

Village Views

NOVEMBER 2018

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF ACTON BURNELL, PITCHFORD, FRODESLEY, RUCKLEY AND LANGLEY



Welcome to the winter edition of Village Views

We are pleased to say that Village Views is now available to read or download from the Parish Council website at www.actonburnellparishcouncil.org.uk. Recent back copies of the newsletter will also be available, so if there is an item of news which you missed or would like to read again, you can easily check back.

The 2018 Village Directory is also available on the website. This will be updated early next year to make sure that the information is current and up-to-date.

Although it is perhaps a little early, the Village Views team would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers and contributors a very Merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year, and

to thank everyone who has contributed items and ideas, placed adverts, and helped with distribution of the newsletter over the last year.

Please send all items to: villageviews@hotmail.com, or call **Chris Harrison** on **01694 731120**, or speak to one of the members of the Village Views committee (Karen Fisher, John Glover or Gilly Turner)

YOUR LOCAL PARISHES

Since the amalgamation of a number of smaller parishes in 1934, your Parish Council glories in the less-than-snappy title of the 'Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley and Langley Parish Council'. The variation in the size and population density of the individual parishes is striking, as the following table (using the latest Shropshire Council data) shows:

Parish	Properties	Electorate	Size (acres)	Councillors	Acres per Person	Voters per Councillor
Acton Burnell *	111	356	1,656	4	4.7	89
Frodesley	64	130	2,262	2	17.4	65
Pitchford	53	100	1,684	2	16.8	50
Ruckley & Langley	23	53	1,536	1	29.0	53

*These figures do not of course include the significant housing developments in Acton Burnell at Stoneleigh Close (11 houses) and at the former Home Farm barns (a further 9 dwellings), potentially adding around 40 voters to the Acton Burnell total.

Since the last Village Views there has only been one PC meeting (in September), which concentrated on local planning and finance issues.

Our local Shropshire County Councillor, Dan Morris reported that his proposal to ban 'Chinese Lanterns' had been passed. With regard to Business Rates Relief, he stated that the recommendation going forward was to continue as now, so that Village Halls like that in Pitchford would not be adversely affected. He added that the proposal regarding car parking has been passed and so it will remain free to park after 1800 in both Shrewsbury and Ludlow.

Concord College are continuing to assist in the installation of the two outstanding defibrillators in Ruckley and Pitchford.

Finally, as previously announced, Acton Burnell will be participating in a nationwide festival of commemoration and remembrance during which a chain of 1,000 beacons will be lit throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories at 7.00pm on Sunday 11th November 2018 – exactly a century after the guns fell silent at the end of hostilities in what later became known as World War One (WWI).

Our beacon, in the form of a large bonfire, will be sited high on Acton Burnell Hill, courtesy of Adrian Bruce-Smythe, and all residents of the four constituent areas represented in the Parish Council are invited to attend. Planning is proceeding well under the watchful eyes of Keith & Jill Faulkner and Rob Morgan - and food and hot drinks will be available!

As a precursor to the beacon lighting, there will be a service of commemoration and remembrance in tribute to the men and women from the local parishes who fought and, sadly, in many cases, died in the war. This will be conducted by the Reverend Geoff Garrett at St Mary's Church, Acton Burnell at 5.30pm on 11th November. This will allow all parishioners to pay their respects to those who served in WW1 and then move up the hill to attend the beacon lighting.

Remember, remember the 5th of November (and New Year's Eve too)

The RSPCA advises that you keep all dogs and cats inside on Bonfire Night, or whenever fireworks are likely to be set off. Closing windows and curtains can help to muffle the sounds, and music or the TV can disguise loud or unexpected noises. Create a quiet space where your pet can feel safe, and don't be surprised if they want to hide away, although some pets may become clingy and need your reassurance.

Rabbits, guinea pigs and other small pets that live outside should have their cages or pens covered with a blanket, and extra bedding should be provided so that they can burrow inside. You might want to consider bringing them into your home or garage for the night.

