Lady Bagot, the society's honorary president.

Costing £12.99 each, copies will be available at the launch and also on sale at WHSmith, Waterstones, Redshaws of Lichfield, local libraries, online at www.coltonhistorysociety.org.uk or by calling 01283 575039 or 01543 473316.

New page in village history



Bill Brown and Gill Sykes launch Colton - History of a Staffordshire Village

Report by Michelle Pearson

Life in a village in Staffordshire has been chronicled in a new book produced by a history group in the area.

Colton History Society will launch its book, called Colton - History of a Staffordshire Village, on May 18 to coincide with an exhibition of old photographs and other memorabilia at Colton Village Hall.

A total of 750 copies have been produced and people in the village are expected to snap them up.

Deputy chairman Bill Brown said: "We

hope to sell a good number of them and expect they will be popular. We have done three books now and have produced both photo books and a book of postcards."

The new history is an updated version of one written by the Reverend Parker, who was rector in Colton in the late 19th Century.

More information is available at www.coltonhistorysociety.org.uk

History is brought to book

THE VILLAGE of Colton may be small but it has a long and eventful history — now documented in a new book.

Colton History Society has put together *Colton — History of a Staffordshire Village*.

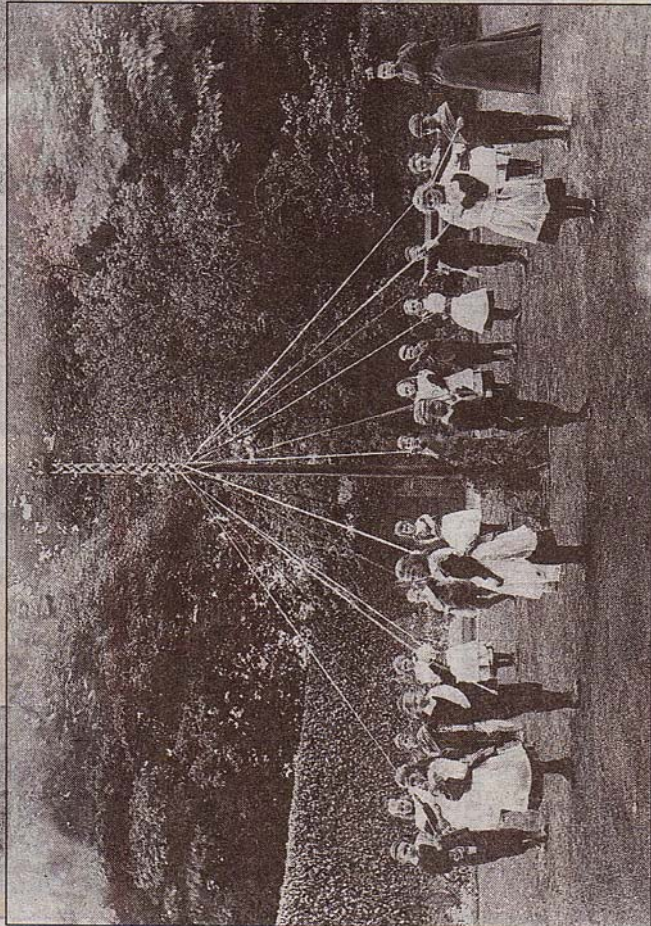
The village's history dates back far past the Norman Conquest in 1066 and has seen a string of murders, a distinguished 17th century courtier and an alleged plot to overthrow a king.

The society has worked since 2002 at researching the historical records of Colton in great detail.

Members have donated long hours and the illustrated book documents life in the village from pre-historic times to the 21st century.

Colton — History of a Staffordshire Village has been published with the help of a grant from the Countryside Agency with funds from the Heritage Lottery fund and supported by Nationwide Building Society.

A special launch and exhibition will be held at Colton Village Hall on Sunday, May 18 when the society's honorary president, Nancy, Lady Bagot, will officially unveil the book.



Left: Dancing around the maypole in Colton in 1892.

Right: The front cover of the new book, available at book shops across the region.





Chairman Gill Sykes from Colton History Society launch new book Colton History of a Staffordshire Village

Book chronicles history of village

LIFE in a village in a village near Rugeley has been chronicled in a new book produced by a history group in the area.

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The launch of the book will take place between

History Corner - see page 19

2.30pm and 4.30pm on Sunday (May 18). The village's history dates back to the Norman conquest of 1066. Throughout its history, Colton has been the home of a distinguished 17th Century courtier, witnessed a number of murders and been the scene of an alleged plot to overthrow the king.

Colton - History of a Staffordshire Village is the result of many hours of painstaking work by the society's members.

It is an updated version of one written by the Reverend Parker, who was rector in Colton in the late 19th Century. More information is available at www.coltonhistorysociety.org.uk

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Village thrived even during Black Death

WHEN the Rugeley village of Colton first came into being is shrouded in mystery but probably dates from around the Anglo Saxon period, the name deriving from an old word for Hill as Martin's Hill is a dominant feature.

It appeared in the Domesday book and was probably the biggest settlement between Stafford and Lichfield at that time.

Under Norman rule Colton settled into a

by **LESLEY GOODERIDGE**

system of organisation known as the parish with Colton's church erected by the lord of the Church Manor. Everyone was obliged to contribute one tenth of their produce to pay the lord for his church and to maintain the priest in his office.

Although largely restored in the Victorian era, parts of the church of St Mary that stands today date from the late Norman period. In 1348 the Black Death carried

away nearly half of the country's population but no records have been found that it affected Colton, in fact the village appeared to be thriving.

During the Tudor period Colton remained mainly under the control of one family, the Gresleys who became owners of both the Church Manor and Colton Hall Manor and made major improvements to Colton Hall.

In the early 1600s the Gresleys ceased their involvement with Colton after 250 years and by then Colton Hall was a substantial house with relative Walter Aston paying £16,000 for it and the estate.

Other large homes were built in the village including Bellamour Hall (the spelling later changed) and Colton House which still stands prominently in Bellamour Way.

As the industrial revolution swept the country Colton was well positioned on one of the national networks of communication with narrowboats hauled by horses making their way along the Trent and Mersey canal.

By 1901 the population was recorded at 760 with the largest amount of those in employment either working on the land or associated trades such as blacksmith or wheelwright. The railway brought new jobs.

October 12, 2007 goes down in history as the Queen touched down in Colton when she disembarked from the royal train at Trent Valley station possibly the only reigning monarch ever to visit the parish.

From Colton - History of a Staffordshire Village: by Colton History Society.



The old Bellamour Hall

A LONG REIGN



Then and now
Left, Colton May Queen, 1901, was Miss Lizzie Kate Norman, pictured with her attendants. And, right, Mrs. Lizzie Kate Parr, now aged 91, looks back to those bygone days.

Lizzie's 79 years as queen

Lizzie Kate Parr has had a beautiful life — for 79 years she was the reigning Colton May Queen!

She became May Queen at the turn of the century, when she was just 12 — and her "successor" was not chosen until this year.

Now, at 91 years of age, Mrs. Parr still has vivid memories of her childhood.

She remembers being chosen by all the other girls and boys at Colton School and leading the May Day procession through the village.

In those days she was Miss Lizzie Kate Norman, and it was one of her proudest moments as she was crowned outside the school at the start of the grand local occasion.

In an old but well-kept photograph album Lizzie has pictures of Colton Queens dating

back as far as 1895, and she remembers all her friends' faces.

When she was Queen her little maids of honour were Mary Ovingdon and Beatrice Radford. These little girls represented spring and summer.

"The crowning ceremony was performed outside the school, and I was given a sceptre to carry and a bag for collecting money," said Lizzie.

"I wore a lovely dress with a pale blue veil edged in fur, and my maids had to carry it," she said.

Lizzie recalled that her Aunt Bess Yates made a beautiful dress for her daughter in 1895, when she was Queen, and afterwards it was used by other queens, including her niece Lizzie.

In 1897, when Lizzie was eight, she was maid of honour to a girl

called Elkings, and again she has a photograph.

Only those children who wanted to join took part in the procession, and they all went around the village, to the rectory, Bellamour Hall and to neighbouring farms singing May Day songs.

"Some boys dressed as the butcher, baker, blacksmith and farmer to represent the trades," said Mr. William Parr, Lizzie's husband.

Villagers used to drop money into the Queen's sack, and it all went to pay for a huge party afterwards which was held at Colton House, home of influential landowner and keen photographer Mr. Fredric Bonny.

William and Lizzie live at 'The Croft' on Colton's High Street. William recalled that a grand old chap — Mr. J. W. Tingay —



catered for the party.

Mr. Tingay was a baker and grocer in the last shop on the left in Upper Brook Street.

Mr. Bonny used to take group photographs and pictures of the Queen with her attendants to preserve the memorable occasion, and it is these photographs which take pride of place in Lizzie's album.

"Every child was given a present, and also every mother," Lizzie remembered.

William also has fond memories of the occasion.

"There was nothing in the parish to equal it. Since 1901 May Day celebrations have never been revived to that extent."

This year a new Colton May Queen was crowned, after 79 years, in the shape of Maria Wigley, as part of an attempt to restore Colton's once popular festival.



Lizzie's successor — 1980 May Queen Maria Wigley.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Colton churchyard extensions

SIR,—In view of the adverse publicity given about the work begun on extensions to Colton Churchyard the facts are as follows:—

In view of the filling up of the present Cemetery the Church Council acquired the field between the school and the church shortly after the death of Mrs. Oldham, late of Bellamoar Lodge, in July, 1956.

It was necessary to obtain permission from the County Planning Authority to use this field for burial purposes so the Rector had the field surveyed by architects because, due to the water-bogged condition of the ground, it was known that the lower part would be unusable for graves.

DANGEROUS BEND

The Parish Council had approached the County Council last year about taking out the dangerous bend between the school and Brook Bridge. One of the conditions for planning permission was the setting back of the roadside by 15 to 18 feet.

It was obvious that this surplus soil could be moved to fill up as much as possible of the lower portion to a height (3ft. to 3ft. 6in.) above road level to allow grave-digging on as large an area as possible.

A suitable retaining wall is necessary to hold this up.

These plans were shown and the reasons explained by the Rector to myself and the other male members of the Church Council, who had been appointed as a sub-

committee by that body soon after we acquired the land. The plans were also put before the Parish Council, although that body is not directly concerned.

Owing to the urgent necessity to find burial accommodation the Rector, at the last Church Council meeting, asked for and received authority to bulldoze the land and build the retaining wall.

THE COST

As to its cost the laying out of the new burial ground, as it was then called, was one of the objects of the £2,500 five years appeal when it was first launched three years ago.

As to the fuss about the trees, one fell across and blocked the road a year or

two ago, and this would have been fatal had anyone been passing at the time (part of the tree remains on the verge outside the cemetery).

The elm nearest the bridge was hollow and dangerous (like its twin from the same root, removed when unsafe to walk under about five years ago).

The oak nearest the school was stunted through being struck by lightning over 50 years ago.

Only one ash tree had any pretensions to being timber and this one was particularly dangerous by making the road so narrow that it was impossible to see the oncoming traffic between the bridge and the village.

Where does the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance come into the matter?

Anyones concerned about.

- (1) Finding a place to bury our dead in the parish;
- (2) Removing danger from this stretch of road;
- (3) Seeing a decent and fitting approach both to the church and village instead of the dilapidated fence and scraggy hedge

should give the rector all the support they can for his foresigh and oft take off his own jacket.

FRANK W. COOPER.

Parish Clerk and Member of the Church Council.

HARVEST-HOME AT COLTON.

From the Staffordshire Advertiser, October 1st, 1859.

The pretty village of Colton presented an unusually gay and animated appearance on Tuesday last, when old and young, the rich and poor, met together for the purpose of keeping the feast of harvest, and acknowledging by public thanksgiving their gratitude to God for the late bounteous supply of the fruits of the earth. The festival, we believe, was originated with the farmers of the parish, who considered it would be a most fitting time for one of those re-visions when all shades of difference, both religious and political, should be forgotten in one united feeling of gratitude to the beneficent and All-wise Providence; and if display and decoration bespeak a people's gratitude, and are a sure test of the feelings of the heart, the harvest-home at Colton, though last, may be considered amongst the most triumphant of any which have taken place this year in this county.

The day was remarkably fine and warm, and well calculated for the enjoyment of the out-door festivities. The scene was in a field between Bellamour house and the church at Colton. Athwart the bridge near the entrance to the field, had been erected a massive structure decorated with evergreens and flowers, designed by Mr. Francis, the organist, near the top of which, on one side, was the motto "God speed the plough," and on the other "Harvest home," whilst the inscription, "Then shall the earth bring forth her increase; and God, even our God, shall give us his blessing both in seed and in increase," was arranged in the evergreens on either side. Over the gateway to the field were the words "God giveth the increase," wreathed round with evergreens. In the field three tents had been pitched, in the larger of which, extending a distance of more than 60 yards, two rows of tables had been placed for the dinner. A magnificent canopy, tastefully arranged, nosegay, designed by Miss Hallhead, of Burton, graced the top of one of the rows of tables, and from end to end the tent was decorated with flowers and evergreens. On each side of the entrance were mottoes—that on the right, "Unity gives strength," was formed of delicately white made-flowers, on a light blue ground; and on the left, the words "Success to Agriculture," formed of ears of corn on laurel leaves, were placed on a pink ground. At the entrance to the tent, immediately in front of the cross-table, was a most elaborate piece of workmanship designed by Mr. Edmund Holland, of Lee-lane. The top represented Ceres, the goddess of agriculture. At her feet were specimens of every kind of fruit and vegetable which could be obtained in the neighbourhood, with the words "Fair Ceres smiles," formed of barley ears, on either side. Beneath, in three lines, was the following motto, formed of the same material—"Ye shall have the sword, and speed the plough,"—the word "plough" being represented by two shares, and small swords and a miniature plough supplying the place of the words they represented. Intersected with the foliage of evergreens opposite were the words, also formed of barley ears, with which Doaz saluted his reapers—"The Lord be with you," and also their reply, "The Lord bless thee."

Leaving the field, and proceeding across the bridge in the direction of the church, the visitor passed beneath an exceedingly chaste and well-formed archway of evergreens, at the top of which was a scroll bearing the words on one side "Whoso loveth God praise and thanks him continually," and on the other "Ye shall keep the feast of harvest," the whole being surmounted with a cross formed of daisies. This remarkably chaste design was the production of Miss Dicken, of Colton Hall. The next object of interest was the church porch, at the entrance to which, right and left, were small sheaves of wheat, evergreens, and flowers. Every available part of the porch itself was lined with tastefully arranged leaves and flowers, underneath and interwoven with which were innumerable appropriate quotations of Scripture, the whole of which had been designed and arranged by Mrs. Nicholls, of Hanley House. The church itself had been richly decorated by Miss Oldham, the Misses Hill, and Miss Garner, the chancel end especially being a complete floral show. On the top of the stone screen were crowded hundreds of scarlet geranium flowers, bound together with the leaves of the graceful water-fern; and in the memorial windows to the late James Oldham Oldham, Esq., and Mrs. Seaton, had been placed similar displays of flowers and leaves. Stretching along the whole length of the walls were flowers of the pendant fuchsia, geraniums, water-fern, and ears of corn; and attached to the rich crimson drapery at the back of the communion table, in large gilded and elongated letters, were the words of the promise "With corn and wine will I sustain thee." The pillars supporting the roof were also decorated with circles of leaves, flowers, and ears of corn, and as the noonday sun shed its lustre over the scene every part of the church appeared gay and beautiful.

At half past one o'clock the chiming of the bells from the old tower called the inhabitants to prayer, and before two o'clock the church was crowded in every part by rich and poor, adults and children, nearly all of whom wore ears of corn in their bonnets or coats. Amongst the congregation who attended service and afterwards dined in the tent were Lord and Lady Bagot, the Hon. and Rev. Hervey Bagot, the Hon. Alfred Bagot, Captain Gooch, Mrs. and Miss Levett, Josiah Spode, Esq., and Mrs. Spode, Dr. Harland, and Mrs. Harland, Miss Oldham, Edward Mayne, Esq., and Mrs. Mayne, W. Woodroffe, Esq., and Mrs. Woodroffe, H. Sneyd, Esq., and Miss Sneyd, Thomas Dicken, Esq., Mrs. Dicken, and family, Rev. S. Plant and Mrs. Plant, Rev. E. Pitman and Mrs. Pitman, Rev. G. Salter, Rev. George Bonney, Dr. Monckton, Mrs. Elrington, Miss Salt, the Misses Hill, Mrs. Buchan and friends, Mr. and Mrs. Holland (Manor House), Mr. and Mrs. Nicholls (Hanley House), Mr. and Mrs. Harvey, Mrs. Hattersley, Miss Hollis, Mr. Trevor, Mrs. Holland, Mr. and Mrs. Yates, &c., &c.

Shortly after two o'clock, the rector, the Rev. A. Seaton, the choir, and clergy entered the church by the west door, chanting the 65th Psalm, which the organ took up with good effect. Immediately after the rector walked the choristers, three of whom carried small bannerets, and they were followed by the Hon. and Rev. Hervey Bagot, Rev. E. Harland, Rev. F. L. Elrington, Rev. F. S. Bolton, Rev. P. H. Dowd, Rev. C. H. Steward, Rev. J. M. Lowe, and the Rev. J. Mason, all attired in white surplices. They proceeded up the aisle to the chancel, where prayers were said by the rector, the psalms for the day being intoned by the choir and congregation. The first lesson, the first chapter of the Book of Tobit, was read by the Rev. F. L. Elrington; and the second lesson, the 1st chapter of the 1st of Corinthians, by the Rev. J. Mason. The sermon was preached by the Hon. and Rev. H. Bagot, from the 9th of Isaiah, part of the 3rd verse—"They joy before Thee, according to the joy of harvest." From these words the rev. gentleman preached a thoroughly evangelical and impressive sermon, remarkable alike for its truthful simplicity and faithfulness.

At the close of divine service the whole of the congregation proceeded to the tent previously referred to, preceded by a band of music, where upwards of 300 ladies and gentlemen, with the labourers of the village and their wives, partook of dinner. The rector presided, Lady Bagot sitting on his right and Mrs. Levett on the left. Rounds of boiled beef, legs of mutton, and roast beef were noticeable the whole length of the tables; but the active carving of the gentlemen who undertook that duty, combined with the keen appetites of the sons of toil, soon made them disappear as by magic. Plum puddings of gigantic size also shared the same fate; but the bounteous supply of edibles which had been provided by the liberality of the gentry and farmers was more than sufficient to satisfy the demand made upon them. The dinner was served by the publicans of the village; and, strange though it may appear, either from the unusual demand or some other unexplained cause, the only deficiency was in the supply of Sir John Barleycorn, to obtain a little of which the most importunate entreaties were at one time unavailing.

After the removal of the cloth, the Rev. CHAIRMAN said that as tea had to be provided in the tent for the children of the villagers, he would not detain them much longer. There were, however, a few toasts which must be given, and he would commence by proposing the good old toast of "Church and Queen." The toast was drunk by the company, the band playing the National Anthem.

The Rev. CHAIRMAN again rose, and said the next toast was one which it gave him the greatest gratification to propose, and he was quite sure it would afford them delight to receive it. (Hear, hear.) They had been highly honoured that day by the presence of a nobleman and his lady, who had joined them in their festivities, and they could not be too grateful to them for their kindness and their sympathy with the parish at large. (Hear, hear.) They all knew that the noble lord's ancestors had been beloved and revered by their forefathers, and he was certain that all present would join with him in hoping that the name of Bagot might be handed down to the latest posterity as honoured and unshaken as it was at present. (Applause.) He had much pleasure in proposing "The health of Lord and Lady Bagot." (Cheers.) He would also wish to include another member of the family to whom they were much indebted—the Hon. and Rev. Hervey Bagot. The able and excellent sermon he had preached to them that day had been delivered in a way in which every clergyman should address his flock. (Applause.) The toast having been drunk, Lord BAGOT briefly acknowledged it, observing that it was a source of great pleasure to him to see his neighbours and friends happy, and nothing could more conduce to a general feeling of happiness than the causes which had suggested their present meeting. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. CHAIRMAN next gave "The health of the Farmers," following it immediately by that of "The Labourers," who answered it with an assent by cheering most lustily the toast of their own health.

Lord BAGOT then briefly proposed "The health of the Rector, the Rev. A. Seaton;" and before the Chairman could reply, an old Irish labourer mounted one of the tables, and shouted that he should drink the health of Mr. Seaton, Miss Oldham, and all the parish, and he hoped they may not have a worse day than that for the next 21 years. [This announcement was received with roars of laughter, which the honest old man appeared right well to enjoy.]

The Rev. CHAIRMAN, in responding to the toast proposed by the noble lord, observed that the present was a proud day for him; it was the thing which for years he had longed for, but he had been such a coward that he never dared propose it, because he thought they would never carry it out. But they had taught him a lesson to trust them fully; they were ready for every good work; they had taught him the way to work, and he thanked them for it. (Hear.) He specially thanked them also that notwithstanding he had been absent from the parish for the benefit of his health, they had deferred the festivities until his return, although he had suggested that the gentleman who had been performing his duties should take his place on that occasion. He viewed it as an evidence of the perfect unity which existed between them, and he hoped they should still continue to work the works of their Heavenly Father, and he thought that what they were doing that day was His work. (Hear, hear.) Referring to the ladies, the rev. gentleman remarked that they wished him to return home to get up this harvest-home; but he had done nothing at all but look on, and he had looked and wondered at the spirit with which every department of it had proceeded. (Hear, hear.) There were, however, several ladies present who did not reside in Colton, and to them he wished to give a word of advice. If they wanted to carry a point, if they wanted to do a work, let them do it as the Colton ladies did. On his return they came to him and inquired which would be the right way to proceed, and, as a matter of course, he acknowledged their superior judgment in the affair. "But suppose (said the rev. gentleman) they had not come to me, but had acted in any other way they thought fit, I may have cut up rough"—(laughter)—but now he looked on with an eye of love, and the eyes of love did not find fault; and if they could only look on each other with eyes of love how kindly and comfortably they would go on. (Hear, hear.) He always found that the ladies were right in everything—(applause)—when (continued Mr. Seaton) they did not forget one thing, which, if a lady forgot she ceased to be a lady—she meant modesty; that meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God was of great price. After a few playful observations with reference to the power gained by the fair over the stronger sex, when they paid that homage which was due to them and which God required, the rev. gentleman closed by saying—"But if they fly in the face of God's authority, if they put at naught the powers that be, never will they gain their point, and never shall they gain their point. I exhort you, therefore, my dear friends, to be quiet and kind, and then all things will go on well. The toast of 'The health of the Ladies of Colton in particular, and all other ladies' was then given, after which the company left the tent.

Immediately after this a country dance took place on the greensward, which was led off by Lady Bagot and the Rev. A. Seaton; Lord Bagot and Mrs. Holland, Captain Gooch and Miss Oldham, and many of the respectable persons present also joining. Dancing was subsequently continued until midnight by old and young, the children of the villagers in the meantime being treated with tea and plum cake in the tent. Nothing occurred throughout the day to mar the happiness and joy of the occasion, which appeared from first to last to afford the greatest pleasure to all present; and which will no doubt form a precedent for future "harvest-homes."

The pretty village of Colton presented an unusually gay and animated appearance on Tuesday last, when old and young, and rich and poor, met together for the purpose of keeping the feast of harvest, and acknowledging by public thanksgiving their gratitude to God for the late bounteous supply of the fruits of the earth. The festival, we believe, was originated with the farmers of the parish, who considered it would be a most fitting time for one of those *re-unions* when all shades of difference, both religious and political, should be forgotten in one united feeling of gratitude to a Beneficent and All-wise Providence; and if display and decoration bespeak a people's gratitude, and are a sure test of the feelings of the heart, the harvest-home at Colton, though last, may be considered amongst the most triumphant of any which have taken place this year in this county.

The day was remarkably fine and warm, and well calculated for the enjoyment of the out-door festivities which took place in a field between Bellamour house and the church at Colton. Athwart the bridge near the entrance to the field, had been erected a massive structure decorated with evergreens and flowers, designed by Mr. Francis, the organist, near the top of which, on one side, was the motto "God speed the plough," and on the other "Harvest home," whilst the inscription, "Then shall the earth bring forth her increase; and God, even our God, shall give us his blessing," was prettily arranged in the evergreens on either side. Over the gateway to the field were the words "God giveth the increase," wreathed round with evergreens. In the field three tents had been pitched, in the larger of which, extending a distance of more than 60 yards, two rows of tables had been placed for dinner. A gigantic, but tastefully arranged; nosegay, designed by Miss Halbeard, of Burton, graced the top of one of the rows of tables, and from end to end the tent was decorated with flowers and evergreens. On each side of the entrance were mottoes—that on the right, "Unity gives strength," was formed of delicately white made-flowers, on a light blue ground; and on the left, the words "Success to Agriculture," formed of ears of corn on laurel leaves, were placed on a pink ground. At the entrance to the tent, immediately in front of the cross table, was a most elaborate piece of workmanship designed by Mr. Edmund Holland, of Lee-lane. The top represented Ceres, the goddess of agriculture. At her feet were specimens of every kind of fruit and vegetable which could be obtained in the neighbourhood, with the words "fair Ceres smiles," formed of barley ears, on either side. Beneath, in three lines, was the following motto, formed of the same material—"Into ploughs beat the swords, and speed the plough,"—the word "ploughs" being represented by two shares, and small swords and a miniature plough supplying the place of the words they represented. Intersected with the foliage of evergreens opposite were the words, also formed of barley ears, with which Boaz saluted his reapers—"The Lord be with you," and also their reply, "The Lord bless thee."

Leaving the field, and proceeding across the bridge in the direction of the church, the visitor passed beneath an exceedingly chaste and well-formed archway of evergreens, at the top of which was a scroll bearing the words on one side "Whoso giveth God praise and thanks honoureth God," and on the obverse, "Ye shall keep the feast of harvest;" the whole being surmounted with a cross formed of dahlias. This remarkably chaste design was the production of Miss Dicken, of Colton Hall. The next object of interest was the church porch, at the entrance to which, right and left, were small sheaves of wheat, evergreens, and flowers. Every available part of the porch itself was lined with tastefully arranged leaves and flowers, underneath and interwoven with which were innumerable appropriate quotations of Scripture, the whole of which had been designed and arranged by Mrs. Nicholls, of Hamley House. The church itself had been

Nicholls, of Hamley House. The church itself had been richly decorated by Miss Oldham, the Misses Hill, and Miss Garner, the chancel end especially being a complete floricultural show. On the top of the stone screen were crowded hundreds of scarlet geranium flowers, bound together with the leaves of the graceful water-fern; and in the memorial windows to the late James Oldham Oldham, Esq., and Mrs. Seaton, had been placed similar displays of flowers and leaves. Stretching along the whole length of the stalls were flowers of the pendant fuschia, geraniums, water-fern, and ears of corn; and attached to the rich crimson drapery at the back of the communion table, in large gilded and elongated letters, were the words of the promise "With corn and wine will I sustain thee." The pillars supporting the roof were also decorated with circles of leaves, flowers, and ears of corn, and as the noonday sun shed its lustre over the scene every part of the church appeared gay and beautiful.

At half-past one o'clock the chiming of the bells from the old tower called the inhabitants to prayer, and before two o'clock the church was crowded in every part by rich and poor, adults and children, nearly all of whom wore ears of corn in their bonnets or coats. Amongst the congregation who attended service and afterwards dined in the tent were Lord and Lady Bagot, the Hon. and Rev. Hervey Bagot, the Hon. Alfred Bagot, Captain Gooch, Mrs. and Miss Levett, Josiah Spode, Esq., and Mrs. Spode, Dr. Harland and Mrs. Harland, Miss Oldham, Edward Mayne, Esq., and Mrs. Mayne, W. Woodroffe, Esq., and Mrs. Woodroffe, H. Sneyd, Esq., and Miss Sneyd, Thomas Dicken, Esq., Mrs. Dicken, and family, Rev. S. Plant and Mrs. Plant, Rev. E. Pitman and Mrs. Pitman, Rev. G. Salter, Rev. George Bonney, Dr. Monckton, Mrs. Elrington, Miss Salt, the Misses Hill, Mrs. Buchan and friends, Mr. and Mrs. Holland (Manor House), Mr. and Mrs. Nicholls (Hamley House), Mr. and Mrs. Harvey, Mrs. Hattersley, Miss. Hollis, Mr. Trevor, Mrs. Holland, Mr. and Mrs. Yates, &c., &c.

Shortly after two o'clock, the rector, the Rev. A. Seaton, the choir, and clergy entered the church by the west door, chanting the 65th Psalm, which the organ took up with good effect. Immediately after the rector walked the choristers, three of whom carried small bannerets, and they were followed by the Hon. and Rev. Hervey Bagot, Rev. E. Harland, Rev. F. L. Elrington, Rev. F. S. Bolton, Rev. P. H. Dod, Rev. C. H. Steward, Rev. J. M. Lowe, and the Rev. J. Mason, all attired in white surplices. They proceeded up the aisle to the chancel, where prayers were said by the rector, the psalms for the day being intoned by the choir and congregation. The first lesson, the first chapter of the Book of Tobit, was read by the Rev. F. L. Elrington; and the second lesson, the 1st chapter of the 1st of Corinthians, by the Rev. — Mason. The sermon was preached by the Hon. and Rev. H. Bagot, from the 9th of Isaiah, part of the 3rd verse—"They joy before Thee, according to the joy of harvest." From these words the rev. gentleman preached a thoroughly evangelical and impressive sermon, remarkable alike for its truthful simplicity and faithfulness.

At the close of divine service the whole of the congregation proceeded to the tent previously referred to, preceded by a band of music, where upwards of 300 ladies and gentlemen, with the labourers of the village and their wives, partook of dinner. The rector presided, Lady Bagot sitting on his right and Mrs. Levett on the left. Rounds of boiled beef, legs of mutton, and roast beef were noticeable the whole length of the tables; but the active carving of the gentlemen who undertook that duty, combined with the keen appetites of the sons of toil, soon made them disappear as by magic. Plum puddings of gigantic size also shared the same fate; but the bounteous supply of edibles which had been provided by the liberality of the gentry and farmers was more than sufficient to satisfy the demand made upon them. The dinner was served by the publicans of the village; and, strange though it may appear, either from the unusual demand or some other unexplained cause, the only deficiency was in the supply of Sir John Barleycorn, to obtain a little of which the most importunate entreaties were at one time unavailing.

After the removal of the cloth, the Rev. CHAIRMAN said that as tea had to be provided in the tent for the children of the villagers, he would not detain them much longer. There were, however, a few toasts which must be given, and he would commence by proposing the good old toast of "Church and Queen." The toast was drunk by the company, the band playing the National Anthem.

The Rev. CHAIRMAN again rose, and said the next toast was one which it gave him the greatest gratification to propose, and he was quite sure it would afford them delight to receive it. (Hear, hear.) They had been highly honoured that day by the presence of a nobleman and his lady, who had joined them in their festivities, and they could not be too grateful to them for their kindness and their sympathy with the parish at large. (Hear, hear.) They all knew that the noble lord's ancestors had been beloved and revered by their forefathers, and he was certain that all present would join with him in hoping that the name of Bagot might be handed down to the latest posterity as honoured and untarnished as it was at present. (Applause.) He had much pleasure in proposing "The health of Lord and Lady Bagot." (Cheers.) He would also wish to include another member of the family to whom they were much indebted—the Hon. and Rev. Hervey Bagot. The able and excellent sermon he had preached to them that day had been delivered in a way in which every clergyman should address his flock. (Applause.)

The toast having been drunk, Lord BAGOT briefly acknowledged it, observing that it was a source of great pleasure to him to see his neighbours and friends happy, and nothing could more conduce to a general feeling of happiness than the causes which had suggested their present meeting. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. CHAIRMAN next gave "The health of the Farmers," following it immediately by that of "The Labourers," who afforded much amusement by cheering most lustily the toast of their own health.

Lord BAGOT then briefly proposed "The health of the Rector, the Rev. A. Seaton;" and before the Chairman could reply, an old Irish labourer mounted one of the tables, and shouted that he should drink the health of Mr. Seaton, Miss Oldham, the farmers, and all the parish, and he hoped they may not have a worse day than that for the next 21 years. [This announcement was received with roars of laughter, which the honest old man appeared right well to enjoy.]

The Rev. CHAIRMAN, in responding to the toast proposed by the noble lord, observed that the present was a proud day for him; it was the thing which for years he had longed for, but he had been such a coward that he never dared propose it, because he thought they would never carry it out. But they had taught him a lesson to trust them fully; they were ready for every good work; they had taught him the way to

ready for every good work ; they had taught him the way to work, and he thanked them for it. (Hear.) He specially thanked them also that notwithstanding he had been absent from the parish for the benefit of his health, they had deferred the festivities until his return, although he had suggested that the gentleman who had been performing his duties should take his place on that occasion. He viewed it as an evidence of the perfect unity which existed between them, and he hoped they should still continue to work the works of their Heavenly Father, and he thought that what they were doing that day was His work. (Hear, hear.) Referring to the ladies, the rev. gentleman remarked that they wished him to return home to get up this harvest-home ; but he had done nothing at all but look on, and he had looked and wondered at the spirit with which every department of it had proceeded. (Hear, hear.) There were, however, several ladies present who did not reside in Colton, and to them he wished to give a word of advice. If they wanted to carry a point, if they wanted to do a work, let them do it as the Colton ladies did. On his return they came to him and inquired which would be the right way to proceed, and, as a matter of course, he acknowledged their superior judgment in the affair. " But suppose (said the rev. gentleman) they had not come to me, but had acted in any other way they thought fit, I may have cut up rough"—(laughter)—but now he looked on with an eye of love, and the eyes of love did not find fault ; and if they could only look on each other with eyes of love how kindly and comfortably they would go on. (Hear, hear.) He always found that the ladies were right in everything—(applause)—when (continued Mr. Seaton) they did not forget one thing, which, if a lady forgot she ceased to be a lady—he meant modesty ; that meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God was of great price. After a few playful observations with reference to the power gained by the fair over the stronger sex, when they paid that homage which was due to them and which God required, the rev. gentleman closed by saying— " But if they fly in the face of God's authority, if they put at naught the powers that be, never will they gain their point, and never shall they gain their point. I exhort you, therefore, my dear friends, to be quiet and kind, and then all things will go on well." The toast of " The health of the Ladies of Colton in particular, and all other ladies," was then given, after which the company left the tent.

Immediately after this a country dance took place on the greensward, which was led off by Lady Bagot and the Rev. A. Seaton ; Lord Bagot and Mrs. Holland, Captain Gooch and Miss Oldham, and many of the respectable persons present also joining. Dancing was subsequently continued until nightfall by old and young, the children of the villagers in the meantime being treated with tea and plum cake in the tent.

Nothing occurred throughout the day to mar the happiness and joy of the occasion, which appeared from first to last to afford the greatest pleasure to all present ; and which will no doubt form a precedent for future " harvest-homes."

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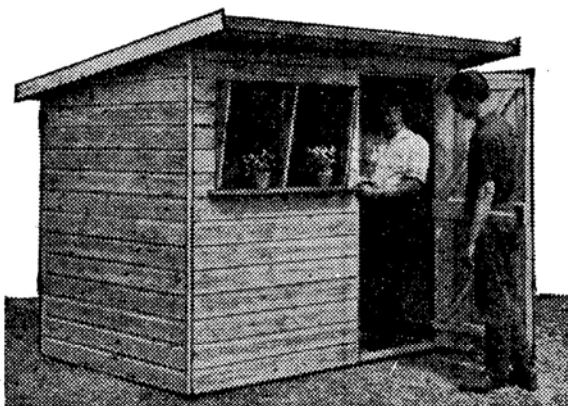
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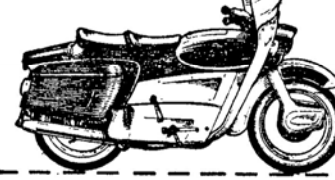
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Wartime relic?

The Freeman family were flushed in more ways than one when they found an old hand grenade in an outside loo.

But luckily their quick thinking prevented an explosive situation!

They called the police, who took the grenade away and will return it to the army.

They found the grenade when Mr. Tom Freeman and his two sons Edward and Calum were digging out a Victorian toilet in the grounds of their Colton home.

The boys discovered the grenade and were kicking it around the garden as a football.

It was not until they washed it down that they found out what they had been playing with.

Their mother, Mrs. Shirley Freeman said the family had no idea there might be ammunition buried in the garden.

"But we will certainly be looking out now," she said.

The Freeman family has lived in the village's Old Rectory for three years.

● Soldiers were stationed in Colton in the early war years.

Our heritage

Murder!

When considering a church of the antiquity of St. Mary's in Colton, many thoughts may pass through the minds of the observer. Saxons, Normans, vicars of an age long since buried in the dusts of time. Murder is not a thought one usually associates with any church, yet this ancient place of worship has twice been associated with "murder most foul," which puts it one up even on Canterbury Cathedral.

The two incidents are, according to Colton legend and tradition, separate events. However, the reader may be surprised at the various similarities between the two. Similarities which could connect them.

The first incident involves a man by the name of Nicholas, who was described as being the son of William de Colton. This Nicholas became entangled with Adam, described as being the son of Hereward. In the ensuing brawl, Nicholas, the son of William de Colton, is said to have slain his adversary, Adam, the son of Hereward.

The church laws of the Middle Ages allowed for any fugitive to claim the right of sanctuary within the confines of the church. Hence many churches have one "room" known as the sanctuary. The fugitive could not claim this right for an indefinite period, but only from "the first hour to midnight."

Nicholas de Colton is said to have claimed the right of sanctuary at St. Mary's. This would have given him a respite from the hue-and-cry, which would have been called to pursue a murderer. No one would have dared to risk the wrath of God by invading the protection of a church.

Those who had chased Nicholas de Colton to the church would not have been over-duly worried. The priest would have come to the door to inform them that Nicholas

had claimed sanctuary, which he could not refuse. However, the protection of sanctuary was effective only to midnight, after which, Nicholas would have to fend for himself. The pursuers had only to set a watch and wait till their man was turned out of the church.

Nicholas de Colton, however, did escape. Legend has it that his father was instrumental in this escape.

The second of the murders in which St. Mary's was reputedly involved, occurred eight years later, in 1271. According to tradition, John, the chaplain of Colton, is alleged to have murdered Christina, the wife of Nicholas de Colton. This murder is said to have come about while John was interposing between Nicholas and a stranger. No details exist as to how a chaplain came to murder the wife of the man he was arguing with.

However the murder came about, John decided not to hang around to explain but took to his heels.

Both legends raise interesting points which are worth a second thought. In 1263, Nicholas murdered Adam the son of Hereward. In 1271, John was interposing in an argument between Nicholas de Colton and a stranger. Note the existence of Nicholas de Colton in both murders. Add to this that the name Hereward is not local and anyone bearing this name would have probably been considered as a stranger in a close-knit village community.

The first story does not tell us what caused the brawl between Nicholas and Adam. Could it have been over Christina? Did John the chaplain murder Christina or did someone of more influence do the deed and poor John fled because he could not fight against the de Coltons?

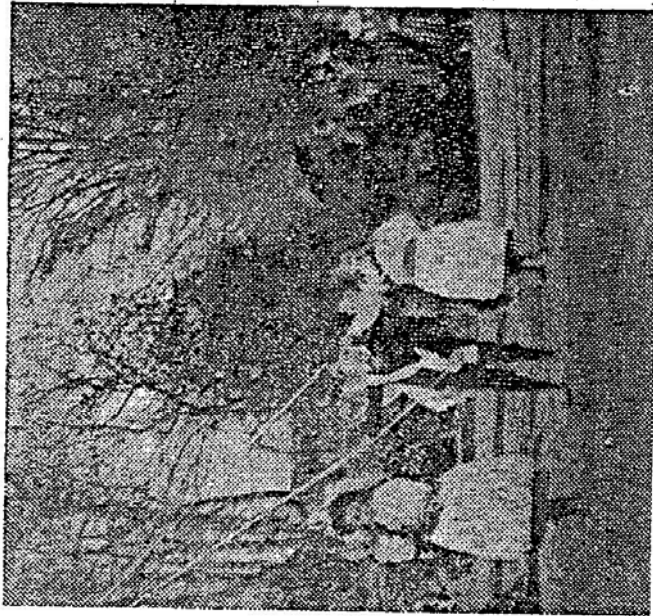
Speculation but

J.A.B.

1892
May Day

Apr 29 1967
The Rugeley Times, St

PHOTO FLASHBACK . . .



May Day was celebrated as the spring festival long before it became the workers' festival. In town and village the maypole was centre of the green and children danced merrily in ancient and intricate patterns. The Rugeley maypole was situated outside Maybank, near the Horse Fair traffic island—hence the name adopted by a former owner of the house. The pictures above show the Colton May Day celebrations in 1892 with Miss H. Mary A. Upton as May Queen, at the age of 13. She subsequently married Mr. Tom Ravenscroft, father



of Mr. C. J. Ravenscroft. Mr. Frederic Bonney of Colton House was instrumental in organising the celebrations in those days, including the crowning of the queen and the dancing round a maypole erected in the plantation opposite his house. Mr. Bonney became first chairman of Colton Parish Council in 1895. He was keen on photography and, as the original has his autograph on the reverse, it is probable that he took these pictures, which were lent by Mr. C. J. Ravenscroft.

COLTON
HIGH STREET
in 1920's

RUG TIMES 21 NOV 1970



The recent picture spread of Colton's listed buildings has prompted Mrs. E. Goodall of Lake Cottage, Stockwell Heath, to submit one of her late husband's pictures of old Colton.

It shows a butcher's shop which no longer exists, near the Greyhound, with Ted Meddings in the doorway. On the left is the smithy and Reading Room pictured in close-up in our feature, and peeping out from behind the ancient trees in the centre are two of the Williscroft Place

houses which were also pictured.

The gardens are at the front in this row, hence the washing on the line (there was washing on a line in our picture also!).

The date is not known, but the Flashback is obviously about 50 years-old, from the days when it was the custom for butchers to hang their meat in the fresh air to keep it cool and fresh—a custom which died out only in the 1930's, with the general introduction of refrigerators.

in p.c.

Rugby Times 4.7.59



Colton family gave its name to Row

In the picture above are some of the tenants of Brown's Row, Colton, home of the Myatt family for nearly a century.

BROWN'S ROW, Colton, consisting of five houses, was christened Myatt's Row just before the last war because every house was occupied by someone belonging to the Myatt family. The Myatts are still very much in evidence there, three of the houses still being in their occupation. Their ancestors first moved into the row nearly a century ago.

Oldest member of the family is 70 years-old Mr. W. J. Myatt, who lives with his wife and daughter at No. 2, Brown's Row. On either side of him live his daughter and son.

His daughter, Mrs. R. Curtis, has two children, and his son at No. 3 also has a family of two. Mr. and Mrs. Myatt have a third daughter,

Mrs. V. Collins, who lives at Heathway, Colton, with her four children.

Mr. Myatt thinks that his grandparents moved into Brown's Row nearly 100 years ago—after the family had lived in the village for many years.

He and his brother were born at No. 2, and his uncles and aunts occupied houses in the Row. Most of his relatives worked at Rugeley Tanyard, but he and his brother were sheet metal workers at a factory near Trent Valley Station. Mr. Myatt worked there for 28 years, and for the remaining 25 years of his working life was a council road-worker.

Few of the Myatts have ever left Colton, and as there are at present eight grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. Myatt senior living in the village, it seems likely that the name will be in evidence for many years to come.

Bellamour

One Collonee de Goussfriedus (Geoffrey) and a man named Almund are said to have had manors at Colton before the Norman Conquest.

By the time of the domesday survey in 1086 Colton — a low lying marshy boggy place — seems to have passed into the hands of a Norman lord named Azeline.

He held the manor under Roger de Montgomery Earl of Arundel, who was given considerable lands in this area for his services to William the Conqueror — Tixall was also part of this holding.

There was still a manor house owned by Geoffrey and his descendants on the site of Colton Hall — near the present Colton Hall farm — and from them came the Westenev family which held power in the area until the mid 14th Century.

It is interesting to note that in the 12th Century a Sir Geoffrey de Westenev was Lord of Tixall.

In the mid 14th Century a daughter of Sir Thomas de Westenev married Sir Nicholas de Gresley and brought Colton Hall into the Gresley family.

Their son was Sir Thomas de Gresley who was followed by Sir John Gresley. He did much work for the king. After his death in 1489 he was succeeded by his son Thomas whose eldest son Sir William served King Henry VIII in the invasion of France and was knighted in 1513.

He married a daughter of the Vernon family to end the feud between the two houses, but died without legitimate children and was succeeded by his brother George.

George was created Knight of the Bath in 1534 and served as High Sheriff of Staffordshire. He died in 1548 and his son and heir Sir William married the daughter of Sir Edward Aston of Tixall.

Sir William was also High Sheriff. He died in 1573.

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It appears that Colton Hall was sold to Sir Walter Aston for £16,000 shortly before the death of Sir Thomas.

At this time it was said to have 80 rooms, 52 of them bedrooms.

Sir Walter served as ambassador in Spain, and in his absence the younger members of the Aston family appear to have spent much time at Colton.

But in the 1640s the hall was burnt down through the carelessness of a servant, and it was never rebuilt.

The Astons lost considerable money during the Civil War, and presumably could not afford to rebuild the old hall.

But the Astons' links with Colton remained, because in 1638 Sir Walter had given land at Bellamour to his son Herbert.

Herbert built the first Bellamour Hall — the Astons do not appear to have been very well off, because he is said to have finished and furnished it with the help of friends.

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Sir Walter — one of his ancestors is mentioned in Shakespeare's "Henry IV" — became Lord of the Manor of Colton.

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Miss Ellen Oldham ran a day school for girls in the old hall from 1829.

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But Miss Oldham continued to live at Bellamour Lodge, built by the judge in 1851 for his daughters, until she died in 1883.

It appears that her sister, who married Mr. John Thomas Harland, also lived at the lodge for most of her life.