Build bonfires as close to time of lighting as possible, and check them thoroughly for animals before lighting. This can help save the lives of hedgehogs and other small animals.



The closing date for contributions to the next edition will be 18th January 2019.

Would you like to advertise your business in Village Views? Contact us on villageviews@hotmail.com for more information.



What's on this Winter

1st & 2nd November

Head up to Cardingmill Valley to take part in a workshop which will show you how to make your own birdfeeder from a log or pine cone. Tickets £2.00 per person. Workshops begin at 11.00am and run through to 3.00pm.

1st November

'Allelujah', a new play by Alan Bennett, celebrating the NHS, is being broadcast live from the National Theatre, and can be enjoyed at Church Stretton School. Tickets are £12.00 for adults and £8.00 for children. Telephone 01694 722209 to book your seats. The performance begins at 7.15pm.

5th November

Ever wondered what it's like to be a National Trust ranger? Come along to Cardingmill Valley for a talk, soup and a roll and find out! Tickets £8.00. Call 03442 491895 or book online via www.nationaltrust.org.uk/carding-mill-valley-and-the-long-mynd/whats-on.

5th November

Church Stretton School is screening 'Edie', following a woman's attempt, after the death of her husband, to climb a Scottish mountain to prove that it is never too late to go after your dreams. Tickets are £4.00 for adults and £2.00 for children, and can be obtained by calling 01694 724330. The film begins at 7.30pm.

10th November

Get up to date on current research on the moon at 'Stars in Your Skies' at Cardingmill Valley, and take the opportunity for some star-watching. Tickets £10.00 per person, available by calling 03442 491895 or on-line at online via www.nationaltrust.org.uk/carding-mill-valley-and-the-long-mynd/whats-on. The talk begins at 8.00pm; homemade soup and rolls available from 7.30pm.

13th November

The Royal Ballet present 'La Bayadere', a fantasy set in legendary India, in a live screening at Church Stretton School. The performance begins at 7.15pm, and tickets are £12.00 for adults and £8.00 for children. For an additional £15.00 per person, you can also enjoy a two course pre-theatre meal with wine or a soft drink at The Place restaurant. Call 01694 722209 to book performance tickets or to reserve your table at the restaurant.

14th November

Annual Christmas Lights switch on in Shrewsbury from 4.30pm in the market square.

15th November

Introduction to stargazing at Attingham Park at 6.30pm. Tickets cost £8.00 (to include a glass of white wine) and are available by calling 03442 491895 or on-line at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events. Please dress for the weather and bring a torch!

16th November

'Pub Night' at Pitchford Village Hall, with the 'Nippy Chippy' in attendance. Doors open at 7.30pm.

16th November

Family stargazing and moonwatch evening at Attingham Park. There will be two sessions - one at 6.30pm and the second at 8.00pm. Tickets cost £3.00 (under 5s are free). Please call 03442 491895 or go on-line at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events to book your place.

23rd November

To mark the anniversary of the end of the 1st World War, there will be a screening of 'Journey's End' at All Stretton Village Hall at 7.15pm. Based on the novel by R. C. Sherrieff's play and novel, this film follows the men of C-Company as they arrive in France to take their turn in the front-line trenches. Please call 07812 583113 or email catelatchford@hotmail.co.uk to book your tickets.

24th November, 1st December & 8th December

Join a workshop at Attingham Park to make a festive elf from wood cut from the Attingham Estate. Half hour workshops will be taking place throughout all three days, but places must be booked in advance. The cost is £8.00 per elf, and tickets can be bought by calling 03442 491895 or on-line at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events. Please note that these workshops involve some woodworking, and children must be accompanied and supervised by an adult.

25th November

Frost Fayre at Longnor School from 1.00pm to 4.00pm. Lots of craft stalls and crafty activities to take part in.

25th November

The annual Christmas