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Info. by Jane Carroll
in Rugeley Times
30th January 1982
pp10-11

Photo publ. by Frederick
Brown, Lichfield, 1899

P.5. May 15th 1974 Rugeley Times,

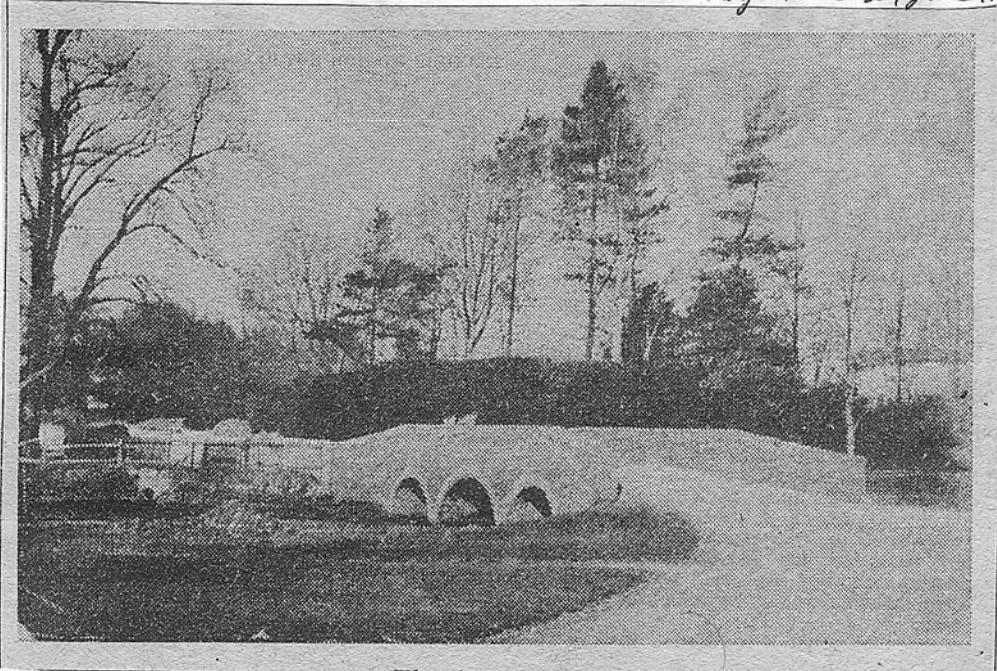


PHOTO FLASHBACK

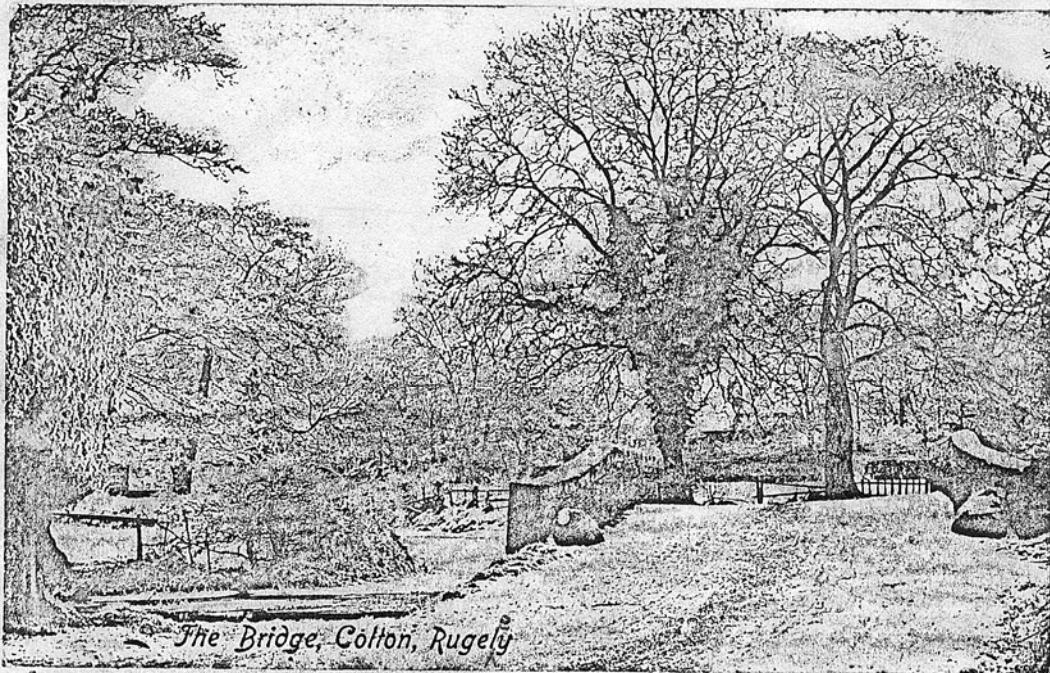
Colton Girl Guides at Oak Edge near Milford in 1926, when they were winners of an area competition. The picture comes from Mrs. Lily Jackson, pictured middle row far right, who lives at Colton. Others include, from left, back row: Kath Webb, Marie Tooth, Dorothy Jones (also living at Colton), Eva Jones (Hednesford), Brown Owl Miss Alice Thomlins, Colton Guide Captain and Divisional Commissioner Mrs. Maud Oldham, Amy Farley, May Grimley, Win Webb, Norah Hawkins. Middle row: Gabriel Latz, Doris Cooper, Peggy Bloor, _____, Alice Pendlebury, Lily Preston. Front row: Win Devalle, _____, Marion Webb, Muriel Bloor and Mary Grimley.

COLTON
BRIDGE & Ford
c. 1906

Rug. Times 24 June 1972



The bridge at Colton which takes the road, recently named Bellamour Way, over Moreton Brook, makes as pretty a picture today as when this postcard photograph was taken in or before 1906. Trees have come and gone, there is an open-plan approach to the church, but the long Bellamour Lodge hedge with stone wall is still an attractive old-world rural approach. The picture was lent by Mrs. F. Clews.



The Bridge, Colton, Rugely

from an old postcard, postmarked 1904. Original loaned by Mrs Hill 45 Lion Street Dec 1973

44

209

COLTON, RAILWAY
COTTAGES
Colton Road.
in 1907

The Rugeley Times, Saturday

Nov 26th 1966 p 7

PHOTO - FLASHBACK . . .



THE last word in housing in 1907, this dignified row of railway cottages built near Trent Valley Station was glorified in the unofficial name of Fog Cottages. They were so named because they were occupied by permanent way maintenance men who would be called out whenever fog descended, and detonators had

to be laid near signals. The craftsmen in the picture worked on the construction of the houses and also apparently on the nearby stable block, for scaffolding can be seen on the left. The picture was lent by retired railway worker Mr. G. T. Morris, of Hagley Road, Rugeley. See Spectator's Notes for information sent in by readers about last week's picture.

Copy in photo collection

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Info. by Jane Carroll
in Rugeley Times
30th January 1982
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Photo publ. by Frederick
Brown, Lichfield, 1899

COLTON

19th

Buildings

(1850)



Colton Lodge (right), "a well-proportioned mid-19th century villa set in a large garden amongst mature trees" is at present having a new roof to extend its life. Above it are the former smithy buildings and the entrance to the modernised village hall, formerly known as the Reading Room.

COLTON

The Paddock & War Moor

in 1845

COLTON

Lot 8.

ALL those two Freehold pieces of Land containing together about 5 acres, 3 roods, 35 perches, called the Paddock, and War Moor, adjoining the Parchfields, in the parish of Colton and said Coun. of Stafford, and now in the occupation of William Hanbury, Jun., Esq.

Lot 9.

ALL that piece of Land called Avarne's Meadow, containing about 3 roods, adjoining to Lot 8.

This Lot is held for the life of a person now aged about 51 years.

Sold by auction by Messrs Walker & Page at the Tabbot Arms Inn on Thurs 23rd October 1845, by direction of the assignees of a bankrupt.

* Avarne was an 18th century vicar of Angelley.

COLTON in 1887 EVENTS
Queen Victoria's Jubilee

Rugby Times 21 June 1975 p.5

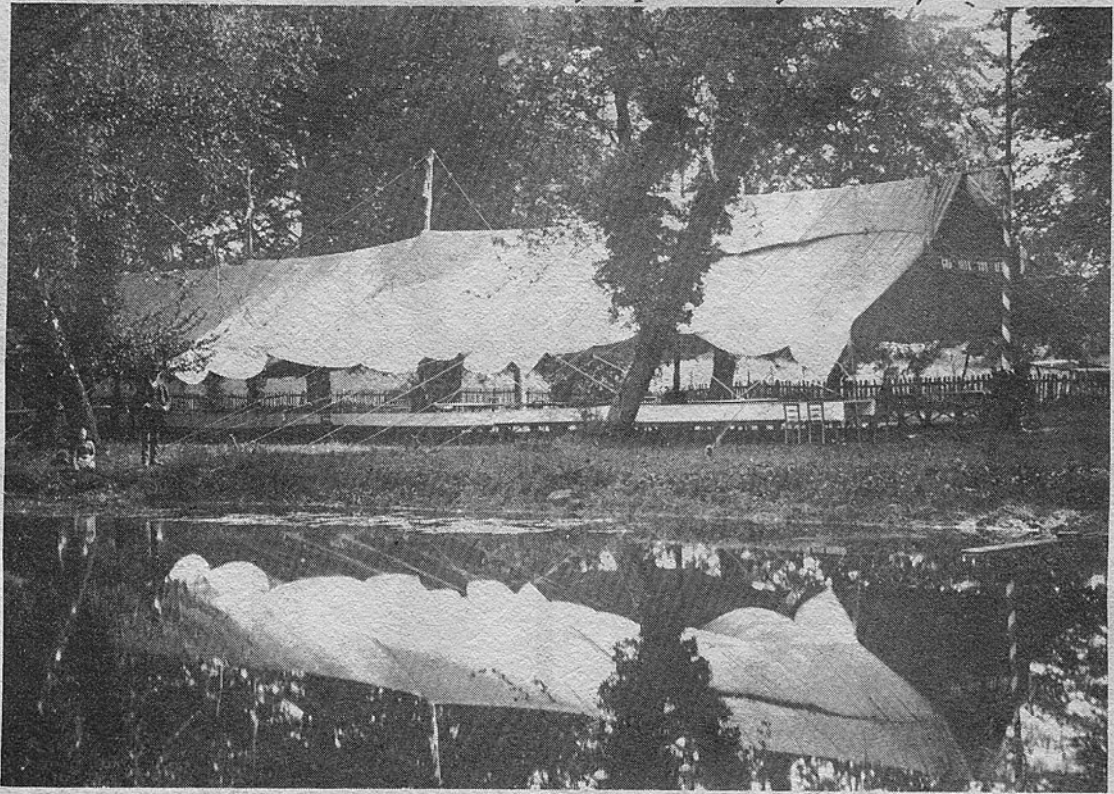


Photo Flashback

To celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria there was a massive party for villagers of Colton, given in the

grounds in front of Colton House.

This souvenir picture of the marquee as viewed across the

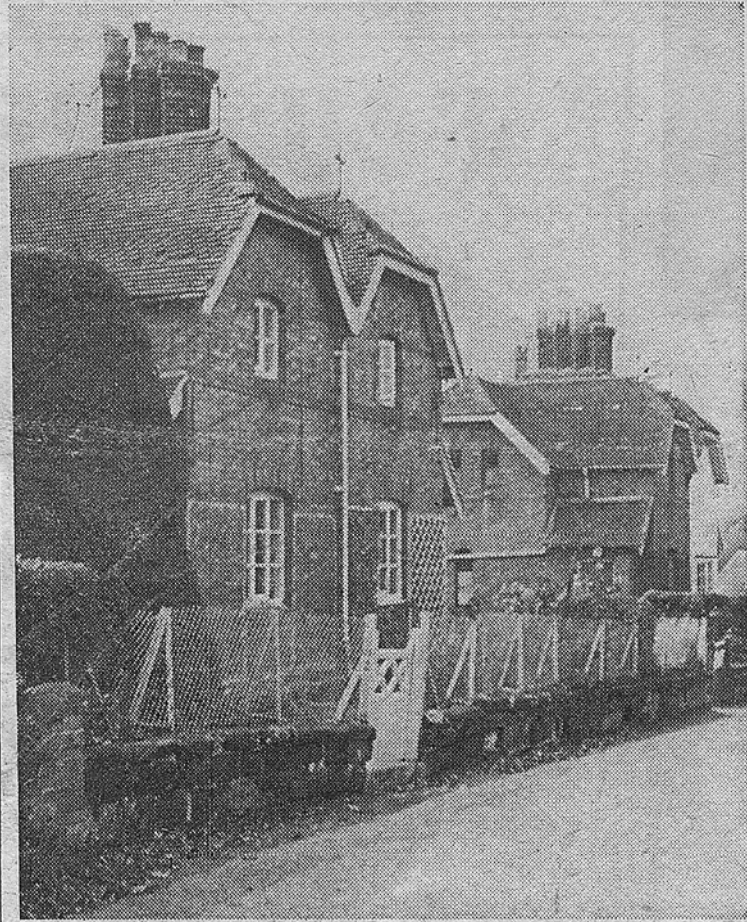
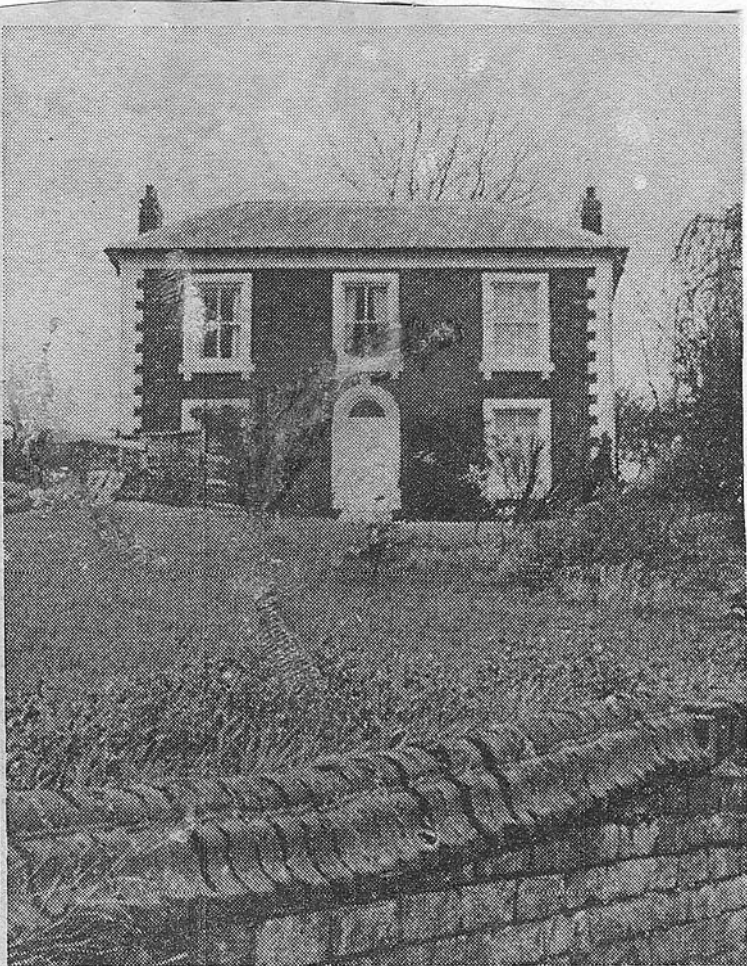
pool was taken by Mr. Frederic Bonney. It was June 21, 1887.

The picture was lent by Miss Radford.

imp.

COLTON

19th



These two late-19th century Colton cottage blocks with unusual hipped roofs are among dwellings mentioned in the conservation area. Below is Colton House, 18th century and "listed," the most important secular building in the village. Focal point at the end of the main street is 19th-century Aspley House (top), set on the hillside.

next page

COLTON FLOODS^{6.2.60}



CALLERS AT INN MOORED CANOES IN CAR PARK!

The Rugeley area had its share of flood havoc. A typical scene was the one pictured above. The driver of a heavy lorry is picking his way through the flooded Colton-Rugeley road.

FOLLOWING more heavy rain at the week-end, low-lying roads and large areas of adjacent land in the Rugeley area remained flooded, causing considerable inconvenience. In some areas, detours had to be made by drivers and pedestrians where roads had become impassable. Most seriously affected were roads at Colton, Bishton, Hill Ridware, and near King's Bromley.

The licensee of the Roebuck Inn, Wolsey Road, told the "Times" that the River Trent, about 30 or 40 yards from the Inn, flooded into his car park during the week-end.

On Sunday morning canoeists spotted the inn from the river, felt thirsty, and were able to paddle their canoes right up to the park. They secured their canoes among the cars, had a drink, and then transferred their craft to the nearby canal to continue their journey.

No water entered the inn, but Mr. Hall intends to have the car park walled in an attempt to prevent any future incursion. He said it was the first time he had seen boats tied up in the car park.

Moreton Brook, Colton, overflowed and covered the road on the Colton side of the bridge. Drivers of vehicles had to proceed with great caution, and some decided not to venture through the flood. The flooding, however, was not so serious in this area as it was on the previous Sunday.

Traffic turned back

Mrs. R. P. Martin, of Bellamour Lodge Farm, said a diversion sign was put up outside her home because of flooding on the Bellamour to Bishton Road. Water was 16 inches deep in places and the worst point was under the railway bridge where practically all traffic turned back.

At Hill Ridware there was flooding at the top of Wade Lane, and Common Corner was also under water. People from Handsacre saw traffic taking the King's Bromley turn off the Handsacre-Hill Ridware Road. The road towards King's Bromley was flooded for several hundred yards.

Rugeley Fire Brigade was called on Saturday morning to pump water from the cellar of a house at Armitage.

Telephones affected

There were telephone delays on Saturday as a result of the floods and for a time operators had to "ration" calls and ask callers to transact their business as quickly as possible. They booked calls and rang subscribers back as soon as they had a line clear. Most of the calls were put through Hednesford exchange, which was not affected.

Faults occurred at Little Haywood and Yoxall, which cut normal communications between Rugeley, Stafford and Uttoxeter districts.

3.12.60

Licence granted for daily bus service to Colton

THE Green Bus Company's application for a licence to run a daily bus service between Colton and Rugeley was granted this week by the Transport Commissioners. They will introduce the extra service on January 11, 1961, the day on which the schools re-open.

The extra service is the result of negotiations opened by Councillor T. E. Cowlshaw, to get a better bus service for the village.

The Birmingham and Midland Omnibus Company, which was approached with the suggestion that some of the Stafford-Colwich-Rugeley buses should deviate via Bishton Lane to give Colton a service at Bellamour Corner, rejected the proposal and stated that they would not oppose any other company's application.

The Green Bus Company will run a bus from Rugeley to Colton at 8.45 a.m., returning from Colton to Rugeley at 8.53 a.m., Mondays to Fridays. They will also run from Rugeley at 4 p.m. and return from Colton at 4.10 p.m.

These are in addition to the existing services on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sa-

urdays, and are designed to be of particular benefit to school-children.



Rustic seat for enjoyment of Colton cottagers

Three occupiers of Oldhams Cottages, Colton, try out the new rustic seat presented by the Village Produce Guild. Mr. M. Williscroft, seen on the left, received the seat as a trustee of the Cottages. Looking on are the members of the Guild who interrupted their meeting to attend the handing over of the seat.

THE business of Colton Village Produce Guild was interrupted on Thursday of last week for the members to take part in a pleasing ceremony. They made their way to Oldham Cottages, taking with them the rustic seat, purchased by the Guild for the use of elderly people living in the cottages. The seat was handed over to Mr. Maurice Williscroft, one of the trustees.

A cine film of the presentation was made by Mr. J. A. Best, and members are looking forward to seeing this during the winter evenings.

At the meeting, which was held in the Reading Room, Mr. J. H. Toy presided and welcomed Mr. Ralph Edwards, of Rodbaston Farm Institute, who gave an instructive and interesting talk on "The growing and care of tomatoes." He answered members' questions, and was thanked by Mr. T. Preston.

Business matters discussed

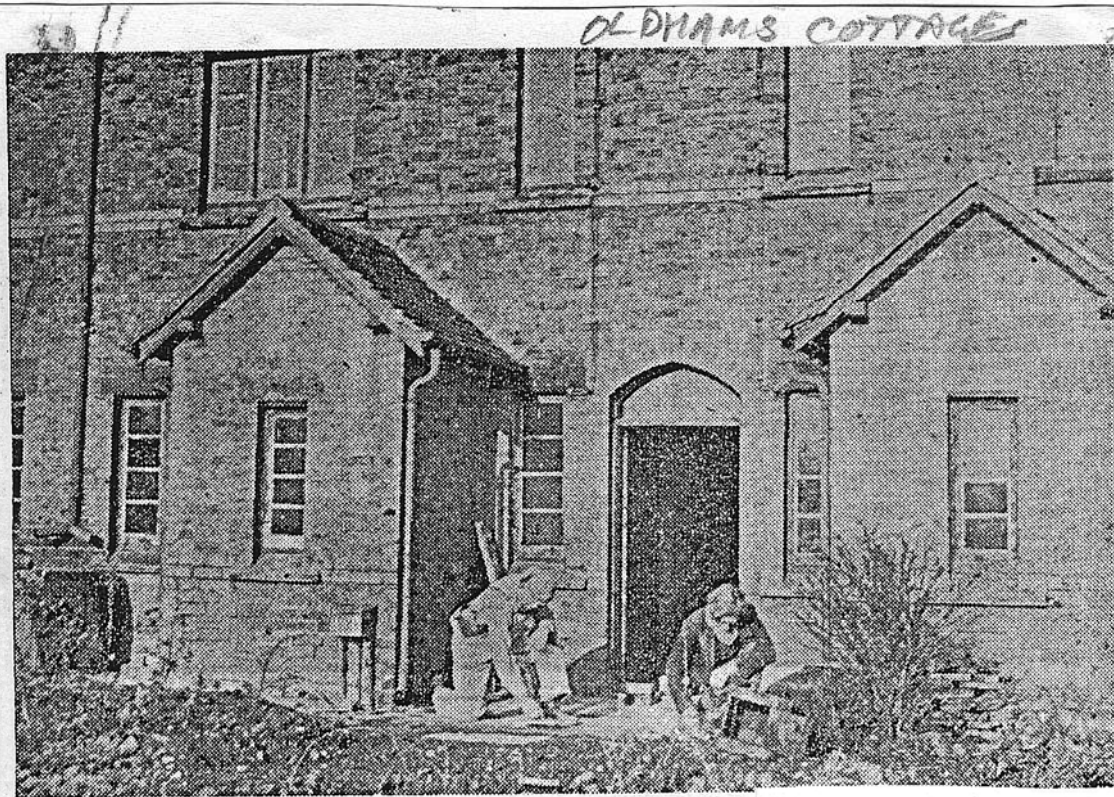
included arrangements for an evening outing to a nursery at Kimber on June 24.

Miss D. M. Jones asked those who were entering for the best kept garden competition, to be held in July, to inform her as soon as possible. She said that vegetable and flower gardens would be judged separately.

The Best Kept Village Competition was discussed at length and it was decided that if the weather was suitable, the time of the next meeting should be spent in tidying one or two parts of the village.

The competition for the evening was an arrangement of flowers in a basin. Mr. Edwards judged the exhibits and awarded the prize to Mrs. B. M. Ravenscroft.

Tea hostesses were Mrs. M. E. Hibbs and Mrs. Ravenscroft.



MODERNISATION OF COLTON ALMSHOUSES WILL COST £4,000

THE conversion of the eight Oldham Almshouses at Colton into eight self-contained flats, at a total cost of about £4,000, is proceeding satisfactorily. Simultaneously, work is being done to modernise Elm Cottage, the house provided for the headmaster of Colton Church School.

The almshouses have been maintained by the Elizabeth Harland Almshouse Charity, having been built towards the end of last century on the site of the old Bell Inn for members of the Church of England.

The intention of the benefactress was to make it convenient for elderly people to attend divine service at the Parish Church, and the trustees were to be the rector and churchwardens for the time being. Accordingly, the present trustees are the Rev. A. S. Towlson, Mr. B. Bettson and Mr. M. Williscroft.

By a judicious rearrangement of interior walls, the conversion of the almshouses will provide each flat with a sitting room and bedroom, a kitchen complete with sink unit, electric cooker and hot and cold water, and a self-contained bathroom.

Most of the £4,000 has already been provided for, chiefly through the receipt of an Exchequer contribution which was available for Trusts which constitute themselves into housing associations, as the Colton trust has done.

The balance is largely being

accounted for by grants from Lichfield Rural Council and the Colwich Parish Lands Trust.

The rector informed the "Times" that the trustees have received a great deal of help in this project from the National Association of Almshouses and from the architect.

Elm Cottage, the school house, is also being modernised by the same trustees before the new headmaster takes up residence.

At present Mr. D. E. Waters and his wife and two-years-old son, Kevin, are being accommodated by Mrs. Taylor at Manor Farm.

About £1,000 is being spent on the house, some of which will be provided by an improvement grant obtained through Lichfield Rural Council, but the "Times" is informed by the rector that there will not be a public appeal for the balance of the money needed.

Cottages²⁻⁷⁻⁶⁰ are brought up to date

THE VEN. B. STRATTON, Archdeacon of Stafford, was present on Thursday of last week at the service of re-dedication of Oldham's Cottages, Colton, following their conversion and modernisation at a cost of £4,000.

At the church service which preceded the re-dedication, the archdeacon compared the story of the Good Samaritan with the gesture of goodwill towards the elderly people living in Oldham's Cottages in attempting to give them as much comfort as possible in their homes.

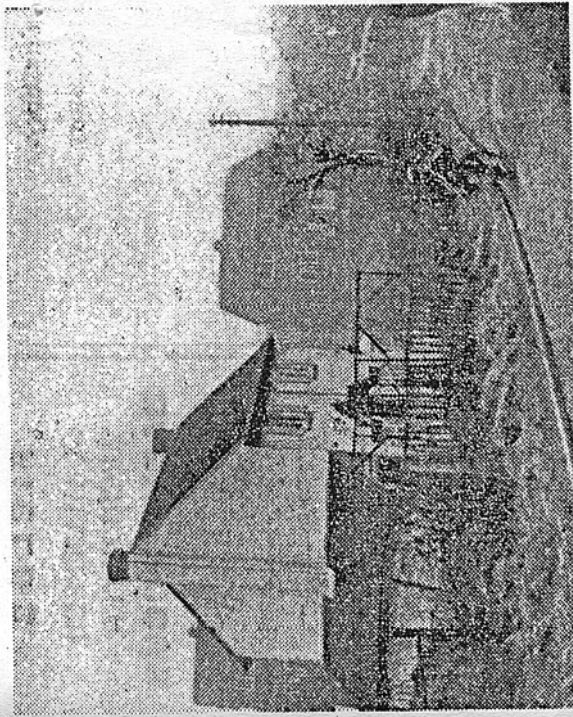
The Rector, the Rev. A. S. Towlson, announced that, owing to the change in the weather there would not be a formal procession, as planned, with the choir leading. He asked the people to make their way informally to the cottages.

After the re-dedication ceremony the Archdeacon was introduced to each of the occupants. He also inspected the improvements at the rear, where a lawn had been laid out by members of the Village Produce Guild.

MORE HOUSES COME TO COLTON



Dun Cow. Stand-
isee. The picture
nt that is taking



Development has been going on apace at the upper end of High Street, Colton, for the past few years. In Heathway, from where the picture was taken, there are a number of rural type council houses. The latest group of houses to be built can be seen at the rear of "The Cottage," the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Brown.

21.2.59

SCENE IS CHANGING ROUND COLTON'S OLD DUN COW

COLTON is a village of contradictions. In spite of being a pre-Domesday village, much older than Rugeley, the most outstanding buildings to be seen today are fine Regency houses. No longer can be seen the thatch and a number of the very old houses, but the squat-towered church, with its list of rectors from 1086, stands as firm as ever at the entrance to the village.

This entrance is by means of a hump-backed bridge over Moreton Brook, which causes numerous floods in the rainy season. By the side of the bridge, however, is a ford and on Tuesday there were cart ruts to be seen in the muddy approaches. Someone disdains the bridge as a new invention!

Its only public hall is called a reading room, built no doubt during the last century when young apprentices and labourers were encouraged to read and to attend literary institutes. Now it is used principally for dances, whist drives, concerts and meetings.

In the grounds of the Manor Farm can be seen Elizabethan chimneys—gaunt remains of the former manor farm. A few new houses have been built on the site of older habitations, and then there is the Dun Cow, Colton's ancient village inn.

New village

A new village is rising fast in the Dun Cow area, for Heathway is occupied by a batch of rural type council houses, and on the road to Stockwell Heath a number of private houses are going up.

The Dun Cow is part 16th century and part 18th. There are lovely old Tudor beams in the bar, which also contains a baker's oven near the fireplace, though the latter is a comparatively modern one replacing a large range.

The smokeroom was formerly a general store until alterations were made between the wars. At present a small store occupies the side portion of the premises, together

with the "outdoor" department.

It is this store which the present licensee, Mrs. R. Boycott, wishes to enlarge by moving the licensed section to the front of the house, in order that she may better cater for the needs of the growing community at this end of the village.

It was reported at last week's Licensing Sessions that the justices had already approved alterations to the servery, but this work had not been carried out.

The proposed alterations are now to include those necessary to accommodate a separate general store at the side, with a bar in the front hall serving smokeroom, bar and outdoor customers together.

MORE HOUSE



A corner of the bar in Colton's ancient inn, the Dun Cow. Standing is Mr. R. Boycott, whose mother is licensee. The picture (right) gives a close-up of the new development that is taking place above High Street.



COLTON

1958

28.6.58

Pilot makes forced landing in field

FARMWORKERS removed part of a hedge in a field near Colton on Tuesday to prepare a "runway" for a small Chipmunk aircraft which had made a forced landing the previous day near Hamley House Farm, Colton. The pilot taxied into position near the farmhouse and made a perfect take off.

The previous afternoon two farmworkers, Mr. D. Goodall and Mr. R. Bannister, were working in a field when they saw the Chipmunk begin to circle overhead.

Mr. Goodall said that when the plane came down the pilot made for a clover field, but a wheel hit a concealed tree stump. "It then came straight for us, but the pilot saw us and swerved. He then made a perfect landing," said Mr. Goodall.

The Chipmunk landed un-

damaged about 30 yards from the workmen.

Training flight

The pilot, 21 years-old cadet pilot Neville de Villiers, of the Oxford University Air Squadron, R.A.F. V.R., went to Mr. F. H. Bannister's farmhouse to wait for transport. He explained that he had been on a training flight from Hulavington in Wiltshire. On the return he ran into a storm and lost his way. He requested instructions but interference was had due to the storm. He then ran out of fuel and had to land. At that time he was heading for Shawbury airfield, and when his fuel ran out he had no alternative but to attempt a forced landing.

He commented: "It was lucky I was not over a town."

STREET LIGHTS DISPEL COLTON VILLAGE GLOOM



In the picture above is seen one of the new standard lamps at Colton. It is sited near a road T-junction, and contributes to the safety of pedestrians and drivers.

COLTON villagers no longer grope their way along the main street after dark, for public lighting, which has been a controversial topic for some years, has now been installed. The re-siting of one of the lights, and the provision of yet another, means, however, that the subject of public lighting has not yet entirely disappeared from the agenda of the Parish Council.

Five lamps have so far been provided for the village, and local residents who have persistently agitated for street lighting now share a feeling of satisfaction. There are some, however, who still feel that public lighting is not altogether necessary.

When it was first suggested that Colton should have street lighting the question of the cost involved was immediately argued, and even parish councillors were divided in their attitude towards the project.

Some said street lights were essential no matter what the cost might be; others argued that the cost to the ratepayers would be too heavy a burden. The Rural Council was asked to submit estimates of the cost of lighting the village, and several plans were drafted and discussed.

As the months passed the rival factions in the village came to be known as the pro-lightists and the anti-lightists.

Those who campaigned for street lighting maintained that, in modern times, some system of lighting that was not too costly or impracticable could be devised.

Too costly

Others held to their belief that the scheme would be too expensive. Some of the "diehards" protested that lighting was an unnecessary expense that the council should not entertain.

Every winter, in the darkened road of the village, residents used powerful torches every time they stepped beyond their front doors. Finally, however, a basis of agreement was reached among the parish councillors, and a revised scheme was submitted by the Rural Council.

Reason for delay

The lights were due to be installed last September, but they were not switched on before the

middle of November.

The reason for the delay was explained to members of the Parish Council by the clerk, Mr. C. J. Ravenscroft, at their meeting in the Reading Room last week.

The heavy demand for brackets and columns at the start of the lighting season had held up the installation of Colton's five street lights, said Mr. Ravenscroft.

The council discussed a light which has been erected at the entrance to Heath Way, and decided to ask Lichfield Rural Council to move it to another site near Mr. H. Challinor's house before next winter.

A sixth light, parish councillors have been informed is to be erected on the main road near the Trent Valley railway station, but before this can be done it will be necessary for the Electricity Authority to enter into an agreement with the G.P.O.

Councillors expressed the hope that the provision of this light will be carried out as soon as possible.

The clerk informed the council that the Colton Parish Land Trust had decided to pay for the work required on the brick bridge over the Moreton Brook. Iron railings are to be erected and certain re-

pairs carried out on the bridge, over which there is a public right-of-way.

Members were told that collections in the village on behalf of the Hungarian Refugees Fund had raised £37.

"A beacon"

Colton residents told the "Rugeley Times" this week that street lighting had made an improvement, but more lamps were needed.

Five lamps have been installed in the village and they provide a beacon to aim for in the darkness, but say the villagers, they are too widely scattered to be of real value.

Mr. N. Myatt, of 8, Heathway, Colton, said: "They are, of course, a big help. We have waited for them long enough, but we could do with more. Still, it is better to have five than none at all, and they do light junctions and awkward spots."

COLTON - EASTER MONDAY
(EVENTS) WALKING MATCH
1920's or 30's



Easter Monday memories

PHOTO FLASHBACK

Former Colton
blacksmith Tommy
Ravenscroft pictured
striding out more than
40 years ago in the
annual village Easter
Monday walking match.

In the second picture
are Bill "Steamer" Pres-
ton and Alvert Devalle.

The pictures were
loaned by Mr. Charlie
Preston of 8, Manor
Way, Colton.

Rugeley Times
5th Oct 1974
p.5.

COLTON, CHRISTMAS
(EVENTS) 1927.

Rugeley Times 8 Jan 1977 p14



Photo flashback

This fancy dress dance took place at the Reading Room, Colton, at Christmas. But it was Christmas 50 years ago!

The picture has been lent by Mr. T. Meddings of 6, Bryans Lane, Rugeley, who supplies as many names as he can remember. They include the following:

From back, reading from left, Amy Farley, ----, Doris Cooper, ----, Marie Tooth, Reg Cooper, ----.

Tom Preston, ----, Tom Meddings, Connie Yeomans, Enid Bentley, ----, ----, Jack Devalle, ----, Gwendoline Myatt, Eva Cooper, ----, ----, Frank Middleton.

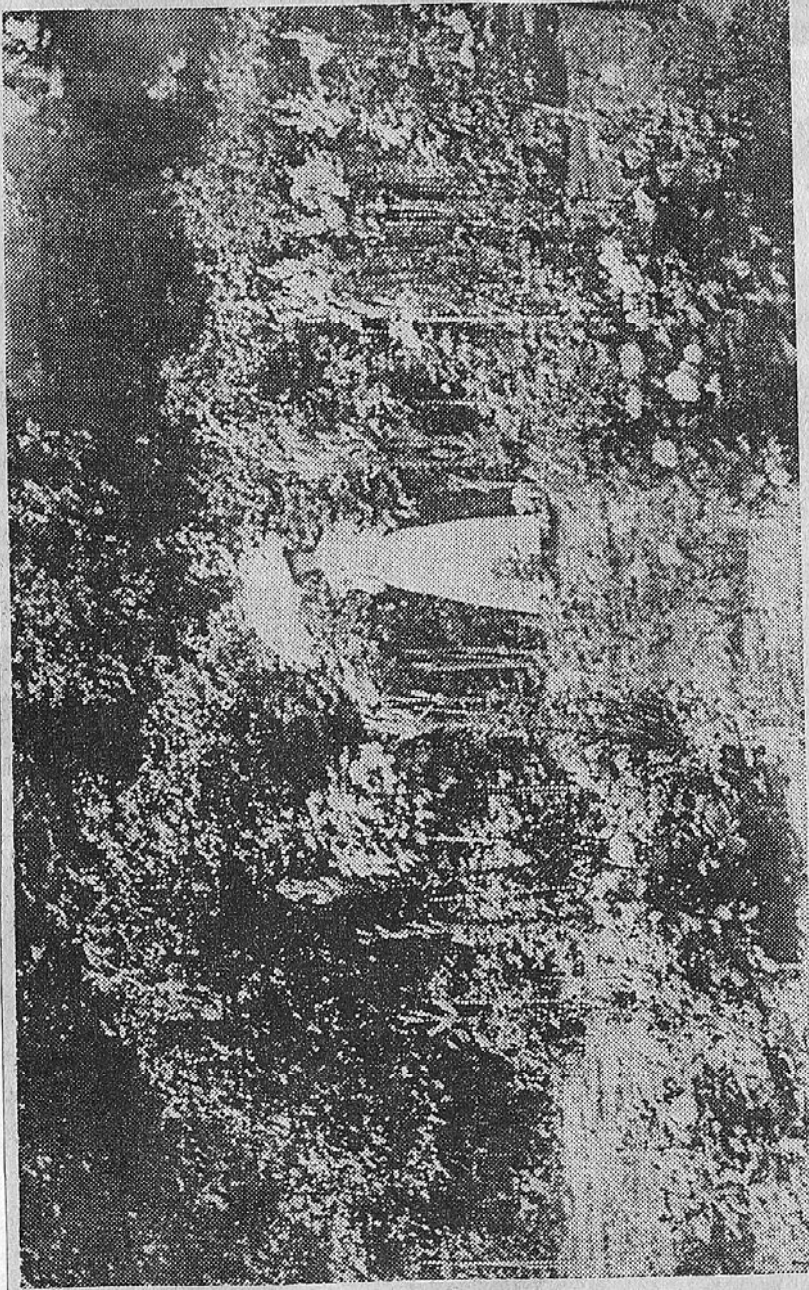
Marjorie Goodall, Freda Lowndes, ----, Zita Heathcote, Muriel Cooper, George Upton ----, Janet Morrall.

----, Celia Williscroft, ----, ----.

----, ----, ----, Marjorie Upton, ----, ----.

COLTON
Bellamour Hall

HORSEFALL FARM
COLTON, BELLAMOUR
BUILDINGS
RT 17 Feb 1968



THIS picture of one of the Miss Horsefalls taken at the beginning of the century gives an idea of the graceful living then enjoyed. Parasol raised in protection from the summer sun, Miss Horsefall poses for her picture amidst the stately flowers growing at Bellamour Hall, Colton.

Bellamour was demolished in the 1920s, though a section of the older hall still remains near the farm. The site was used last year for the festival of steam.

Shortly before the picture was taken there

had been a serious fire at the hall, damaging seven rooms in the left wing of the newer building, erected by Edward Blount at the beginning of the 19th century on to the stone hall erected by his mother in 1796.

Originally a home of the Astons of Tixall, Bellamour passed to the Blounts, then to Mr. J. O. Oldham before being purchased by the Horsefalls, great local benefactors. The estate is now the property of Mr. J. C. Price, who lives at nearby Bellamour Lodge.

COLTON - PEOPLE
and GREYHOUND INN.
in 1930's



10 Aug 1974 p5
Rugeley Times, Sat

PHOTO FLASHBACK

Tommy Ravenscroft, Bill "Steamer" Preston, Jack "Pewit" Norman, and Fred Hardcastle, with Albert Nelson and Albert Devalle, who posed outside the Greyhound, Colton, about 40 years ago.

Mr. Charlie Preston of 8, Manor Way, Colton, who lent this picture, said the only member of the group still living is his friend, Albert Nelson.

COLTON
PEOPLE HORSFALL FAMILY
(Bellamour Hall)

Rug. Times 19th Feb 1972

Going back perhaps more than 100 years, this typical Victorian family portrait shows the ornate dress of the ladies of those days. Not to be outdone, the man of the family sports his topper — of great size — for this picture by a London photographer.

It is of the second Mrs. Horsfall and her family, later of Bellamour Hall, and has been lent by Miss D. Landor.

The Horsfalls were prominent in the neighbourhood and kept a large number of servants at Bellamour. This hall was taken down and transported to America in the early 1920s. Remains of the older Bellamour hall still remain in the park, which is now farmed by Mr. J. C. Price.



PEOPLE
COLTON-(BELLAMOUR HALL)
Head Gardener, Mr Morrall

Ageley Times 17 Sept 1977 p 4

Photo flashback

The Morralls were a tradition at Bellamour Hall in the days of the Horsefalls. This Mr. Morrall, head gardener at the old hall, was the first man to ripen a banana in England, according to Mr. C. Robinson, who lent the picture. Also in the picture are Annie Morrall and the Horsefalls' dog.

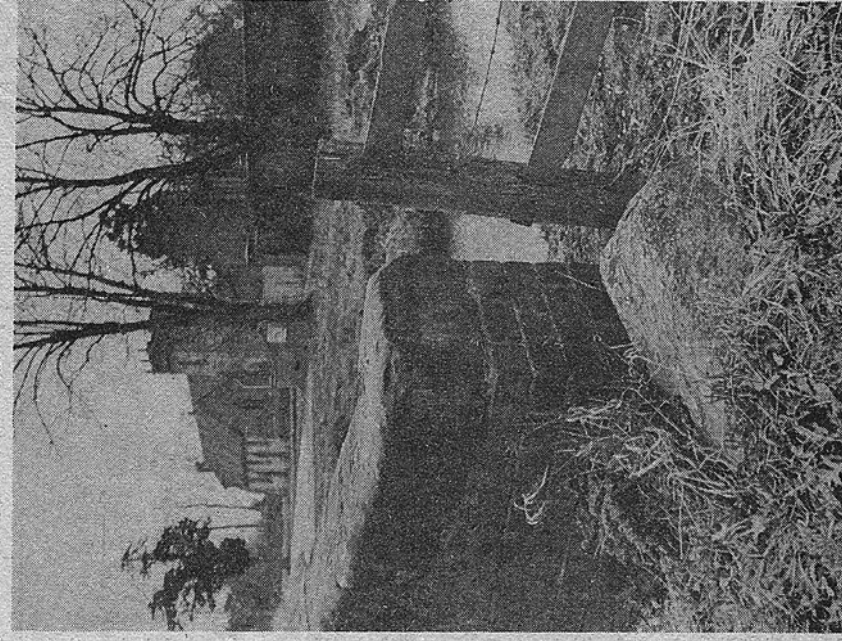
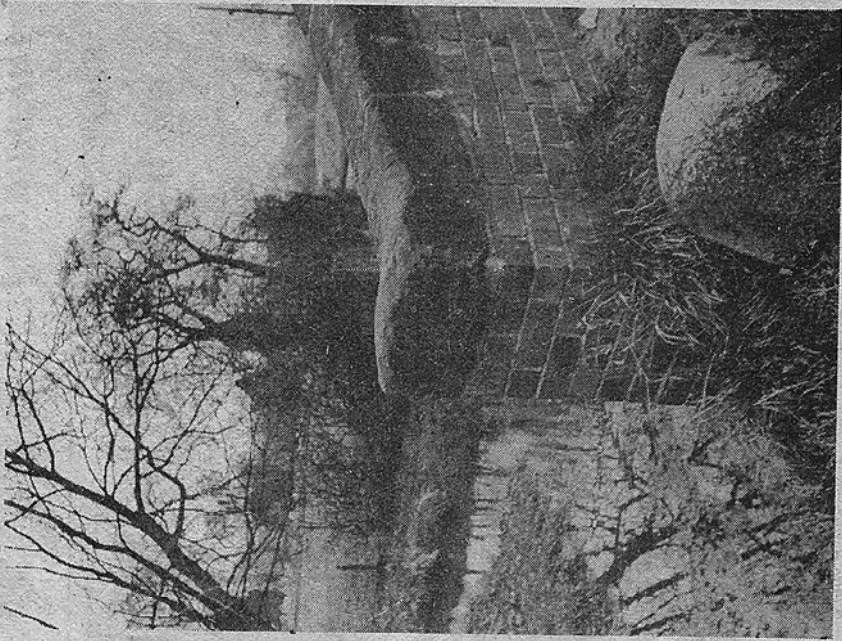


Cutting in photo collection

COLTON Bridge
geology
March 1974

Rugeley Times 2 March 1974 p.1.

Council to safeguard Ice Age relics



Protecting local features which date back mere centuries is peanuts to Colton Parish Council. This week they set about saving four relics from the Ice Age... or are there just three now?

Colton villagers often pass them but few probably even notice them and very few can know their purpose. To those who have, please don't write them off as four useless stones plonked down at the four corners of the small hump backed bridge.

Having been around for up to 600 million years, they are perhaps entitled to look a little sorry for themselves as they slowly sink below the surface. They may have been stepping stones at the ford before the bridge was built and then were used to stop cartwheels getting too close to the bridge walls.

Miss D. Landor, president of Rugeley's local history society, says the stones were identified as relics of the Ice Age by a leading geologist, Professor F. Bonney who lived at Colton House. The parish council will now raise them to their former glory and search for the missing fourth one.

Mercury 8th March 1974

DIGGING UP A RELIC

COLTON parish councillors have unearthed a boulder believed to be 600 million years old.

Their spadework and digging for the lost relic paid off.

It was known by the councillors that there were

originally four boulders at the corners of a hump-back bridge crossing the village stream.

But one had disappeared from sight . . . and a hunt was started by the council.

After cutting back weeds and grass they uncovered the lost stone.

No-one really knows why the boulders were positioned on the corners of the bridge, which leads into the tiny village.

But one theory is that because the stones were light in colour, they helped horse and cart drivers cross the bridge in the dark.

— AND HOW!

Clerk to the council, Mrs. Irene Brown, said they held a site meeting, did a bit of 'poking around' and soon found the missing stone.

The search was started when Miss D. Landor, president of Rugeley's Local History

Society, pointed out that one stone had disappeared and the others were in danger of being buried.

The parish council now plans to raise the buried stone and clear earth and overgrown grass from around the others.

Rugley Times 9th March 1974

Stone Age

Colton's four member family of Ice Age stones was reunited last Friday.

While four of the parish councillors with their clerk pondered the problem of the 'missing fourth' in pouring rain at the village's hump backed bridge, Councillor Mrs. A. P. Ball worked some of the soil away with her boot at the corner where the stone should have rested. Something solid was felt.

Surprise, surprise . . . and it was not long before Councillor G. Sanders had removed all doubt.

Well, almost. The trouble is, we now have a pretender to the throne. Two village boys — Jonathan Derry and Tony James — claim they have found the true stone in a field between the bridge and Trent Valley railway station.

Who can guess what fresh agonies of doubt this will arouse?

Rug. Times 13 March 1971

Should Colton be numbered?

Colton Parish Council has been asked how it feels about numbering houses in the village. And at their meeting on Monday members decided to ask Lichfield Rural Council, the body which posed the question, whether numbering is compulsory by law.

Members heard that houses in one half of the village had no numbers at all. They were asked to discuss the possibility of changing the name of the main street to incorporate "Upper" or "Lower."

Councillor A. V. Harcastle chairman, said he could see no difficulty at all and felt the houses should be numbered. He said that in Rugeley some years ago householders were sent a circular advising them that if they did not number their homes the council would do it and charge them.

Councillor G. Sanders asked if numbering was compulsory by law, and Councillor Mrs. M. S. Toy said she could understand the move in an urban area, which Colton was not.

The chairman pointed out that the move to number houses was an attempt to ease the postal and local authority's situation.

He said that many houses

had such peculiar names it was difficult to even write some of them and stressed that residents could retain their house name even though their house might also be numbered.

Councillor G. Upton thought the situation should be "tossed back" to Lichfield Rural Council. He said that a few years ago this authority had numbered some of the houses in the village. It was "a bit late in the day" to pose the question of numbering houses because half those in the village already had them, he said.

Councillor F. Harcastle felt the parish council would be wise in considering a move which might serve a useful purpose to the public and to industry.

Rug. Times 14 AUG 1971

RT E. May 71

Colton main road to have new name

What is in a name? At Colton, quite a lot. Half the village's main street — the lower half — is to be named Bellamour Way, the parish council has agreed. And the top half of the road? That will continue to be known as High Street.

The re-christening is planned because of a move to number houses and so ease postal and local authority situations. In Colton at present some houses are numbered and some are not — these are known by names, such as Laburnum Cottage.

Residents will be able to retain house names

Sir,—Seeing the report in your issue of August 7, that the question of naming the road through the lower half of the village of Colton had not yet been settled, brings to my mind the one or two occasions over the years when I have been asked by someone in an official position if I could say where High Street begins.

My reply has been "At Apsley House Corner" (i.e. where the road leading through the village divides; the left arm proceeding up the village and the right arm leading — via Hollow Lane and Bank Top — to Blithbury and the Ridwares.)

Their next question has been "If that is so, would you know of any name for the road running through the lower part of the village," to which I have replied in the negative.

I am pleased that this matter is under consideration as I think it will be a great convenience to be able to refer to this lower road by name and I feel it is a good thing not to be in too big a hurry in arriving at a decision as the name will, of course, want to be a permanent one.

Of the one or two names I have heard suggested I would not favour "Bellamour Way" as now and then one might meet people unfamiliar with the locality asking for Bellamour when they really want "Bellamour Way" and

vice versa. Nor would I choose "Lower High Street" as the word "High" applied to the rather low-lying road between the school and Apsley House Corner (which I take it is the section under consideration) would be an incongruity.

My own suggestion would be "Lower Way" which would contrast well with adjoining "High Street" and would not cause confusion. Or does this prompt others to put forward their idea of a more suitable name and add to the interest in the subject?

Cecil J. Ravenscroft
(former clerk for many years to Colton Parish Council).

Holly Cottage,
43, High Street,
Colton, near Rugeley.

COLTON
ROADS
HIGH STREET
1972

15 Jan 72
10 Rugeley Times, Saturday 15th Jan 1972

Colton road scheme start

An urgent much-needed scheme to cost more than £44,000 is to be started this year on the widening of High Street, Colton. There will be new footpaths and a drainage system.

R.
The work has been passed by Staffordshire Roads and Bridges Committee.
A petition signed by 263 local residents last year, pressed for the work to be done as soon as possible, and the parish council also urged an early start on the scheme.
The work will extend along High Street from its junction with Bellamour Road, to the north. There are hardly any footpaths and the road is flanked by high banks without any refuge or roadside verge. Four trees will have to be felled.
Improvements are also proposed for Heathway.

R.T. 1 April 1972

Colton road works may make village a death trap

Road widening costing £44,000 at Colton could turn the village's main road into a "death trap," local people were warned on Friday last.

"At the moment the road is a death trap and vehicles will only go faster after the improvements," Mrs. K. Haynes told the parish assembly.
She made the comment

after the chairman of the parish council, Councillor Mrs. M. S. Toy, had told the meeting that work on road improvement scheme should be started this year.
Mrs. Haynes, calling for a 30 miles per hour speed limit to be imposed along Main Road and Heath Way, said many small children lived in

the vicinity and the speed of traffic was a constant danger.
Councillor Mrs. Toy replied, "The matter is more a question of road safety education now, because the scheme has obviously got to go through."
The meeting decided to look into the possibility of getting a "Halt" sign erected at the junction of Heath Way, to slow down the speed of traffic through the village.

As a result of a complaint by Mrs. M. R. Taylor the parish council are to write letters to the R.A.F. and the Minister for the Environment protesting about low flying aircraft in the area.

Councillor Mrs. Toy reported that "no progress" had been made with work starting on a children's play area, although a survey had been carried out and a loan promised.
Due to the likelihood of road improvement schemes starting it was decided not to enter the Best Kept Village competition this year.

Councillor Mrs. Toy suggested "making an effort" this year by organising a party of volunteers to do work in the village. After discussion no volunteers were forthcoming.

Following a question by Councillor G. Sanders, Rural Councillor F. Hardcastle assured the meeting that no large scale development would be taking place at Colton.

At the last census the population of Colton was 693.

End-of-year target for High St.

All the land needed to enable Colton High Street improvement plan to be started has now been purchased, it was said at Colton Parish Council meeting on Thursday last.

If the County Roads and Bridges Committee pass the plans on June 6, contractors will be invited to tender, County Councillor J. E. Riley said.

Pressed by Councillor G. Sanders to say when work could start, he estimated within three months.

"I do hope that the work is finished this year," Councillor Riley added.

Councillor A. V. Hardcastle said he thought tenders had already been invited but it was said that this was not possible until all land required had been purchased.

"It was holding us up. You cannot do the job until you have the land," County Councillor J. E. Riley said.

RT 27 May 72

121

RT. 2 NOV 1970

TREE SCHEME AT COLTON

Twenty-six trees costing £84 are to be planted along the northern side of Hollow Lane, Colton.

The scheme, approved by the county planning department, is subject to the necessary land being dedicated to the highway authority by the owner.

Lichfield Rural Council have decided to share the cost equally with Colton Parish Council.

RT 16 JAN 1971

Lights for Colton

Midlands Electricity Board quotations totalling £227 for street lighting in Colton have been accepted by the parish council. Lights will be provided — two in Hollow Lane, one by the Brook Bridge and one either opposite the "Fog" cottages or by Rydal House.

The latter proposal was accepted but the council considered it was not entirely satisfactory and decided that a site inspection should be carried out beforehand.

RT 13 MARCH 1971

COLTON MISSES TREES

Now that trees at Hollow Lane, Colton, have gone members of the parish council are in two minds about the resulting space. One feels there is more light; another thinks it looks 'terribly bare.'

Councillor A. V. Harcastle, chairman, felt Hollow Lane had been 'vastly improved.' There was more light there now than ever in the history of the Lane, he said.

But Councillor Mrs. M. S. Toy said the area was now 'terribly bare.' The house on top of the hill there 'sticks out like a sore thumb,' and she felt it must be terribly windy.

Councillor F. Harcastle said the householder must have lost some of his privacy. The county council considered that the bank on which the trees grew was the householder's responsibility — he considered it was theirs. Councillor Harcastle did not know if a solution had been resolved.

Councillor Mrs. Toy thought it had been agreed that the county council were to replant the bank with shrubs rather than trees. It was agreed to leave the matter, pending correspondence.

RT. 3 APRIL 1971

Plant trees bees like - villager

Staffordshire County Council have agreed to plant trees along a bank at Hollow Lane, Colton, the parish assembly heard on Wednesday.

Parish councillors had expressed concern that the bank looked "bare" since the trees were removed after they were considered in a dangerous condition.

At the assembly Councillor A. V. Harcastle (chairman) said he hoped shrubs would also be planted further down the bank.

Mr. R. Morrall said he did not consider the proposal adequate and thought the parish council should press for the bank to be restored to something resembling its former state.

Mr. H. Taylor suggested that the trees planted should be of a type "liked" by bees. "There are a large number of beekeepers in the village and if trees are to be planted they might as well be of use," he added.

RT. 5 May 71

New trees for a Colton lane

The future of the bare bank at Hollow Lane, Colton, has been settled. It is to be replanted, trees having been removed to the consternation of some members of the parish council.

At their March meeting, some members felt the lane had been improved by the trees' removal; others thought it had not. But on Thursday last, at their April meeting, they heard that plans for the bank's replanting were "in the pipeline."

It had been said that the County Council felt the bank on which the trees grew was the householder's responsibility while he considered it was theirs. Councillor A. V. Harcastle (chairman) said the expense for replanting the bank would be shared between Parish, County and Lichfield Rural Councils.

COLTON ROADS

HOLLOW
LANE

1970-72

RT 8 Jan 72

Approve trees for Colton's Hollow Lane

A tree planting scheme in Hollow Lane, Colton, costing £170, to replace dangerous trees felled there in the summer of 1970, has been approved.

Offers by Lichfield Rural Council and Colton Parish Council to each contribute £40 towards the cost of the trees, to be planted during the current planting season was also accepted by Staffordshire Roads and Bridges Committee.

The county council's share will be about £90.

After the dangerous trees were felled, members of Lichfield Rural Council and Colton Parish Council asked for the work to be done; as did two landowners who live in Hollow Lane.

They agreed that some of the trees could be planted on their land beyond Hollow Lane's boundary.

RT 22 JAN 1972

Colton trees safeguard

Colton Parish Council is to contribute £40 towards the cost of providing trees at Hollow Lane. A further £40 is to come from Lichfield Rural Council and the rest of the £170 total will come from County Council.

Some of the trees originally at Hollow Lane were found to be unsafe and were cleared. Colton Parish Council heard on Monday that the new trees will include oak, lime, sycamore and two varieties of horse chestnut; they will be the subjects of tree preservation orders.

Councillor F. Harcastle said the parish council wanted to know when planting would start and felt the County Council should be asked for a starting date. It was said that autumn was the best planting time for trees but that work depended on weather conditions and the availability of labour.

RT 22 Jan 72

MUCH BINDING NEEDED IN THE HOLLOW LANE AT COLTON

Rug Times
27 May 1973

Tree-planting at Hollow Lane, Colton, has been completed. "But what about the shrubs?" Councillor F. Harcastle asked at Colton Parish Council meeting on Thursday last.

A letter from the county council said the work had been done and asked the parish to pay its contribution of £40. Councillor Mrs. B. M. Ravenscroft, vice-chairman, said she had seen the trees.

Councillor Harcastle said he understood that shrubs were also to be planted up the bank at Hollow Lane.

"The shrubs were for binding the bank — what is going to hold it together?" he asked.

No record could be found of an agreement to plant shrubs so the parish council agreed to pay the £40. A tree preservation order has been asked for, said Councillor Mrs. M. S. Toy, chairman.

123

MACHINES RUN COLTON FARM

IN these days of mass production, many foodstuffs are advertised as 'untouched by human hands.' To what extent this can be true of farming operations is shown by harvesting processes at Bellamour Lodge Farm, Colton, where the owner, Mr. J. C. Price, is employing some of the latest ideas in mechanised farming.

There the grain goes through the whole process of harvesting without being touched by hand.

"We use a combine harvester to cut the crop, which is fed through the machine, where it is threshed. The straw is thrown out of the rear of the machine and picked up by a baler," Mr. Price told a "Times" reporter who visited the farm this week.

"Following the baler is a sledge, which holds 15 bales. These are stacked in the field and then put on a wagon by an elevator. When the wagon gets to the farmyard, the straw is again elevated into the Dutch barns, where it waits to be used for the cattle.

"The system needs only seven men for smooth operation. With good weather they can complete 20 acres in a day.

"The grain, however, stays in the combine in two-ton bulk tanks and is then shot into a trailer, which tips the grain into a chute, where spiral elevators take it to the top of the storage tanks.

"If the grain is wet, we put it in drying bins holding 14 tons of grain, and it is next taken up to the top of the bins and along a conveyor which divides it between the storage bins, each holding 18 tons.

Mr. Price also mixes his own pig food for his well-known herd of large whites. His mixer can make various mixtures to suit his need.

This mechanised harvesting process has been built up over the last five years. Trying out various kinds of seeds, Mr. Price has found that Zephyr barley gave the best yield this year on Bellamour's sandy loam.

Mr. Price aims at getting an average of two tons an acre from his land, which is well above national average. This year, despite the recent floods, he has managed one ton from the worst-hit fields.

The huge grain drying bins on the Bellamour Lodge farm of Mr. J. C. Price stand guard over the combine harvester.



Colton bids a fond farewell to the old village hall

13-8-91

Picture: TREVOR ROBERTS



Part of the new building can be seen through the rubble of the old village hall.

It is finally coming down - the delapidated Colton village hall is being demolished to pave way for a new one.

Fund raising in the village has been going on for over seven years to cover the cost of a new village hall.

Work on the new building is well underway. It will be a bigger and better facility than the old hall. One of its new features will be a purpose built committee room.

The new hall is not sited on the exact location of the old, it being built further back from the road to pave way for much needed car parking space.

It is intended that the building will have facility to cater for outdoor sporting events.

The original village hall was left to the village by wealthy landowners the Horsfall family and is now run by a trust committee.

It was erected in the 1920s and over the decades had gradually fallen into disrepair.

One excited villager told The Post: "We have waited a long time for this new village hall and worked hard for it. It'll be a great day when its doors finally open."

As contractors Chase Builders carry on with their work, fund raising efforts continue. Cash is still needed for interior decorations and fittings including a new floor and items such as crockery.

Village post office could get reprieve

Post
LE
8/8/91
P9

Report by RICHARD GREEN

Fears that the village of Colton could die if its shop and post office closed are receding.

A full post office service is definitely on its way back to the village say the Post Office.

The post office counter, housed in the village shop, closed earlier this year after irregularities were unearthed.

A skeleton service then started two mornings a week from a high street home.

The shop has been taken over by Mr. Mick Scoins who told the Post he only took on the business on the understanding the post office franchise would be renewed.

But months have passed without the Post Office renewing the franchise. And without the custom drawn by the post office, the shop has become unviable.

A fortnight ago Mr. Scoins revealed his intent

to close the shop if no action was taken by the Post Office.

Residents feared that without the shop and full time post office their village would start to die.

But a reprieve for the village is on the cards.

The franchise has now been officially advertised by the Post Office, in keeping with their legal requirements, and a closing date for applications of August 12 has been set.

Mr. Scoins has now said he will keep the shop open until a final decision on the franchise has been made. He hopes his application will be successful.

PO spokesman Mike Granville said: "We are seeking to make an appointment as quickly as possible. We want to open on a full time basis again as soon as possible as opposed to the part time service now in operation."

Mr. Granville added that a couple of applications had been received and would be reviewed after August 12.

8-8-91

Villagers battle to save the post office

The village of Colton is fighting for its very life.

Desperate attempts are being made by villagers to save the local post office and shop from permanent closure.

And if they fail many believe the village itself will die.

"It'd be the beginning of the end," predicted one parish councillor.

"A village needs a post office, a shop, a school, a

pub and a church to survive," said Cllr David Bradbury. "Lose one and you start on a trail that ends with them all going and then the village dies."

The Post Office counter was housed in the village shop. It was closed several months ago following alleged irregularities.

Urgency call

The Post Office has yet to renew the franchise despite being pressed to do so as quickly as possible by the parish council, local residents and MP Sylvia Heal.

A skeleton service has been operated by a former post master from his High Street home in Colton. Pensions and income support cheques can be cashed and collected there two mornings a week.

Cllr. Bradbury said: "It seems the Post Office is content to let that situation

continue. But really it is not on."

New owner of the shop Mr. Mick Scoins only took on the premises on the understanding he would be able to take up the post office franchise.

The shop as a single entity is not viable, it only becomes viable when linked to the post office and the custom it draws.

Mr. Scoins has kept the shop going through personal subsidies for as long as he can. He can no longer keep the doors open and has started running down stock supplies.

'We will close'

Unless the Post Office react swiftly the shop will be closed inside a fortnight.

Mr. Scoins said: "This is a crazy situation. I've done all I can. I feel sorry for the pensioners and villagers. They need this fa-

cility. At the moment they are forced to pass the shop and walk half a mile to get their money from the temporary post office service. They shouldn't have to do that."

Cllr. Bradbury told the Post: "The parish council is very concerned Colton will lose the shop. It is an important community link. The consequences of losing it are frightening."

MP Sylvia Heal has now taken up the fight and is supporting villagers' calls for positive action from the Post Office.

There is still hope in the village that the situation can be retrieved but all are aware that time is running out fast.

●The Post Office official dealing with the Colton affair was unavailable for comment at time of going to press.

25.7.91

Post Exclusive

Report by
RICHARD GREEN

Colton gets its post office

Colton is to have a full post office service again.

Mick Scoins has been given the franchise to operate a full post office counter service from his shop in the village.

The news comes as a boost for the Scoins family and the village.

Mr. Scoins told The Post: "This is excellent. We shall be opening up on September 16. Staff are already being trained by post office experts."

It was feared the shop would close

if the post office franchise was not granted. The shop has proved to be unviable as a solo project.

Mr. Scoins had kept it open and stocked through his personal funding but admitted he was not in a position to continue that financial arrangement.

Now the post office has granted the franchise Mr. Scoins said the shop would be restocked to capacity as quickly as possible.

5-9-91

COLTON FESTIVAL HITS THE DIZZY HEIGHTS

Organisers hope to top £7,500 mark

ORGANISERS of this year's Colton Festival looked to the skies for their star attraction.

It came in the form of an aerobic display by one of Britain's top flying teams, the

Microlease Pitts Special, which performed last year at the Farnborough International Air Show.

But there was plenty of other things for the visitors to do at the festival, which had a European theme - everything

from a parade of vintage tractors and a Caledonian Pipe Band to karate and Morris dancing.

A flower festival in the church was on display throughout the weekend, and other attractions included a brass band, several dance groups including clog dancers, a classic car parade, tug-of-war, Polish National Dancers, and a model railway exhibition.

The festival, which is held every two years, proved a great weekend for everybody involved, and the organisers now hope they can top the proceeds of the last event, when £7,500 was raised.

The money is split equally between the new village hall fund and the maintenance of the village church.

Spokesman for the festival committee, Mrs Chris Turner said: "The main attraction of the event seems to be that it is a traditional type of village festival."



● Twin terrors Kathryn and Sarah Harper (back), aged five, and four-year-old Luke Fearing have a great time with their ice creams! (Pic:91-876-10)

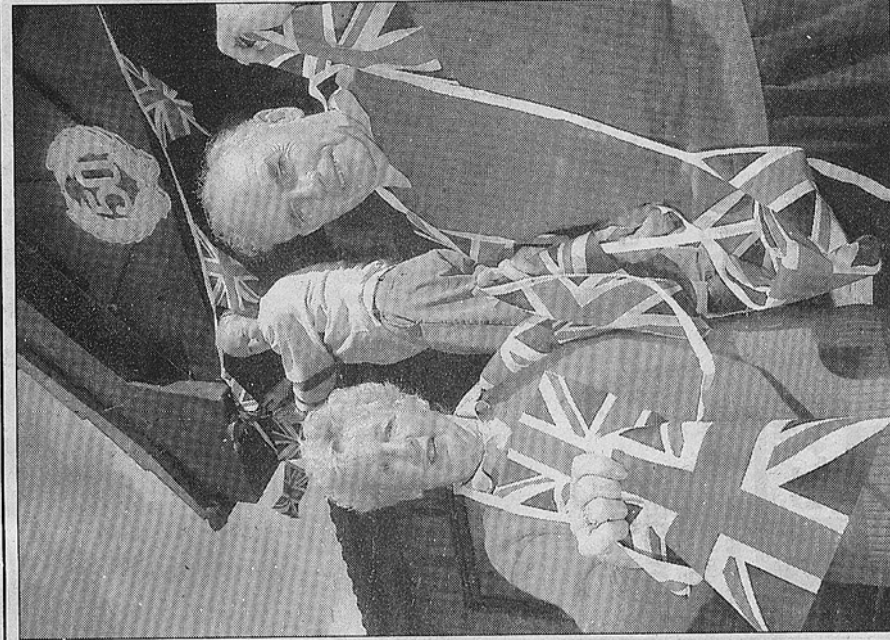
Pictures by Allan Williamson



● The Microlease Pitts Special which gave a special aerobic display at Colton Festival.

2-10-91

Post Jubilee jaunt A selection of events in our area over the Jubilee weekend



Village celebrates the Jubilee in style

Residents of Colton are pulling out all the stops to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

And they started early. Bunting for the big day went up last week and the village looks a picture decked in red, white and blue flags. Jane Morris, one of the Jubilee committee, got together a happy band of willing workers to put up the decorations.

This was just the start of a series of activities aimed at getting families together for a weekend of celebrations. Popular band Blue Serge will give the festivities a great start on Saturday June 1 when they play at the Village Hall from 7.30 to midnight.

Tickets are £7.50, including buffet supper, from Shirley Carter on 01889 584931 or Judy Winter on 583517.

Sunday June 2 starts with a Jubilee Thanksgiving service and celebration bell ringing at St Mary's Church at 10.30am and a Songs of Praise at 5pm. From 11am and exhibition of flowers and village memorabilia will open and continue for the two days.

For those who like to test the little grey

cells, The Greyhound pub has a quiz at 6.30pm.

The big day on Monday June 3 starts at 11.30am with brunch - at just £1.50 (accompanied children free) and a variety of family activities will run throughout the day with afternoon tea at 4pm to finish off the celebrations.

Committee member Shirley Barnett is looking for volunteers for a variety of tasks and hopes residents will donate cakes for the Monday tea. Call her on 01889 577168.



■ **Left: John Carter gets up the ladder while Jane Morris and David Bradbury pass him the bunting**

■ **Right: Jill Croft with some of the memorabilia**

■ **Above: Yvonne Wilson and Rachel Bayliss model some of the beautiful dresses in the exhibition**



Church outing to Drayton Manor

BOYS and girls who are members of the Children's Church, which has been developed since the opening of the Church of the Good Shepherd on the Pear Tree Estate, were given their second annual outing on Saturday. Centre for the outing was Drayton Manor Park, and about 150 children and 16 adults made the journey in double-deck buses.

The organisers were Mr. R. Griffiths and Mrs. Griffiths, Miss J. Burden and Mr. F. Hall.

The buses left the church at 2 p.m. and arrived at Drayton Manor at 3 p.m. The children were split into groups and placed in charge of an adult or adults, and after they had enjoyed the various attractions of the fair they had tea in the recreation ground.

The children were given sandwiches, cakes, an apple and a packet of sweets. The sweets were provided by Mr. and Mrs. Harold V. Taylor, and other provisions were given by local residents.

After tea, the children played games, and prizes were distributed.

The Rev. B. A. Hardy, curate in charge at the Church of the Good Shepherd, accompanied the party.

Mr. Griffiths expressed the thanks of the sub-committee to all who helped to make the outing a success.

Youth leader to attend course

Mr. Bernard Grundy, of Rose House, High Street, Abbots Bromley, who was recently appointed leader of Abbots Bromley Youth Club, and 16 people associated with the Service of Youth movement in Uttoxeter will be attending a course at the University of Aberystwyth from August 20 to 27.

The course is organised by the Staffordshire County Council Education Committee and is a Service of Youth residential course for youth leaders and helpers.

The course will be officially opened by Alderman E. Allen, chairman of the County Service of Youth Committee.

GIPSY ACQUITTED: WATCHES CEREMONIAL BURNING OF CARAVAN

CLEARED of the murder of his father at Rugeley Magistrates' Court on Friday, and discharged, Henry Gaskin, a 22 years-old gipsy, returned to the encampment alongside the Manchester-London railway line at Rugeley Trent Valley, where he watched the ceremonial burning of his father's horse-drawn caravan home.

The hearing of the case had not been completed when the "Times" went to press on Friday.

After hearing that the father died of heart failure and could have died at any time if he became excited, the Bench upheld a submission by Mr. S. Brown, defending, that Gaskin had no case to answer either for murder or manslaughter.

"Self-defence"

Mr. Brown suggested that Gaskin struck at his father in self-defence, because in the darkness he thought that a candlestick with which his father struck him was a knife.

The destruction, by burning, of Mr. Gaskin's caravan was in accordance with Romany custom. The horses which drew the caravan, eight years-old Thunder and 12 years-old Star, were turned loose.

Mr. Edwin Smith, a relative, explained that the Romany saying was "Turning them out to die," but in fact the horses would be able to take care of themselves.

Everything that John Gaskin owned would be destroyed, said Mr. Smith. Romanies believed that the only thing a man should leave behind him were memories.

Horse brasses, candlesticks, cooking utensils and other objects which could not be burned were later cast into a deep pool.

"Try to forget"

Henry Gaskin wept as he watched the caravan burn. "I loved my father," he said.

All could not crowd picture, but it shows able proportion of members of the Church who enjoyed outing to Drayton

New College Technology cost £560

Final negotiations have been completed and on the site of the new Technology at Staff Junction of Weston Beaconside. It will cost £560,000. The College will have four-storey teaching storey laboratory and refectory block which reinforced concrete floors, with a roof over the administration. There will also be single-storey blocks for machine shops and laboratories containing heating and mechanical equipment. These will be of steel structure, lit by mon.

When completed, will be furnished with equipment for advanced logical studies and facilities will be a research. The building completed by September although classrooms station office should be the previous February.

"Romany families often quarrel but we stay very close. My family have been Romanies for generations. None of us has ever known a permanent home but I might settle down now and find a job. I want to try to forget all this."

His mother, Mrs. Sarah Gaskin, aged 65, said: "I am glad my son is back. My husband was highly respected by Gipsies throughout the country. He was a local chief and head of the Gaskin family."

The gipsy family left the district on Saturday, never to return to Colton.

Mrs. Gaskin said that gipsies would never again go to Colton as the place had an evil curse on it.

Gipsy families throughout the Midlands are contributing to buy a new caravan for Mrs. Gaskin.

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Colton celebrates after raising £1,000

It was anything from prams to heavy lorries at Colton on Saturday when the village celebrations got under way. And they had £1,000 to spend.

It seemed as though all the village had turned out in the sunshine at Pedley's Croft, opposite St. Mary's Church, to absorb the Jubilee holiday spirit — and there was plenty of it in evidence!

Children got the celebrations started with a fancy dress competition open to all the children in the village and judging by the standard and originality of the costumes a total of effort had gone into it.

Mr. C. Shelley, headmaster of Western Springs Junior School, Rugeley judged Calum Freeman to be the winner. Calum looked patriotic be decked in red, white and blue as a Jubilee rosette.

Second were Lee and Darren Barnard equally as Beekeepers, and third was

Caroline Croft, as Britannia.

Villagers were given the chance to see all the entries taking part in the best decorated vehicle competition and were driven through the village back to Pedley's Croft.

by John Upton

During the morning a best decorated house competition had been judged by Mr. Shelley and he presented winners' prizes during the afternoon.

First prize went to Councillor George Vernon and his wife Marianne, of 8, High Street who had used red, white and blue crepe paper to decorate the whole house. They received a stainless steel tray as a reward.

Second was the Warring family of School House and third was Mrs. Peggy

Bannister of 19, Heathway who were given a bottle of sherry each.

Star attraction of the day was a pram-race from Stockwell Heath in which all the contestants dressed up as mothers or babies.

It was a downhill run and the fastest pram team, Mr. and Mrs. Pat Johnson clocked in after a breakneck nine minutes!

Second was Mr. Lawrence Dolman's pram and third was Mr. Bob Perzac's pram.

The ten entries in the race all received stainless steel trays.

There were only three entries in a best decorated vehicle contest and they rumbled through the village looking colourful in the bright sunshine.

Mr. Maurice Sargeant and Mr. Mick Hughes both drove lorries decorated in red, white and blue hunting and Mrs. Rhonna Darlington, local horse enthusiast, drove a decorated pony and trap.



Colton children who took part in fancy dress competition looked on Saturday when they paraded to be judged.

Colton folk in an exhibition of local crafts open for four days.

Featured were crafts past and present and everything had been made by 'unprofessional' people during their spare time.

On show was a selection of bee-keeping equipment, a corn dolly exhibition and a selection of children's work including Jubilee paintings and models.

Mr. David Bradbury a committee spokesman, said of Saturday's celebrations: "We have had a good response from the people of the village, in fact all the proceedings are a complete village effort."

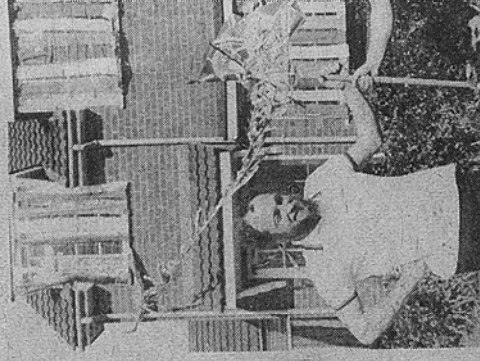
A best decorated pet-

Judging was by Mr. and Mrs. G. Rudd of Sutton Coldfield who also gave Jubilee crowns to winners and rosettes to all the entrants.

A Jubilee thanksgiving service at St. Mary's Church on Sunday was conducted by the Rev. L. Sapsford (rector). In his address the rector spoke of the importance of the monarchy in today's society.

On Monday the children had a sports afternoon on the school playing fields.

Demonstrations were given by the Junior Gym Club and the Colton Ladies' Keep Fit Group who performed a series of routines to music. Mr. J. Brown was announcer for the afternoon.





Some of the children who tramped to the top of Marlin Hill to watch the village Jubilee beacon being lit on the historic site.

Mr. David Bradbury a committee spokesman, said of Saturday's celebrations: "We have had a good response from the people of the village, in fact all the proceedings are a complete village effort."

A best decorated pet-competition sounds like an unlikely event, but Colton staged one on Pedley's Croft on Sunday thanks to Mrs. Rhonna Darlington and the response was good.

Entries numbered 40 and there was anything from dogs to donkeys all dressed in red, white and blue or costumes connected with the Queen's 25 years' reign.

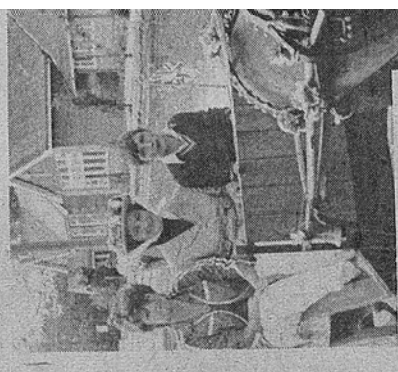
Winner of the best decorated horse and rider section was Nicola Darlington, who was dressed as St. Trinian's girl on a red, white and blue decorated horse. Winner of the best decorated dog and handler section was Amanda Wright with Candi, a corgi dachshund cross-bred.

Caroline O'Brien came first in the best decorated donkey and owner, the donkey being lent by Mrs. J. Knight of Crabtree Farm.

The only male winner was Mark Vernon as a Buckingham Palace window cleaner. He came first in the best dressed child in red, white and blue without a pet.



Mr. George Vernon, his wife and their children outside their home - the best decorated in the village.



Mr. George Vernon, his wife and their children outside their home - the best decorated in the village.



Decorated dogs and owners were all part of the pets' fancy dress competition at Colton on Sunday. The winners are pictured above and

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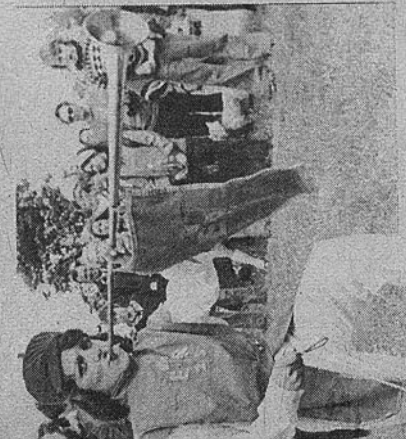
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Decorated dogs and donkeys were all part of the pets' fancy dress competition at Colton on Sunday. Winners are pictured above and other entries are on the right.

Demonstrations were given by the Junior Gym Club and the Colton Ladies' Keep Fit Group who performed a series of routines to music. Mr. J. Brown was announcer for the afternoon.

Mr. Bradbury said on Monday: "Although the weather was poor during the morning it turned out fine for us again in the afternoon. The weather seems to have been good to us!"

Each child was given a Jubilee certificate by Mrs. Darlington as a memento of the occasion.

Capping Colton's celebrations was the lighting of a beacon on Marthin Hill, the highest point in the village.

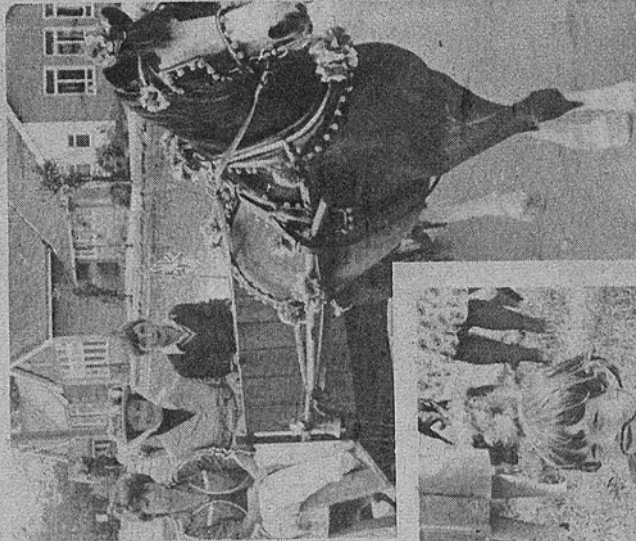
About 200 people made the uphill trek to the site of the bonfire, which was not one of the official links in the Jubilee chain.

The slight rain did not dampen the spirits of the spectators — or the bonfire — which burnt away merrily until about 2 a.m.

During the reign of Elizabeth I Marthin Hill was the place where beacons were lit. From Marthin Hill Barr Beacon could be seen, as well as beacons at Longton, Mewcastle under Lyme and Derby.



Mr. George Vernon, his wife Marianne and their children outside their house, judged to be the best decorated in Colton.

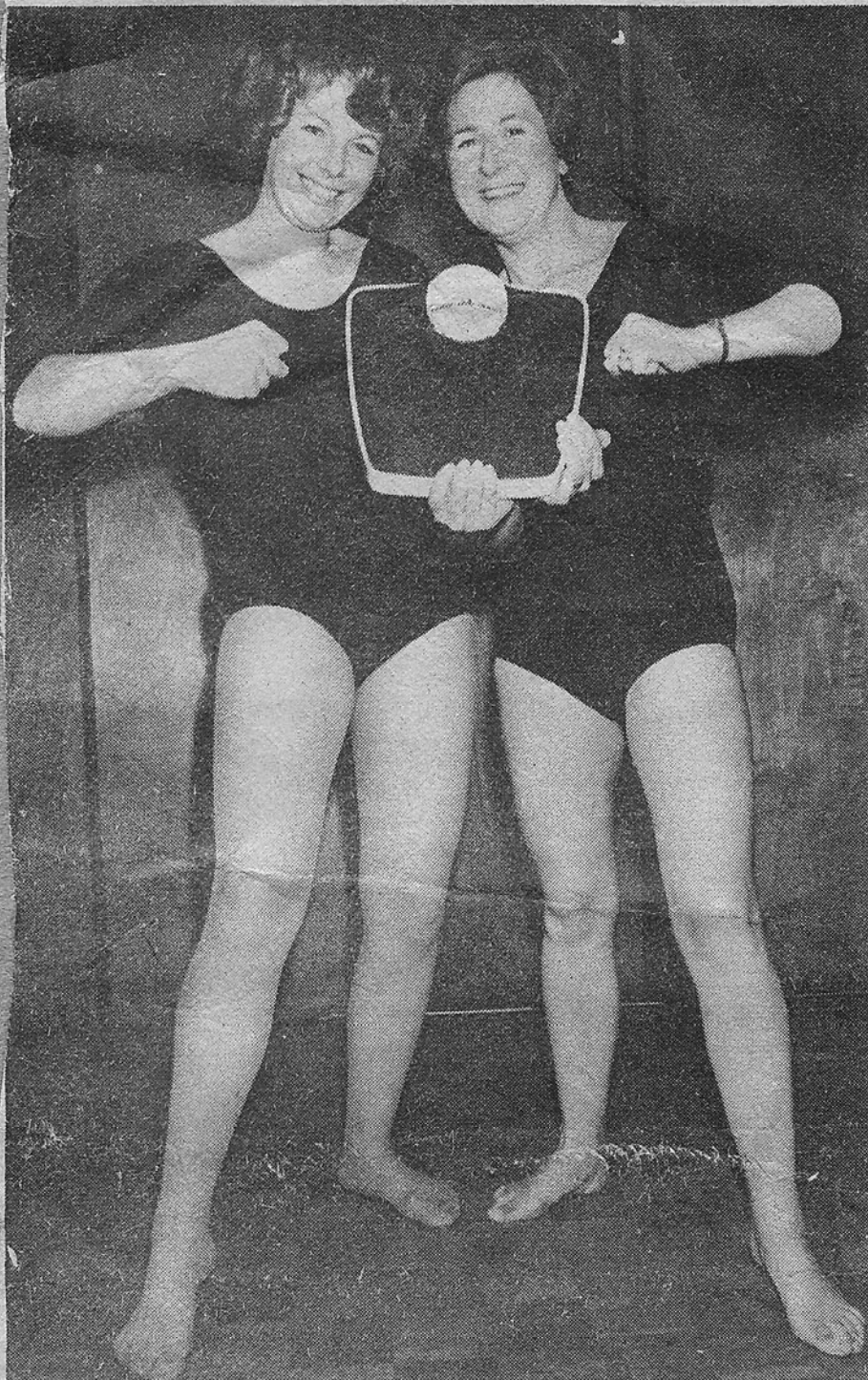


Mrs. Rhona Darlington in her decorated trap, one of the entries in best decorated vehicle contest.

Patriotic garages

A resident of the Beeches showed true patriotism over the Jubilee — he painted his garage door to resemble one large

A 'silver' slim



Carol Smith (left) and organiser Vicky Sargeant — out to beat the scales for a 'silver' target.

KEEP-FIT folk at Colton will be losing pounds to raise pounds — for the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

Sponsored slimmers will be losing weight to raise cash towards the village's £600 target.

Nearly 20 people turned up for the "weigh-in" on Monday at the reading room — hoping to "fight the flab" for a month.

And it is the first event the village has staged towards the celebrations in June.

Slimmers will be going on strict diets, exercising and weighing-in

weekly before the final meeting in February.

"I decided on the sponsored slim because not only will it raise cash but also give people an incentive to lose weight," said Jubilee committee member Mrs. Vicky Sargeant.

"It certainly seems to have provoked a lot of interest in the village; everyone seems to know about it," she added.

The village committee is already planning other fund-raisers, including a football match.

Colton's version of a knitting machine

Sparks flew last Thursday when Colton's Jubilee Committee organised a fund raising sponsored knit.

Although there was no competition between the 14 women who took part there was plenty of needle. Each knitter had to do her best in the two hours allocated.

The 'quick knits' completed 21in. the 'average knits' completed 14 to 15in. and the 'slower knits' bringing up the rear contributed a highly respectable nine to 10in.

A patchwork blanket will be made from the knitted pieces and this will be auctioned later in the year to raise money for the village's Jubilee effort.

Most of those who took part are pictured above. The other knitters who could not turn up on the day completed their pieces at home.

The raffle to pay for the hire of the hall was won by Mrs. Pam Roobotham, and second place went to Mrs. Ivy Preston.

They won prizes of a Jubilee tin of fruits, given by Mrs. B. M. Ravenscroft who also helped organise the event, and a swiss roll made by Mrs. G. N. Johnson.



The Martlin marathon

When they could have stayed cosily at home, tending the Sunday roast, a handful of Colton women chose

to dress up in St. Trinian - type outfits and race around on a windy hill — all to raise money.

The brave band played a team of men in a chilly Sunday morning football match at Martlin Hill, Colton. And rumour has it that the 'weaker' sex —

who incidentally won by four goals to two — are now murmuring 'I must have been mad' as they nurse their aching muscles...

But it was all in a good cause. The match was held to raise funds for Colton's Jubilee celebrations — in all, a raffle and collection made just £18.

Play between the two teams might have been generously described as 'haphazard,' not to say 'unorthodox,' with ref. Alf Haynes turning more than one blind eye to some of the goings-on.

He might have flinched, though, when plastic squirtable bottles filled with water were brought out as the ultimate defence weapon. And he certainly shuddered when one woman abandoned her pretence of obeying the rules, feeling that she could improve on the game by not bothering to kick the ball. She scurried up the field, Webb Ellis style, with it tucked firmly under her arm — and woe

betide anyone who dared tackle her.

Player Mrs. Ruth Jones (like the others, she played both defence and attack) said later: "It was just a bit of good fun. But there are a load of crippled women walking round the village today!"

Mrs. Jones described the 60 minute match as a 'free for all.' And as far as bending the rules was concerned, the women's team included two heavily disguised men, while the men began the game's second half with 19 players!

Much of the organisation behind the match was done by Jubilee committee member Mrs. Vicky Sargeant, whose hard work provided Colton with a good fund-raiser — and a giggle to go with it.

And at least two people were more than happy they had supported the event — raffle prizes of a box of fruit and a bag of potatoes were won respectively by Mick Allison and Mr. Sam Jones.



Jubilee is time for memories

Colton's Reading Room nearly had its roof lifted off last Thursday when the village's elderly took part in an old time music hall evening. The jolly atmosphere is captured in our picture (left).

More than 70 of them listened to singers Mick Hughes, Janet Sargeant, Agnes Sargeant, Sandra Flower, Gwen Johnson, Ruth Williams, Ruth Jones and Josephine Oliver.

Monologues were read by Tony Hill and Jane Jones and Josephine

Oliver dance the Charleston. They were later joined by Ruth Williams and sang 'Waiting at the Church' and 'My Old Man Said Follow the Van'.

During the evening a medley of old time songs were sung and at the end everyone joined in a sing song to guitar and piano accordion accompaniment.

Earlier Rod Williams sang 'Streets of London' to his own guitar accompaniment and George and Marianne Vernon sang together.



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Local crafts

Colton Church is one of the oldest in Staffordshire, dating back to the 11th century and parts of it are probably older.

It is a lovely building but when decorated with flowers, as it was for the Queen's Silver Jubilee, it is even more beautiful and lends itself to such an occasion.

There were flowers everywhere and the pedestals and font, done in white, mauve, green and silver, were particularly attractive.

A craft exhibition included many skills and each item was so well done that altogether it was a wonderful display. There was honey on the comb and in jars, bee-keeping equipment and information on the subject.

An impressive variety of wine, a wonderful collection of corn dollies and the story of their significance, and wood carving — some old and some new — came next. If I were asked to choose one piece, and it would be difficult, I think the stool would have been my choice.

There was leatherwork, brass and copper work, sculptures, enamelwork, fretwork and handmade lamps. An impressive collection of pottery, all shapes and sizes, expertly made, collages and some beautiful paintings were also on show. There were pictures made with dried and pressed flowers, embroidery, and three scrubboard samples.

Crochet work was delicately done in wool and cotton, and there were tapestry, maps, rugs, cushions, shawls and embroidered table cloths. Several pieces of macrame, dress-making, dried flower arrangements and poetry and prose were also on show.

In the vestry there was a display of photographs about the church's history, its incumbents and choir, and paintings of the church and bridge.

Near the altar were two exquisite antique chairs and a new hand-embroidered "cope".

A copy of greetings sent to the Queen on behalf of the people of Colton was also displayed.

On the other side of the church I found knitwear, toys, polished stones — some made into jewellery — hand weaving, old photographs and drawings.

A whole corner had been set aside for work done by children — the play school, Brownies and pupils of Colton Primary school. They had done wonders with wild flowers, papier mache figures, and

paintings of Royal scenes. There was a Brownie Ring and a good news poster of Bible stories.

Colton church was full for the thanksgiving service on Sunday evening and there have been many visitors during the four days of the exhibition.

It proved what a small community could do, and how everyone was interested and willing to be involved.

Miss Jones did a marvellous job organising it and the whole Jubilee committee is to be congratulated — they did the village proud.

May Bannister

Colton celebrates after raising £1,000

It was anything from prams to heavy lorries at Colton on Saturday when the village celebrations got under way. And they had £1,000 to spend.

It seemed as though all the village had turned out in the sunshine at Pedley's Croft, opposite St. Mary's Church, to absorb the Jubilee holiday spirit — and there was plenty of it in evidence!

Children got the celebrations started with a fancy dress competition open to all the children in the village and judging by the standard and originality of the costumes a lot of effort had gone into it.

Mr. C. Shelley, headmaster of Western Springs Junior School, Rugeley judged Calum Freeman to be the winner. Calum looked patriotic bedecked in red, white and blue as a Jubilee rosette.

Second were Lee and Darren Barnard equally as Beefeeders, and third was

Caroline Croft, as Britannia.

Villagers were given the chance to see all the enpiled on to one of the lorries taking part in the best decorated vehicle competition and were driven through the village back to Pedley's Croft.

by John Upton

During the morning a best decorated house competition had been judged by Mr. Shelley and he presented winners' prizes during the afternoon.

First prize went to Councillor George Vernon and his wife Marrienne, of 8, High Street who had used red, white and blue crepe paper to decorate the whole house. They received a stainless steel tray as a reward.

Second was the Warring family of School House and third was Mrs. Peggy

Bannister of 19, Heathway who were given a bottle of sherry each.

Star attraction of the day was a pram race from Stockwell Heath in which all the contestants dressed up as mothers or babies.

It was a downhill run and the fastest pram team, Mr. and Mrs. Pat Johnson clocked in after a breackneck nine minutes!

Second was Mr. Lawrence Dolman's pram and third was Mr. Bob Perzac's pram.

The ten entries in the race all received stainless steel trays.

There were only three entries in a best decorated vehicle contest and they rumbled through the village looking colourful in the bright sunshine.

Mr. Maurice Sargeant and Mr. Mick Hughes both drove lorries decorated in red, white and blue bunting and Mrs. Rhonna Darlington, local horse enthusiast, drove a decorated pony and trap.

Each entry received £1 as a reward.

Anyone tired of Saturday's hot sunshine could wander into the shade of St. Mary's Church and see evidence of the industrious activities of

Colton folk in an
hibition of local craft

Lee and
equally as
third was

Second was the winning
family of School House
and third was Mrs. Peggy

Darlington, local horse
enthusiast, drove a deco-
rated pony and trap.

St. Mary's Church and see
evidence of the in-
dustrious activities of

Colton folk in an exhibition of local crafts open for four days.

Featured were crafts past and present and everything had been made by 'unprofessional' people during their spare time.

On show was a selection of bee-keeping equipment, a corn dolly exhibition and a selection of children's work including jubilee paintings and models.

Mr. David Bradbury a committee spokesman, said of Saturday's celebrations: "We have had a good response from the people of the village, in fact all the proceedings are a complete village effort."

A best decorated pet-competition sounds like an unlikely event, but Colton staged one on Pedley's Croft on Sunday, thanks to Mrs. Rhonna Darlington and the response was good.

Entries numbered 40 and there was anything from dogs to donkeys all dressed in red, white and blue or costumes connected with the Queen's 25 years' reign.

Winner of the best decorated horse and rider section was Nicola Darlington who was dressed as St. Trinian's girl on a red, white and blue decorated horse. Winner of the best decorated dog and handler section was Amanda Wright with Candi, a corgi dachshund cross-bred.

Caroline O'Brien came first in the best decorated donkey and owner, the donkey being lent by Mrs. J. Knight of Crabtree Farm.

The only male winner was Mark Vernon as a Buckingham Palace window cleaner. He came first in the best dressed child in red, white and blue without a pet.

Judging was by Mr. and Mrs. G. Rudd of Sutton Coldfield who also gave Jubilee crowns to winners and rosettes to all the entrants.

A Jubilee thanksgiving service at St. Mary's Church on Sunday was conducted by the Rev. L. Sapsford (rector). In his address the rector spoke of the importance of the monarchy in today's society.

On Monday the children had a sports afternoon on the school playing fields.

Demonstrations were given by the Junior Gym Club and the Colton Ladies' Keep Fit Group who performed a series of routines to music. Mr. J. Brown was announcer for the afternoon.

Mr. Bradbury said on Monday: "Although the weather was poor during the morning it turned out fine for us again in the afternoon. The weather seems to have been good to us."

Each child was given a Jubilee certificate by Mrs. Darlington as a memento of the occasion.

Capping Colton's celebrations was the lighting of a beacon on Martlin Hill, the highest point in the village.

About 200 people made the uphill trek to the site of the bonfire, which was not one of the official links in the Jubilee chain.

The slight rain did not dampen the spirits of spectators — or the bonfire — which burnt away merrily until about 2 a.m.

During the reign of Elizabeth I Martlin Hill was the place where beacons were lit. From Martlin Hill Barr Beacon could be seen, as well as beacons at Longton, Mewcastle under Lyme and Derby.



Decorated dogs and owners were all part of the pets' fancy dress competition at Colton on Sunday. The winners are pictured above and some of the other entries are on the right.



Some of the children who tramped to the top of Martin Hill to watch the village Jubilee beacon being lit on the historic site.





Colton children who took part in the village fancy dress competition looked colourful on Saturday when they paraded on Pedley's Croft to be judged.

Ever heard of "The Greensleeves," "The Woolybacks" or "The Blue Mountain Band"?

They may not produce hit singles, but Colton folk found their music just as much fun to dance to.

Several villagers organised a barn dance in the car park of the "Dun Cow" as their wedding night celebration.

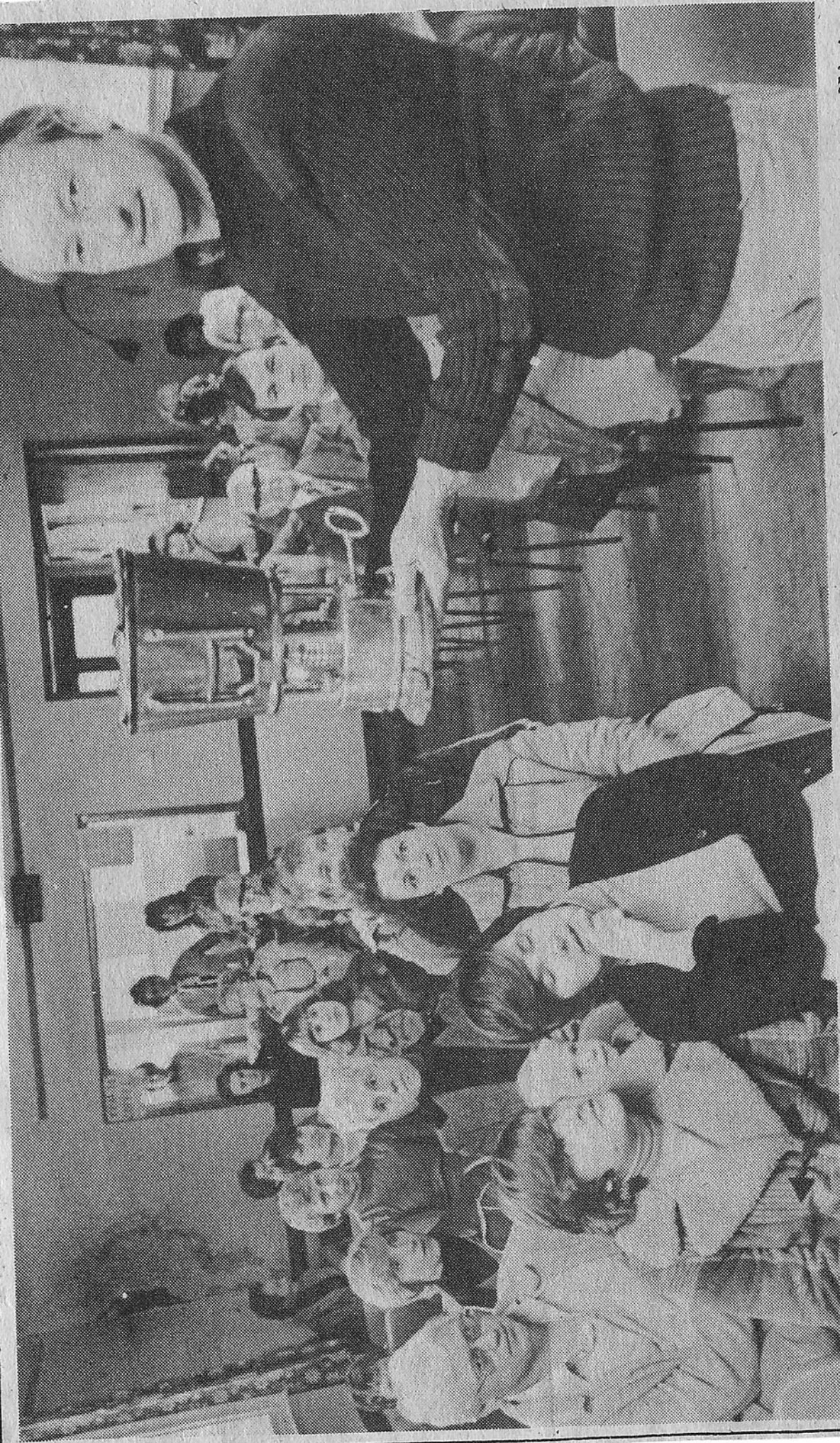
Mr. Jack Brown played music — both recorded and live on accordion — and called instructions for those uninitiated in barn dancing.

Mr. Brian Bevan had set up floodlights in the car park so that dancing could continue well into the evening.

A wedding cake, decorated with the names of the Royal couple, was the centrepiece of the feast.

Baked by Steve and Mary Upton, and donated by them and Derek and Vicky Sargeant, the cake was cut by a couple celebrating their 14th wedding anniversary — George and Marion Vernon.





a Chinese gun. Highest price of the day, about £30, was paid for a carpet.

Antiques dealer Mr. Peter Gagan (pictured) conducted the auction, which ran for more than four hours, at the village hall.

An auction at Colton on Saturday raised more than £800, of which about £160 went to village hall funds.

Household goods and toys made up most of the 280 lots, but there were also unusual goods such as

Auction aids village hall fund



Irene and Jack Brown at home in their own special corner of England, which won them the Little Hay Rose Bowl in Colton's annual garden contest.

Mr. Harry Baker in part of the garden judges decided was the best in the Colton area, earning the Richard Morral Cup and the Parish Council Cup.



Everything in the garden's lovely...

When music-hall star Marie Lloyd sang her famous song, "Everything in the Garden's Lovely", she could well have been singing about Colton.

For the gardens in this village could rank among the best in the country — and to find the best in the village, green-fingered gardeners met in competition.

The annual best kept garden competition, organised by Colton Parish Council, produced a blaze of colour throughout the village.

Mr. Peter Epps, Cannock Chase District Council parks superintendent, and Mr. Roy Binfield, from Brereton, judged the contest.

Mr. Binfield was called in at the last minute for Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Wheedon, from Reading, who arrived to judge, but were called away suddenly.

In spite of the bad season, all gardens were of

a very high standard, the judges said.

Both the Richard Morral Cup, for the best vegetable garden, and the Parish Council Cup for the best overall flower and vegetable garden, were won by Mr. Harry Baker and his wife, Florence, of "Lungarry," Stockwell Heath.

Harry and Florence, who are both 75 years old, have worked a field into a masterpiece of a garden in just seven years.

This year, as a patriotic touch, their flower garden includes a display of Spencer's sweet peas, flowering in red, white and blue.

Their garden is not just beautiful, but practical — the Bakers are almost self-sufficient.

They keep hens, geese, and pullets, and grow beans, peas, marrows, cucumbers, parsnips, sprouts, gooseberries, blackcurrants — it would be easier to list what they do not grow.

"We put a tremendous amount of work into our garden, but we get a lot of pleasure out of it," said Harry.

ROSE BOWL

A special trophy for the most comprehensive flower garden outside the village — the "63 Trophy" — was awarded to Mrs. Jean Matthews, of Jonghams Cottage, Hamley.

The Little Hay Rose Bowl — first prize for the best flower garden inside the village — was won for the second time in three years by Jack and Irene Brown, of The Cottage, Heath Way.

The garden is Mrs. Brown's hobby, and has paid dividends this year.

Report: Andy Smith

Honeysuckle, ivy, clematis and a Virginia creeper cover the front wall of the cottage, while roses and flowering shrubs grow all around the building.

A rockery, complete with small well, sets the garden off. In a greenhouse at the back, the Browns are growing a vine — no doubt at home in this summer weather.

CONSOLATION

Colton Village Produce Guild donated consolation prizes to the best gardens of guild members who had not won in any other class. The two winners in this category were Tom and Ivy Preston, and Derek and Vicky Sargeant.

Tom and Ivy, of 7 Holding, Old Wood Farm, Blithbury Road find they cannot spend as much time as they would like on their garden, with a farm to run.

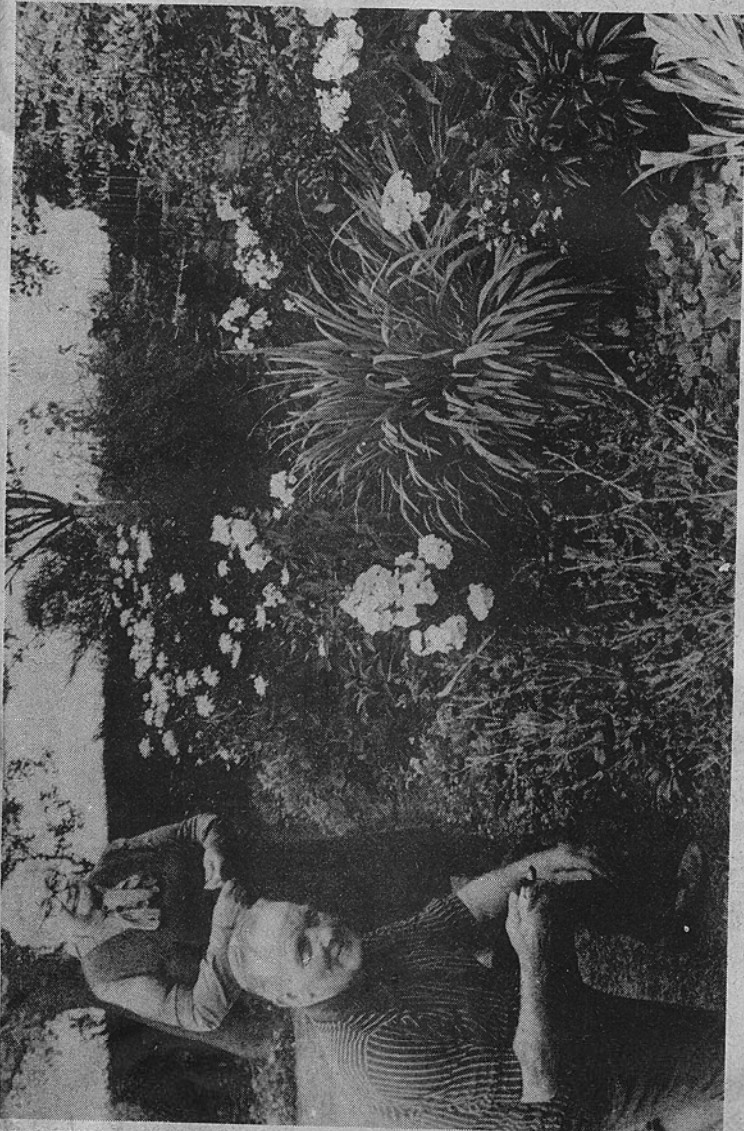
But the garden still looks a picture. Dahlias and chrysanthemums take pride of place among the flowers, many of which are grown for Ivy's flower arranging.

Vegetables grown include leeks, onions, potatoes and beans. Tom put down the success of their garden to his wife's green fingers.

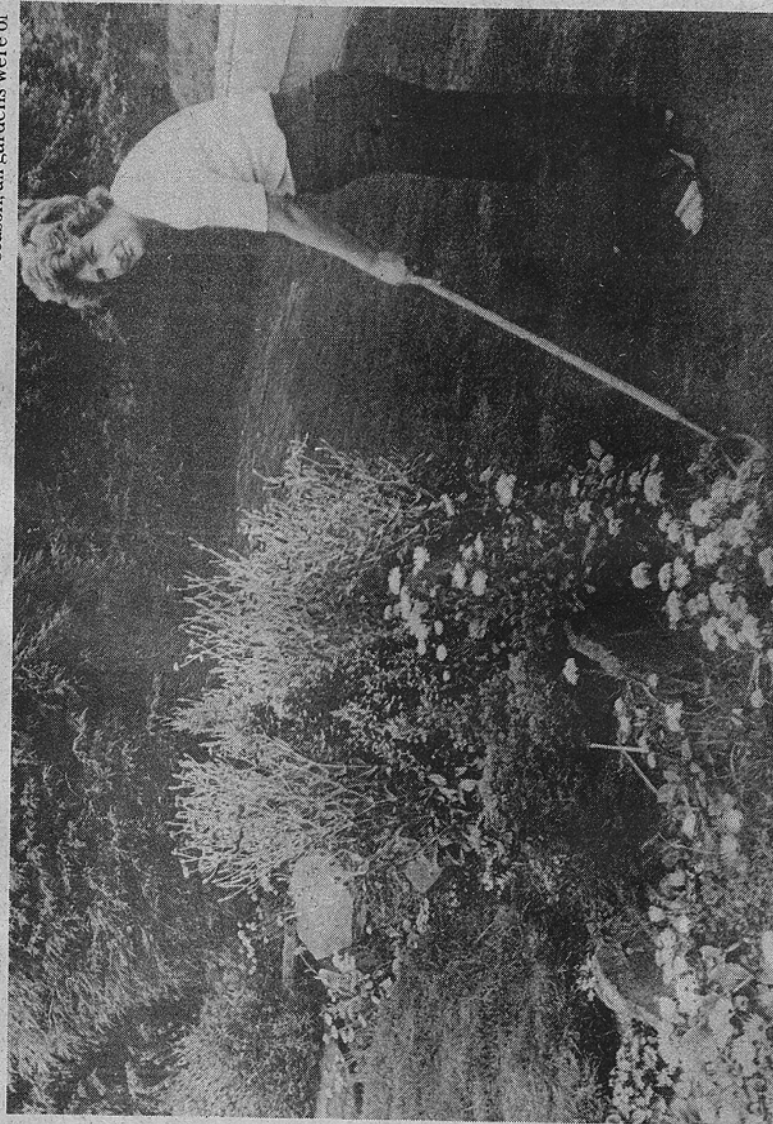
Derek and Vicky, of 43, High Street, Colton, entered the competition for the first time this year.

Vicky said she thought the judges were impressed by the colourful rockery of the front garden, which is an impressive sight with its tall conifers.

Other features of the garden include a bush of panoplas grass over 10 feet tall, and a good selection of roses.



A garden in full bloom on a sunny day... this one belongs to Tom and Ivy Preston, and won them a Colton Village Produce Guild prize.



Mrs. Vicky Sargeant does her version of a hoe-down beside her prize-winning rockery, which helped gain her a Colton Village Produce Guild award.

COLTON GETS CRAFTY



A weekend of crafts of every shape, size and description is taking place in Colton to raise funds for the village church.

Displays and demonstrations will line Belamour Way today (Saturday) and tomorrow from the bridge up to the village shop.

One of the highlights will be a demonstration by Mr. Maurice Willis-croft (pictured) of the age-old craft of 'hooping the wheel' — shrinking an iron trim onto an old-fashioned wooden wagon wheel.

The iron tyre is shrunk onto the wheel, by being heated up and then cooled quickly to fit properly. This then forms the surface of the base of the wheel, which can be decorated or trimmed when cold.

There is not much call for the craft today, and most of Mr. Willis-croft's time is spent on woodwork of all kinds as his main trade. He and his sons will also be demonstrating woodwork this weekend.

Crafts on display also include yew tree carving, farrowing, upholstery, bread making, painting, pottery, weaving, and a whole host of others.

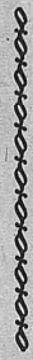
On both days the activities will begin at 11 a.m. and go on to 6 p.m.

Ploughman's lunches will be served in the village hall, as well as Victorian cream teas.





Visitors to Colton's craft weekend could have a trip on this traction engine loaned by Mr. John Bradbury, brother of parish councillor David Bradbury. Both are pictured.



Mrs. Ruth Jones and Mrs. Vicky Sargeant sell programmes for the craft weekend, appropriately dressed in Victorian costume.



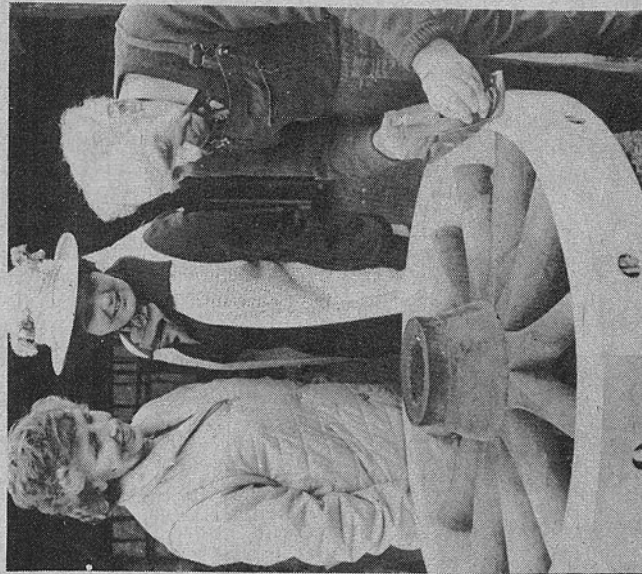
Mrs. Gay Lawrence (below), of Colton House, is watched by three youngsters as she shows her skill with a needle in a tapestry design.



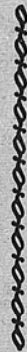
cribed the Vicar, The Rev. Raymond

Victorian cream teas and coffee.

taking part each year.



Mr. Maurice Williscroft, above, planes a wooden wagon wheel before the metal surround is fitted on.



Left, Mrs. Sue Awford, Sally Awford and Caroline Croft helped with the preparation and serving of ploughmen's lunches and Victorian cream teas at the village hall.



Right, macrame and the art of lampshade making — one of the crafts on display at Colton over the weekend.



Turning back the clock

Colton residents turned back the clock to the Victorian era at the weekend when they staged one of the largest craft demonstrations ever held in the area.

Dressing in Victorian costumes was not stressed by the organisers — but on seeing some people dressed up, many dashed home and appeared later in make-shift costumes.

This was typical of the community spirit which prevailed over the weekend, and helped to make the craft fair such a tremendous success.

Organisers hope to have raised about £1,000, which will go towards repairs and maintenance at St. Mary's Church.

The village was beautifully decorated with flowers and bunting, and stalls and displays lined Bellamour Way outside almost every house.

Everyone was involved in one way or another, and everyone entered the spirit of the occasion.

Villagers were up and about at 7 a.m. on Saturday to make sure everything was looking right.

Children from St. Mary's School made models out of cardboard, wood and wire, depicting their school and the village church.

They also wrote amusing essays on their likes and dislikes of school life, and described the Vicar, The Rev. Raymond

Wilcox.

These made up part of an exhibition at the school, along with paintings and pictures.

Also at the school Mr. Robin Mathans had laid out a model railway track of Rugeley Trent Valley.

Stalls and demonstrations lining the street included items individually crafted by members of Colton Flower Club, such as Teazel grannies, pot pourri, bouquets garni and hop pillows.

Mr. John Russell, of Wedges Mills, demonstrated the art of glass engraving.

On Saturday afternoon he was busy inscribing a verse about whisky on a glass.

Clive Deeley, a local wood turner, displayed some of his work using exotic woods from all over the world.

And next-door neighbour Les O'Brien, a print maker, had laid out his work in the various stages of print-making.

A tapestry weaving demonstration was given by Mrs. Gay Lawrence, of Colton House, whose fingers must have been feeling the cold on Saturday.

Other demonstrations included hand painting on china, yew tree carving, fanery and upholstery.

Women serving refreshments in the village hall had a very successful weekend, making almost £450.

They served ploughmen's lunches and Victorian cream teas and coffee.

An exhibition of Victorian clothes and photographs was also staged at the village hall.

Sunday began with an open air service by the brook bridge, taken by Mrs. Dorothy Bradbury, and the day ended with harvest evensong in the church.

Mr. Stephen Upton, who runs the bread section at Low Cost in Rugeley, gave bread-making demonstrations on Sunday. Some of the bread was raffled and the rest was sold.

Also on Sunday Mr. Maurice Williscroft demonstrated the ancient art of hoopsing, which involves shrinking metal onto a wooden wheel.

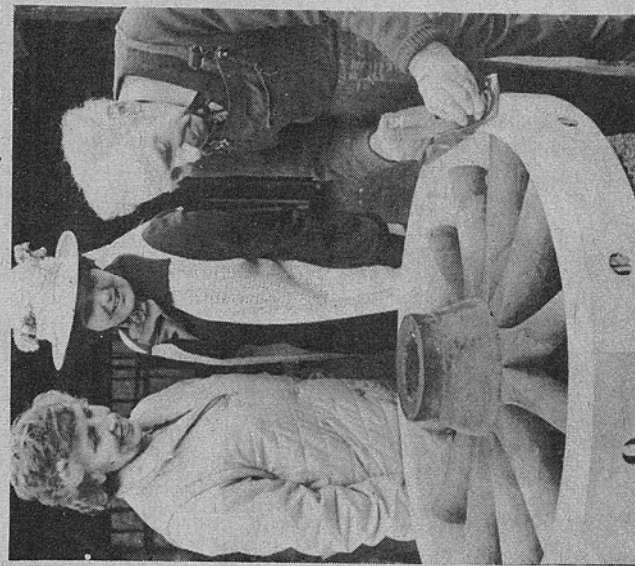
Children and adults alike enjoyed ride on a traction engine, and in a trap drawn by a pony.

And on Saturday afternoon the Abbot Bromley Horn Dancers gave a display using the imitation horns.

A competition for the worst dressed urchin was won by Debbie Upton.

A beekeeping demonstration had to be cancelled because Mr. Harry Taylor, professional bee keeper, was in Wolverhampton Eye Hospital.

But the weekend was a tremendous success, and one of the organisers said there was talk of staging it again — but if it became a yearly event it would lose impact because the same people would be taking part each year.



Mr. Maurice Williscroft, above, planes a wooden wagon wheel before the metal surround is fitted on.



Left, Mrs. Sue Awford, Sally Awford and Co.

Colton Fair a huge success


THOUSANDS of local folk turned Colton's first craft fair into a runaway success at the weekend.

About 5,000 people are thought to have attended the two-day event, which

was staged at several areas around the village.

And proceeds are expected to reach £1,000 in aid of St. Mary's Church restoration fund and the Year of the Disabled.

Attractions included the Abbots Bromley Horn Dancers, a steam traction engine, craft demonstrations and a special Victorian village atmosphere.



Abbots Bromley's famous horn dancers give a special performance.



Village children demonstrate their painting skills.



Local youngsters take a ride on the steam traction engine.

GLASS

Traditional country crafts were on exhibition, with practical demonstrations in glass engraving, pottery painting, wood carving and wine making.

Children from the village's St. Mary's C.E. Primary School also joined in with an exhibition of their craft skills.

The Bass-Worthington Bottle Car proved to be a popular entertainment for children, as did rides on the steam engine.

At the local Tea Rooms, music took the form of a Victorian Vocal Ensemble, and organisers and helpers throughout the village wore 19th century costume.

Mrs. Ruth Williams, an organiser, said: "One of the weekend's greatest successes was the unique Victorian atmosphere which was created.

PULLED

"Everyone in the village pulled together, and this rekindled a feeling of unity, which must have been a big part of 19th century village life.

"Visitors even remarked on the wonderful atmosphere, and so they must have felt it too."

The craft weekend was originally the idea of the Parochial Church Council to raise cash for the restoration fund.

Later, a special organising committee was set up, and Mr. Rod Williams was appointed chairman.

Organisers are now hoping a similar craft weekend can be arranged for next year.



Children pool talents for a model show

Crafty children at Colton, near Rugeley, are combining their talents for an exhibition in the village. They are building models of their school and church, both called St Mary's.

The models are for a craft weekend next month.

Headmistress, Mrs Emily Hiesley, wants parents and former pupils to join in as well.

"We are hoping people will find us old photographs and pictures of the school," she said.

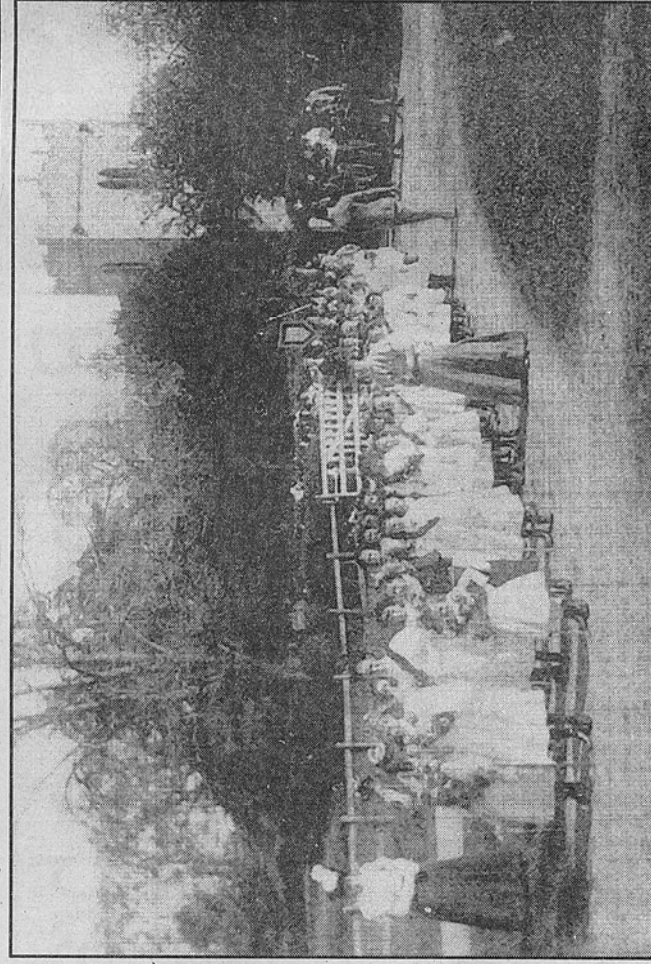
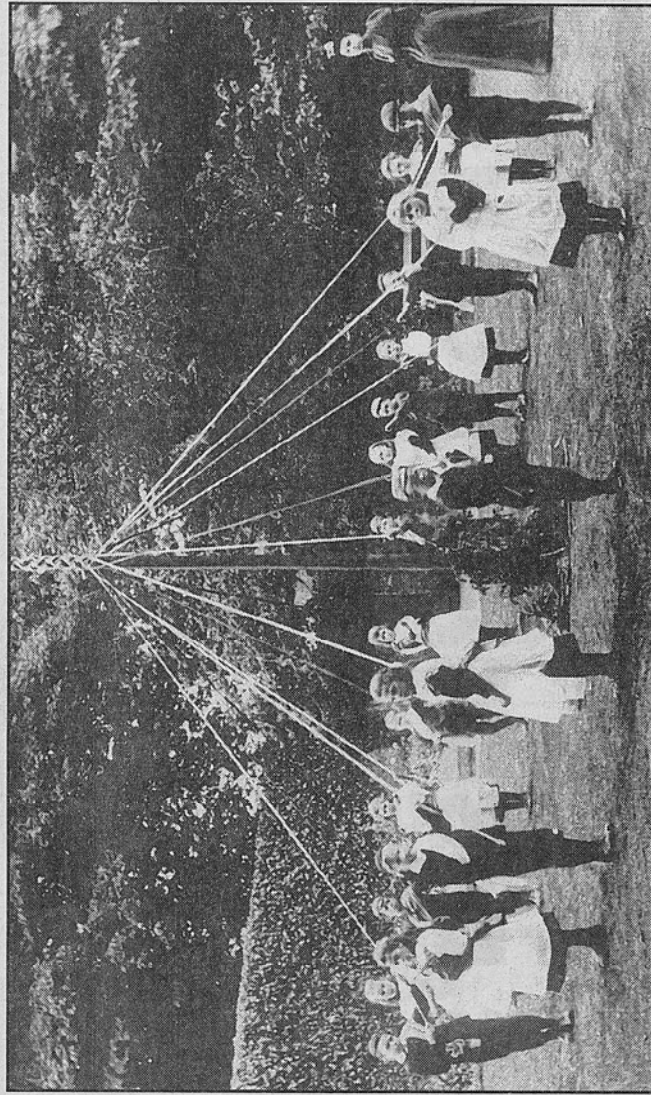
About 40 children aged between eight and 11 are making the models out of cardboard, wood and wire.

They will go on display in the school's entrance hall along with paintings, pictures and essays done by younger children.

The exhibition is linked with the craft weekend being run in the church on October 3 and 4.

Pictured here showing of the model framework is headmistress Mrs Hiesley with pupils Paul Carr, Louise Pye, Kirsty Freeman, Jacqueline Dolman, Adrian Williams and Stephen Prentice.

Post feature



First milestone for village history group

by Theresa Larner

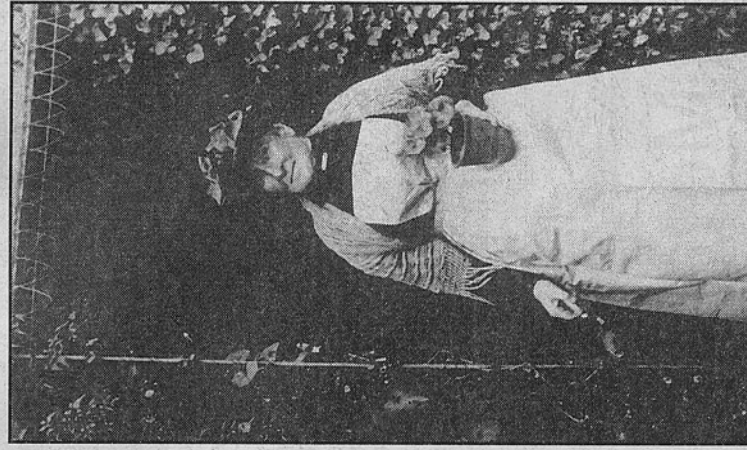
The history society of a picturesque village near Rugeley is celebrating the first anniversary this week.

Colton History Society is one-year-old and members are hoping the anniversary is the first of many to come.

The village is hundreds of years old and even got a mention in the Domesday Book.

And the history society was set up to ensure the character and memories of all those living there are kept alive for future generations.

It was set up by a
The society
draws on



Village History Group

by Theresa Larner

The history society of a picturesque village near Rugeley is celebrating the first anniversary this week.

Colton History Society is one-year-old and members are hoping the anniversary is the first of many to come.

The village is hundreds of years old and even got a mention in the Domesday Book.

And the history society was set up to ensure the character and memories of all those living there are kept alive for future generations.

It was set up by a group of villagers who were interested in Colton's past and preserving it for future generations.

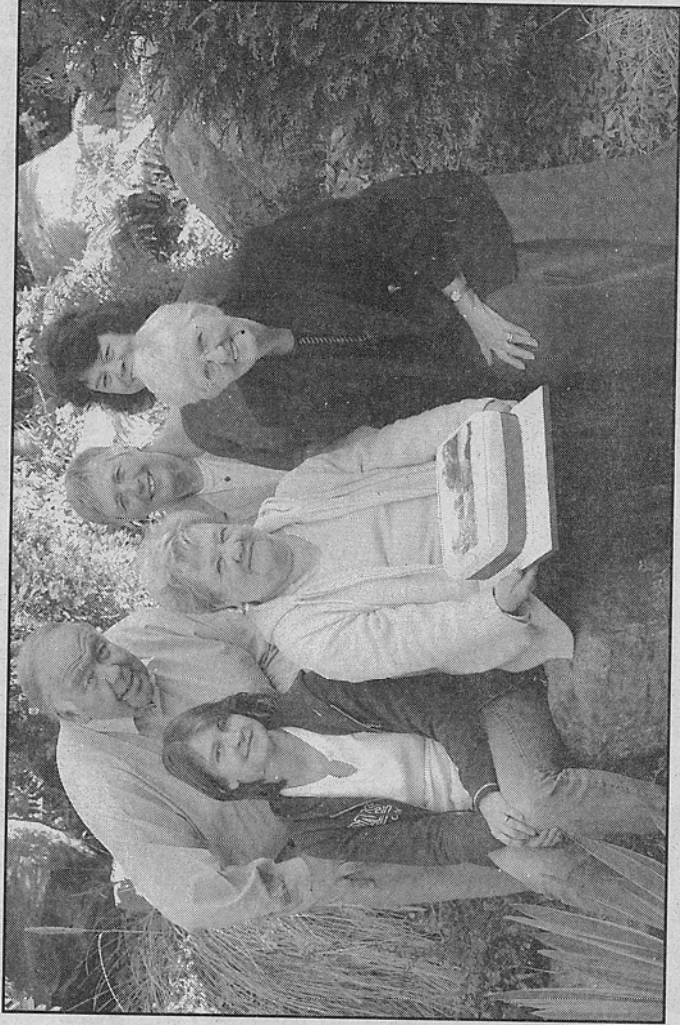
Chairperson of the society Gill Sykes said: "What we decided to do when we set the group up was to tap into local people's knowledge. "And in our first two or three meetings we did that."

However, the group has rapidly expanded over the year and now boast 30 members.

Gill added: "When we started it was just a small group of people all interested in the history of the village."

The group meet once a month and regularly

The society draws on the local knowledge of generations of the same families who have lived in Colton for years



■ Members of Colton History Group with their first birthday cake

entertain guest speakers.

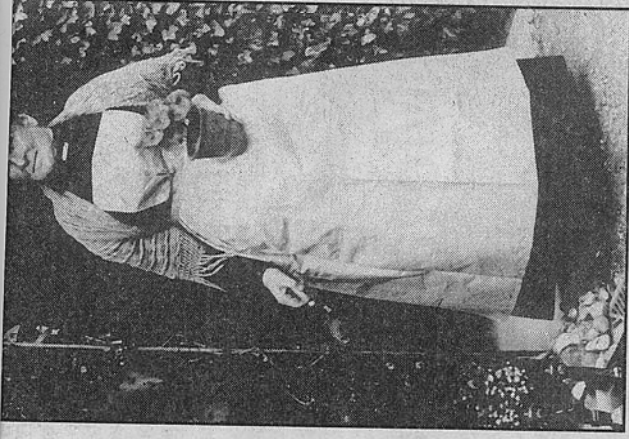
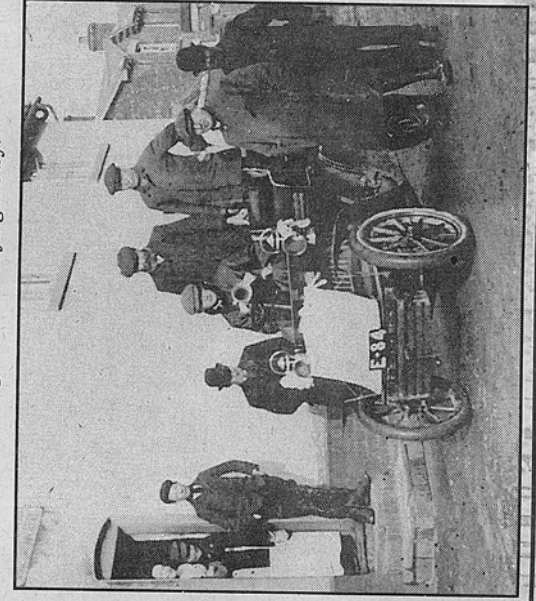
They draw on the local knowledge of generations of the same families who have lived in Colton for years.

As well as the primary school, old buildings and beautiful scenery in the village, the skyline is dominated by St Mary's Church.

Gill said the society has proved a massive success.

She said: "Some members and their families have lived in the village for generations."

"And they share information gathered from parents and grandparents before them about how things were in days gone by."



If you would like your group or organisation featured in The Post, call Theresa or Kevin on **01543 258523**

Two trophies for Colton Guild

Both the rose and geranium trophies were won by Colton Village Produce Guild at the Staffordshire Association of Produce Guilds annual show at the County College of Agriculture at the weekend.

It was the association's annual floral art competition, which incorporated a rose and geranium show. Mr. W. D. D. Fowler, head of the college horticultural section, and his staff

judged entries from 14 guilds.

In the floral art competition entered by 10 guilds, Mrs. Irene Pearson of Colton won first with a Silver Jubilee dinner table arrangement.

A Tittensor member won the "Summer Song" section and "The Young Generation" section. Tittensor were the overall winners, gaining the trophy, with Maer second and Penkrige third.

A fund raising competition for a posy in an egg cup was won by Mrs. Ivy Butcher of King's Bromley.

Croxton Guild organised this year's show and a raffle run by Edingale Guild raised £33.30 for association funds.

Mr. G. W. Arnold of Abbots Bromley, vice-chairman, thanked everyone concerned with the success of the evening.

Rotary topic

The joys — and heartaches — of a reporter's life were outlined to Rugeley Rotary Club members at their Monday luncheon by "Times" chief reporter Mrs. Jane Carroll.

She gave members an insight into the varied work of a weekly newspaper reporter, including the opportunity of getting involved in "human angle" stories.

Mrs. Carroll stressed that a reporter could give a much more balanced story when members of the public co-operated by being helpful during inquiries.

It became obvious from the number of searching questions asked afterwards that the subject was found very interesting. The vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. W. Smith.

Fine follows collision

Rugeley magistrates imposed a £20 fine on Friday on a man who drove without due care and attention when he was involved in a collision at the Bridges intersection.

Kenneth Kent, of 9, Uttoxeter Road, Handsacre, admitted the offence.

Thousands see old craft skills



Mr. Tom Bradley of Royal Doulton showing members of Longdon Over-60s Club the skills of barrel making.

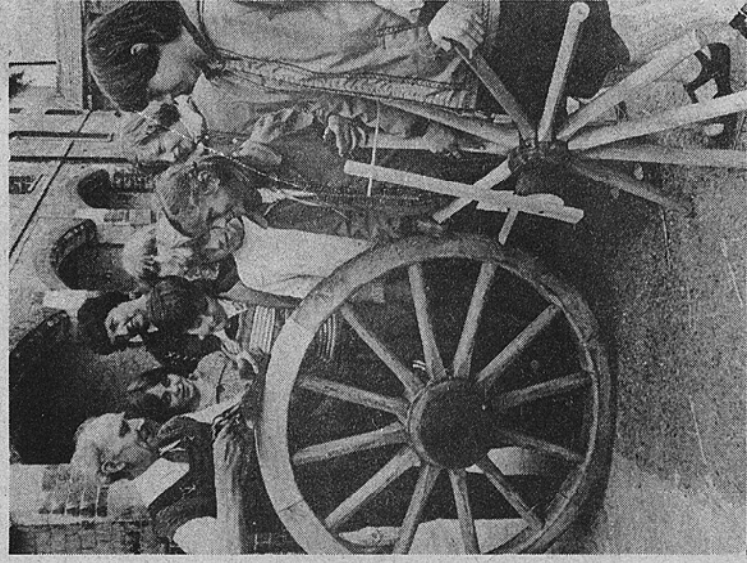
Shugborough's second craft exhibition which finished on Sunday attracted more than 5,000 people and because of its popularity could easily become an annual event.

The exhibition was staged at the Park Farm which is normally only open to the public at weekends, so it gave a chance for the many parties of school children visiting on weekdays to see the farm as well.

All the craftsmen and women — some of them were local — demonstrated their skills during the five-day period and created a lot of interest in the old crafts.

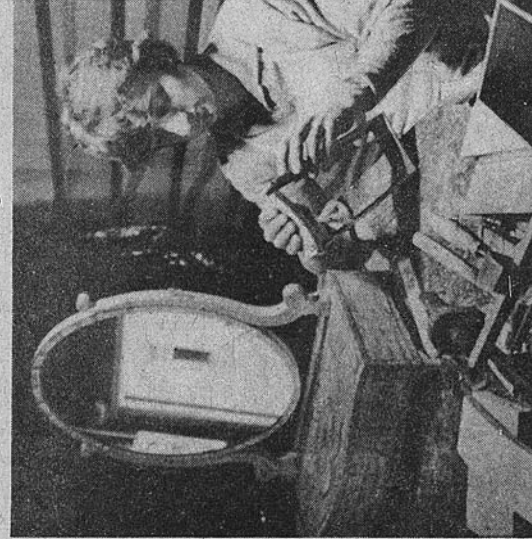
There was a market at the farm as well on Saturday, selling craft items, home made and home grown produce. The stalls were run by local produce guilds and W.I.s

As an extra attraction on Sunday, Stafford Morris Men danced at the exhibition.



Mr. Maurice Willis of Forge House, Colton showing children the skills of a wheelwright. Mr.

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As an extra attraction on Sunday, Stafford Morris Men danced at the exhibition.



Mr. Maurice Williscroft of Forge House, Colton showing children the skills of a wheelwright. Mr. Williscroft's father was a master wheelwright and taught his son the skills but the business had to go over to restoring and making furniture when motor vehicles replaced horses.

Now there are increasing demands for wheelwright skills, Mr. Williscroft can do more of the job he loves best.

The wheel of time deals blow to an ancient skill

Wheelwrighting is an ancient and exacting craft which is trundling almost unnoticed into obscurity under the garish illumination of 20th century process.

Mr. Maurice Williscroft, of Forge House, Colton, is 62 and has been a wheelwright for 48 years. The bulk of his work is now general joinery; since the war his special skills have been called for less and less, and in recent years he has sometimes gone 12 months without a wheel in his workshop.

He said: "Usually any wheels that come in are ornamental, used as garden decoration and so on. Sometimes someone wants one — or perhaps a set of them — for a pony and trap; but they are rarely wanted for farm work.

"After the war, iron wheels on farm carts still in use were phased out and replaced by pneumatic tyres, and this gave us a lot of work.

"Occasionally, for instance, with a large harvest wagon, the wheels with iron tyres were kept on because with standing idle for nine or ten months of the year, rubber tyres went flat or perished.

"But work of this sort stopped coming in eventually because farmers only kept the old carts till they fell to bits, then replaced them with modern machinery."

The best wood for wheel-making is wych elm, because of its hardness. The hub is lathed and iron frets are fitted back and front to prevent it splitting when the spokes are driven in.

All cart wheels dish outwards — for three reasons, says Mr. Williscroft. Firstly, this prevents the wheel grinding against the side or the shaft of the cart, especially while wallowing in a muddy field or while travelling along a slope.

Secondly, since the iron tyre fitted is slightly smaller than the wooden wheel — to bind the whole structure — it may sometimes bend the spokes closer together. If the wheel is already dished outwards, any bending will be in the same direction, again preventing fouling of the cart.

sometimes 14, and to every two spokes there is one felloe (pronounced felly) — section of rim.

Each felloe is roughly sawn and is positioned beneath the outer end of the spokes so that the wheelwright can mark where he will bore the holes to take the tenons.

The holes penetrate the felloes through to the outer edge. Because the spokes diverge they have to be forced together with a lever and chain contraption so that the end will fit into the holes. The felloe is then knocked home.

the very end of the spokes. When this is repeated with all the felloes the gaps between them are sufficient to accommodate the dowels — which must be cut fairly short with this in view. The felloes are then eased together and finally knocked into place.

The tenon of each spoke reaches nearly to the end of its hole in the felloe. It is split with a chisel and a wedge is driven in, effectively creating a dovetail to hold the wheel firm.

The outer face of the felloes — the side opposite the cart — is trimmed and planed. Then the

Once cooled its circumference is checked. The wheelwright aims to err on the small size if at all; it is easier to plane down the wooden wheel than re-weld the tyre. Ideally, the circumference of the tyre should be $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ in. shorter than that of the wheel so that the tyre is held firmly in place and also clamps the structure together. If it needs lengthening slightly it can be hammered out, but this weakens it and is avoided where possible.

The wheel is clamped to a disc of metal — known as a hooping plate — on the ground. Meanwhile, the tyre is heating in either a hooping oven or an open fire. A hooping oven is a large, brick-lined, vertical slot fired from underneath. It has advantages over an open fire in bad weather, but if the iron gets too hot it tends to sag into an ovoid.

Furthermore, with an open fire — where the tyre lies on bricks and the coals are heaped around it — more than one tyre can be heated at a time, with one lying inside the other.

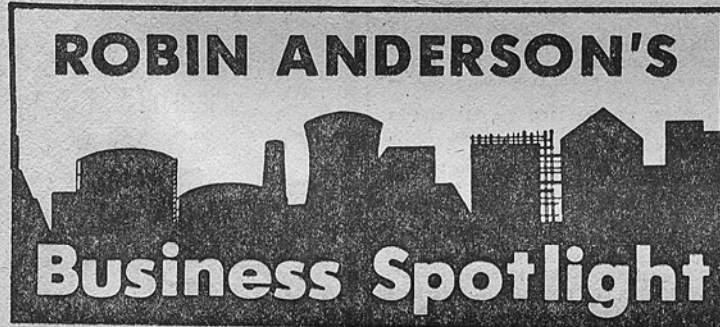
This can be attempted with an oven, but is hampered by poor access and by the occasional fusing together of the tyres as one rests on the other.

The tyre must not be so hot that when applied to the wheel it burns too much of the wood and is thus loosened. One lip is placed slightly over the sole and the rest is levered and knocked on with an adjustable fork called a dog. Once in position it is given a final check and is speedily cooled off with cold water to prevent further burning.

The tyre is usually nailed once to each felloe. This does nothing to prevent it becoming loose, but does hold it in place long enough for the farmer to get to a repair shop if the metal works its way free. If the tyre dropped off completely, the wheel would collapse.

A hole is bored through the centre of the hub after the removal of the circle of wood at the end. A tube of cast steel known as a bush, is fitted inside to act as a bearing for the axle.

It must not be too tight, to allow for truing — the equivalent of wheel balancing on a modern car. The wheel is set on the axle in the workshop and turned; if it wobbles, wedges are driven into the wood of the hub to counter the



This operation reveals the reason behind having two spokes for one felloe; a third spoke would get into the way as the tenons were fitted into the holes.

On smaller wheels the spokes are staggered, half of them angled towards the inner, half towards the outer edge of the felloe. This increases the amount of wood between each spoke, and thereby the strength of the wheel also.

The felloes are cut overlong in order to leave a margin for exact tailoring to each other. Only alternate felloes are fitted initially, so that those remaining can be positioned beneath the gaps and marked at either end for cutting to size.

To obtain the angle of the join between them, a baton is centred between the spokes at both the hub and the outer ends, and its line is traced on to the felloes. The unfitted felloes are then marked up and are bored for the tenon holes at the same time as being trimmed for length. Those already fitted are trimmed on the spokes.

All the felloes are then knocked home on to the spokes, and a handsaw is run through the

edge of the inner face — known as the back is bevelled with an axe around the sole; the sole being the part which will eventually take the tyre. This ensures that the tyre is wider than the wood and thus takes the brunt of the wear. The bevelling is planed smooth.

A large compass is set in the circle of wood at the end of the hub and marks out the exact circumference, to which the sole is planed.

If a wheel is new, the tyre is made to fit it; if being repaired, it is made to fit the tyre. Either way, a travel — a small wheel — is run round the outer circumference of the wheel and the inner circumference of the tyre to ensure they match exactly.

The tyre starts as a flat bar of iron. It is marked according to the measurement on the travel and is cut to length — allowing for a slight overlap so it can be open-hearth welded in the forge. If it were to be acetylene welded, it would be cut to the precise length required so that the ends would butt together. It is bent into a circle on a machine with three rollers, which can be set to form different curvatures.

The next stage takes at least

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Secondly, since the iron tyre fitted is slightly smaller than the wooden wheel — to bind the whole structure — it may sometimes bend the spokes closer together. If the wheel is already dished outwards, any bending will be in the same direction, again preventing fouling of the cart.

Finally, and more dubiously, says Mr. Williscroft, the sides of the cart could be constructed to slope more sharply outwards, thus increasing its capacity.

Accordingly, the mortices — slots — around the centre of the hub into which the ends of the spokes will be fitted must be cut at a slight angle. First, a circle of wood which will be used throughout the making of the wheel is fixed to the end of the hub.

In the centre of this circle is bolted a wooden gauge perpendicular to the hub itself, marked off in distances from the bolt. The mortices are cut roughly with a hammer and chisel. Then a slat of wood is rested in the slots against their outer side, and their angle is adjusted with the hammer and chisel until the slat touches the perpendicular gauge at a point to give the desired angle.

The angle is so slight, however, that the spokes would be very long if they were built to reach the gauge. So a dowel — a peg — is stuck to the gauge, cut slightly shorter than the distance from the edge of the mortice to the edge of the hub, and positioned to intersect the line of the angle at the point where the wheelwright wants the spokes to disappear into the wheel rim.

The spokes are driven into the hub, and are marked at the other end where they touch the dowel. The wood of each spoke is then cut away at that point to form the tenons — pegs — which will fit into holes in the rim.

This procedure is time-consuming and complicated, but ensures that all the spokes of all the wheels of any one cart are the same length and set at the same angle. There are no fixed measurements for use on all carts, but it is obviously essential that spokes for each cart should be identical.

Usually there are 12 spokes,

into the way as the tenons were fitted into the holes.

On smaller wheels the spokes are staggered, half of them angled towards the inner, half towards the outer edge of the felloe. This increases the amount of wood between each spoke, and thereby the strength of the wheel also.

The felloes are cut overlong in order to leave a margin for exact tailoring to each other. Only alternate felloes are fitted initially, so that those remaining can be positioned beneath the gaps and marked at either end for cutting to size.

To obtain the angle of the joint between them, a baton is centred between the spokes at both the hub and the outer ends, and its line is traced on to the felloes. The unfitted felloes are then marked up and are bored for the tenon holes at the same time as being trimmed for length. Those already fitted are trimmed on the spokes.

All the felloes are then knocked home on to the spokes, and a handsaw is run through the joints to leave a gap of one-sixteenth of an inch. This allows for binding by the iron tyre when it is eventually levered on.

Marks are then drawn on perpendicular to the joints in preparation for boreholes to take dowels pegging the felloes together. The felloes are removed one by one, the holes are drilled and, if wanted, bevelling — known as chamfer — is added along the inner edge of the outer face of the felloes between the spokes.

A dowel is placed in one of the holes and the felloe is returned to

the part which will eventually take the tyre. This ensures that the tyre is wider than the wood and thus takes the brunt of the wear. The bevelling is planed smooth.

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The next stage takes at least two men. The tyre overlap is sprung apart so that the ends butt, then it is placed in the hearth. When hot, the ends are hit to thin them so that when welded the joint will not stand proud. Sprung apart, the tyre returns to the fire.

This time it remains there until it reaches welding heat, and the iron sparks and becomes runny. It is taken quickly to the anvil, the ends — which are likely to have started to fuse — are knocked apart, and the overlap is welded by hammering.

The tyre must be heated when applied to the wheel it burns too much of the wood and is thus loosened. One lip is placed slightly over the sole and the rest is levered and knocked on with an adjustable fork called a dog. Once in position it is given a final check and is speedily cooled off with cold water to prevent further burning.

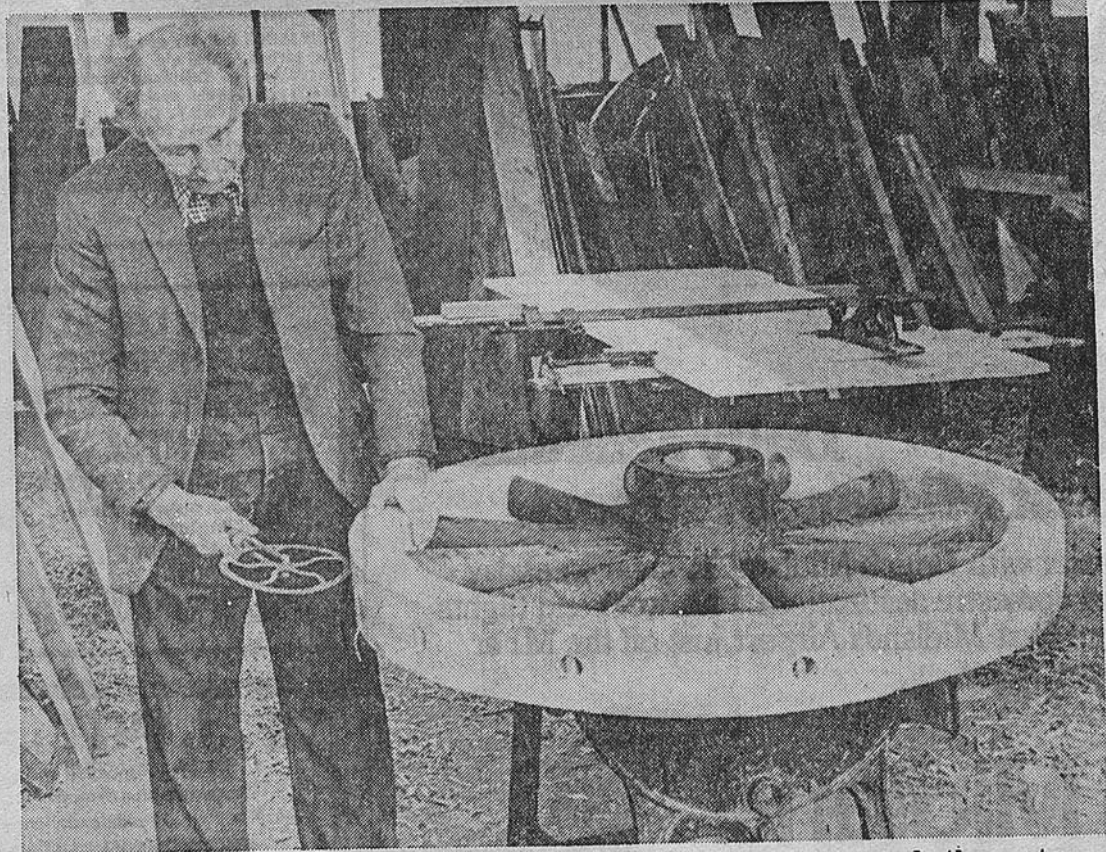
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It must not be too tight, to allow for truing — the equivalent of wheel balancing on a modern car. The wheel is set on the axle in the workshop and turned; if it wobbles, wedges are driven into the wood of the hub to counter the effect with weighting.

The axle protrudes beyond the outer face of the hub, and the wheel is secured in one of three ways. The axle may be fixed with a collar and gudgeon pin and the assembly covered with a brass oil cap, or three bolts may run through the hub and attach to a collar and plate on the axle at the back.

The final option is a patent Collinge axle, in which a sliding collar is threaded on to the protruding section and tightened up to the front of the bush.



A measuring wheel, known as a travel, is run round the outer circumference of the felloes so that the iron tyre can be tailored to fit.

COLTON 'FRIENDS' RALLY TO HELP VILLAGE CHURCH

COLTON Church is a priceless heritage which the villagers must preserve intact, said Miss D. F. N. Landor, when opening the garden fete at Colton Rectory in bright sunshine on Wednesday afternoon. She appealed for more people to join the Friends of Colton Church by giving 1/- per week until the £2,500 appeal was completed. She recalled that the last time she was at a Colton fete was many years ago, when Mrs. Oldham opened it. "It was more like a happy family party and I hope today's fete will be the same."

Miss Landor went on to speak of her family's association with Colton Church, over the last 200 years, saying two of her ancestors were rectors, John for 39 years, and Charles Savage Landor, brother of the poet, for 43 years. She was pleased to see two old tablets to their memory still in the church. Referring to the very ancient character of the church, she also mentioned two even older objects in the village—the two stones which are at the ends of the bridge over the stream, relics of the glacial age.

The rector also appealed for generous support, and asked everyone to patronise the "well-stocked stalls." In thanking Miss Landor, he asked people to "act as Christian people—as friends of the church."

The vote of thanks was seconded

In the picture above are seen (left to right) Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Bettson, Mr. Bettson (churchwarden), Lady Bagot, Miss Landor and Lord Bagot. In the foreground are Gwendoline Ravenscroft and Keith Williscroft.

by Mr. Bettson, a churchwarden, and a bouquet was presented to Lady Bagot, who was accompanied by Lord Bagot, by Gwendoline Ravenscroft, and a box of chocolates and a buttonhole were handed to Miss Landor by six year-old Keith Williscroft.

Stallholders

Stalls were in charge of the following:—China: Mrs. Taylor; produce: Mrs. Best, Mrs. Parr, Miss Williscroft; work stall: Mrs. Sargeant, Mrs. Dunkey and Mrs. Atkin; cakes: Miss Jones, Mrs. Westhorpe, Mrs. Ball; rummage: Mrs. J. Meddings senior, Miss Ball; bran-tub: Miss Rotchell; mystery stall: Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Ballard.

The Friends of Colton Church had a stall, staffed by Miss Cooper, for the sale of "stones" for the new churchyard wall at 2s. each. Sideshows included treasure island, Miss A. Hoare; hoopla: Mrs. J. H. Toy and Mrs. F. Knight; bowls: Mr. Bloor; kagle: Mr. F. Cooper; skittles: Mr. Bettson; clock golf and hidden treasure: Miss D. Jones.

Rides for the children were given



Villagers and visitors grouped in the lawn as Miss Landor is about to perform the opening ceremony at Colton garden fete.

New right of appeal for widows

WIDOWS and other dependants claiming the death benefit of up to £300 provided under the pneumoconiosis and byssinosis benefit scheme now have rights of appeal against an unfavourable decision as to the cause of death. This amendment to the scheme operates from August 4.

The scheme, administered by an independent board, covers those suffering from pneumoconiosis who are not entitled to workmen's compensation or to benefit under the Industrial Injuries Act.

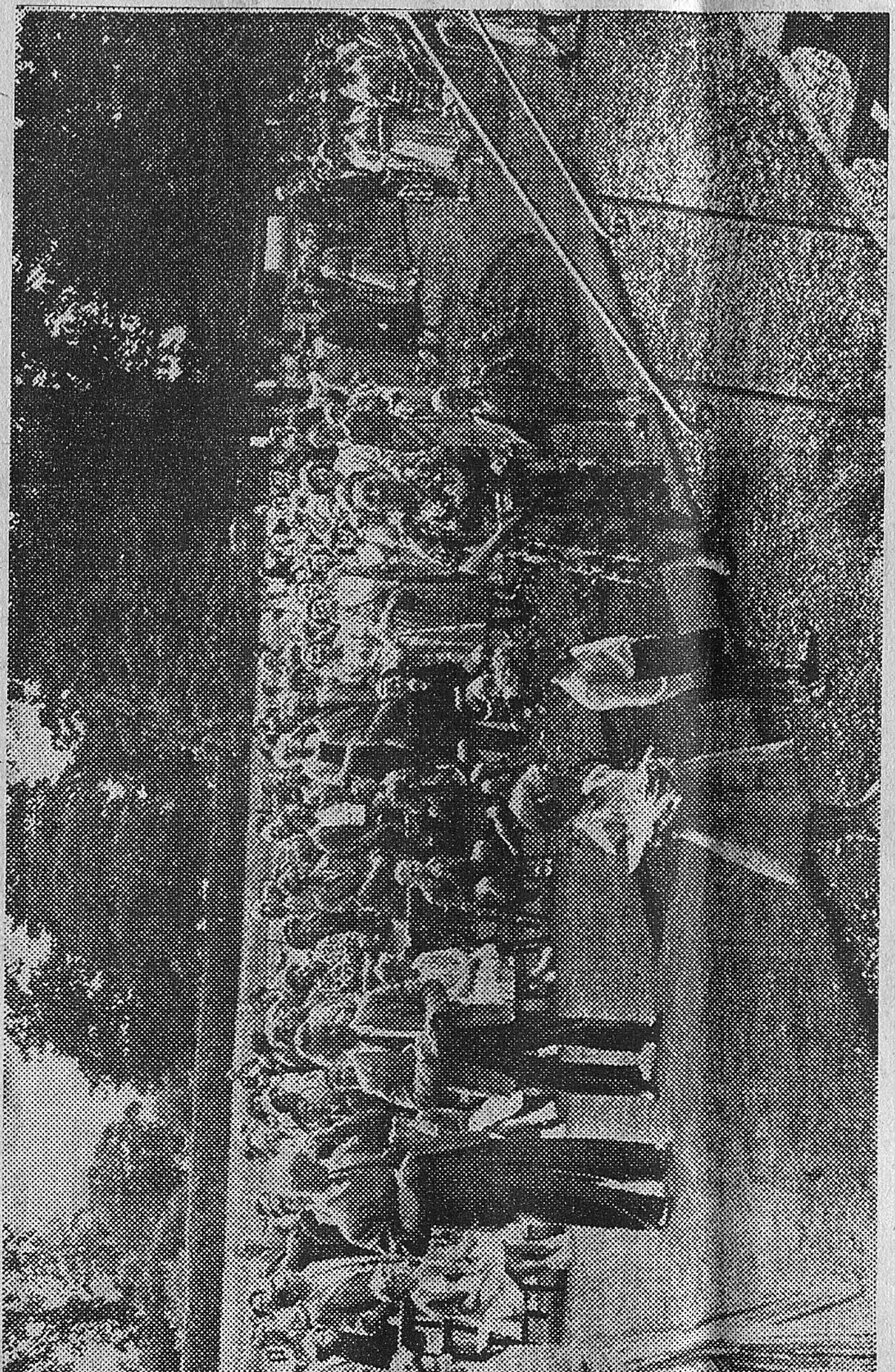
Apart from death benefit, allowances of 20s. for partial disablement and 40s. for total disablement are provided.

Up to now the medical decision on a claim for death benefit has been final. For August 4 the pneumoconiosis medical panel will give an opinion on whether death was due to pneumoconiosis, but the claim will be decided, as under the industrial injuries scheme, by the local insurance officer.

If the widow appeals, she will be able to explain her case to the local appeal tribunal and the industrial injuries commissioner with the support, if she wishes, of further medical evidence or medical or other witnesses.

Trent Valley
Station of





Misses T. Colson, Mrs. M. J. Villagers and visitors groomed

Colton garden fete helps fund for village church expenses

THE short rainstorm on Wednesday afternoon sent everyone at Colton Church garden party scurrying for shelter, but spirits were not dampened and a few minutes later it was "business as usual." The garden party, held in aid of church expenses, and was well patronised, more than £100 being raised.

Four familiar faces were missing — Lord and Lady Bagot and the Rev. A. S. Towlson and Mrs. Towlson. The general feeling was well expressed by Mr. D. E. Waters, who deputised for the rector, when he referred to the loss of "their old friend" and patron of the living of Blithfield, Lord Bagot, who was being cremated that afternoon. He said Lady Bagot was certainly with them in spirit, and had sent a donation.

Mrs. H. B. Croft, needed no introduction to members of the Mothers' Union, he said, for she was well known as an enrolling member at her own church.

Opening the garden party, Mrs. Croft said there was nothing she liked better than a church garden party. Many people outside the Church would like to enjoy such friendships as those gained at parties. So many would love to be in fellowship but they were too shy or diffident to come forward, she said.

In enjoying that fellowship they should spare a thought for all that the Church was always there, because, generations ago, people gave money and provided a church. She reminded her hearers that the Church had also pioneered educational and medical services, as in deed it was doing today in undeveloped countries.

Mrs. Croft was presented with a bouquet by one of the youngest members of the choir, Marilyn Collins, and the schoolchildren cheered her.

Mr. M. Williscroft (churchwarden and treasurer) proposed the vote of thanks. There was no dancing display this year, but the fancy dress contest was held as usual. The winners were: — Boys: 1, Lynn Peake (chimney sweep); 2, Ian Myatt (shepherd); 3, Kevin Waters (pillar-box); consolation, Nigel Knight (Colton Menace, a motor-



In the picture above Marilyn Collins is seen presenting a bouquet to Mrs. H. B. Croft. Mrs. Symonds, mother of Mrs. Croft is seated. Also in the picture are Mr. and Mrs. D. E. Waters and Mr. and Mrs. M. Williscroft. Right: The scene on the Rectory lawn.



cycle). Girls: 1, Kathleen Norman (Japanese girl); 2, Glens Jones (spins and needles); 3, Gwen Ravenscroft (fuschia); consolation, Ellen Myatt (bride).

During the evening there was a gymnastic display by the Chase Health and Strength Club.

Stallholders

Cakes: Mrs. S. J. Timmins, Mrs. J. W. Westhorpe; produce: Mrs. J. A. Best, Mrs. G. Mellor, Mrs. M. Deacon, Miss E. Rochelle; bran-tub and balloons: Mrs. T. V. Collins; china: Mrs. J. L. Taylor and Mrs. M. J. Patch; crimoline lady (handkerchiefs): Mrs. D. E. Waters and schoolchildren; general stores: Mr. Jack Brown; miscellaneous (Coopers stall): Mrs. F. Cooper, Miss D. Cooper; white elephant: Mrs. A. Cooper, Mrs. P. M. Buckley. Sideshows — Hoop-la; Choir; rollapenny: Miss A. Hoare; rifle range: Mr. W. Norman; coconut shy; Mr. W. Bailey, Mr. D. Knight; bowling: Mr. C. M. Boycott; miniature bowls: Mr. R. Martin; darts: Mr. W. Yemans; schoeia (Dutch game): Mrs. M. M. Everall.

Refreshments: Mesdames M. Williscroft, N. Felton, G. E. Finnimore, M. E. Hibbs, E. Griffin, P. L. Bannister, I. Preston, B. M. Ravenscroft, J. H. Toy, Miss H. Streton, Miss S. Hibbs. Gatekeepers: Mr. N. Felton, Mr. T. Preston.

Winners of competitions were bowling: Mr. G. Mellor (whisky); Mrs. V. Collins, Mrs. Brown (New-ton) and Miss Vernon (Admas-ton) tied for ladies' prize of a box of chocolates; miniature bowls, Mrs. S. Martin; schoeia, Miss Diane Grimley; clock-golf, Mr. F. Knight; rifle range, Mr. Peart and Charles Pitcher tied for first prize; ladies' prize, Mrs. V. Collins; juniors, Kathleen Norman and William Knight (Colton Menace, a motor-

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...mas, H. W. Brunkler and Mrs. C. Brandrick; doll competition: Miss P. Jarvis-Hickson; finding Aunt Agatha's pain: Miss F. Heron; win a goldfish: Misses Ann Sandy, N. Godwin, G. Singleton; treasure trove: Mr. F. G. Hunt; ball in bucket: David Poynton; coconut



Mrs. J. H. Toy takes a putt in a round of Clock Golf, watched by her husband and Mrs. E. Finnimore (left), Miss D. M. Jones and Mrs. M. Fateh, holidaying from Persia (right). Left: The two young shots on the rifle range are Terence Martin and Vernon Norman. Mr. W. Norman (right) supervises.

Village gets boost for vital transport fund

VILLAGERS 'cut-off' in Colton will receive better transport services when the parish council receives a £10,000 grant from the Countryside Agency.

After a tentative 12 month wait, councillors recently received the news that the application for a 'Vital Villages' grant had been successful. Plans are now being made for how to use the money for community transport projects. Possibilities include a special taxi service taking elderly villagers shopping and to appointments in Rugeley.

Peter Harrison, Colton Parish council clerk, said: "The Countryside Agency has various pots of money and invites applications for grants.

"We sent an application 12 months ago for a grant towards provision of transport in rural

areas, because Colton is not very well served for buses and trains. "This can provide a problem for villagers, especially the elderly community, so the parish council decided to apply.

"Recently we were told out of the blue that we will be receiving a grant of up to £10,000.

Isolated community to get transport to shops, doctors and outings for youngsters

"We are hoping to use the funding for various transport schemes, such as possibly taxis to take older members of the community shopping or to doctors appointments in Rugeley," he said.

"We also hope to make provisions for youngsters in the village, trips to the cinema or the Snow Dome in Tamworth."

Villagers will be required to find 30 per cent additional funding.

The grant will be paid as and when Colton Parish Council needs it, rather than a lump sum.

"We will use the money to help fund trips for other groups in the village such as the Village Produce Guild which holds an annual trip.

"We are trying to cover all aspects of the community," said Mr Harrison.

The Countryside Agency also funded the parish council website - www.coltonpc.org.uk - which helps keep villagers informed of events and news in Colton.

R101 RIDING THE WIND AND RAIN



We saw it over Bedford

on 9 Nov 29

A *Sunday Graphic* photograph of Britain's great airship R101 riding at the mooring mast at Cardington, Bedfordshire yesterday. It was because weather conditions were "entirely unfavourable" that disappointed M.P.s were informed that their looked-for flight had had to be cancelled.

ALL ALONG THE RIVER.

The Essex Bridge, at Great Haywood, over the Trent, is noted far and wide as one of the beauty spots of Staffordshire. Artists from all parts of the country come to paint the tit-bits of river and woodland scenery so lavishly bestowed by Nature here. Running almost parallel with the canal through Shugborough Park (Lord Lichfield's beautiful seat) one is rather puzzled to know which is the prettier, canal or river? But both are delightful. Great trees (oak, elm and beech) line the banks of the canal, in which there are (or were) plenty of fish, while outrushes and wild iris grow along the river. Water fowl and ducks abound. You will hear the call of a coot, and there may be a few otters. I saw a fine one some time ago, but up the trees squirrels are not so plentiful as they were. Passing by Colwich (with its grand old church) there is a goodly stretch of water to Wolesley Bridges, where you have a remarkably fine view of Bishton Hall. Wolesley Hall, almost opposite, is rather hidden. It is, however, a delightful place, and perhaps looks its best in the autumn. A little farther on Bellamour Hall, with its well timbered park, comes in view. Quite a lot of swans promenade up and down the river at Rugeley. Between here and Abbots Bromley one may visit the old-world village of Colton, a sweetly pretty place, with a fine trout stream, one or two good residences and some excellent cottages. The old Norman church is half-hidden by ivy. Leaving the river at Rugeley one may sometimes catch a Red 'bus for Armitage, well known to Birmingham anglers for its excellent fishing and plum pudding. The disciples of Izaak Walton flock here in untold numbers right away to King's Bromley, Yoxall and Alrewas. The whole district teems with fishing stories, which increase year by year. From Alrewas to Walton there are many osiers, rushes, and a few water lilies among which the dragon flies dart here and there, while now and then you hear the splash of a monster pike or the monotonous croak of a bull frog; perhaps, too, you may watch the graceful flight of a heron.

—Tom Gloster.



Tamarisks sing for Colton W.I.

Visitors from seven other W.I.s were at this Colton W.I. Christmas social last week. They were welcomed by president Mrs. Ivy Preston.

Entertainment began with the Tamarisks, the Uttoxeter sixth-form girls folk group, and concluded with Miss D. M. Jones playing for carols.

Crazy whist winners were Mrs. B. M. Ravenscroft, Mr. L. Kendrick, with lowest scorers Mrs. R. M. Jones and Mrs. M. G. Bennett.

There was a bring and buy stall and the competition for a table decoration was won by Mrs. Ravenscroft and Mrs. P. Roobotham.

NOT ALL JAM AND JERUSALEM

ONE of the things that immediately strikes you about Colton W.I. is the remarkable number of young members.

"We have found that more and more young people are joining us," said president Mrs. Ivy Preston. "They come from the new estate in the village."

The secretary, Mrs. Carol Sanders added: "When they join us, they don't think they will like it, but they soon fit in, and enjoy it very much. We soon lose our jam-making image," she laughed.

In fact, this lively group, which was formed in 1938, is certainly not all jam and Jerusalem. Their current programme covers as wide a range of subjects as you could wish for.

For example, their May meeting

took the form of a hairdressing demonstration, while last month's meeting was along more solemn lines. The speaker gave a talk on the work of a probation officer. They also like to get their members involved in the talks. In January, Mrs. Irene Brown, the treasurer, is giving a talk on corn dillies. In July, she goes on a course to the W.I. college at Denman in Berkshire to learn how to make them.

During the war years, when the institute was newly-formed, their meeting place was never the same from one month to the next, as the army had taken over the village hall. They made jam for the American forces stationed near the village, and often cooked hearty suppers for the troops.

There are still several founder members with the institute. One of

Women in Focus

these is Miss Ellen Rochelle, who at 75, is the oldest member. She rarely misses a meeting, and when she does, always sends some money for club funds.

At the other end of the scale, the youngest member is about 23.

With such a wide age range, the institute has ample resources to form a lively drama group. In fact, they put on a play for a recent group meeting.

Another remarkable fact about the institute is that membership has remained steady at 42 for the 33 years it has been in existence. The only change has been that so many more young people have joined.



Members of Colton Women's Institute, with committee standing at the back, ready for a hairdressing demonstration at their last monthly meeting.

1263 and 1271
and church - right of
sanctuary.

Our heritage

Murder!

When considering a church of the antiquity of St. Mary's in Colton, many thoughts may pass through the minds of the observer. Saxons, Normans, vicars of an age long since buried in the dusts of time. Murder is not a thought one usually associates with any church, yet this ancient place of worship has twice been associated with "murder most foul," which puts it one up even on Canterbury Cathedral.

The two incidents are, according to Colton legend and tradition, separate events. However, the reader may be surprised at the various similarities between the two. Similarities which could connect them.

The first incident involves a man by the name of Nicholas, who was described as being the son of William de Colton. This Nicholas became entangled with Adam, described as being the son of Hereward. In the ensuing brawl, Nicholas, the son of William de Colton, is said to have slain his adversary, Adam, the son of Hereward.

The church laws of the Middle Ages allowed for any fugitive to claim the right of sanctuary within the confines of the church. Hence many churches have one "room" known as the sanctuary. The fugitive could not claim this right for an indefinite period, but only from "the first hour to midnight."

Nicholas de Colton is said to have claimed the right of sanctuary at St. Mary's. This would have given him a respite from the hue-and-cry, which would have been called to pursue a murderer. No one would have dared to risk the wrath of God by invading the protection of a church.

Those who had chased Nicholas de Colton to the church would not have been over-duly worried. The priest would have come to the door to inform them that Nicholas

had claimed sanctuary, which he could not refuse. However, the protection of sanctuary was effective only to midnight, after which, Nicholas would have to fend for himself. The pursuers had only to set a watch and wait till their man was turned out of the church.

Nicholas de Colton, however, did escape. Legend has it that his father was instrumental in this escape.

The second of the murders in which St. Mary's was reputedly involved, occurred eight years later, in 1271. According to tradition, John, the chaplain of Colton, is alleged to have murdered Christina, the wife of Nicholas de Colton. This murder is said to have come about while John was interposing between Nicholas and a stranger. No details exist as to how a chaplain came to murder the wife of the man he was arguing with.

However the murder came about, John decided not to hang around to explain but took to his heels.

Both legends raise interesting points which are worth a second thought. In 1263, Nicholas murdered Adam the son of Hereward. In 1271, John was interposing in an argument between Nicholas de Colton and a stranger. Note the existence of Nicholas de Colton in both murders. Add to this that the name Hereward is not local and anyone bearing this name would have probably been considered as a stranger in a close-knit village community.

The first story does not tell us what caused the brawl between Nicholas and Adam. Could it have been over Christina? Did John the chaplain murder Christina or did someone of more influence do the deed and poor John fled because he could not fight against the de Coltons?

Speculation but

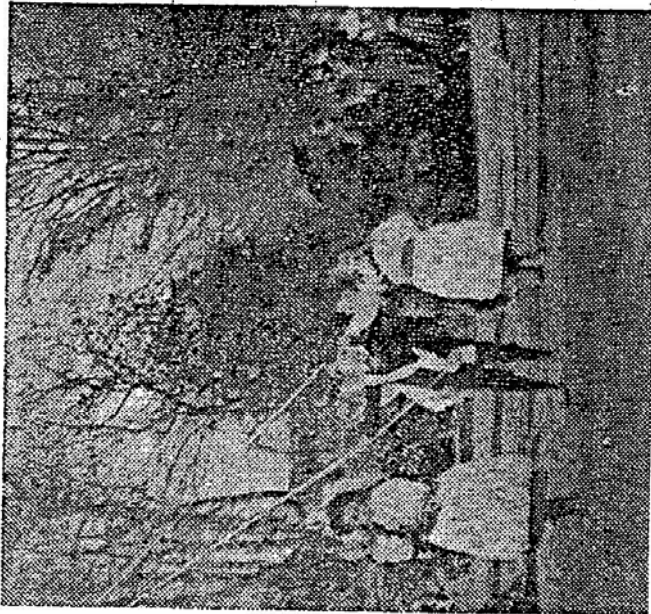
J.A.B.

RT 15 July 72

1892
May Day

Apr 29 1967
The Rugeley Times, St

PHOTO FLASHBACK . . .



May Day was celebrated as the spring festival long before it became the workers' festival. In town and village the maypole was centre of the green and children danced merrily in ancient and intricate patterns. The Rugeley maypole was situated outside Maybank, near the Horse Fair traffic island—hence the name adopted by a former owner of the house. The pictures above show the Colton May Day celebrations in 1892 with Miss H. Mary A. Upton as May Queen, at the age of 13. She subsequently married Mr. Tom Ravenscroft, father



of Mr. C. J. Ravenscroft. Mr. Frederic Bonney of Colton House was instrumental in organising the celebrations in those days, including the crowning of the queen and the dancing round a maypole erected in the plantation opposite his house. Mr. Bonney became first chairman of Colton Parish Council in 1895. He was keen on photography and, as the original has his autograph on the reverse, it is probable that he took these pictures, which were lent by Mr. C. J. Ravenscroft.

COLTON
HIGH STREET
in 1920's

RUG TIMES 21 NOV 1970



The recent picture spread of Colton's listed buildings has prompted Mrs. E. Goodall of Lake Cottage, Stockwell Heath, to submit one of her late husband's pictures of old Colton.

It shows a butcher's shop which no longer exists, near the Greyhound, with Ted Meddings in the doorway. On the left is the smithy and Reading Room pictured in close-up in our feature, and peeping out from behind the ancient trees in the centre are two of the Williscroft Place

houses which were also pictured.

The gardens are at the front in this row, hence the washing on the line (there was washing on a line in our picture also!).

The date is not known, but the Flashback is obviously about 50 years-old, from the days when it was the custom for butchers to hang their meat in the fresh air to keep it cool and fresh—a custom which died out only in the 1930's, with the general introduction of refrigerators.

in p.c.

Rugby Times 4-7-59



Colton family gave its name to Row

In the picture above are some of the tenants of Brown's Row, Colton, home of the Myatt family for nearly a century.

BROWN'S ROW, Colton, consisting of five houses, was christened Myatt's Row just before the last war because every house was occupied by someone belonging to the Myatt family. The Myatts are still very much in evidence there, three of the houses still being in their occupation. Their ancestors first moved into the row nearly a century ago.

Oldest member of the family is 70 years-old Mr. W. J. Myatt, who lives with his wife and daughter at No. 2, Brown's Row. On either side of him live his daughter and son.

His daughter, Mrs. R. Curtis, has two children, and his son at No. 3 also has a family of two. Mr. and Mrs. Myatt have a third daughter,

Mrs. V. Collins, who lives at Heathway, Colton, with her four children.

Mr. Myatt thinks that his grandparents moved into Brown's Row nearly 100 years ago—after the family had lived in the village for many years.

He and his brother were born at No. 2, and his uncles and aunts occupied houses in the Row. Most of his relatives worked at Rugeley Tanyard, but he and his brother were sheet metal workers at a factory near Trent Valley Station. Mr. Myatt worked there for 28 years, and for the remaining 25 years of his working life was a council road-worker.

Few of the Myatts have ever left Colton, and as there are at present eight grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. Myatt senior living in the village, it seems likely that the name will be in evidence for many years to come.

Bellamour

One Collonee de Gouffriedus (Geoffrey) and a man named Almund are said to have had manors at Colton before the Norman Conquest.

By the time of the domesday survey in 1086 Colton — a low lying marshy boggy place — seems to have passed into the hands of a Norman lord named Azeline.

He held the manor under Roger de Montgomery Earl of Arundel, who was given considerable lands in this area for his services to William the Conqueror — Tixall was also part of this holding.

There was still a manor house owned by Geoffrey and his descendants on the site of Colton Hall — near the present Colton Hall farm — and from them came the Westenev family which held power in the area until the mid 14th Century.

It is interesting to note that in the 12th Century a Sir Geoffrey de Westenev was Lord of Tixall.

In the mid 14th Century a daughter of Sir Thomas de Westenev married Sir Nicholas de Gresley and brought Colton Hall into the Gresley family.

Their son was Sir Thomas de Gresley who was followed by Sir John Gresley. He did much work for the king. After his death in 1489 he was succeeded by his son Thomas whose eldest son Sir William served King Henry VIII in the invasion of France and was knighted in 1513.

He married a daughter of the Vernon family to end the feud between the two houses, but died without legitimate children and was succeeded by his brother George.

George was created Knight of the Bath in 1534 and served as High Sheriff of Staffordshire. He died in 1548 and his son and heir Sir William married the daughter of Sir Edward Aston of Tixall.

Sir William was also High Sheriff. He died in 1573.

Sir Thomas Gresley succeeded and he was High Sheriff of Derbyshire as well as Staffordshire. He died in 1610. Sir George, his eldest surviving son, was created a baronet by King James I.

He was an MP and High Sheriff for Derbyshire when the Civil War broke out in 1645, but the Gresleys had by then left Colton.

It appears that Colton Hall was sold to Sir Walter Aston for £16,000 shortly before the death of Sir Thomas.

At this time it was said to have 80 rooms, 52 of them bedrooms.

Sir Walter served as ambassador in Spain, and in his absence the younger members of the Aston family appear to have spent much time at Colton.

But in the 1640s the hall was burnt down through the carelessness of a servant, and it was never rebuilt.

The Astons lost considerable money during the Civil War, and presumably could not afford to rebuild the old hall.

But the Astons' links with Colton remained, because in 1638 Sir Walter had given land at Bellamour to his son Herbert.

Herbert built the first Bellamour Hall — the Astons do not appear to have been very well off, because he is said to have finished and furnished it with the help of friends.

It was said to have been for this reason that the hall was called Bellamour — French for 'good love'.

Sir Walter Aston died in 1639, and was succeeded by his son Sir Walter, who also supported King Charles I to the detriment of the family fortune.

In 1646 he took part in the defence of Lichfield, one of the last royalist strongholds to be taken by Cromwell's forces.

As a Royalist and a Roman Catholic Lord Aston suffered under Cromwell's rule, and much of the Colton estates were sold to pay fines.

In 1658 he sold the ruined Colton Hall and a large part of the land to William Chetwynd, of Hagley Park, Rugeley. He died in 1678.

In the meantime Lord Aston's brother Herbert — second son of the first Lord Aston of Colton Hall — lived happily at Bellamour with his wife, Catherine.

He lived until 1689, narrowly avoiding becoming mixed up in the Popish Plot of 1680 for which Lord Stafford was beheaded.

His eldest son, John, took an active part in Colton affairs, being an overseer of the poor and a churchwarden.

He died childless in 1724, and as there were no direct heirs the hall passed to the daughters of James, the 5th Lord Aston, and the eldest of these, Mary, married a Sir Walter Blout in 1766.

Sir Walter — one of his ancestors is mentioned in Shakespeare's "Henry IV" — became Lord of the Manor of Colton.

At some time the upper storey of Bellamour Hall had been removed and the old stone used to make the boundary wall. Buttresses and outhouses were added.

The Blouts also had property in Worcestershire, but after Sir Walter's death in 1785 Lady Blout spent most of her time at Bellamour.

In 1796 she had a second hall built for her second son Edward, and he altered the new hall considerably, building a new wing onto it. It seems Lady Blout moved into the new hall.

Presumably her eldest son, Walter inherited the old hall, but there does not appear to be any record of his life and the new hall was now known as Bellamour.

Edward Blout, who died in 1843, sold the property in about 1824 to a retired Indian judge named James Oldham Oldham, who lived there with his family for many years.

Miss Ellen Oldham ran a day school for girls in the old hall from 1829.

Judge Oldham Oldham died in 1857, and the property was bought by Thomas Berry Horsfall, who added considerably to the estate.

But Miss Oldham continued to live at Bellamour Lodge, built by the judge in 1851 for his daughters, until she died in 1883.

It appears that her sister, who married Mr. John Thomas Harland, also lived at the lodge for most of her life.

In 1884 Mrs. Harland, by then a widow, erected eight almshouses in Colton in memory of Miss Oldham.

Mr. Horsfall, an MP for Liverpool, made considerable alterations to the hall and was a benefactor to the village.

He built a village school in 1862, presumably to replace the one run by Miss Oldham, and gave land for a village burial ground. The village hall was also built by him.

By 1880 Mr. Horsfall had died, but his widow Mrs. Lucy Horsfall continued to live in the hall until her death in about 1920.

Mrs. Horsfall left Bellamour to a relative, Henry Leeke Horsfall.

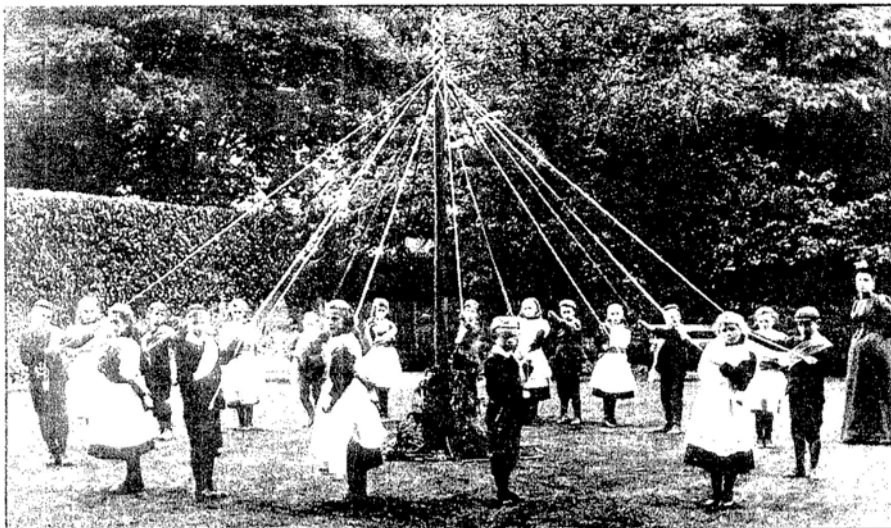
By 1932 it had been demolished, but Henry Leeke Horsfall, a JP and chief landowner in Colton, continued to be described as Lord of the Manor until as late as 1940.

Ironically the old hall lasted quite a few years longer, although derelict, and part of the ruins still remain.

Info. by Jane Carroll
in Rugeley Times
30th January 1982
pp10-11

Photos publ. by Frederick
Brown, Lichfield, 1899

Post feature



First milestone for village history group

by Theresa Larner

The history society of a picturesque village near Rugeley is celebrating the first anniversary this week.

Colton History Society is one-year-old and members are hoping the anniversary is the first of many to come.

The village is hundreds of years old and even got a mention in the Domesday Book.

And the history society was set up to ensure the character and memories of all those living there are kept alive for future generations.

It was set up by a group of villagers who were interested in Colton's past and preserving it for future generations.

Chairperson of the society Gill Sykes said: "What we decided to do when we set the group up was to tap into local people's knowledge."

"And in our first two or three meetings we did that."

However, the group has rapidly expanded over the year and now boast 30 members.

Gill added: "When we started it was just a small group of people all interested in the history of the village."

The group meet once a month and regularly

The society draws on the local knowledge of generations of the same families who have lived in Colton for years



Members of Colton History Group with their first birthday cake

entertain guest speakers.

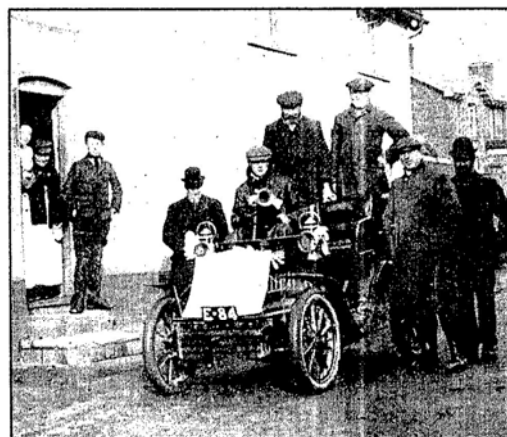
They draw on the local knowledge of generations of the same families who have lived in Colton for years.

As well as the primary school, old buildings and beautiful scenery in the village, the skyline is dominated by St Mary's Church.

Gill said the society has proved a massive success.

She said: "Some members and their families have lived in the village for generations."

"And they share information gathered from parents and grandparents before them about how things were in days gone by."



If you would like to join the group or organise a feature in The Post, contact Theresa or Kevin on 01543 2585

History group marks anniversary with exhibition

COLTON History Society is planning to mark its second anniversary by holding an exhibition.

The group, which was established in October 2002, is set to stage the exhibition on Sunday, August 22. It will take place in Colton Village Hall, Reading Room Drive, off Bellamour Way, from 10am to 4pm.

Admission will be free, refreshments will be served and there will be a quiz with a prize for the winner.

A selection of photographs, press cuttings and documents gathered by the society and donated by villagers will be on display. Video recordings of

early village festivals will also be run throughout the day and artefacts and memorabilia from early village businesses, the local shop, smithy and wheelwright will be on display.

In addition, other items of interest displayed by villagers for the day will be on show.

Visitors will also be able to view copies of parish registers, and copies of villagers' wills dating back to the 1600s and get an insight into researching their own family history.

The society is currently researching a number of projects including, buildings of historic interest in the village, health, sickness and causes of

death, the poor laws, charities, maps and tithes, farming and agriculture, education and schooling.

Monthly meetings feature invited and local village speakers and are held on the third Thursday of the month at 8pm in the village hall. The committee comprises chairman Gill Sykes, Shirley Carter, Sonia Jenkinson, Gay Lawrence and Bill Brown. Lady Nancy Bagot is the President.

For further information contact Gill Sykes on 01283 575 039 or Bill Brown, secretary on 01889 579 401.

... was, on Thursday.



Poppy Day Appeal. — Sir Ian Fraser, national president of the British Legion, this week appealed for the last £600 to make the 1954 Poppy Day total £1,000,000. He was speaking at a luncheon after the southern area's annual parade service at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

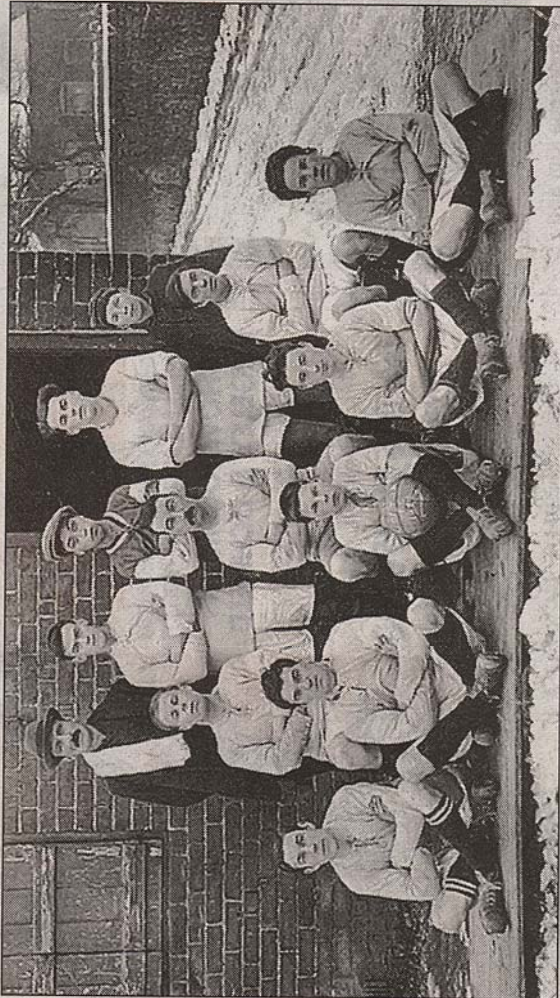
HELPING the furniture removers is Mr. John Wright, formerly of 5, Station Street, Colwich, who has become licensee of The Greyhound, Colton. Mr. Wright, who is 50, is not entirely new to the licensed trade, having been a temporary barman at Rugeley Working Men's Club for the past two years.

Mr. Wright has been on the railway maintenance staff at Stafford, Colwich and Rugeley Trent Valley for 34 years, and has been at Rugeley for the past seven years. He is now a temporary ganger at Trent Valley and is continuing in this employment for the present. His wife and one of his two daughters, Mrs. Wright told the "Times," are very interested in the new business and hope to make many new friends in Colton.

Mr. Wright has taken over the Colton licence from Mr. A. Cooper, who has been licensee for more than 24 years. In retirement Mr. Cooper will still live in village.

29/7/56

Exhibition puts spotlight on village life in bygone days



■ Step back in time: A very chilly looking Colton Village football team pictured on a snowy day in 1922. (ColtonHist2-LM.jpg)

VISITORS to a historical exhibition this weekend will be able to savour village life of yesteryear.

On Sunday, August 22, the Colton History Society will be staging an exhibition in the Colton Village Hall, Reading Room Drive, Colton.

The exhibition will feature photographs, press cuttings, video recordings, artifacts, memorabilia and much more.

"It is a great opportunity for people to understand what's gone on in their community in the recent past," said society secretary, Bill Brown.

"I think a lot of people in the village and in the surrounding area can and will associate with that."

Visitors will also be able to view copies of parish registers and 17th century wills.

The Colton History Society recently got the good news that it had been awarded a grant aid of £22,000 from the Countryside Agency to assist its research projects.

Doors are open for the exhibition between 10am and 4pm and refreshments will be available.



■ Colton History Society's Bill Brown and Gay Lawrence showing off some of the pieces that will be on view at the exhibition. (AW3288-7413LM.jpg)



■ Left: Pinafores were the order of the day for the girls while the boys sported their best sailor suits and Eton collars for this photo of Colton Infants from 1908. (SIF)

■ Far left: Times gone by; Colton village children enjoy a maypole dance in 1892. One of the many fascinating photos on show at the exhibition. (ColtonHist1-LM.jpg)

Village heritage on show

COLTON History Society's exhibition held at the weekend attracted more than 400 visitors and helped to highlight the society's successful application for grant aid from the National Lottery Fund.

The society has received a £22,000 grant, placing a video recorder to record living memories and an audio recorder at the top of its shopping list.

But one of the Fund's requirements was that the society must stage free exhibitions and after Saturday's success, it will now become an annual event.

The society, formed two years ago, has 30 members who staged items for Saturday's exhibition which included artefacts donated by villagers and included photographs, maps, press cuttings, historic wills, parish records, memorabilia and records from the village shop, smithy and wheelwright.

There was also a copy of the *Rugeley Times* on show with the 1977 Silver Jubilee as the front page story. Also taking pride of place was cake, baked by Nona Goring and showing the society's logo and incorporating a line drawing of Colton church.

The society's honorary president, Lady Bagot, attended the exhibition which had been officially opened by Councillor Tony Hill, chairman of Lichfield District Council.

Staffordshire county archivist Thea Randall drew for a raffle at the end of the afternoon. Thanks were expressed by society chairman Gill Sykes who made special mention of Bill Brown, a committee member for his role in copying the society's pictures and articles.

The society meets on the third Thursday each month at 8pm at Colton Village Hall.



JUBILEE PAPER: How the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 was reported by the *Rugeley Times*. Contributed photographs



ABSORBING: People with an interest in Colton and local history gathered to view the many artefacts of its history society.



STALWARTS: Two members of Colton History Society who have been instrumental in its success since it was formed two years ago, Bill Brown and chairman Gill Sykes.



EXHIBITS: Methods old and not so old were used to display Colton's historical artefacts - here are traditional display boards and, just showing, on the bottom left, a laptop computer



Colton History Society chairman Gill Sykes, points out the Domesday Book entry about the village to Councillor Tony Hill, Lichfield District Council chairman, Bill Brown and Gay Lawrence

Big turnout for exhibition

AN exhibition by a group of local history enthusiasts in a Rugeley village exceeded all expectations – to the delight of organisers.

Colton History Society's special exhibition was held last Sunday (August 22) at the village hall and secretary Bill Brown said more than 450 people turned up to view copies of parish registers and wills dating back to the 1600s and to get an insight into researching their own family history.

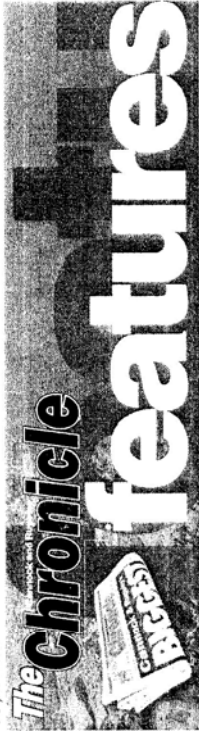
Mr Brown added: "We also had a

visit from some Americans and Czechs who were on holiday over here as well as people who used to live in the village."

Joining members and visitors were the society's president Lady Nancy Bagot and Lichfield District Council chairman, Councillor Tony Hill.

Staffordshire county archivist Thea Randall drew the raffle in which the prize was a cake decorated with a picture of the village church of St Mary's.

VILLAGE RICH IN HISTORY



Secretary Bill Brown and committee member Gay Lawrence prepare for the Colton History Society exhibition on August 22

THE Rev Parker, a former rector of Colton, was among the first to compile a book on the village's rich history and was also one of the founders of the William Salt Library in Stafford.

The well-known local family the Bagots bought Little Hay Manor in the 1300s when they became Lords and it remained in the family until the 20th century.

This is just two of the many claims to fame of Colton which has managed to retain its old world atmosphere despite the centuries of change sweeping over it.

The current chairman of Lichfield District Council, Councillor Tony Hill, is so proud of his home village that he held his inauguration ceremony at St Mary's Church and the village hall instead of the usual venue of Lichfield Cathedral. Colton is also believed to have links with another cathedral, York Minster, with

glass from the local glassworks rumoured to be in some of its stained glass windows.

Little wonder therefore that Colton Local History Society was established and in less than two years they have come a long way in recording its rich history.

A major exhibition is being held this Sunday (August 22) to officially launch Colton's Local Heritage Initiative which has recently been awarded a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

They have all sorts of plans for the £22,000 windfall including setting up a website and research groups, producing pamphlets, siting a computer in the village hall for research purposes, producing a colour leaflet. A walk through Colton and much more.

Says secretary Bill Brown: "I think we have come quite a long way in a very short time and we are very pleased to receive this money to further our work."

Colton has had a population of around 630 for hundreds of years - though these days it's a commuter base rather than an agricultural one.

Once larger than its big neighbour Rugeley, it was well-established in Saxon times, mentioned in the Domesday Book and there is evidence it may go back even earlier to the Iron Age with burnt mounds of stones found in the area.

One of its major landmarks is Bellinour Hall, once lived in by Lord Aston, though only part of the chimney survives. Committee member Gay Lawrence is

by LESLEY GOODERIDGE

constantly surrounded by history as she lives in Colton House once owned by John Burt who had sugar plantations in the West Indies in the 1770s. Gay added: "The old rectory was pulled down and a new one built because it was originally in such a boggy spot that seven of the rector's children died of a fever in the 1800s."

Sunday's exhibition, from 10am to 4pm, will include scores of old photographs, press cuttings, documents, parish registers, wills (with modern translations), artefacts and memorabilia dating back to the 1600s.

Says chairman Gill Sykes: "We are hoping that this wonderful exhibition will stimulate local people to join us in finding out much more."

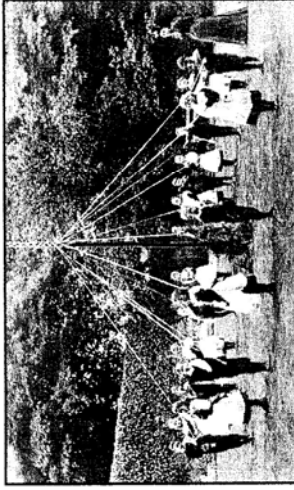
The society, whose president is rather fittingly Lady Nancy Bagot, meets on the third Thursday of the month at 8pm in the village hall.



Children playing in the winter snow in 1896 in a picture taken by Fred Bonney. All archive pictures courtesy of the Colton History Society Collection



Colton Nursery school photograph, circa 1908



Children dance around the Maypole in 1892



Drinkers outside the Dun Cow pub, Colton, in 1906



Colton Football Club as they lined up in 1922

Village looks at its history



Sonia Jenkinson with some historical items at the Colton village exhibition

Treasures from a Staffordshire village were unveiled to the public for the first time at a special exhibition.

Photographs, press cuttings and documents were on show to Colton residents at the event yesterday.

Video recordings of early village festivals, artefacts and memorabilia from old village businesses was also revealed along with historic parish registers, wills and other documents dating back to the 1600s.

The exhibition was staged to launch Colton's Local Heritage Initiative (LHI), which has been given a £22,000 grant to investigate and record local history.

Report by Bridget Ballance

Between 10am and 4pm villagers piled into Colton Village Hall, in Reading Room Drive, off Bellamour Way, to see the items.

As part of the initiative the Colton History Society will be involving the whole community in exploring, recording and sharing all aspects of their industrial, geological, archeological and cultural history.

Memories villagers, will be recorded and present day collections of events and activities will be gathered. A website, pamphlets, a CD and a video diary will also be produced.

Call Gill Sykes on 01283 575 039.

Village history is

SPECIAL REPORT

by **Carl Roache**
News Reporter

COLTON History Society is giving you the opportunity to step back in time and discover secrets of past village life.

The society's exhibition is back by popular demand, this time for a whole weekend.

Last year's one-day event proved a major success with over 450 visitors enjoying the exhibition.

This year's exhibition will feature displays filled with emotive photographs, press cuttings and memorabilia.

Artefacts will also be on show for guests' perusal as will video recordings and historical documents.

There will be a number of featured themes including the Second World War, connections with steam and illustrious former Colton residents.

One revered former villager you can learn about is Frederick Bonney who lived in Colton House in the late 1800s.

Bonney was a keen photographer and explorer who embarked on a 16-year expedition to the Darling River in the New South Wales region of Australia in 1865.

In 1883 he presented a paper to the Anthropological Institute in London, illustrating his findings with a series of photographs, which will be on display at the exhibition.

The society's website, soon to be online, will also be introduced to guests as will various publications by society members.

Society president, Lady Nancy Bagot, will officially open the exhibition.



■ Pictured in front of Colton House with some historic photos are from left, Bev Croft, Shirley Carter, Gay Lawrence and Gill Sykes from Colton History Society. (AWK/758-1363CM)

Wartime evacuees set to return as special guests at weekend event

Gill Sykes, chair of the society, said: "Our exhibition last year far exceeded our expectations, with many of the people who attended coming forward with information and giving us a real incentive to continue collecting memories, records and artefacts both past and present."

Society secretary, Bill Brown, explained that this year's event would feature some special guests.

"We are doing a feature on the evacuees and have made contact with a few people who were evacuated here during the war, and they will be

visiting the exhibition," he said.

To tie in with the war theme, a life-sized Anderson shelter is being constructed for the exhibition.

"At the exhibition, people can learn about the history of Colton going back to the Domesday Book," explained Mr Brown.

"It will be an enjoyable day for all the family that gives an insight to the past in a way they can understand and be a part of."

The society was awarded a £22,000 Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) grant to support the exhibition and their research.

The LHI grant comes from The Countryside Agency with contributions from the Heritage Lottery Fund and support from Nationwide Building Society.

The Colton History Society is now trying to encourage the whole community to take part in exploring,

brought to life



■ Left: Famous Colton photographer and explorer, Frederick Bonney, pictured during an expedition to Australia in 1865. (SIP)

■ Below: A picture of Hollow Lane taken in the 1890s by Frederick Bonney, showing two thatched cottages. The cottage on the left used to be a fish and chip shop in the early 1900s. (SIP)

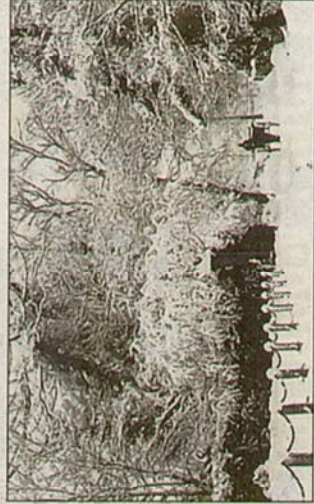
recording and sharing their industrial, geological, archaeological and cultural history.

The exhibition will be at Colton Village Hall, Reading Room Drive, off Bellamour Way, Colton, from 10am until 4pm on Saturday and Sunday October 8 and 9.

Admission is free, with refreshments and a raffle available.

The society meets monthly on the third Thursday of the month at 8pm, in the village hall.

For more information about Colton History Society contact Gill Sykes on 01283 575 039.



■ A Bonney photo of Bellamour Way, looking west towards Moreton Brook Bridge taken during the winter snow in 1889. (SIP)



■ This picture formed part of the sale catalogue in 1921 when Colton House was sold at auction as part of the Bellamour Hall Estate. It sold for £2,300. (SIP)

Why pay £6 for

owrooms

SIT THE VILLAGE

Exhibition 'better than ever' thanks to Local Heritage grant



■ Right: Famous Colton photographer and explorer, Frederick Bonney, pictured during an expedition to Australia in 1865. (SIP)

Window on bygone days of village life

by **Carl Roache**
Arts Reporter

Colton History Society is giving you the opportunity to step back in time and discover the secrets of past village life.

The society's exhibition is back by popular demand, this time for a whole weekend.

Last year's one-day event proved a major success with over 450 visitors enjoying the exhibition.

This year's exhibition will feature displays filled with emotive photographs, press cuttings and memorabilia.

Artefacts will also be on show for guests' perusal as will video recordings and historical documents.

There will be a number of featured themes including Second World War recollections, connections with steam and illustrious past Colton residents.

One revered former villager you can learn about is Frederick Bonney who lived in Colton House in the late 1800s.

Bonney was a keen photographer and explorer who embarked on a 16 year expedition to the Darling River in the New South Wales region of Australia in 1865.

In 1883 he presented a paper to the Anthropological Institute in London, illustrating his findings with a series of photographs, which will be on display at the exhibition.

The society's website, soon to be online, will also be introduced to guests as will various publications by society members.

Society president, Lady Nancy Bagot, will officially open the exhibition.

Gill Sykes, chair of the society, said: "Our exhibition last year far exceeded our expectations, with many of the people who attended coming forward with information and giving us a real incentive to continue collecting memories, records and artefacts both past and present."

Society secretary, Bill Brown, explained that this year's event would feature some special guests.

"We are doing a feature on the



■ Left: A picture of Hollow Lane taken in the 1890s by Frederick Bonney.

■ Below: A Bonney photo of Bellamour Way, looking west towards Moreton Brook Bridge taken during the winter snow in 1889. (SIP)

■ Below: This picture formed part of the sale catalogue in 1921 when Colton House was sold at auction as part of the Bellamour Hall Estate. It sold for £2,300. (SIP)



■ Below: Pictured in front of Colton House with some historic photos are from left, Bev Croft, Shirley Carter, Gay Lawrence and Gill Sykes from Colton History Society. (AW4758-1363CM)

evacuees and have made contact with a few people who were evacuated here during the war, and they will be visiting the exhibition," he said.

To tie in with the war theme, a life-sized Anderson Shelter is being constructed for the exhibition.

"At the exhibition, people can learn about the history of Colton going back to the Domesday Book," explained Mr Brown.

"It will be an enjoyable day for all the family that gives an insight to the past in a way they can understand and be a part of."

The society was awarded a £22,000 Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) grant to support the exhibition and their research.

The LHI grant comes from The Countryside Agency with contributions from the Heritage Lottery Fund and support from Nationwide Building Society.

The Colton History Society is now trying to encourage the whole community to take part in exploring, recording and sharing



their industrial, geological, archaeological and cultural history.

The exhibition will be at Colton Village Hall, Reading Room Drive, off Bellamour Way Colton, from 10am until 4pm on Saturday and Sunday October 8 and 9.

Admission is free, with refresh-

ments and a raffle available.

The society meets monthly on the third Thursday of the month at 8pm, in the village hall.

For more information about Colton History Society contact Gill Sykes on 01283 575 039.



Society steps back in time



Evacuees Reg Williams, Ken Maple and Tony Towner with veterans John Fisher and Karl Heinz get together at the Colton Historical Society Exhibition in the village hall

A Staffordshire history society has staged its second annual village exhibition to the delight of hundreds of visitors.

The Colton History Society held the event over the weekend at the village hall in Belamour Way and put on a wide range of displays about life in Colton.

Organisers decided to stage the exhibition over two days after more than 450 people attended last year's event. Society secretary

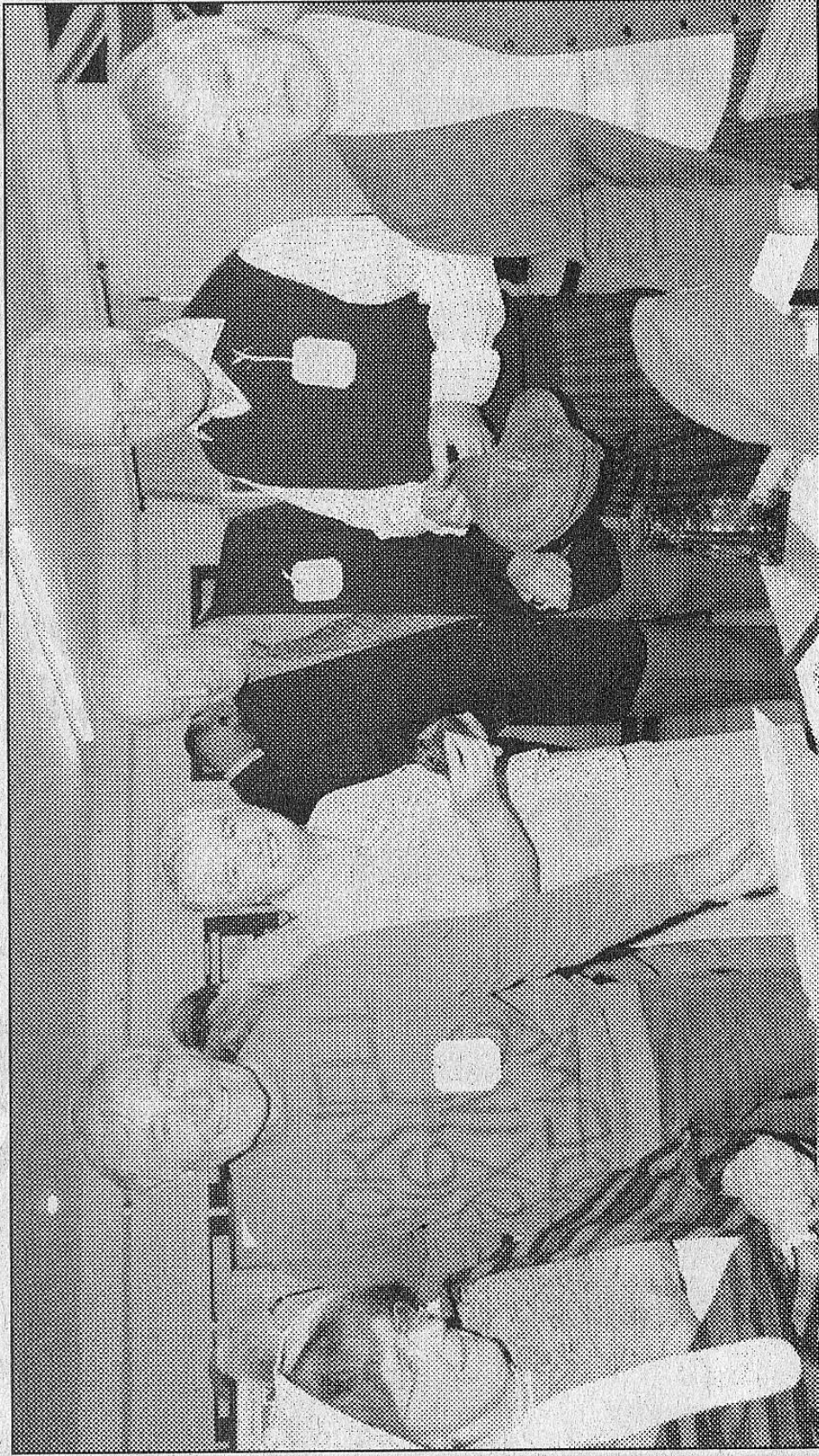
Bill Brown said they had no hesitation with making the show an annual event given last year's huge success.

He said: "Last year it was the first exhibition and we were inundated with the response. We wanted to give people the opportunity to spend more time there."

Items on display included photographs, press cuttings, documents, video recordings, artefacts and memorabilia.

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Evacuees re-live their 'history'

EVACUEES sent to Colton during the Second World War had an emotional reunion in the village last weekend when Colton History Society held its annual exhibition.

The event saw more than 400 people through the doors to recognise the village connections. Gill

Sykes, chairman of the group, said: "It went brilliantly and was fantastic to be part of the evacuee reunion - which was very emotional."

Shown here are (from left) Julie Thorn, Reg Williams, Gill Croft, Ken Maple, Tony Towner and Jill Bodenham. *John Aris,*

COLTON

HISTORY SOCIETY: The society next month opens its doors to reveal more treasures of Colton.

It will stage an exhibition for the second year on the weekend of Saturday and Sunday October 8 and 9.

Items on display will include photographs, press cuttings, documents, video recordings, artefacts and memorabilia.

This year, the exhibition will feature village recollections from the Second World War, Colton's link with steam, illustrious past residents of the village, the society's newly-developed website and publications produced by the society and its members, and much more besides.

The exhibition has been staged by the society with the support of the Local Heritage Initiative, which awarded a £22,000 grant to the society to investigate and record local history.

The grant comes from The Countryside Agency, with funds from The Heritage Lottery Fund and supported by the Nationwide Building Society.

As part of their Local Heritage Initiative, the society is now involving the whole community in exploring, recording and sharing all aspects of their industrial, geological, archaeological and cultural history.

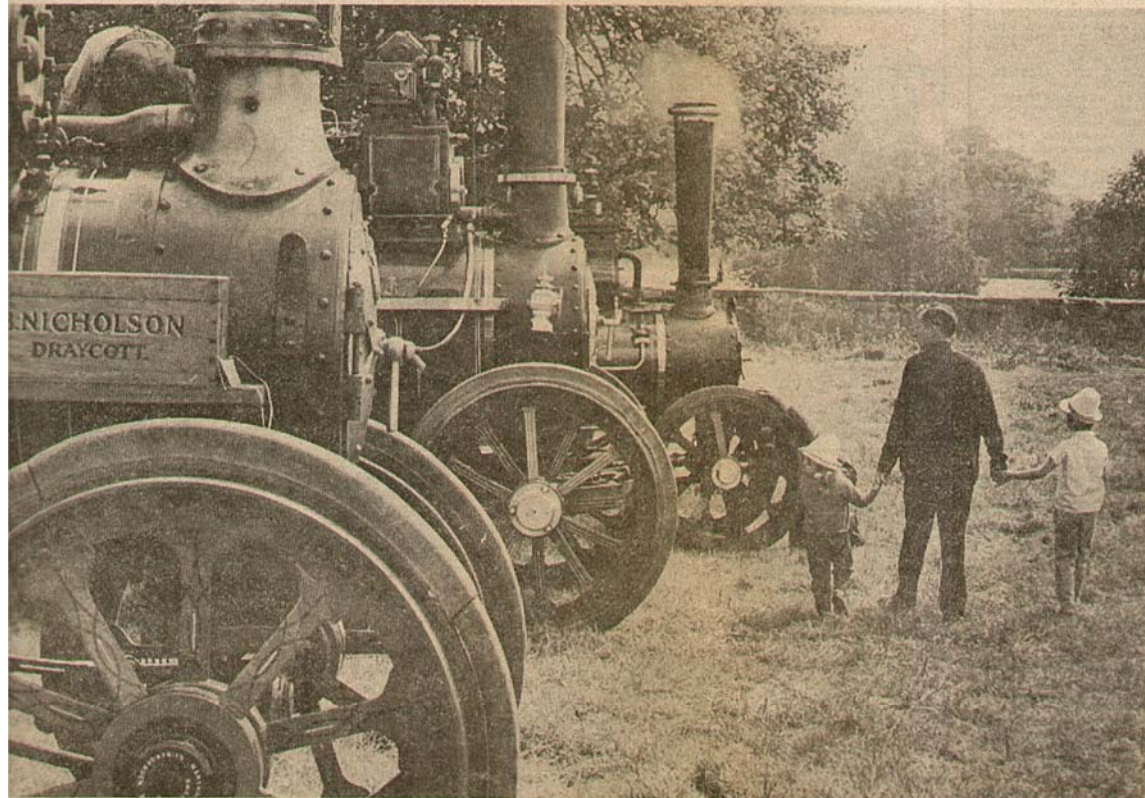
This year, members have been busy recording the memories of those living in the village as well as accumulating collections of events and activities.

The exhibition is from 10am until 4pm in the village hall each day and will be opened by Lady Nancy Bagot.

Said society chairman Gill Sykes: "The society is proving to be a very popular village society. Our exhibition last year far exceeded our expectations with many of the people who attended coming forward with information and giving us a real incentive to continue collecting memories, records and artefacts both past and present."

The society meets monthly on the third Thursday of the month at 8pm, in the village hall sited at Reading Room Drive, off Bellamour Way, Colton. Entrance is free and refreshments will be available.

Festival of steam



HUFFING and puffing the belch their way across scarred field. Monsters of a bygone age, the steam traction engines of yesteryear live again at the annual Midland Festival of Steam.

Nearly three-dozen hooting giant traction engines, their flywheels whirling, are taking part in this week-end's festival at Bellamour Lodge, Colton, near Rugeley — once more commanding respect befitting the dignity of king.

Discovered rusty and neglected in half-forgotten, remote pastures and barns, the engines have been restored to their former glory by enthusiast owners.

Together with as many veteran antique cars, a pair of ancient fire engines, six vintage motor-cycles and a handful of steam organs, the engines will have attracted nearly 25,000 people to the normally quiet six-plough Domesday village of Colton by the time the festival ends this afternoon.

Organised by the village hall committee and the North Staffordshire and Cheshire Traction Engine Club, the rally included ladies' steering events, traction engine races and tug-o-wars. The workhorses of half a century ago are now the stars of a travelling circus of steam.

But some of the giants, weighing anything from six to 16 tons, still work for their keep, threshing, soil sterilising and tree-hauling.

They eat coal and drink water — swallowing a hundredweight of fuel and more than 200 gallons of water every dozen miles—as they chug along at 10 m.p.h.

During the summer they travel hundreds of miles to rallies the length and breadth of the country, their gleaming contours drawing fantastic bids from other enthusiasts—in particular, American tourists.

But thanks to their owners, an antique rally like the Midland Festival of Steam, the old traction engine, like roast beef and Yorkshire pudding and the Changing of the Guard, remains part of Britain's heritage.

When you are dwarfed by half a dozen quietly smoking giants, even if they are still and relatively docile, it's reassuring to slip your hand into father's as he steers you past a shady corner at the Midland Festival of Steam.



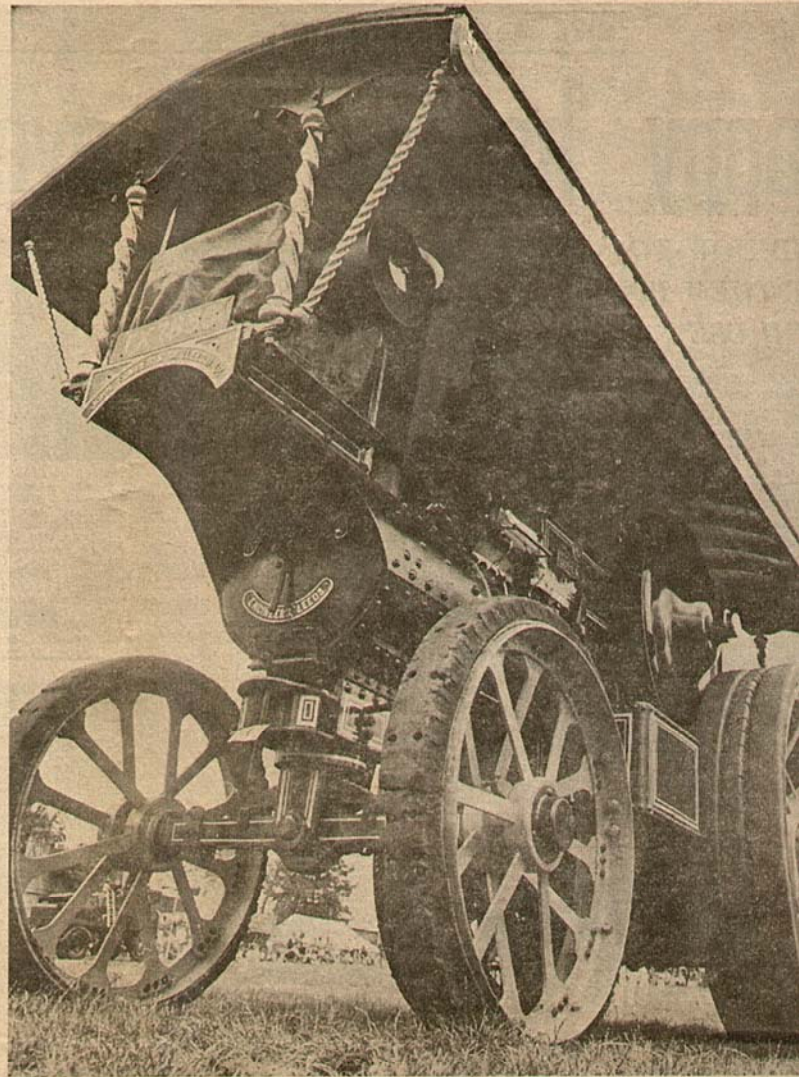
For Brian Jackson, a 33-year-old school caretaker from London, his 1939 Leyland Metz fire engine is more than just a hobby—it's a way of life. His appearance at the festival is one stopping a week's countryside tour during which he has already turned down a £2,000 offer for the engine from an American who flagged him down on the M1.

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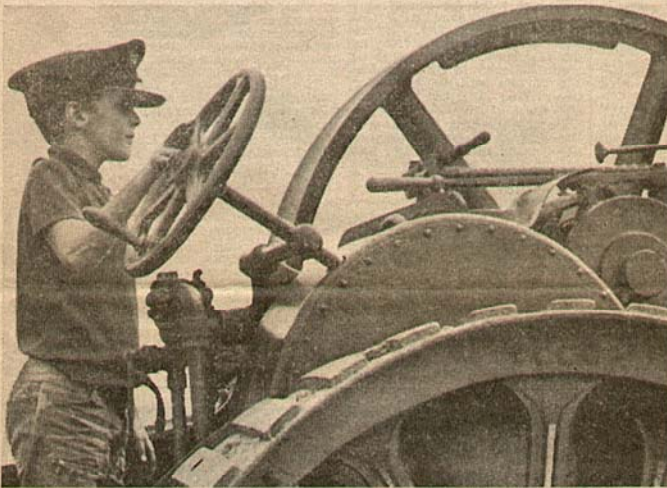
A DASH OF PETROL AND OIL AND THE SOUND OF ORGANS



Foden's four-ton steam bus was built 25 years before Suzette Melvin (19) was born. A replica of Puffing Billy, it now provides an historic background for Suzette, a housewife from Stafford, and her West Highland terrier, Pippy.



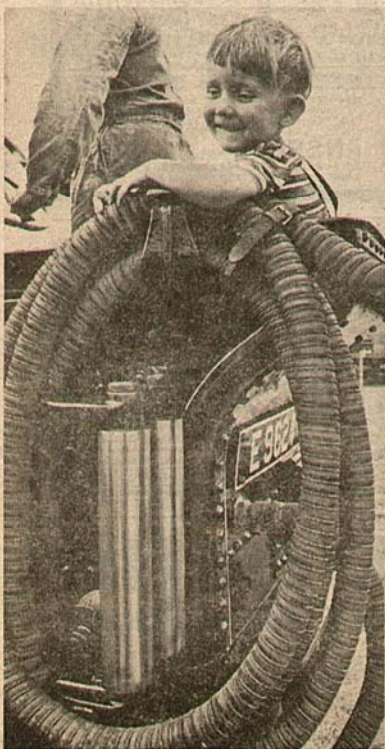
Its brass glittering in the sun, the showman's six-ton locomotive Queen Mary was built by the War Department order in 1919 for gun haulage. Two years later it was used for a less glamorous task, pulling 40-ton blocks of stone on Portland Bill.



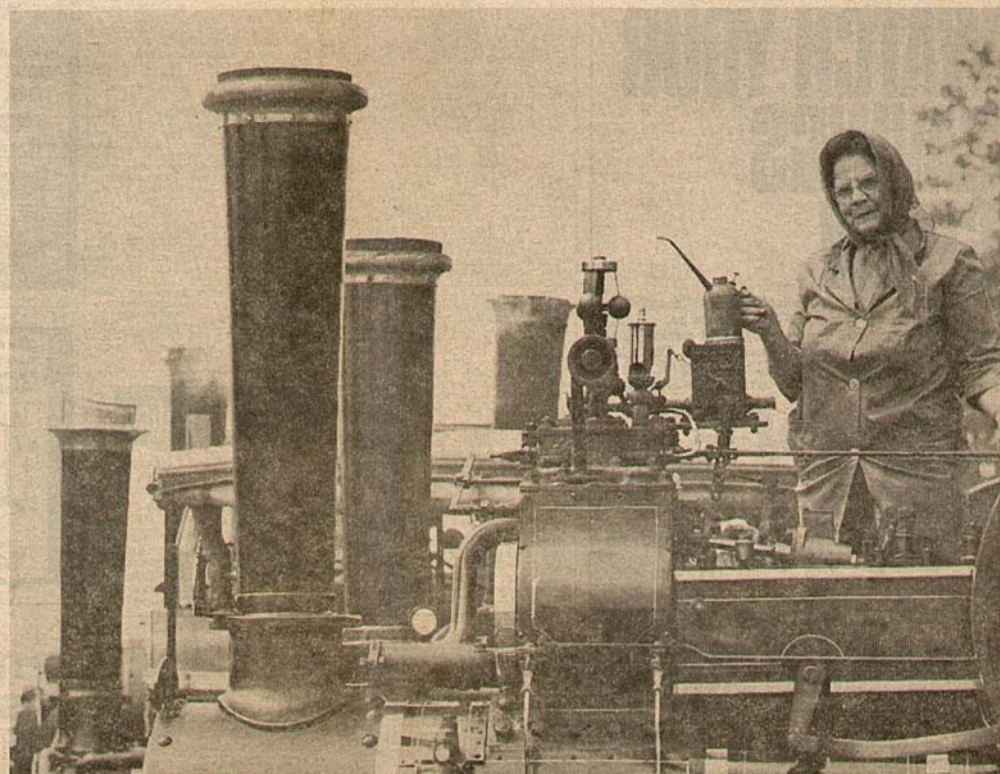
A peaked cap, an oily rag and 10-year-old Paul Wood, from Cheshire, is a king among kings on a 1902 agricultural engine.

Pictures by KENNETH GREEN

Story by ROGER MC

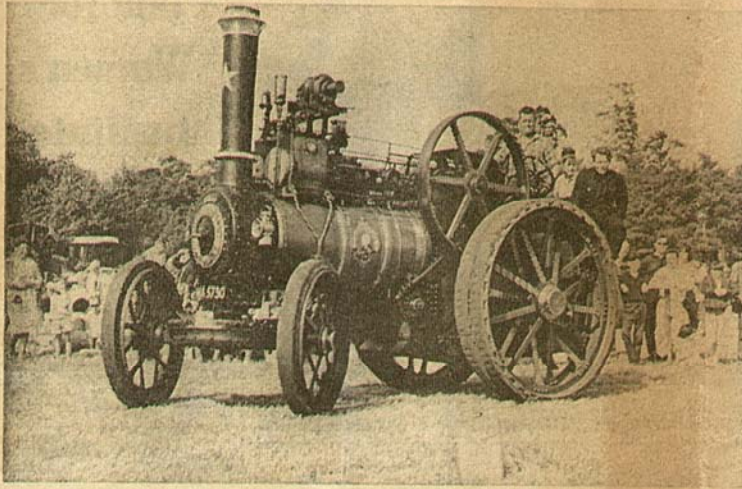


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As the sun sinks and the clanking of a field of engines dies away, all that remains to be done is a final oil and a check over before turning in. With a silhouette of funnels in the background, Mrs. Lucy Fearnley, from Castlethorpe, Yorkshire, prepares her husband's engine for another day's festival.

FESTIVAL OF STEAM



Winnie, a Foster double-crank compound traction engine, preparing to show her paces to the large crowd which attended the last Festival of Steam.

Village setting for big rally

WHY has the six plough Domesday village of Colton become the centre of the annual Midlands Festival of Steam? Why with a population of less than 1,000 today does Colton aspire to attract thousands of visitors to a steam-age festival?

The answers tell a story of enterprise, initiative, foresight, and of a chance contact with a club in need of a site for an annual rally.

Behind it all is a long story of a village's efforts to restore its centre of community life, the village hall, known since last century as the Reading Room.

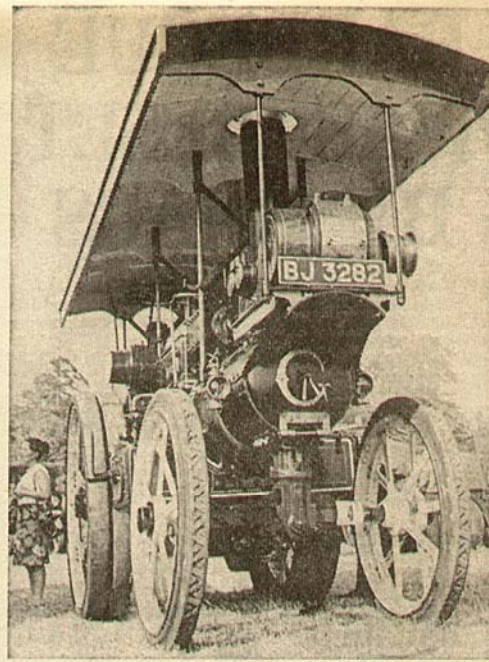
In 1960, when the present management committee took office the village hall was in disrepair and £14 in debt. A public meeting decided that the existing room could be renovated and improved and by the end of the year with the aid of dances and whist drives a balance of £30 had accrued.

This progress was considered ineffectual and a separate Village Hall Entertainment Committee was formed. A major money-raising effort, a barbecue, in 1962 then brought the fund up to £445 and, spurred on by its success, a further barbecue was planned for 1963.

Then came the liaison. A chance contact by a member of the village hall committee with the secretary of the North Staffordshire and Cheshire Traction Engine Club, who at the time were seeking a site for an annual rally, resulted in the Bellamour traction engine rally, held only four weeks after the last barbecue.

This was just the opportunity the Colton committee had been seeking and the joint efforts continued. By the end of 1963 the village hall fund had a balance of £1,160, by the end of 1964 it was £1,605, after receiving a share of the traction engine rally profit of £930.

Then the committee, in conjunction with the traction engine club, decided to widen even further the scope of the annual event which was already being attended by 12,000 to 15,000 people. They embraced all aspects of steam power, vintage and veteran cars, motor cycles, and also gave facilities for railway preservation societies to exhibit at the festival.



Standing majestically, this Garrett showman's tractor will be remembered from the last festival at Bellamour.

SMALLEST ENGINE WEIGHS OVER 4 TONS

WEIGHING just over four tons, "Tiny Tim" will be the smallest engine at the Midlands Festival of Steam today. Being of this weight it is known as a steam tractor — a far cry from the diesel agricultural tractors which are the mainstay of modern farming.

The steam tractor came into being with the Road Traffic Act of 1929, which stipulated that if an engine weighed less than five tons it could be used on the road under the control of one man.

Normally two were required, a driver and a steersman. From the very outset of this Act economies could be seen and soon steam tractors were an everyday sight on the highways and byways.

These first tractors were reduced versions of the familiar traction engine and were basically two-man machines. This produced difficulties when one man was supposed to drive, steer and look after the fire and water.

At the turn of the century Mann and Charles of Leeds had decided to produce a one-man operated machine capable of a multitude of services. The result was the Mann's Patent Steam Tractor.

FIRE HOLE

To obtain this machine the designers took a further look at the familiar steam traction engine and then, instead of keeping the driver at the rear, placed him alongside the boiler and made the fire hole down by his feet. This meant that he was roasted on one side and frozen on the other! (Doubts have been expressed if this is the official reason for this unique arrangement; now only being found on two locomotives working on a narrow-gauge railway in North Wales).

This arrangement left the space at the rear for a large water tank, the coal being carried in a bunker in front of the driver's feet. And so "Tiny Tim" was born.

With subsequent revolutionary changes it is not surprising that these little machines did not catch on and very few were made, despite the fact that they were capable of road haulage, threshing and even direct ploughing.

Therefore it was with great interest that in 1959 the North Staffordshire and Cheshire Traction Engine Club heard the news that one of these interesting machines was available for sale at Pickering in Yorkshire.

The next week-end several club members travelled to Yorkshire to see "Tiny Tim" at the Pickering Rally, where unfortunately the little chap was not feeling too good. He ended up having to be towed out of the arena!

Steam engine men are a sentimental lot and "Tiny Tim" was bought on the spot and arrangements were made to transport him to a new home in Staffordshire.

Since then very extensive repair work has taken place, including new drive gears and boiler repairs, so the fine engine to be seen at Bellamour today, although



Festival director Mr. David Bradbury (left) with Mr. J. C. Price (Colton's parish council and village hall chairman) who owns the festival site, near the ruins of the old hall, reputed to have been haunted.

REDISCOVERING OUR INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

THIS is by many people's standard the Throwaway Age, the age when little is sacred, much expendable and all status symbols essentially new. An age in which articles of every description are manufactured to planned breakdown and obsolescence dates.

An age in which the technician rushes to complete a job on Friday because he fears his work will be obsolete on Monday.

Will everything be lost? It is a depressing thought and one which has probably given impetus to the growing interest in industrial archaeology, devotees of which are doing for England's industrial past what other preservation societies have done for England's beautiful buildings and countryside. Long may they flourish.

People are thinking again of their industrial heritage, appreciating the romance and wonder in the ancient winding gear and the defunct iron furnace.

DAWLEY PLANS

Dawley New Town announces plans to make the old Coalbrookdale/Ironbridge area into virtually a parkland and museum. Hardheaded businessmen rebuild and recreate old industrial machines like contemporary sculptors. Many are rediscovering the beauty and dignity in industrial relics which once were thought to possess no such qualities.

One of the most fascinating sources of study in this respect is the machinery of the early industrial era, when inventive man sought to supplement the muscle-power of the overworked labourer and the overladen horse.

achievements must stand steam motivation, particularly the elegant monsters we now call steam traction engines, which trundled along England's roads for generations—made the roads themselves, drove the threshers, drove indeed a thousand different machines on their endless belts. Their tasks were legion and they should not be forgotten.

Are we in England reawakening to the wonders of these machines? Hopefully, it would seem so. Steam traction and vintage and veteran vehicle societies are active these days and their interest is not wholly academic.

Their members are to be found rediscovering, rebuilding, refurbishing, in sheds and garages all over the country. The fruits of their dedicated labours are the restoration of lost elegance and forgotten beauty.

A rare opportunity for Midlands to see such history in action legitimate and undeviated, presents itself at Bellamour today and tomorrow (Sunday) at the Festival of Steam.

Old Bellamour Hall saw all the vicissitudes of the Industrial Revolution and must have seen the waxing and waning fortunes of steam power in all its stages. Now in its grounds this weekend is a show which to a great degree reflects the history of machine locomotion over the last 100 years

The time when ghosts walked at Bellamore

WILL the ghost of Bellamore be awakened by the steaming reminders of bygone days that fill the quiet Colton countryside this weekend? Will she walk again among the ruins of the former Astons home around which this year's Festival of Steam takes place?

Legend intermingles with reminders of psychic research at Bellamour today and there are people living in Colton who declare that cries have been heard coming from the meadow opposite the lodge on the road from Rugeley.

There is Mr. J. C. Price, the present owner of the ancient estate, with information gained by the Birmingham Psychic Research Society through a medium who spent a clairvoyant midnight hour at the Old Hall four years ago. There is also the statement made by a former resident, Mr. H. Morrall of Dudley, to a newspaper in 1955 which cannot be discounted by those who love to abolish ghosts.

Mr. Morrall said that on September 14, 1905, his twin sister, born in the Old Hall, was awakened and in the moonlight by what she thought was a man in flowing black robes, with a beautiful face, beckoning her. Exactly a year later the same thing happened again!

After that she had a collie dog always sleeping under her bed. She never again saw anything, but she heard footsteps which frightened the dog and caused it howl, but not to leave the bed. He would had the footsteps be human.

Mr. Morrall recalled that some time afterwards the Lady Bag of the day investigated the incident and found that a man was murdered there in 1698, his widow becoming a nun. It would appear to have been the widow's ghost that was walking at midnight.

Some years after the incident Mr. Morrall said he also heard footsteps and the door-latch lifted. He shouted and the footsteps were quietly downstairs.

WRINGING HANDS
The 1963 clairvoyant's experience was also of tragedy, a late wailing her hands, breathing ha and apparently suffering from throat complaint. There was cross round her throat and a nurse was carrying a Bible. There were lots of trees around, she said.

Old Bellamore Hall was built 1639 by Herbert Aston, for his 16-year-old wife, who bore him eight children but died when on 40. He named it from the Italian "Bell amore," not from the French as one would assume from today's spelling.

After his wife's death or daughter, Katherine, became a nun at Louvain, where two aunts were nuns—one being the superior. Herbert narrowly escaped being included in the Popish Plot of 1680, when the conspirators attempted to make Bellamore the scene of the supposed conspiracy through a Morrall, who however refused to become involved.

The estate passed to cousin the Blounts, and a newer house (also demolished) was built in 179 but Lady Blount was burnt to death in 1805 when a spark from a fire fell on her dress.

Twenty years later Mr. Edward Blount, her son, sold the estate to Mr. J. Oldham and later it was sold to Mr. T. B. Horsfall. The newer hall was demolished in the 1920's.

The men behind the festival

TWO personalities stand out in connection with the annual Midlands Festival of Steam at Bellamour, Colton. One is the owner of the site, Mr. John Charles Price, who lives at Bellamour Lodge. The other is Mr. David John Bradbury, of Brindley Bank, Rugeley — just over the Colton parish boundary.

Mr. Price, who sought "a place in the country" rather than continuing to live in West Bromwich, specialising in breeding Large White pigs and Friesian cattle at Bellamour, it was his offer of a site in Bellamour Park which made first the giant barbecue, then the annual festivals, possible.

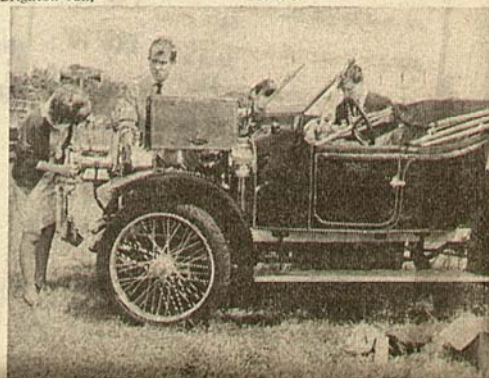
After a rest last year while a new site matured, he has enabled vast improvements to be carried out in sitting and parking at today's festival.

Keen on community work, Mr. Price is this year's chairman of Colton Parish Council as well as being chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee. Himself a collector of antiques of all kinds, he has already acquired a vintage tractor.

A "neutral" chairman has been appointed to manage this year's point festival committee — Mr. Charles Shelley of Rugeley, formerly of the neighbouring parish of Colwich. Mr. Shelley is himself a steam enthusiast as well as a headmaster.

Chairman of the North Staffordshire and Cheshire Traction Engine Club is Mr. R. D. Howell of Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The link man who made the liaison between the two bodies possible and who this year is acting



18,000 VISITORS PAID

OUT £3,220 TO SEE THE FESTIVAL OF STEAM

BELLAMOUR'S Midland Festival of Steam, the fourth such event to be held jointly by Colton Village Hall Committee and the North Staffordshire and Cheshire Traction Engine Club, attracted 18,000 visitors on Saturday and Sunday, gross takings at the gates being £3,220.

There were 26 traction engines, the oldest being the 1902 Fowler, and 100 vintage cars, three steam driven organs, 110 veteran and vintage cars and commercial vehicles and about 20 motor cycles. Even the fair equipment was vintage, including one of only two remaining steam "gallopers" in this country, and a cake walk.

The traction engines consumed during the weekend ten tons of North Staffordshire coal (sold for the best price of 10s. 6d. per ton) and 8,000 gallons of South Staffordshire water.

Gate figures on Saturday reached 5,000 and on Sunday there were 13,000, taxing the car parking arrangements to the limit of 4,000 vehicles. Over the two days, 5,800 cats were parked at Bellamour.

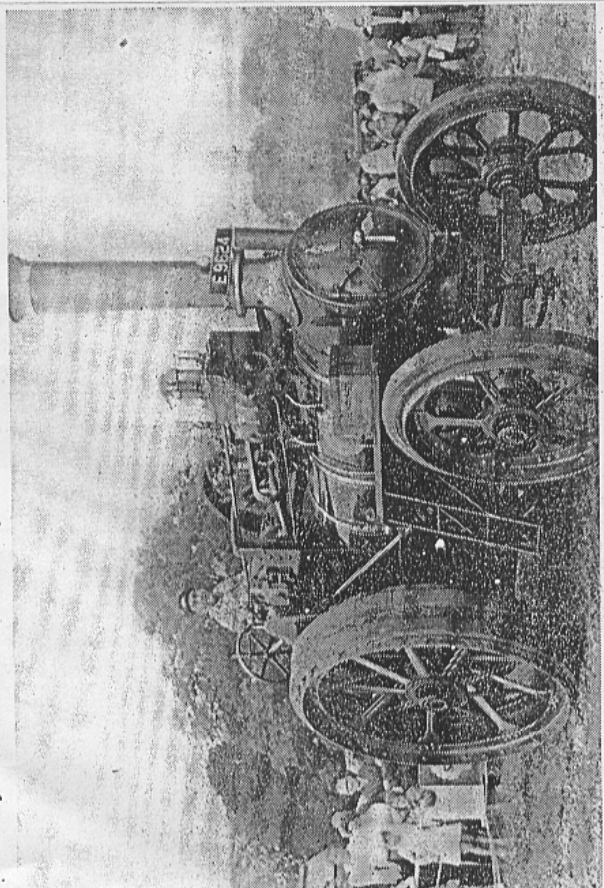
Festival treasurer Mr. P. J. Everall told the "Times" that expenses would amount to £2,000, so that the event would make a profit of more than £1,000. This would be divided between the two organising groups.

PARKING SPACE
In view of the ever-increasing support, the club assure future space would be arranged for the year so that no-one would be turned away.

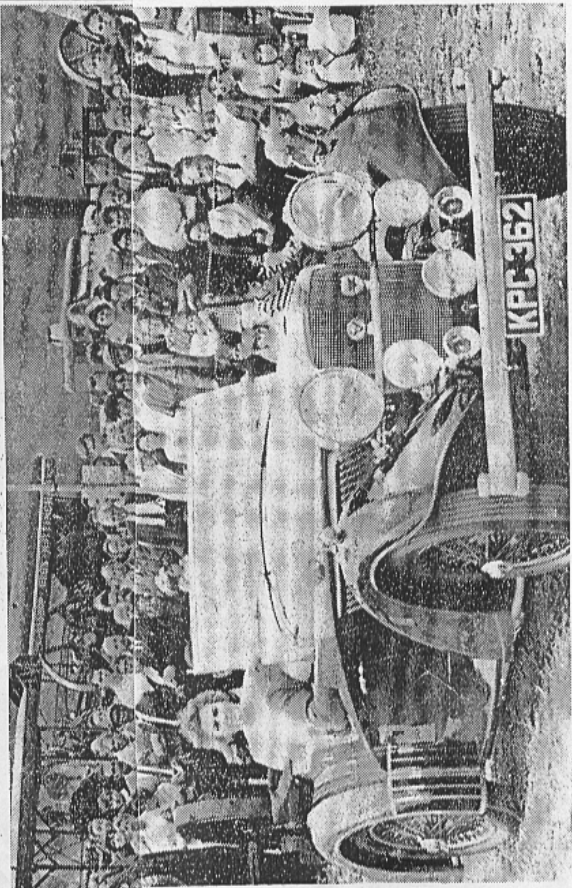
For the first time the Midland Festival of Steam reached the prestige point whereby cup winners of the car events become eligible to compete in the Veteran and Vintage Car of the Year Show.

Opening the events on Saturday, the Hon. John Gretton, son of the Earl of Arundel, who has been the finest rally of his kind in the country and it was helped by the friendly atmosphere which always seemed to prevail about traction engine and veteran car people.

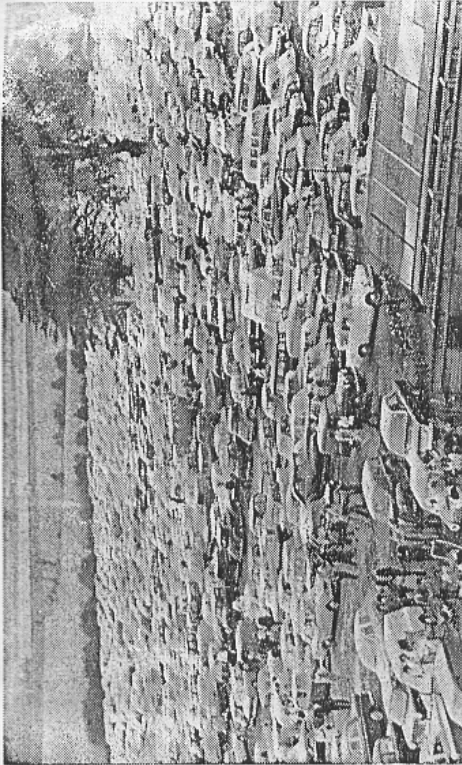
It was a sad fact that as technology progressed cars lost their individuality. Steam engines, though primitive and simple, inspired a grand parade of traction engines led by "Queen Mary," followed by "Supremacy," "Rajah," and a Foden steambus, "Puffing Billy," which used to convey the famous Foden Works Band. Many visitors enjoyed rides in the steam bus during the festival.



Brian Nicholson of Draycott-in-the-Clay, best traction engine driver of the festival, seated on his Marshall agricultural engine "Lindy Lou" which won the Jack Sandham trophy for the best privately owned and restored engine of a club member.



Mr. R. A. Parker's 1938 Alvis which won the trophy for the best vintage car at the festival.



From the top of a 60ft. fire engine ladder "Times" photographer Eric Brown gets a bird's eye view of some of the 4,000 cars parked at Bellamour on Sunday afternoon.

Village is thanked for helping to make event successful

OWNER of Bellamour, chairman of Colton Village Hall Committee, and chairman of Colton Parish Council, Mr. J. C. Price said after the festival closed on Sunday evening that he considered it a privilege to own the ancient estate of Bellamour and also a privilege to live in Colton.

"The support Colton villagers have given is second to none. The unity is wonderful and we are grateful also to the people from outside who have helped us. The post-war special constables did a wonderful job," he told the "Times."

He said he was pleased also to be associated with the North Staffordshire and Cheshire Traction Engine Club. "It is a credit to the whole of the surrounding area that we are able to put on what is generally recognised to be the finest show in the country."

THREE FIRMS

Mr. David Bradbury, festival director and the link between the festival and the surrounding area, thought they had now reached the twilight of steam for track locomotives. There was a lot of life yet in traction engines. But he warned that there were now only three firms in this country capable of making boilers complete, and when they died out machines such as they had seen at the festival would die out with them.

He thanked all stewards and also all engine owners for making the show what it was. He paid tribute also to the Colton people who had undertaken the maintenance of the site. The services they provided there could have been provided elsewhere, but they provided them.



Looking down at the veteran car enclosure at the festival from the 60ft. ladder of a Peterborough fire engine.

Visitors by canal had no parking problem

ONE family which had no parking problems at the festival arrived by canal boat, tied up, and walked on to the site. They had learned of the festival from a poster they saw while on a canal cruise holiday.

Several families arrived on Saturday and camped overnight in the car park. Biggest problem of all for many motorists was finding their own car out of the 4,000 parked in an area which had few trees for landmarks.

Latecomers on Sunday parked on roadside verges, stretching as far back as Partridge Farm, and in mid-afternoon a queue along the road was seen as latecomers sought a place to park.



Mr. J. C. Price, owner of Bellamour Park, about to present the "Rugby Times" cup for the best vintage fire engine to Mr. R. A. Parker of Nuneaton.

FESTIVAL FANFARE

Chronicle 1 Sep 2005

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Village history on display

TREASURES from yesteryear will be on show next month at an exhibition held by a Rugeley group.

The Colton -History Society is hosting the event for the second year running and by popular demand.

Because of the success of last year's inaugural event, this year's will be held over two days.

Items on display include

photographs, press cuttings, video recordings and memorabilia.

This year the exhibition will also feature the society's newly developed website.

The exhibition is being held with the support of the Local Heritage Initiative, which awarded the society a grant of £22,000 grant to investigate and record local history. So far this year the

Report by TAMLYN JONES

society, which meets on the third Thursday of each month at 8pm, has been recording villagers' memories as well as accumulating collections of events and activities. A CD and video are currently in production.

Society chairman Gill Sykes said: "We have been

going for three years now and it is proving to be a very popular village society.

"Our exhibition last year far exceeded our expectations with many of the people who attended coming forward with information and giving us a real incentive to continue collecting memories, records and artefacts both past and present."

The exhibition takes place on October 7 and 8 from 10am-4pm at Colton village hall in Reading Room Drive.

Society president Lady Nancy Bagot will open the first day of the exhibition.

Admission is free and there will be refreshments and a raffle.

For more details call Gill Sykes on 01283 575039.

Killer studied medicine at Stafford Free Infirmary

Prince of poisoners
who thrived on death

Next week sees the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the murder of John Parsons Cook by local physician, Doctor William Palmer. GIL HOUSEMAN tells the gruesome story

William Palmer, christened by the press as 'The Prince of Poisoners', was born in Rugeley on August 6, 1824.

His father, a sawyer (woodworker), is said to have embezzled a modest fortune from his employer before his premature death, leaving his mother a wealthy widow.

Discharged from two apprenticeships due to theft and philandering, Palmer opted for a career in medicine, using family influences to gain a position as a 'walking student' at the Stafford Free Infirmary.

Here William showed an unhealthy interest in the poisons kept in the Dispensary, leading to a rule being created specifically to prevent him gaining further access to the poison cabinets.

It was while studying at Stafford that Palmer's first supposed victim died having entered into a fatal drinking competition with Palmer. It has been suggested that 'something' was slipped into the poor unfortunates drink to make him sick and that the 'prank' went wrong. He was discovered outside in the yard dead moments after leaving for air.

Palmer completed his medical training in London in 1846 gaining a reputation for drinking, gambling, womanising and a being a financial liability - Palmer was coached through the exam but failed to pay his mentor's fee.

The Palmer family were very much respected in their hometown. William had two brothers, both professionals, and a sister. One brother was a solicitor and the other a local chaplain, both giving William additional respectability and making the revelation of his murderous career all the more shocking.

On William's return to Rugeley in 1847 he married Annie Thornton an heiress to property in Stafford, including the Noah's Ark public house (now the Surgery bar).

In the same year he established a practice in Rugeley but very quickly found the work tedious, employing someone to do much of the work while he devoted his time to womanising and building a stable.

In 1848 Annie gave birth to a son who they christened William. Of Palmer's five legitimate children only his eldest son survived.

This led later to claims that he poisoned at least two of his babies by dipping his fingers in poison and coated them with sugar encouraging them to suck them. Modern theories suggest that the children died of natural causes and were due to a hereditary illness.

Throughout his youth Palmer had spent beyond his means, looking to his mother to bale him out when his life-style caught up with him. However, in later life he looked for other sources of ready money. His gambling debts rising, Palmer took out loans to pay off his creditors.

No sooner had he paid off one gambling debt than he 'invested' in a new horse in the hope of recouping all his money. His reputation preceding him and Palmer soon found he could only obtain loans from disreputable sources, who fleeced him accordingly. William Palmer's mother-in-law, an alcoholic, went to stay with him while recovering from a recurring illness. She told her daughter that she would never leave their house alive.

Within weeks her prophecy had come true. Palmer was dismayed when, however, his wife did not inherit her mother's property, merely an annual income from the rents - this was not even enough to cover a month's interest on his debts and so he needed to act quickly.

Alcoholic

In April 1854, with spiralling debts and having begun an affair with the family's teenage live-in maid, Palmer insured Annie's life for £13,000. She was dead within six months. It was later discovered that Palmer slept with their maid on the night of poor Annie's funeral.

Despite reservations, the insurance company paid up. However, such were Palmer's debts by then that the money barely covered them. Now he turned his attentions to his alcoholic brother, Walter, whose life he insured for £14,000 in April 1855. Once again he waited a few months before administering a fatal draught. Following Walter Palmer's death the insurance company sent a detective to investigate the case. While he couldn't find sufficient evidence of foul play, the claim was refused - Walter had been murdered for nothing.

A few months later, and with his debts still mounting, Palmer visited the Shrewsbury Races with his gambling friend John Parsons Cook on 13th November. Cook's horse Pale Star won its owner the purse of £3,000 but in so doing sealed his fate. On their return to Rugeley, Cook became very ill and was attended, at the Talbot Arms, by both William Palmer.

Palmer stole Cook's betting book and took the coach to London where he managed, by deception, to collect his winnings. When he returned to Rugeley he purchased a quantity of strychnine. Early the following morning of Wednesday November 21st John Parsons Cook died in agony of what was later believed to be strychnine poisoning.

Cook's stepfather was highly suspicious of Palmer and pressed for a post mortem, which was held five days later,



Doctor Palmer with one of the horses from his stables



Notice announcing the arrest of Doctor William Palmer

London where he stood against the single indictment for the murder of John Parsons Cook.

Much of the evidence, including the testimony of expert witnesses, was available to the media months before the trial. This, along with hearsay statements from locals, with grudges to bear or names to make, was published in the Rugeley Times in February 1856. This publication was, of course, available to all of the potential witnesses who could adjust their own statements accordingly.

After a twelve-day trial William Palmer was found guilty on May 27th, and sentenced to death by hanging. The sentence was to be carried out at Stafford Gaol within sight of the Infirmary where he had begun his medical training.

Such was his notoriety that a crowd of some 35,000 men, women and children gathered to witness his execution before Stafford Gaol on June 14th, nearly three times the town's population.

Composed

Special trains were laid on to bring people to watch the spectacle from all corners of the county.

The rope is said to have made two or three times the length required, with the remainder sold off as 'the rope that hanged William Palmer'.

On the morning of the execution Palmer was visited by the gaol's chaplain who pleaded with him to confess. William refused, claiming that he had not poisoned Cook by strychnine which many have taken this to suggest that he did murder Cook but by another means. Palmer remained cool and composed to the end. His last request was a glass of champagne. In front of his gaoler he was seen to blow the bubbles off the glass, commenting that they gave him indigestion.

The exact number of people Palmer murdered is not known, some historians have put the figure as high as twelve, others four or five. He was a master at manipulation and ruthless in his desire for money to fund his gambling addiction. However, he became convinced of his own invincibility and this made him careless in leaving a host of clues which the police used to clinch the case against him.

As so often is the case, the name of Palmer lives on while those of his victims has largely faded away. Palmer was even immortalised by Staffordshire potters who produced an image of the poisoner and even of his house in Rugeley, while a number of books have been written on the subject.



The Prince of Poisoners - Doctor William Palmer

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Falling rolls could see primary schools shut

by **Andrew Wragg**

News Reporter

IN RESPONSE to a falling number of pupil admissions, Staffordshire County Council has released a report which casts doubt over the long-term future of at least two local primary schools.

The authority claims that reception class intake across the county has dropped by an average 15 per cent in the last eight years.

And it predicts that the figure will fall by a further 17 per cent in Lichfield district over the next four years.

On the back of these findings, the council's education chiefs are assessing the need to cut local school provision. They studied primary and reception class numbers.

In Lichfield city, figures indicate a 20 per cent projected surplus in class numbers by 2009/10.

Staff at the two-site St Michael's school, in Sturgeons Hill, are recommending that all its students move to the newer building – and the council agreed to examine the feasibility of the suggestion.

The study noted that of its Catholic primary schools, St Joseph's was at full capacity and therefore less likely to warrant adaptation.

But St Peter and St Paul's primary is projected to have a 46 per cent surplus of places available by 2008/9 – a matter which the council intends to discuss with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese.

In Burntwood, projections suggest that its schools will need to cut reception class numbers by an average 19 per cent by 2008/9 and year seven intake by 10 per cent.

This information bodes least well for Boney

living in St Mary's catchment area attend other schools.

The council again proposes to consult with staff to assess whether the school has 'long-term value'.

Merging smaller schools' management and control could be another way forward, the report suggests.

Staffordshire County Council cabinet member for lifelong learning, Robert Simpson, said: "The objective of this review is to create strong, viable schools, both educationally and financially within the context of falling rolls, constrained budgets and a large number of surplus places.

"Raising the level of achievement and extending the range of opportunity are the key objectives of the county council and proposals will need to be judged in the light of how far they contribute to these objectives."

The review is indicative of the decline in birth rates in Staffordshire over the last decade.

The largest number of students transferring from year six-seven was seen in September 2002 (10,895); by January 2005 this figure had fallen by nine per cent.

January 2004 saw the number of pupils aged between 11-16 reach its peak in the county.

The number of pupils aged 16-19 will peak in 2009/10.



■ **Colton. The village school here could have more than half its official capacity empty by September 2008.**

Hay Primary School which is predicted to have a 65 per cent surplus in places by 2008/9, and could face closure as a result.

The council is planning consultations with its headteacher and governors to discuss the school's long-term future.

In rural areas, the overall projected surplus for 2009/10 was 14 per cent.

But St Mary's Primary School, Colton, came under fire. The review predicts that the school's 46 per cent surplus places in January 2005, will rise to 52 per cent by 2008/9.

It was also noted that 40 per cent of pupils

MERCURY 17TH NOVEMBER 2005.

History of village put on display



Steam engineers John Bradbury, Andrew Bradbury and David Dale and engine Little Mac



Evacuees Reg Williams, Ken Maple and Tony Towner with veterans John Fisher and Karl Heinz

MEMBERS of a historical group staged their second annual village exhibition last weekend – to the delight of hundreds of visitors.

The Colton History Society held the event at the village hall in Bellamour Way over two days following the success of last year's inaugural event.

Society secretary Bill Brown said: "Last year it was the first exhibition and we were inundated with the response.

"We wanted to give people the opportunity to spend more time there."

Items on display included photographs, Press cuttings, documents, video recordings, artefacts and memorabilia.

There were also special features on village recollections from the second world war, the area's steam heritage and prominent people to give a valuable insight into Colton's history.

The exhibition was staged with the support of the Local Heritage Initiative, which has awarded the group a £22,000 grant to investigate and record local history.

As part of its work, the society is trying to involve the whole community in researching, recording and sharing all aspects of its industrial, geological, archaeological and cultural history.

The group is also set to launch its own website in the near future.



Canal life enthusiast Julie Thorn and Family Historian Sonia Jenkinson at the exhibition

The way we were



Colton House which belonged to the Bagot family



The Old Rectory was the oldest building in the village



Bellamour Lodge was built in 1851 by James Oldham

Village's past life is revealed by website

These pictures of the village of Colton, situated between Lichfield and Rugeley, are taken from a new website.

The website - www.coltonhistory.org.uk - has recently been launched thanks to a cash injection of £22,183 from the Local Heritage Initiative.

It aims to both share the research of Colton History Society, and to encourage people with local connections to contribute to its unfolding story.

A section of the new site is dedicated to Buildings of Note, from where these pictures are taken. Colton House was the smaller Manor in Colton belonging to the Bagot family. It is not known who built the

Report by Faye Casey Pictures Colton History Society

property but the Queen Anne style is of the early part of the 18th Century.

The present house has a wealth of history, and details of many who lived there are revealed on the website.

Converted

But probably the most celebrated occupant to live there was Frederic Bonney in the 1890s. The Victorian explorer, who spent more than 20 years in Australia, even created an arboretum around the lakes which used to be opposite the house.

Colton House was also occupied by the army in the Second World War, and afterwards was converted into six flats.

The present owners bought the house in the 1970s, and it is slowly being restored to its former glory.

The Old Rectory was the home for the Rector of St Mary's Church, the oldest building in Colton, for many years. It was built on the east side of the church in the 19th Century, after originally being on the west side, but this was deemed unhealthy because it was built on damp, low land.

The Old Rectory was home to the Rectors of Colton until the 1970s, when the church decided it was too big and costly to run.

It was then sold as a private house and a new Rectory built back on the west side of the church. Bellamour Lodge is described as a "19th Century grace and favour house" and was built in the Victorian style in 1851 by James Oldham, the owner of the Bellam-

our Estate, for his unmarried daughter.

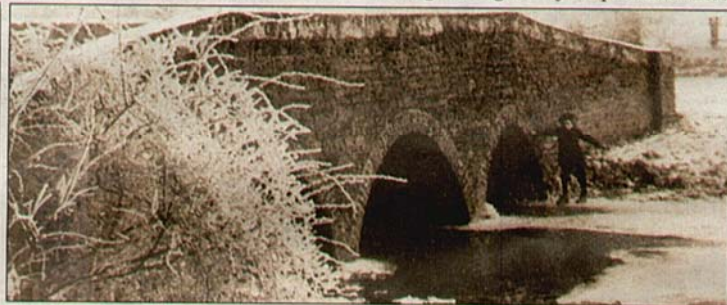
Over the years the house was extended and its gardens improved to make it one of the grandest houses in the village.

Restored

After changing hands several times the house finally passed out of the Oldham family in 1935 and was bought by the Riley s, a shoe manufacturer from Stafford.

It was then bought by a Birmingham business couple, the Morleys, and in the late 1940s by John Price, a former dentist who farmed on the land until his death.

The Lodge was then restored to much of its original elegance by the present owners.



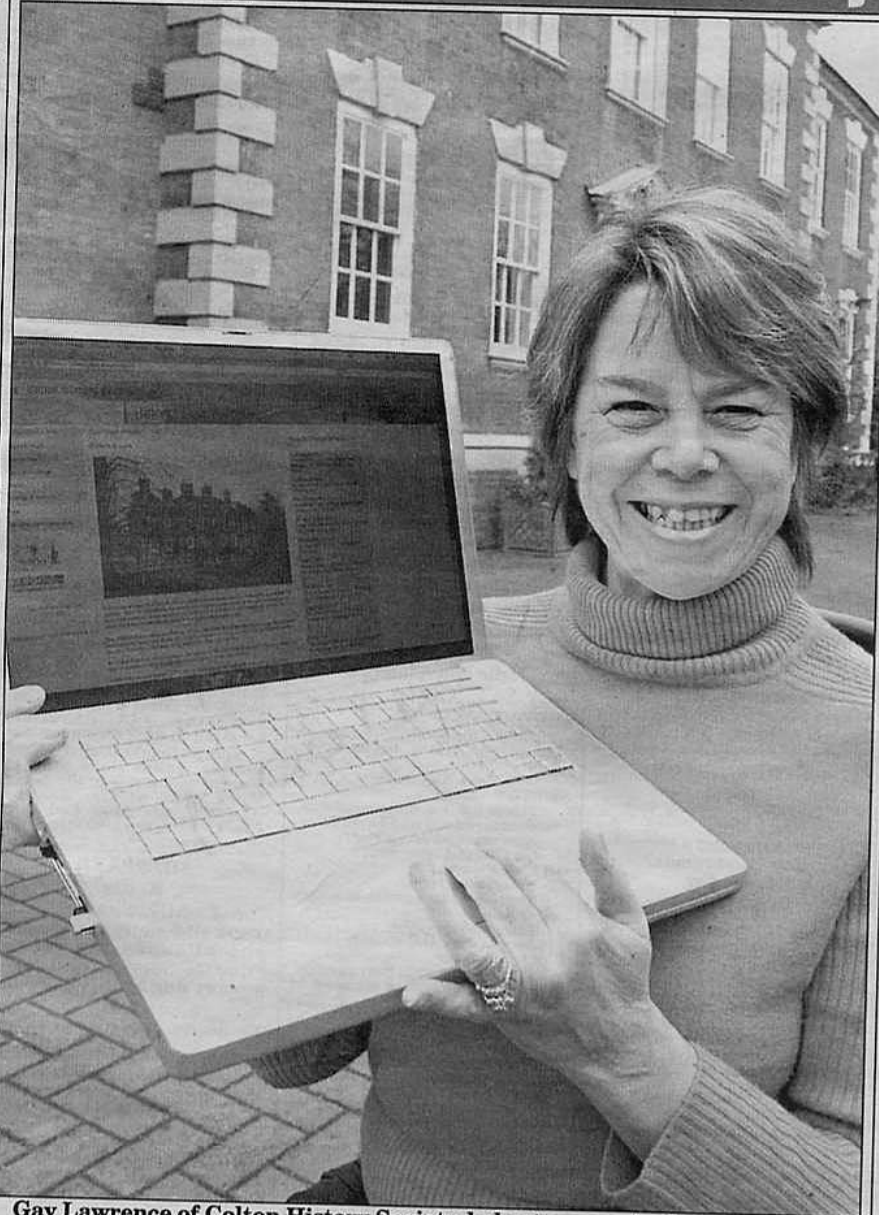
Moreton Brook Bridge is seen in this picture which can be found on the website



An old photograph of pupils waiting outside St Mary's School in the village

Express Star 15.2.06

Village clicks on to history



Gay Lawrence of Colton History Society, helps to promote the new website

Step back in time via web

Report by Faye Casey

Residents in a Staffordshire village can now take a step back in time to uncover its history and help make their own.

A website dedicated to the village of Colton, between Lichfield and Rugeley, has just been launched after an injection of £22,183 from the Local Heritage Initiative.

The website aims to both share the research of Colton History Society, and to encourage people with local connections to contribute to its unfolding story.

Thanks to the grant members of the society have meticulously researched all aspects of local life in the village including

uncovering tales of local residents, such as the Victorian explorer Frederic Bonney and plantation owner John Heyliger Burt.

The society has also delved into the health and well being of the village and looked at local industries such as medieval glassmaking, mills and canals.

Gill Sykes, society chairman, said: "We have already had feedback from as far away as New Zealand and Australia."

The address of the website is www.coltonhistory.org.uk

Grant puts village history on the web

THE fascinating history of a village near Rugeley is available at the touch of a button.

With a grant of more than £20,000 from the Local Heritage Initiative, the Colton History Society members have meticulously researched all aspects of local life and the village now has its own website.

Gill Sykes of Colton History Society said: "The website is full of topics and pictures that we hope will be of interest to people all over the world."

"We have already had feedback from as far away as New Zealand and Australia."

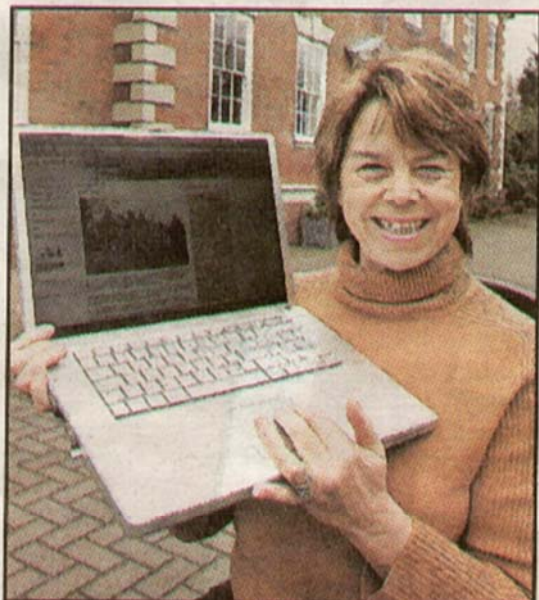
The address is www.coltonhistory.org.uk

Chronicle 9 Feb 2006



Web of village history

by **LESLEY GOODERIDGE**



Gay Lawrence, of Colton Local History Society launches the new website outside her home, Colton House

LOCAL historians in a village near Rugeley have unlocked the door to many fascinating secrets behind the facade of one of its most impressive buildings.

Colton House in the village of Colton may well stand on the site of the original main manor house recorded as belonging to Azeline in the Domesday Book.

The present house is in the Queen Anne style of the early 18th century but it is its occupiers which give the building such a colourful history.

William Pigott, a gentleman who kept harriers, lived there in the 1770's and Lady Blount of Bellamour Hall occupied it whilst the new Bellamour Hall was being built nearby in the late 18th century.

In 1795 a merchant who had sugar plantations in the West Indies owned it but died when his ship disappeared on a voyage back from St Croix in the West Indies. In the 1851 census records for Colton, a boy's school for some 18 boarders was being run at Colton House by a Mr Mills.

But perhaps its most celebrated occupant came there in the 1890s. Frederic Bonney was born in Rugeley but as a young man went out to Australia to work with his elder brother in the sheep stations north of Adelaide.

A keen photographer, he took many pictures particularly of the Aborigines but also of the settlers and places around him.

He also took notes about the customs and practices of the Aborigines and his informative collections were later deposited with the museum of Australia in Sydney.

Returning to England, Bonney tenanted Colton House for a number of years and created an arboretum around the lakes that used to be opposite the house. Some of the trees he planted can still be seen.

Occupied by the army during the war, the house was converted into six flats before being bought by a developer in the 1970s who stripped it of many of its features, built houses in the courtyard and sold the gardens.

Its present owners have carefully restored the house to its former glory.

● From the Colton Local History website at www.coltonhistory.com



The historic Colton House

Canal trip to Mossley

Two Colton women struck a blow for "women's lib." last Sunday after a joke in a public house turned into a determined attempt to raise money for the old people of the village.

The money-raising effort took the form of a sponsored three mile row on the canal from Bellamour, near Colton, to a point opposite the Mossley Tavern on the Arnold Road, Rugley — and back again — in a plastic doughty about 5fl. long.

The two brave adventurers were Mrs. S. Doughty and Mrs. N. Goring, both of High

raises £17

Street, Colton.

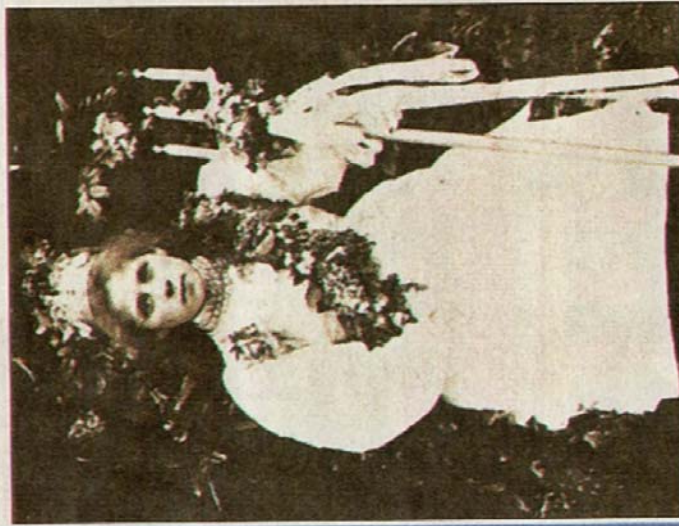
The row had apparently been done by the couple before and friendly argument arose over this, as it had not been witnessed by anyone.

The two decided that they would attempt the "voyage" again, this time with witnesses to prove it.

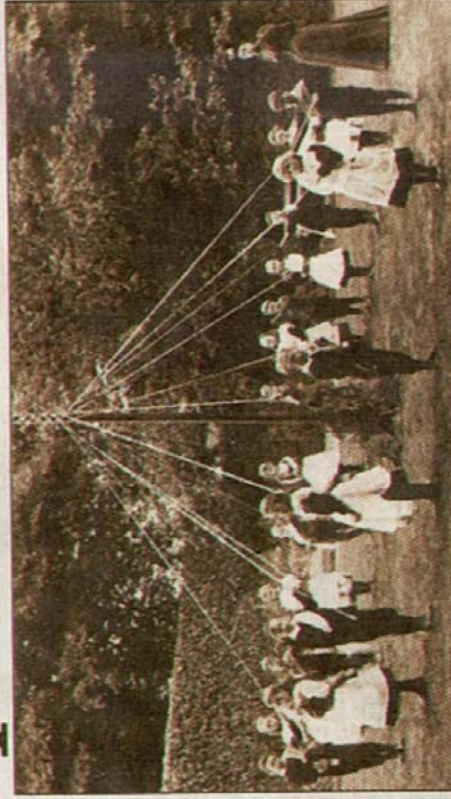
The bet ended with more than 60 people sponsoring the couple at about 25p a time, which resulted in £17 being raised.

The way we were

Historic pictures show village life



The village's carnival queen on May Day

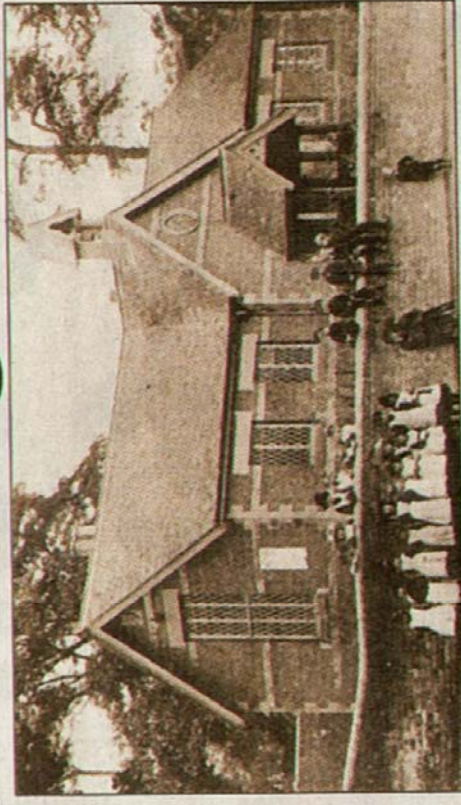


Dancing round the maypole during May Day celebrations

These pictures give a flavour of what life was like for the villagers of Colton in the 19th century.

Schoolchildren at St Mary's School, and the village's May Day celebrations, are featured in the pictures, which are provided by Colton History Society.

The village, found between Lichfield and



St Mary's School. Pictures courtesy Colton History Society

Rugeley, has come under the spotlight thanks to the launch of a new website.

After meticulously researching all aspects of village life members of the history society were able to launch the website, with the help of a £22,183 cash injection from the Local Heritage Initiative. The website aims to both share the research of the history

society, and to encourage people with local connections to contribute to its unfolding story. Visitors to the website can select an historical theme of Sickness and Health; People of Note; History of the Village; Religion; Buildings of Note; Maps, and Education and Employment, all of which are dedicated to Colton.



CAMPAIGN: County archivist Thea Randall who has campaigned to save the papers. *Jon Thorne*

Historic papers to stay in the county

STAFFORDSHIRE'S valuable Sutherland Papers have been secured now that council bosses have rubber-stamped plans to buy them in a £2 million deal.

The collection will be bought by the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service in time for the March 31 deadline bid.

The archive charts the lives of the Leveson-Gower family, the Dukes of Sutherland who lived at Trentham Hall near Stone.

The papers have been on loan to the county's record office since 1959 but the Sutherland trustees announced last year they wanted to sell them.

Since then, there has been a feverish fundraising campaign to keep the collection in the county.

Cash help has come from a range of organisations, including a £1.35 million lottery grant, while the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service has pulled in £657,000 through donations and money-spinning events.

At a meeting of Staffordshire County Council's cabinet committee yesterday, members approved the purchase of the papers.

Councillor Susan Woodward said: "We should congratulate everyone who worked on this."

"It is so important that these documents are retained for future generations."

Village with world view

VIEWS of old Colton are now being beamed around the world thanks to the initiative of Colton History Society's members in launching their own website.

The society which researches the history of the village, just a mile from Rugeley, hopes the website will encourage people with local connections to contribute to their unfolding story.

The website was launched with a grant of £22,183 from the Local Heritage Initiative, having researched many aspects of local life uncovering tales of local residents, such as Victorian explorer Frederic Bonney and plantation owner John Heyliger Burt.

The society's Bill Brown said: "The website is full of topics and pictures that we hope will be of interest to people all over the world."

"We have already had feedback from as far away as New Zealand and Australia. With the increasing interest in family history, we are hoping that people with historical connections to Colton will make contact and add to our information about Colton's past as well as us being able to help them."

The website address is www.coltonhistory.org.uk



THE OLD DAYS: Above, a village scene featuring the Dun Cow pub in the background. Below, matrons of the village gather to be photographed which, in Edwardian times, would have been regarded as a novelty. *(Contributed photographs)*



W. Midlands Men In Goch Fighting

One of the first to get within sight of the German key town of Goch during the Canadian Army offensive was Major L. Roberts, of 60, Ward-road, Goldthorn-hill, Wolverhampton. He led a company of Somerset Light Infantry, in which a number of Staffordshire men are serving, in a brilliant attack which gained the high escarpment overlooking the town from the north.

Over a period of 12 days this battalion of the Somersets carried out a series of highly-successful attacks east of the Reichswald Forest towards Goch. In three days they captured some 900 prisoners, Major Roberts's company claiming 300-400.

After Major Roberts's company had taken one of its objectives, a German ration vehicle attempted to pass across the front of their positions. Sergeant J. Chinnock, of Rose Villa, Colton, Rugeley, shot the two Germans in the driver's cabin and captured the vehicle.

Among other Staffordshire men Lance-corporal A. Tapper, of 34, Cannon-street, North Walsall, did a lot of good work in the capture of prisoners.

Possibly 1944

M.M. For Colton Sapper

BRAVERY ON ITALIAN FRONT

It is announced that the the Military Medal has been awarded to Sapper Russell William Eastwick Lees, Royal Engineers, of Colton, Staffs., for services on the Italian Front.

The citation states: "On July 28th, 1944, near Sassoferrato, Driver Lees was driving his troop leader's scout car with a patrol of armoured cars, when they proceeded along an alternative route to reconnoitre a demolition.

"Whilst the troop leader was looking at this he was mortally wounded by an enemy machine-gun firing from 50 yards range, and was thrown on to the back of the vehicle.

"Ignoring the enemy fire, Driver Lees lifted the officer back into the car, fully exposing himself. He returned the enemy fire with a Bren gun. Then, being unable to change the magazine without exposing himself again, he reversed the scout car for several hundred yards until it fell into the ditch, still receiving repeated hits. He thereupon wirelessed for assistance and attended to the officers, who died a few minutes later. The armoured cars then arrived and extricated them.

"Throughout this action, which lasted for ten minutes, Driver Lees was alone in the vehicle with the unconscious officer, and under continuous close range fire without support. He did everything possible to save his troop leader's life, and there is no doubt that his bravery, initiative and coolness prevented his vehicle from falling into enemy hands."

ENTERTAINMENT FOR RUGELEY P.O.W. CHILDREN

Visit To Pantomime

The Rugeley Red Cross Prisoners of War Relatives Committee have decided to take the children of Rugeley prisoners of war to the production of the pantomime "Dick Whittington" to be given in the Town Hall on Saturday, January 13th, by the Stone House Players.

The children will be accompanied by the Chairman, Mr. F. Hill, Mr. G. Averill and Mrs. Gardner.

AN EXPIRED LICENCE.

Edward Lowe, of Oldham Bungalow, Colton, was summoned for driving a lorry without a licence on March 7th, and his employer, Alfred Bates, junr., Trent Valley Wharf, Rugeley, was summoned for permitting the offence.—P.C. Craythorne said Lowe produced a licence which expired on August 29th, 1942. He said: "I don't carry the licence with me, and had overlooked that it had expired. When interviewed Bates said the driver told him the licence was in order, and was unaware he had not renewed it.—Lowe was fined 30s. and Bates 40s.

GOOD FRIDAY. "THE GREAT MR. HANDEL."

This film portrays in technicolour the life and trials of the great musician Handel, and how he was inspired to compose the great work "The Messiah." George Frederick Handel is played by Wilfred Lawson, Mrs. Cibber, Elizabeth Allan, and there is also a good supporting cast. The music from Handel's original scores are played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Norman Walker directing this inspiring picture.

FISHLEY CUP RUGELEY CIVIL DEFENCE v. RUGELEY JUNIORS

Civil Defence, who become the new holders of the Fishley Cup, had little difficulty in accounting for a side that lacked the services of several of the Juniors' usual players. Goals were scored by McDroy (5), Osborne, Davis, Carroll and Crutchley, while Owens and E. Wood netted for the losers.

Result:
Civil Defence 9
Rugeley Juniors 2

It is ne in world

May Bannister about the vill where she liv



"THE ENGLISH village is a relic: it is even a miraculous relic!" so said G. K. Chesterton. In this part of Staffordshire there are many English villages which, though they are nearly all being 'developed', still manage to keep at least some of their old-world charm. Colton is no exception, it is growing rapidly now but it is still a community, as it has been in various ways all through its history. Roads are now being widened and paths have been made on either side of them. New houses are growing almost like mushrooms overnight, new people have moved into the area, and young folk and children make up at least two-thirds of the population. We have a modernised village pub, a playingfield for the children, street lighting and main sewerage, but Colton remains an attractive English village, and it's a friendly place.

My friends who live in town have often asked me "What do you do in the country, surely you must get bored?" Not in Colton! We have the Produce Guild, Women's Institute, Mothers' Union, Old People's Welfare, a Youth Club, Football Club and Car Club, and there are two public houses, The Greyhound and the Dun Cow.

Something is going on every day, there is no need for anyone to feel bored or lonely, as long as they are prepared to join in with village interests and activities. We also have an active Parish Council which looks after us all very well.

Colton is roughly two miles north of Rugeley and east of the B5013, it lies in the extreme north-west of Lichfield Rural District and includes the hamlet of Stockwell Heath. It covers 3,764 acres and has -- or had until recent years -- a population of 560. The population was static for many years but I am sure it's growing now. The surrounding countryside is pleasant, mainly agricultural, with the River Trent to the south, and River Blythe -- which flows from Blithfield Reservoir -- to the north.

The earliest evidence of man's occupation of the area is of Celtic origin. 'Col' is a Celtic word meaning 'holy', and Colton was at one time a centre of Druid worship. Sutton Coldfield -- which is really

not far away -- was possibly the chief seat of the Arch Druid of Britain. Colton, in those far-off days, was almost inaccessible, thickly wooded, remote -- a fitting place for the exercise of Druidism's esoteric and occult practices.

Colton is mentioned in the Survey taken in 1086 by William the Conqueror, when the King's Commissioners visited most of his new dominions. The officials interviewed the sheriff, the chief landowners, the representatives of the hundreds, with priest, reeve, and six villeins from each township in every shire.

These men were asked to describe the condition of the land, the name of each manor and town, names of former holders, the extent of the hides, the number of ploughs which each employed, names of homagers, the villeins, cotters and serfs, the number of free men and soke men. The extent of wood, meadow and pasture land, and mills and fisheries if any; and the increase or decrease of the value of each holding since the time of Edward the Confessor.

Their report became the recognised authority on all matters concerning rating and tenure of lands and has been known ever since as the Domesday Book. This book was a register for final appeal, by which sentence and judgment could be given in cases of dispute.

The Staffordshire Domesday tells of a free man called Almund, who, in the days of Edward the Confessor, held a manor in 'Coltone', which passed at the time of the Survey into the hands of a Saxon lord named Ageline. This man also held four manors in the hundred of Pirehill; Cote, Coltone, Ridware and Locksley, under Roger de Montgomery, who led the centre forces of William's army at the Battle of Hastings, and was afterwards made Earl of Shrewsbury and Arundel. Ageline's tenure is thought to have been for military service against the Welsh. The Earl was the chief lord of those marches in Wales, and it is certain that the Mavesyns held land in Colton shortly afterwards by that tenure.

This, however, was not the only Colton mentioned in the Survey! Referring to the possessions of Robert de Stafford, there was another

township called 'Coltune' which had formerly belonged to the free men Odo and Uluric, but was then held by one Goisfrid (Geoffrey). It has been suggested that both lordships may have been included in Colton. There are arguments in favour of both 'Coltone' and 'Coltune' but 'Coltone' seemed to be the most likely because of the position of the estate adjoining Mavesyn Ridware which Ageline is known to have held.

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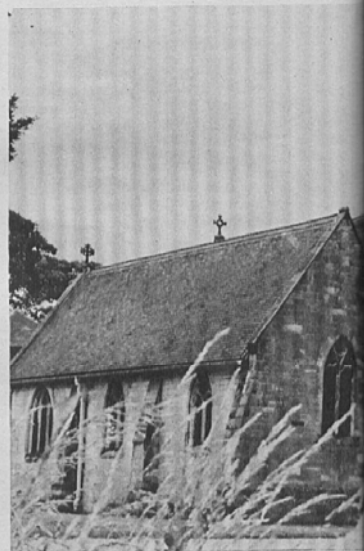
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"THE ENGLISH village is a relic: it is even a miraculous relic!" so said G. K. Chesterton. In this part of Staffordshire there are many English villages which, though they are nearly all being 'developed', still manage to keep at least some of their old-world charm. Colton is no exception, it is growing rapidly now but it is still a community, as it has been in various ways all through its history. Roads are now being widened and paths have been made on either side of them. New houses are growing almost like mushrooms overnight, new people have moved into the area, and young folk and children make up at least two-thirds of the population. We have a modernised village pub, a playing field for the children, street lighting and main sewerage, but Colton remains an attractive English village, and it's a friendly place.

My friends who live in town have often asked me "What do you do in the country, surely you must get bored?" Not in Colton! We have the Produce Guild, Women's Institute, Mothers' Union, Old People's Welfare, a Youth Club, Football Club and Car Club, and there are two public houses, The Greyhound and the Dun Cow.

Something is going on every day, there is no need for anyone to feel bored or lonely, as long as they are prepared to join in with village interests and activities. We also have an active Parish Council which looks after us all very well.

Colton is roughly two miles north of Rugeley and east of the B5013, it lies in the extreme north-west of Lichfield Rural District and includes the hamlet of Stockwell Heath. It covers 3,764 acres and has -- or had until recent years -- a population of 560. The population was static for many years but I am sure it's growing now. The surrounding countryside is pleasant, mainly agricultural, with the River Trent to the south, and River Blythe -- which flows from Blithfield Reservoir -- to the north.

The earliest evidence of man's occupation of the area is of Celtic origin. 'Col' is a Celtic word meaning 'holy', and Colton was at one time a centre of Druid worship. Sutton Coldfield -- which is really

not far away -- was possibly the chief seat of the Arch Druid of Britain. Colton, in those far-off days, was almost inaccessible, thickly wooded, remote -- a fitting place for the exercise of Druidism's esoteric and occult practises.

Colton is mentioned in the Survey taken in 1086 by William the Conqueror, when the King's Commissioners visited most of his new dominions. The officials interviewed the sheriff, the chief landowners, the representatives of the hundreds, with priest, reeve, and six villeins from each township in every shire.

These men were asked to describe the condition of the land, the name of each manor and town, names of former holders, the extent of the hides, the number of ploughs which each employed, names of homagers, the villeins, cotters and serfs, the number of free men and sokemen. The extent of wood, meadow and pasture land, and mills and fisheries if any; and the increase or decrease of the value of each holding since the time of Edward the Confessor.

Their report became the recognised authority on all matters concerning rating and tenure of lands and has been known ever since as the Domesday Book. This book was a register for final appeal, by which sentence and judgment could be given in cases of dispute.

The Staffordshire Domesday tells of a free man called Almund, who, in the days of Edward the Confessor, held a manor in 'Coltone', which passed at the time of the Survey into the hands of a Saxon lord named Ageline. This man also held four manors in the hundred of Pirehill: Cote, Coltone, Ridware and Locksley, under Roger de Montgomery, who led the centre forces of William's army at the Battle of Hastings, and was afterwards made Earl of Shrewsbury and Arundel. Ageline's tenure is thought to have been for military service against the Welsh. The Earl was the chief lord of those marches in Wales, and it is certain that the Mavesyns held land in Colton shortly afterwards by that tenure.

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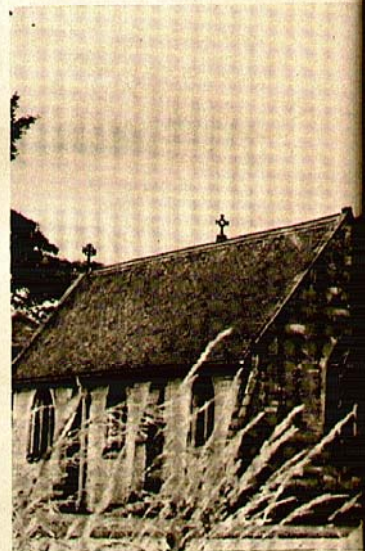
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In 1263, Nicholas, son of William de Colton, stabbed Adam, son of Hereward, in a brawl at Dutton. The murderer fled for his life to Colton Church. In 1271 the village itself was the scene of a dreadful murder, when John, Chaplain of Colton, serving probably the chapel on the site of Bellamour Lodge, killed Christina, wife of Nicholas de Colton, whilst interposing between her and a stranger residing at her house. John fled from justice but was outlawed and had all his goods confiscated. This was the second murder in less than ten years in which Colton people were involved. Lawsuits were frequent in the year 1279; and in 1287 three virgates of land were let yearly for 'one sparrow hawk', an uncommon way of acknowledging that hawking was an ordinary sport

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In 1365 Thomasine de Wastineys, heiress to the Colton Lordship, married Sir Nicholas Gresley, representative of an ancient Derby family whose ancestor, Nigel came to England with William 1st. Her eldest son by this marriage succeeded to all the De Wastineys' lands. Thomasine, 'Mistress of Colton', was evidently well-loved by the people of the village as an affectionate reference is made about her in old writings. She restored Colton Church and decorated the south chancel walls with frescoes, the life of Nicholas, her husband's patron saint, being one of the subjects portrayed.

Sir Thomas Gresley (her son) was an important man. He represented Derbyshire in Parliament in 1401, 1415 and 1418, and became High Sherriff of Staffordshire in 1439, after representing this county in 1434. Sir John was one of the principal gentry in Staffordshire, he died in 1489, leaving the property to his son, Thomas, who, unlike his father, took little part in public life.

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It was a great loss to Colton that this grand old house was burned down through the carelessness of a servant, in the latter part of Charles 1st's reign (1730). The Astons had an older residence, Tixall Hall, so Colton Hall was never rebuilt, the house having been built of timber, little remained after the fire. In its heyday it was undoubtedly a magnificent place, surrounded as it was by a park with extensive woods -- possibly Ashley-Hay and Hazelhurst -- between the lower part of the park and the Trent. Swans were kept there for many years, adding to the beauty of the place, which even the building of the railway failed to destroy.

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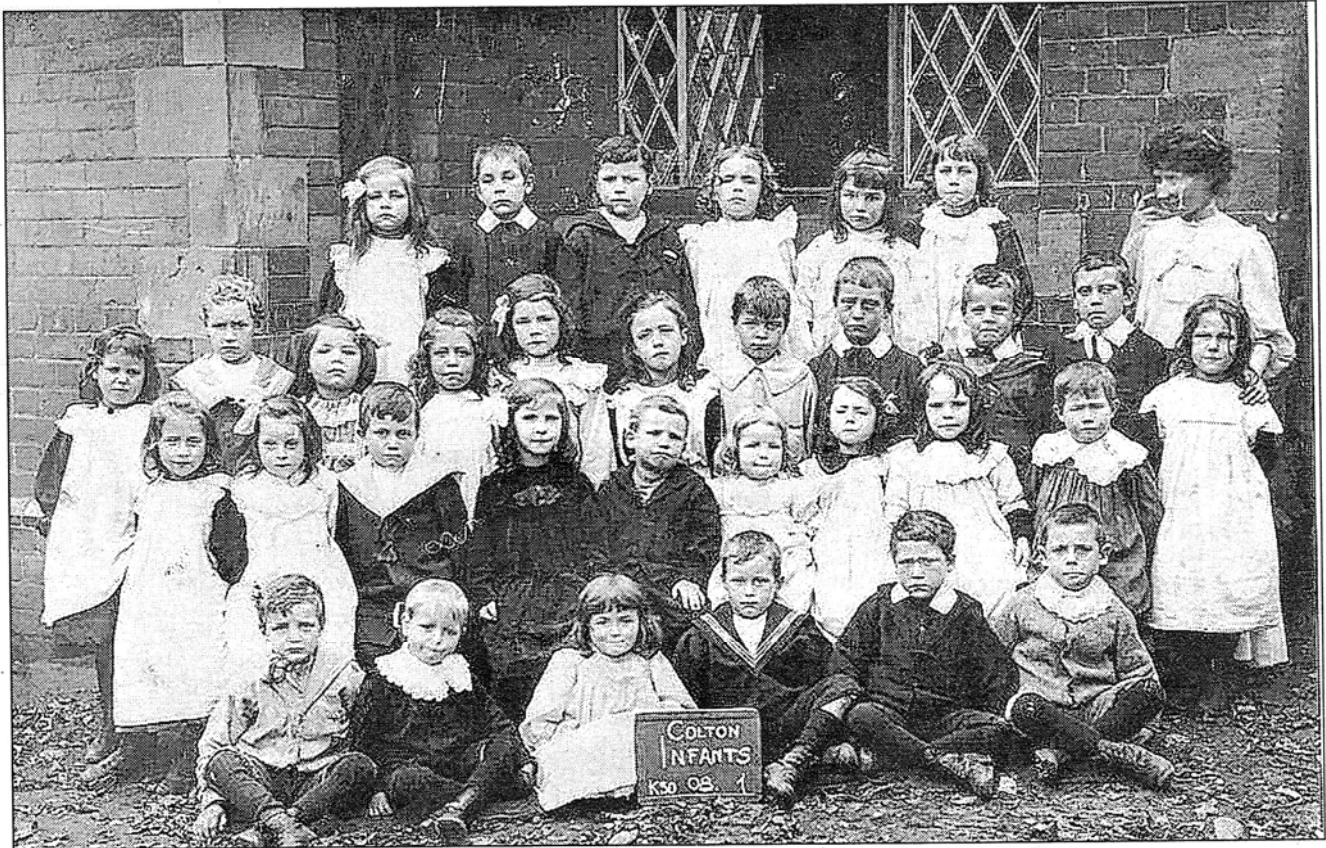
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Learning history is child's play



■ The place of children and education in the village features prominently in this year's Colton History Exhibition. This is a 1908 school photograph. (SIP)

MORE of the treasures of an ancient village go on show this weekend as its annual history exhibition throws open its doors to the public.

Colton has been inhabited since the bronze age, was mentioned in the Domesday Book and had a market charter as long ago as 1240.

Following the popularity of exhibitions in 2004 and 2005 Colton History Society is to stage a third exhibition with a new theme to keep the event fresh and interesting.

Doors open at the village hall in Reading Room Drive at 10am on Saturday and Sunday, October 7-8 and admission is free.

Items on display will include photographs, press cuttings, documents, video recordings,

artefacts and memorabilia.

Children feature prominently and exhibits include a reconstruction of the village School room, a collection of toys from the Victorian era and early 20th century, a video presentation including the children of St Mary's School, and a photograph album of 'the lost village of Colton'.

The history of St Mary's Church is also told, including church tours and bell ringing.

The exhibition has been staged by the society with the support of the Local Heritage Initiative, which has awarded a £22,000 grant, over three years, to the society to investigate and record local history.

The grant comes from The Countryside Agency with funds from The Heritage Lottery Fund and supported by the Nationwide Building Society.

As part of the initiative the Colton History Society is now involving the whole com-

munity in exploring, recording and sharing all aspects of their industrial, geological, archaeological and cultural history.

"This year we have been busy recording the memories of those living in the village as well as accumulating collections of events and activities," said chairman Gill Sykes.

"And the website launched last year, www.coltonhistory.org.uk, has proved extremely successful with many visitors from around the world."

Members of the society have produced a series of pamphlets on various aspects of village history, which will be available for purchase as well as Christmas Cards and photo CDs.

■ The society meets monthly on the third Thursday of the month at 8pm, in the village hall.

For more information about Colton History Society contact Gill Sykes on 01283 575039.



Village past is set to be showcased

Treasured mementoes from a Rugeley village's past will be showcased when a heritage group stages its annual exhibition next month.

Colton History Society will display photographs, press cuttings, documents, video recordings, artefacts and memorabilia on October 7 and 8.

There will be special features including a reconstruction of the village school room, a collection of toys from the Victorian era and early 20th century as well as video presentations.

The exhibition is being staged in conjunc-

extremely successful with many visitors from around the world. Members of the society have produced a series of pamphlets on various aspects of village history, which will be available for purchase as well as Christmas Cards and photo CDs.

Encourage

The exhibition will be in Colton Village Hall, off Bellamour Way, from 10am until 4pm. Its aim is to encourage local people to get involved in further research and recording their past.

Gill Sykes, Colton History Society chair-

man said: "Colton History Society has now been going for four years and is proving to be a very popular village society.

"Our exhibitions in 2004 and 2005 far exceeded our expectations with many of the people who attended coming forward with information and giving us a real incentive to continue collecting memories, records and artefacts both past and present."

Colton History Society meets on the third Thursday of the month at 8pm, in the village hall. Entrance to the exhibition is free, refreshments are available and there will be a raffle.

Report by Michelle Hunt
tion with the Local Heritage Initiative which was awarded a £22,000 grant over three years to investigate and record local history.

The grant was awarded by The Country-side Agency with funds from The Heritage Lottery Fund and supported by the Nationwide Building Society. This year the group has been recording the memories of those living in the village as well as accumulating collections of events and activities.

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Colton W.I. members who missed Wednesday's meeting were probably kicking themselves when they discovered Esther Rantzen was a surprise guest. Esther is pictured behind the Staffordshire pottery of Mrs. S. Ball (foreground) with Mrs. B. M. Ravenscroft in centre.

That's Esther with the post

Television personality Esther Rantzen was helping to deliver post at Colton on Thursday.

Four months ago she visited the village with a camera crew to film some of the confusion caused by the haphazard system of house numbers.

Television viewers later saw Esther interview one of the villagers, Mrs. Blanche Ravenscroft — chairman of the parish council and by coincidence also the village "postie."

So impressed was she that Esther has decided to

put Mrs. Ravenscroft "top of the list of interesting people I have interviewed during my television career" and about which she is now writing a book.

Last month Esther wrote to ask if she could visit Mrs. Ravenscroft and on Wednesday returned to the village for three days, staying at the home of Mrs. Ravenscroft's daughter, Mrs. Gwendoline Johnson of Rose Villa, Bellamour Way.

Thursday morning at 6.30 Esther and Mrs. Ravenscroft set off on bicycles together to deliver the post — and to appreciate some of the village features!

Mrs. Ravenscroft told the "Times" that her unusual guest, even though a Londoner, had been particularly interested in the village history and had closely studied her family scrap book.



Entries were down at this year's Colton Produce Guild and WI annual vegetable, fruit, flower and produce show, held on Saturday at the village hall.

Tom Preston and his wife, Ivy, took two of the show's top awards — the women's cup for most points, and the Bradbury Cup for flowers.

Other award winners were: Mr. Sam Jones (men's cup for most points); Mr. Neville James (James Cup for best vegetable exhibit); Mrs. Elizabeth Nixon (Ruth Williams trophy for best domestic exhibit); and Mr. Ron Nixon (rose medal).

Judges were Mr. Roy Binfield, of Brereton (horticulture); Mrs. Shirley Freeman, of Colton (cooking); Mr. S. Varley, of Lichfield (wine);

Mrs. Ivy Butcher, of King's Bromley (flower arrangements); and Mrs. L. Barkas, of Rugeley (handicrafts).

Class winners were: Tom Preston (round potatoes, marrows, gladioli, cactus dahlias, spray chrysanthemums); Alan Hurd (kidney potatoes, leeks); Ron Nixon (tomatoes, specimen hybrid tea rose, sweet peas); Basil Mobberley (onions from seed, carrots vegetable collection, pom and decorative dahlias, special vegetable/flower class); Neville James (unions from sets, runner beans); Sam Jones (both classes shallots, cabbage, beetroot, other vegetable, longest runner bean, cooking apples); Jack Meddings (peas, pansies); Fred Nixon (lettuce, dessert apples, African marigolds, flowering house plant);

Mrs. Ivy Preston (herb collection, mixed annuals, herbaceous perennials, apple tart fruit cake); Mr. L. Stretton (pears); Mrs. Margaret Bennett (asters, raspberry buns, foliage house plant); Stan Roper (chrysanthemums); Mrs. Shirley Carter (small flower arrangement, stoned fruit jam, chutney, pizza); Josephine Johnson (large flower arrangement); Mrs. Carol Sanders (soft fruit jam); Mrs. Audrey Roper (marmalade); Mrs. Elizabeth Nixon (lemon curd, cheese scones); Mrs. Monica Taylor (wholemeal loaf); Mrs. Yvonne Branson (red wine, other variety wine); John Carter (white wine); Mrs. Barbara Nixon (knitting or crochet); Dawn Hurd (sewing); Cheryl Deakin (children's class).



All-male panel had feminine "touches"

Colton Village Produce Guild held their annual social evening in the Reading Room on Saturday, when an enjoyable time was spent by members and their guests. The room had been tastefully decorated for the occasion. Music for dancing and games was supplied by Mr. R. A. Brundle (piano-accordion), Mr. R. H. Bannister (violin) and Miss D. M. Jones and Mrs. J. H. Toy (pianist).

A popular item was a parody on "What's My Line," with the following taking part as Lady Isobel Barnett (Mr. R. A. Brundle), Gilbert Harding, Mr. J. H. Toy, Barbara Kelly (Mr. J. F. Peet), Farmer Moulton (Mr. T. Preston) and Eamonn Andrews (Mr. A. N. Felton). Mrs. J. F. Peet tried to beat the Panel as "prison wardress," Mr. A. Starbuck "an earwig catcher," Miss D. M. Jones "black pudding maker" and Mr. Colin Sargeant "a milk inspector."

Refreshments were handed round, and Mrs. F. H. Bannister cut the Christmas cake.

The competition for a bottle of sherry was won by Mr. D. R. Johnson.

'Twins' go to Tom and Ivy

This year's entries may have been down at Colton Village Produce Guild and Womens' Institute annual show, but there was still plenty to see.

The show was held in the village hall and judges were Mr. Roy Binfield, Mr. Gerald Sanders, Mrs. Shirley Freeman, Mrs. H. Bell and Mrs. L. Barkas.

Village sub-postmaster Mr. Derek Sargeant and his wife Vicky presented the prizes.

Mr. Tom Preston won the men's cup for most points in the show, and his wife, Ivy, the 'twin award' ladies' cup.

The James cup was won by Mr. N. James; the Ruth Williams trophy by Mrs. Shirley Carter and the flower trophy by Mrs. Ivy Preston. The rose medal went to Mr. J. James.

Classwinners were: round potatoes, tomatoes, pom pom dahlias, foliage house plants — T. Preston; shallots, gladioli, dahlias, mixed annuals, perennials, marmalade, fruit loaf, wine — Mrs. Ivy Preston; onions, cooking apples — S. Jones; kidney potatoes, onions, runner beans, beetroot, floral arrangement — Mr. N. James; shallots — G. Sanders; leeks and vegetables — M. Threadgold; marrows — D. Quinn; collection of herbs — V. Hurd.

Prizes for dessert apples won by J. Carter; specimen rose class won by J. James; pansies and asters class, Mrs. J. Meddings; spray chrysanthemums won by F. Nixon.

House plant, floral arrangement, fruit jam, lemon curd, quiche lorraine classes — S. Carter; fruit jam, chutney — Miss D. M. Jones; fruit cake, red wine, and white wine classes — Mrs. M. Threadgold.

Apple tart — Mrs. B. Nixon; sponge cake — Mrs. E. Nixon; fruit scones — Mrs. M. Bennett; flower novice class, knitted article — Mrs. T. Quinn; sewing article — Mrs. N. Jones.

Children's class (up to nine years) Josephine Johnson; children's class (10—15 years), Justin Johnson.



Entries in joint show down, but quality still high

ENTRIES to Colton produce guild and WI joint show were slightly down this year because of the late season, but quality was high and the show most successful.

Village residents Tony and Yvonne Branson presented the prizes. They are pictured, second and third from right, Shirley Carter, Stan Roper, Ivy Preston, Fred Nixon, Tom Preston, and Nev James.

Nev James won the James Cup for the best vegetable exhibit. Shirley Carter took the Ruth Williams trophy for best cookery exhibit, and Yvonne Branson won the ladies cup for most overall points. Tom and Ivy Preston respectively won the Men's and Bradbury cups for most overall points and flower points, and Stan Roper won the rose medal.

Class winners: Basil Moberley (round potatoes, cactus and pompon dahlias, herbaceous perennials, special flower/veg display), Maurice Williscroft (kidney potatoes, flowering house plant), Jack Meddings (tomatoes, carrots), Nev James (onions from seed, runner beans, leeks, asters, spray chrysanthus).

Sam Jones (onions from sets, cabbage, beetroot, any other veg, longest runner bean, cooking and dessert apples), Tom Preston (shallots, salad veg, gladioli), Monica Taylor (peas), Gwen

Johnson (veg collection, mince pies, bakewell tart), Irene Brown (herbs, pears, floral arrangement), Ron Nixon (decorative dahlias), Stan Roper (mixed annuals, tea rose, pansies, chrysanthemums).

Yvonne Branson (sweet peas, red wine, white wine, other wine), Ivy Preston

(foliage house plant orange marmalade), Glenda Brown (African marigolds).

Shirley Carter (cup and saucer floral arrangement, stoned fruit jam chutney), John Carter (men's flower arrangement), Ruth Williams (soft fruit jam, lemon curd), Barbara Nixon (apple tart, white baps, knitted article), Margaret Bennett (Cornish Pasties), Lillian Carter (coconut cake, sewing article), Beryl Stubbs (embroidery).



pretty show kind



Colton WI made about £47 in its first fund - raiser for some time.

A bazaar attracted a good crowd, including the Rev. Raymond Wilcox and his wife, a WI member.

Mrs. Ivy Preston, president, said the WI had held no fund - raising events for some time because they had been busy making money for other village courses, including the church and the village hall.

Next big item on the WI's agenda is playing host to the Parkside group meeting, on March 16.

Lively social

Members of Colton Produce Guild celebrated a belated New Year with a social evening on Saturday.

About 80 guild members and guests from other guilds went along to the Reading Room for the get - together. (pictured).

After the buffet supper members made their own entertainment with various games and the CVPG version of the 'Generation Game'.

To round off the evening three male guild members dressed up as a female pop group and kept the guests in stitches by miming to records.

Members also held a raffle to boost club funds.





Guild actors raise a laugh

The 'Colton Drama Group' stole the show at the village produce guilds annual social on Saturday, with a production entitled 'The Doctor's Dilemma'.

Guild members, Jim and Shirley Barnett, John Carter, and Andrew Collins, formed the cast, in a ten-minute sketch, set in a doctor's surgery. Jim Barnett, complete with turban, played the doctor, while Andrew Collins

was a baby and John Carter played the baby's mother.

The short play had the audience reeling with tears in their eyes.

The sketch was supported by games and activities to which other members had contributed and the party finished with community singing.

Mr. G. Arnold thanked the guild on behalf of the visitors; and chairman, Mr. G. Sanders, thanked all responsible for the success of the evening.



Fund - raisers at St. Mary's Church, Colton, are setting to with a will in a bid to raise enough cash for badly needed roof repairs.

Mothers Union members organised a successful Christmas fayre at the weekend, raising more than £140 for funds.

And now, with Christmas fast approaching, concerts and carol services are planned.

The fayre, in the village hall, brought villagers flocking to take a look and buy at the stalls; pottery, bric - a - brac, pins and needles, teddy bears and many others.

One of the organisers, Mrs. Rowena Wilcox, said: "We were very pleased with the way things went. We had a very nice day."

Now church members are hoping their next fund - raising evening, a concert by Rugeley

Operatic Society, will be a success.

The concert is to be held in the village hall on Monday at 7.30 p.m.

A Colton family, the Ballards, have also offered their musical talents for a concert to be held Tuesday, December 21.

Each member of the family will be taking part, either playing or singing. The concert will be in the church at 7.30 p.m.



Forty-two years a postwoman and 14 miles a day—how many miles. Ask Miss Ellen Rotchell, Colton, Stafford, postwoman. Her hobbies are gardening and walking!



Colton memorial helps renal unit

Colton people have raised a total of £524.95 for the Renal Unit at the North Staffs. Royal Infirmary, Stoke on Trent.

The money was raised as part of the Jean Fowell Memorial Fund and it was used to buy items for use in the unit.

On Saturday campaign helpers met at the Reading Room and three invalid chairs, a commode and two portable televisions were handed over to representatives of the staff of the unit.

A cheque for £18.68 was also presented. Each of the items will carry a plaque in memory of Mrs. Fowell.

Mr. Norman Bruce welcomed the visitors from the hospital and told those assembled that the campaign had begun on January 20.

Following the presentation, entertainment was provided by the Bee Jees and refreshments were served by the ladies committee.

Pictured: Mr. Doug Fowell, husband of the late Mrs. Fowell, presents one of the gifts to Sister Brown of the Renal Unit. They are surrounded by many of the campaign's helpers.

And her hobby walking.



Miss Helen Rotchell, of Berry Cottage, Colton, has been village postwoman for the past 41 years, and she still walks a 14-mile round every day. She is seen in this picture checking the mail with Mrs. A. Deakin, wife of the Colton sub-postmaster, before setting off on her delivery round.

Miss Rotchell, who is 59, has walked an average of 10 miles a day for the last 40 years, and taking a six-day working week, this means she has covered something like 125,000 miles. She is due to retire next year.

Miss Rotchell's chief hobbies are gardening and walking! She has been a Sunday school teacher for 30 years and a member of the Colton W.I. for 11 years, eight of those as a committee member.



Judges name best kept villages

COLTON, Abbots Bromley and King's Bromley are among the area winners in the Best Kept Village Competition. On its first entry into the competition, Colton gained first prize in Eastern "E" area, and King's Bromley shared second prize with Hopwas in Eastern "F" area, both in the small villages' section. Abbots Bromley came second in the Eastern "E" area, large villages' section.

Barton-under-Needwood gained first prize in the large village section, Brewood and Kinver coming second and third. In the small village section Denstone was awarded first prize, followed by Enville and Hints.

Colton's effort is praiseworthy because it is the first time the village has been entered. The county was divided into large and small villages and six areas, as 49 villages had entered. In Colton's section were Anslow, Dunstall, Rangemore and Tattenhill.

The competition is organised annually by the Staffordshire

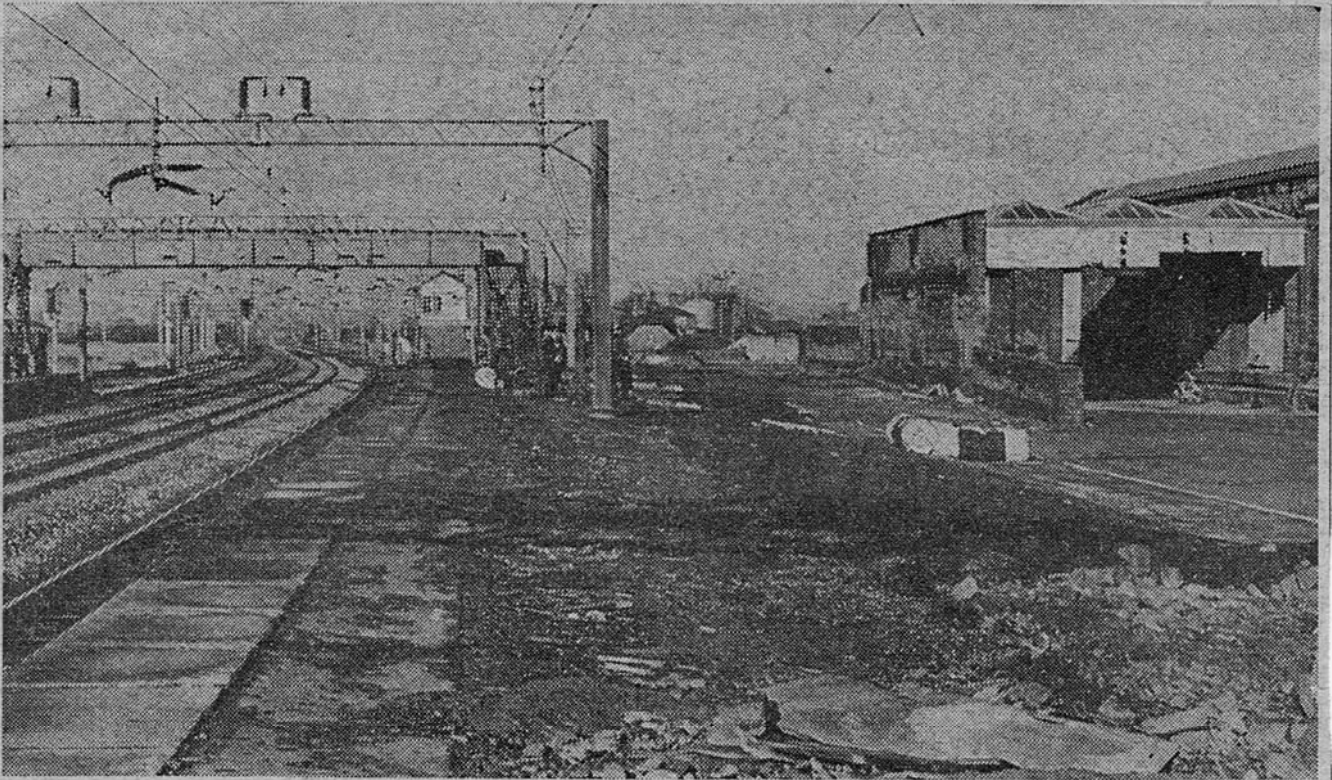
Rural Community Council. The judges, it is stated, were most impressed by the high standards of the villages taking part and had great difficulty in reaching their decisions.

The judges noted "the many evidences of corporate endeavours to beautify the villages, including attractive notice boards, and litter bins." They highly commended the many efforts made to provide additional beauty through window-boxes, hanging baskets and flowers in unexpected places.

On the other hand, with certain exceptions, marks were lost by the condition of surroundings of communal buildings and churchyards, and while appreciating the very real difficulties, the judges commend the special efforts which had obviously been made in most cases. Some villages lost marks, they state, because of the amount of litter which, in the winning villages, was "conspicuous by its absence."

One of the prettiest corners of Colton, winner of the area Best Kept Village Competition, is near Heathway, where Ye Olde Dun Cow has been given a face-lift and a modernised interior. The garden is gay with flowers and rustic seats and table invite customers to linger in the summer sunshine. The children in the picture are Helen Myatt and Charlotte Wilson.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1972



Stark station

Rugeley Trent Valley station buildings have been razed to the ground, and the 'up' platform is a shambles; but the station is not dying yet.

British Rail assures passengers that as soon as the demolition gang clear the rubble, then up will go a new 'bus' type platform shelter.

Since the station became unstaffed more than a month ago, passengers have bought their tickets either on the train or at their destination. Timetables remain unchanged.

But passengers arriving at the isolated station hoping to telephone for a taxi find that the station's telephone kiosk has been removed to avoid vandalism. A post office spokesman has warned that it will be some time before they find a suitable site for a replacement kiosk.

Colton Fancy Dress Ball

CORONATION FUND HELPED



Group of some of the prize-winners with the following officials standing in the background: — Mrs. J. Vernon (judge), Mr. L. Deavall (committee), Mr. J. Vernon (judge), Father Christmas, Mr. B. Jackson (committee), and Mrs. F. Hardcastle (organiser).

Considerable interest centred round the gaily decorated Reading Room, Colton, on New Year's Eve when Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Vernon, of Colwich, acted as judges at a children's fancy dress ball. Proceeds are to be added to the Coronation celebrations fund.

Prize winners were:— Infants, aged five and under: 1 and special, Christine Taylor (nurse); 2, Christopher Buckley (Robin Hood); 3, Helen Myatt (Snowdrop).

Girls, six to nine inclusive: 1, Hilda Stretton (Flower Seller); 2, Irene Harley (grandma); 3, Janet Jones (Mrs. Mop).

Boys, six to nine inclusive: 1, Roderick Hodgkiss (The Boxer); 2, Dennis Hibbs (The Butcher); 3, Brian Wain (Cowboy).

Girls, ten and over: 1, Eileen Devalle (Rajah); 2, Nona Lycett (Witch); 3, Beatrice Stretton (Gipsy).

Boys, ten and over: 1, Michael

(Photo: Jones, Little Haywood) Beaumont (Highwayman); 2, Christopher Hibbs (Jig-Saw Puzzle).

Consolation prizes were awarded to Eileen Norman (Marmalade), Valerie Lycett (Red Riding Hood), Gillian Machin (Queen of Hearts), and William Devalle (The Footballer). Mrs. Vernon presented the prizes. Oranges were distributed by Father Christmas to all the children.

Photo Flashback

The Rugeley Times, Saturday



COLTON ST. MARY'S 1920 team figures in this "Flashback," sent by Mr. A. Boulton. It came from his cousin, Mr. W. Boulton of Cross Road.

In the front row (left to right) are: Jack Parker, Jack Davies, H. Boulton, Watty Myatt and Percy Myatt. Middle row: Bill Fisher, Ned Devall and Charlie Bull.

Back row: Ben Salt, Jack Tooth, Charlie Brinkworth, Bob Myatt, Jim Beasley, Joe Glenn, Fred Myatt, Billy Jones, E. Myatt.

Now that the football season has returned, old pictures of local teams are suitable for "Flashback," provided the names (or the majority of the names) are supplied. Pictures from the 1920's in particular will be welcomed.

and read poems.

gifts.

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Hall on October 25.

Plaited corn a harvest feature

Children from St. Mary's School, Colton pictured (right) outside the village church with their gifts for harvest services.

The school service, on Friday afternoon last week, marked the start of the church's harvest festival.

A band of women had been busy all week plaiting corn to decorate the church, ready for the main services on Sunday.

Tomorrow (Sunday) a new venture is planned for the village. Mr. and Mrs. S. Dorsett of the Dun Cow are holding a harvest festival service in the inn with collections for church funds. The rector will conduct the service.



aster Mr. E. R. nised by Mr. and Mrs. Jack Cartmail. on Monday to try to re- week of each month. of evening.



Home-grown produce supper at Colton

Festival
St. Michael's Church, Brereton, has its harvest festival services tomorrow, including a children's gift service in the morning. The Rev. D. Woodhouse, Vicar of Colwich, will address the congregation at evensong.

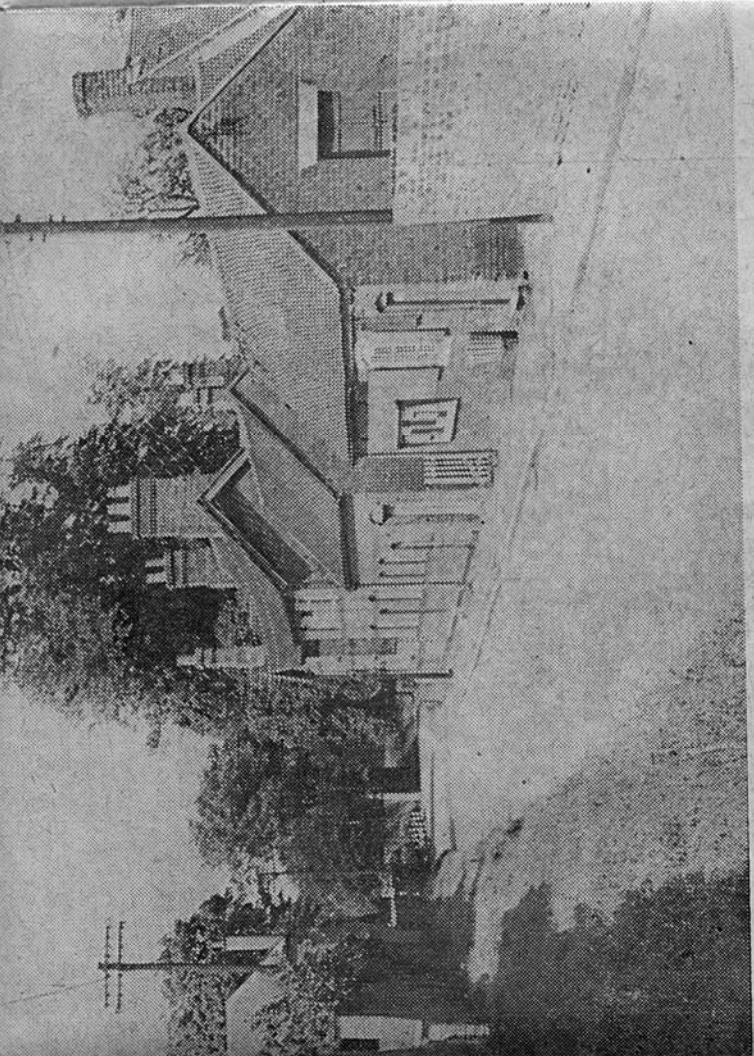
Members of Colton Village Produce Guild and their guests pictured at their annual "home grown" supper in the Reading Room.

Chairman Mr. Gerald Sanders welcomed about 60 people who had the usual menu of beef and ham salads with home - made bread and rolls, followed by apple pie and cream, cheese and biscuits and home - made wine.

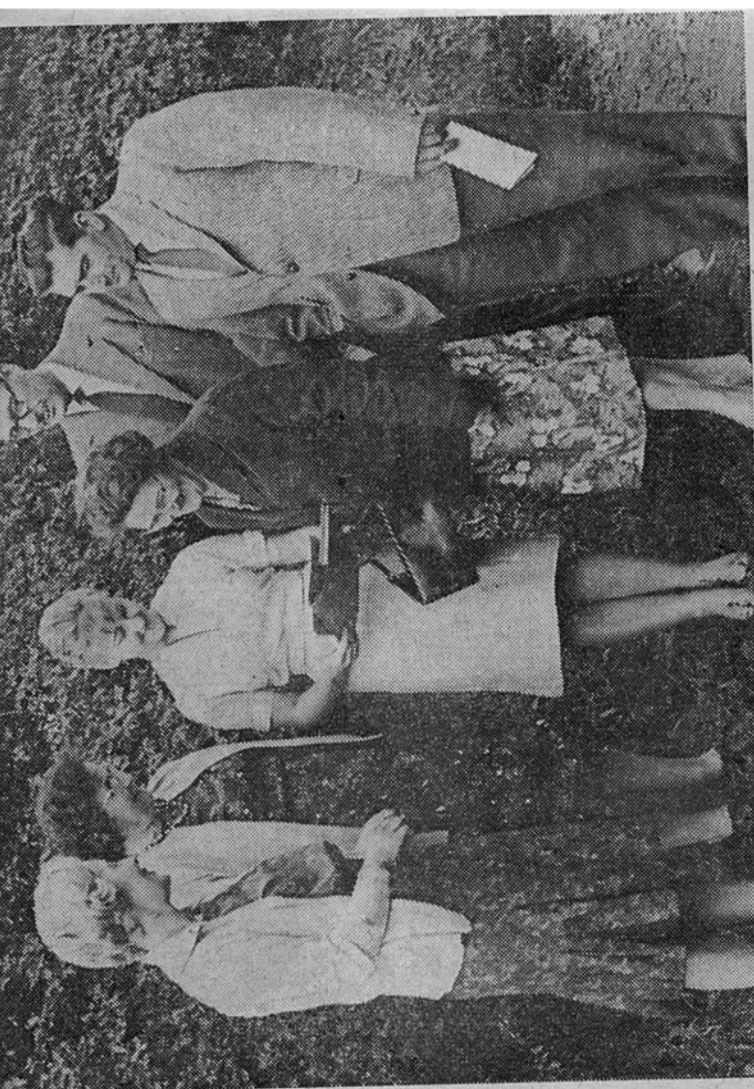
Mr. Sanders thanked all who had given the food or helped prepare the meal.

As usual the male members helped with the washing up before the party continued with dancing and games. Mr. Sanders was M.C., assisted by Mr. Jack Brown.

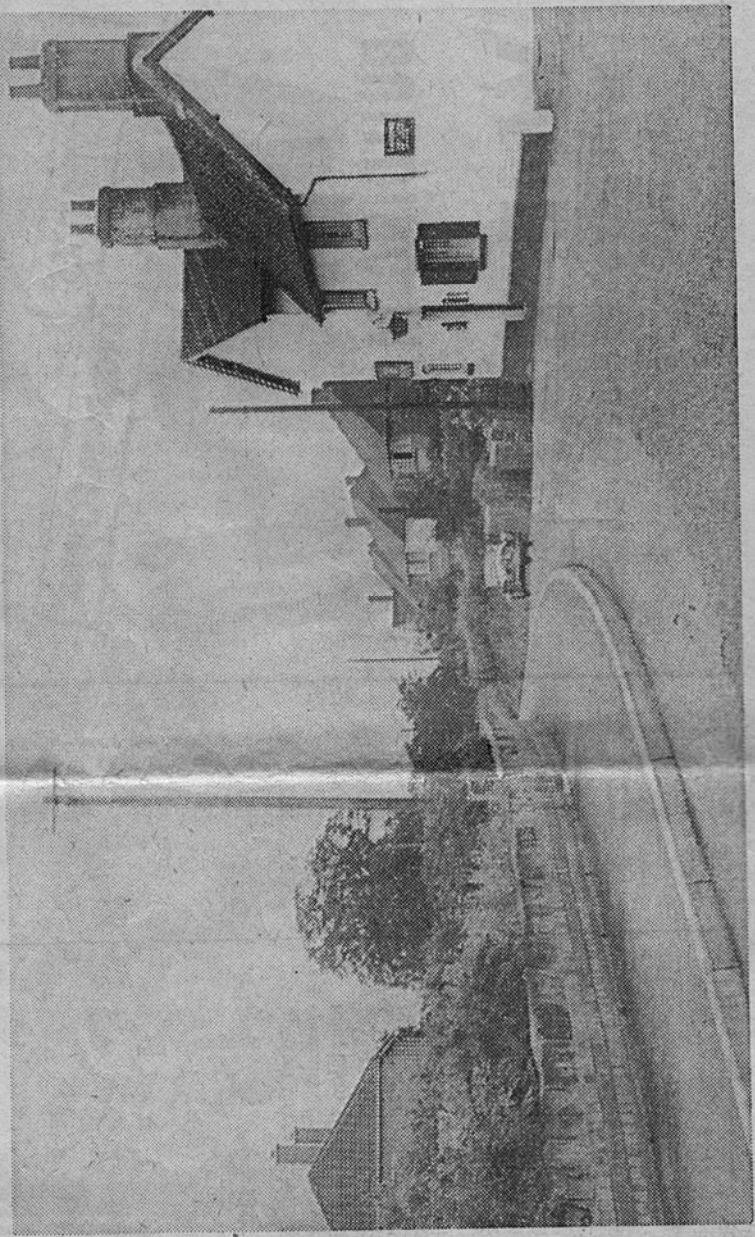
Raffle winners were Mr. H. Pitts, Mrs. C. Deakin, Miss N. Foster, Mr. Ray France, Mrs. I. Preston and Mrs. Fulbrooke.



A general view of the "bottom" half of Colton (above) shows the Reading Room on the right. The picture (right) shows another part of the village. Its tidy appearance continues to the northern end where the Dun Cow public house stands within the new development.



Mr. J. C. Price (second from right), chairman, pictured with fellow members of Colton Beskept Village Competition committee — Miss D. A. Cooper, Miss D. M. Jones, Mrs. M. Taylor (secretary), Mrs. B. G. Ravenscroft and Mr. G. I. Upton. Also on the committee is Mrs. L. Jackson.



Pavilion is planned for youth club

WORK on a new £8,000 pavilion for the sports ground Littleton Colliery Youth Centre, scheduled to start immediately, will have the usual sporting facilities in such buildings, and a snooker club room.

A bowling green and two tennis courts are also being provided, and work is in hand preparing ground for cricket next year. The pavilion is being erected by the organisation which provides many recreation facilities for miners and their families.

Man accused of theft from Ley house

Local Magistrates' Court today on Saturday an 18-year-old man, accused of stealing from a house in Coppice Street, was remanded in custody.

Ian David Crocker, of the Royal Engineers at Wokingham, Hants, was remanded in custody. Constable R. A. Blood of the Wokingham Police saw Crocker at Aldershot on Friday and told him that he was the man who had stolen a house on the Pear Street on the previous Monday. The man, alleged, admitted taking some clothing, and was arrested. K. R. Cooke said he had been an absentee from work for some time.

Young motorists reminded of obligations

Mr. J. Hill, chairman of Rugeley Magistrates, stressed on Thursday of last week the obligations which rest on young men when they take a vehicle on the road. He was addressing an 18 years-old youth club who was fined for five offences concerning his motor-cycle.

Paul Eugene Francis Rugeley, of 85, Church Street, Rugeley, pleaded "guilty" to riding a motor-cycle without insurance, without a driving licence, riding a motor-cycle which had no test certificate, riding a motor-cycle with no Excise licence and riding a motor-cycle with no rear number plate. He was fined £5 on the first charge, and £1 for each of the other offences.

Wartime relic?

The Freeman family were flushed in more ways than one when they found an old hand grenade in an outside loo.

But luckily their quick thinking prevented an explosive situation!

They called the police, who took the grenade away and will return it to the army.

They found the grenade when Mr. Tom Freeman and his two sons Edward and Calum were digging out a Victorian toilet in the grounds of their Colton home.

The boys discovered the grenade and were kicking it around the garden as a football.

It was not until they washed it down that they found out what they had been playing with.

Their mother, Mrs. Shirley Freeman said the family had no idea there might be ammunition buried in the garden.

"But we will certainly be looking out now," she said.

The Freeman family has lived in the village's Old Rectory for three years.

● Soldiers were stationed in Colton in the early war years.

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Models help church

Train drivers of all ages turned out at Colton on Sunday for the village's first public model railway display.

It attracted about 300 people (some are seen here) and made around £25 for St. Mary's Church restoration fund.

The idea was thought up by Colton resident Mr. Tom Freeman, who has several links with the church. He serves as a deputy churchwarden and his four children — Fiona, Edward, Calum and Kirsty — sing in the choir.

Mr. Freeman shares an interest in model trains with Mr. Robin Mathams of Bracken Way, Rugeley, and Sunday's display was an extension of an idea they tried out last year.

Then Mr. Mathams wanted to set up his track layout in the Freemans lounge, but the room proved too small. They decided to 'borrow' the village hall instead, and staged their own private rail display there.

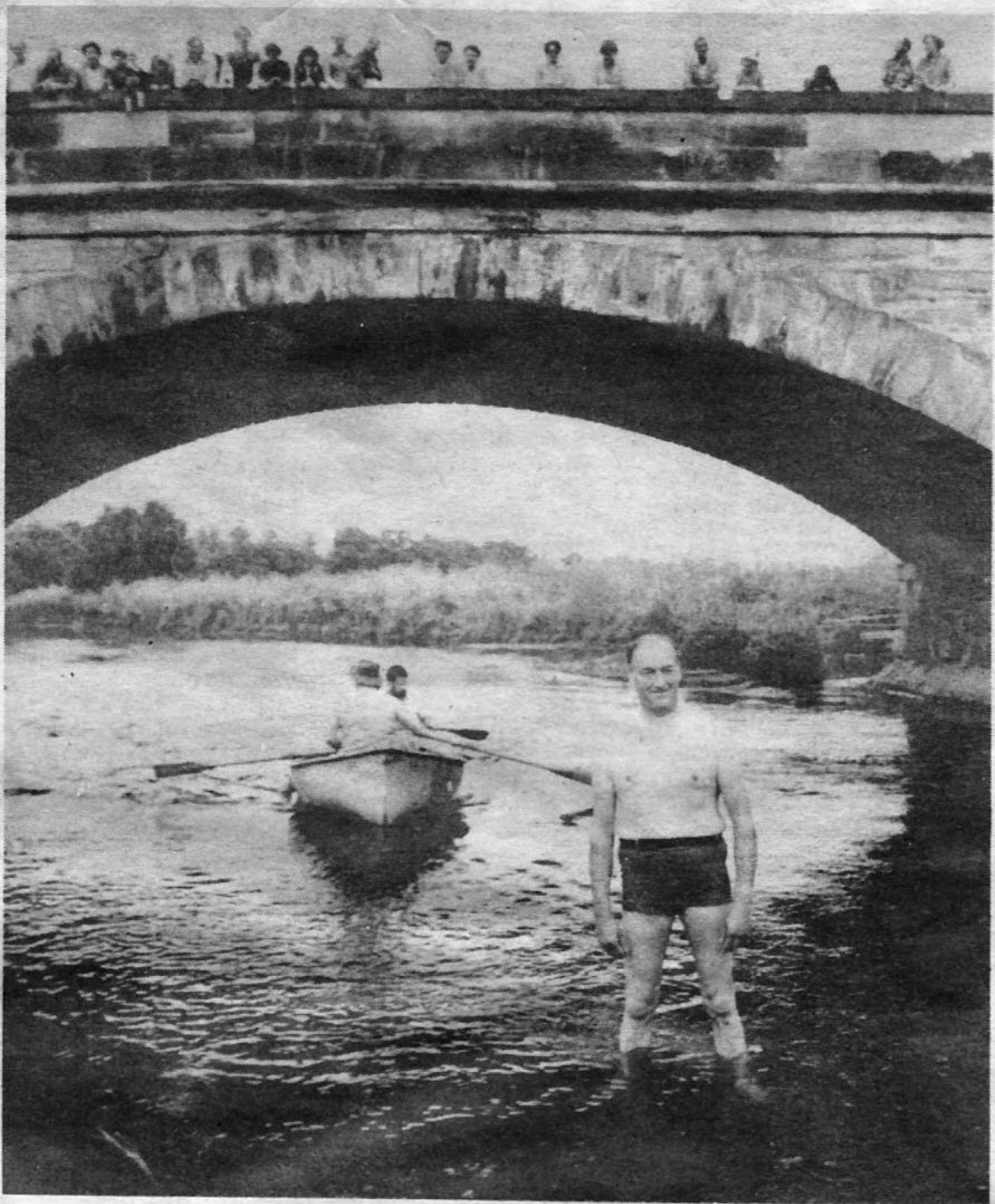
"It aroused so much interest that we decided to hold a public display in aid of the church funds," Mrs. Shirley Freeman said this week.

Mr. Mathams took along dozens of trains, and tempted other rail fanciers with the chance to 'have a go' — at 10p a time — with their own trains on a special test track.

He modelled his major layout — it included authentic automatic signals — on Birmingham New Street to Sutton line.

"Many people took along their own trains and there was a lot of interest. We would like to do it again and perhaps try to make it an annual event," Mrs. Freeman said.





River swim raises £300

Taking the plunge for a good cause on Sunday was Mr. Walter Norman who swam a distance of two and a half miles in an effort to raise money for St. Mary's Church at Colton.

Mr. Norman, of 12, Heath Way, swam from Wolseley Bridge to Rugeley — under the

watchful eyes of boatmen Mr. Tom Freeman, Mr. Robin Mathews and Mr. David Bradbury in case he had any difficulties.

Altogether the effort raised £300 for the fund to re-lead the church roof, for which £10,000 is needed.

Mr. Norman was

watched in his gallant effort by a number of Colton parishioners who turned out to cheer him at vantage points.

The Rev. Raymond Wilcox told the "Times" that Mr. Norman had done very well to swim such a distance. He said that the church planned to hold sponsored walks, concerts and a professional wrestling bout in the future as part of the effort for the restoration fund.



Three little maids

Looking as pretty as a picture are these three young ladies who took part in the May Day celebrations at Colton Church on Monday. The May Queen is 11 year old Ann Wigley (centre), and her attendants are Rashpal Kaur, also aged 11 (left) and ten year old Kirsty Freeman.

A monumental task



Colton WI members are being kept busy with an unusual project on village history.

The women were asked by the Birmingham and Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry to help with a monumental inscription project.

It involves recording all the inscriptions on gravestones, tablets and monuments in Colton.

The Genealogy and Heraldry Society is compiling findings from towns and villages in the three Midland counties of Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

It says there is an urgent need for the work to be done before our history is lost.

President of Colton WI, Mrs. Ivy Preston, said work had started on the old churchyard in the village, and names, inscriptions and verses have all been carefully recorded.

"I don't think it is only WIs which have been approached to do this work.

"So far we have had three meetings where we have taken recordings, and we have found it very interesting indeed," said Mrs. Preston.

"But there is still a lot of work to be done. Next we shall be working on the new churchyard, and we have also been asked to record inscriptions inside the church itself."

Pictured left to right -
Miss Dorothy M. Jones, Mrs. Monica Taylor,
Mrs. Ruth B. Williams and Mrs. Ivy Preston.



"Wear whatever you like" was the message the Colton teams received and they did just that. Above, they assemble with the addition of two youngsters — Innesmen perhaps? Mr. Alfred Haynes, referee, stands far right.

DUN COW SUNDAY BATTLE

Colton people have been having a lot of fun lately. Village women challenged the men to a football match last Sunday after seeing a hilarious all-men match a fortnight ago.

And they proved their point — by beating the men 4-3. Of course the women's goal keeper happened to be a man. Frank Gladwin also helped by scoring the first goal for the women's team.

Still, the women proved they could score goals. Mesdames Chris Peake, Sue Doughty and Jane Williams all put the ball into the back of the net. The men were completely

Grant restores hall for new era

by Alex Keller
NEWS REPORTER

AMBITIOUS plans to extend and modernise Colton Village Hall can finally be completed thanks to a fresh injection of cash.

The Bellamour Way facility has been granted £29,913 from Staffordshire Environmental Fund, under the Landfill Communities Fund.

Professor Allan Lloyd, chairman of the project management group, said: "We are delighted that years of planning and hard work have resulted in us being able to provide a village hall the people of Colton need and deserve.

"Our village hall is a great focal point for social and recreational activities in the parish and these improvements will be of huge and lasting benefit."



Members of the project management group, from left, Ron Lawrence, Tony Winter, Allan Lloyd and Ken Rider survey the work. (CS120809-9531LM)

Modernisation

The money will allow the village to complete an ambitious programme of extension and

local charity based in the village, has also bestowed "generous grants" on the project.

When work is completed the village hall will boast an enlarged main hall to accommodate larger parties and events, a meeting room, which can be hired separately, and new toilet facilities.

The hall as a whole will also benefit from two new up-to-date gas boilers, making the central heating more economical and environmentally friendly.

"The hall will be even more attractive too for outside hirers, who already look to us for their celebrations," added Prof Lloyd.

Very grateful

"We are very grateful for the award from the Landfill Communities Fund and from Colton Parish Lands Trust.

"Without their help these major improvements would still be a distant prospect."

The hall accommodates a wide range of activities, from meetings of village organisations, such as the Produce Guild, the Women's Institute and Colton History Society, to the annual harvest supper and the Christmas fair.

It also plays host to twice-yearly auctions.

It was the increasing success of those activities, leading to increased membership, which prompted the plan to modernise and extend the hall, explained Prof Lloyd.

A formal opening is planned when work finishes in the autumn.

"Representatives of Staffordshire Environmental Fund and Colton Parish Lands Trust, as well as other friends and supporters, will be invited to join in the celebrations," said Prof Lloyd.

The hall can be hired by contacting Ann Martin on 01889 576666.



Party marks end of hall renovations

by Alex Keller
NEWS REPORTER

VILLAGERS in Colton have celebrated the end of a major programme of improvements to the village hall.

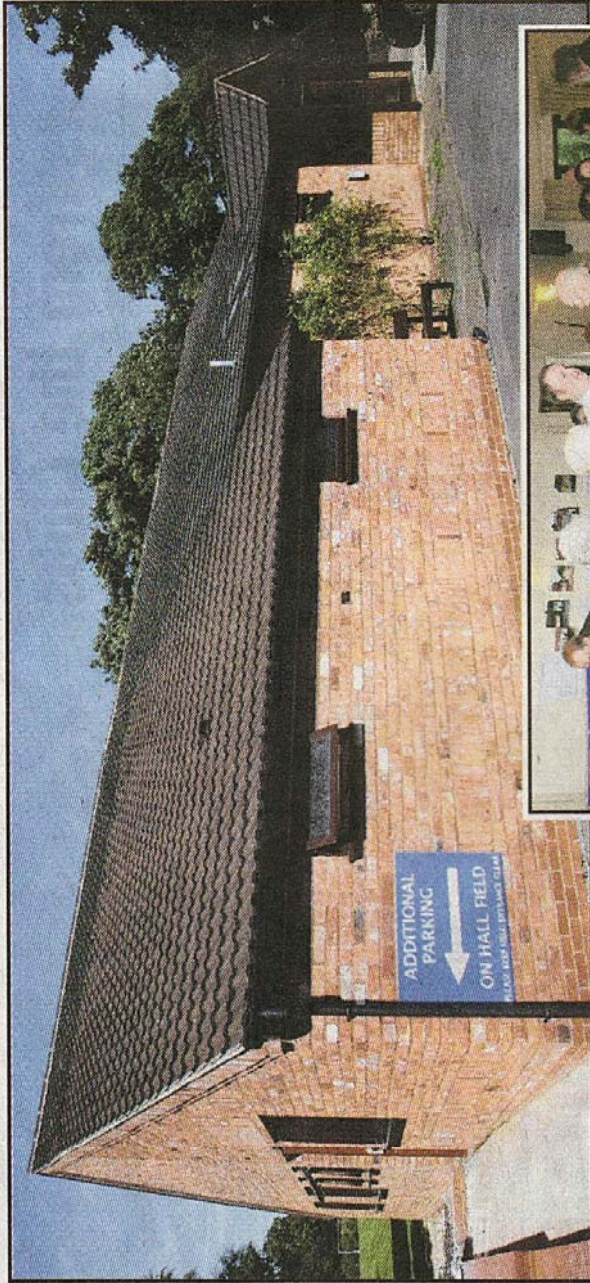
Plans in the pipeline since 2002 have now been completed thanks to grants totalling some £150,000.

And last Sunday, visitors

staged an official opening ceremony at the extended and modernised hall in Bellamour Way.

"Initial reaction from Coltonians who have seen these improvements has been extremely positive," said Brenda Lloyd, chairman of the hall's management committee.

"They are delighted with the new facilities and are pleased to have the increased space in the main hall, which previously



Colton Village Hall and, right, civic dignitaries and guests joined the hall's management committee to inspect the new facilities.
(CS120809-9575LM)



could become quite crowded at large parties.

"The hall as a whole will be more attractive too for hirers from outside Colton, who increasingly look to our village hall, in a pleasant rural setting, to hold their celebrations."

Village organisations and other hall users staged displays at the opening to show why the facility is such an asset, serving groups with social, leisure and educational interests.

Thanks to the improvements, the main hall is 30 per cent larger than before, incorporating a stage area with lighting and a modern sound system.

There is also a meeting room which can be hired independently of the main hall, two new

toilets, and two new central heating boilers.

The hall accommodates a wide range of activities, from meetings of village organisations, such as the Produce Guild, the Women's Institute and Colton History Society, to the annual harvest supper and the Christmas fair.

It also plays host to twice-yearly auctions.

Guests on Sunday included John Dutton, chief executive and managing director of Staffordshire Environmental Fund, which supported the project under the Landfill Communities Fund, and David Bradbury, chairman of Colton Parish Lands Trust, a local charity which also gave generous fin-

ancial support. They jointly performed the official opening, unveiling memorial plaques and cutting a ceremonial ribbon.

Among other guests were three members of the original 1962 Entertainments Committee of the old Reading Room, which preceded the modern hall.

Their dedication and fundraising helped to lay the foundations for the village hall and its activities today.

Now styled as 'the country venue close to town', the hall's management committee is hoping for a busy spring and summer programme which will see its new facilities well-used.

The hall can be hired by contacting Ann Martin on 01889 576666.



David Bradbury, left, and John Dutton celebrate the unveiling of the commemorative plaques at the opening.

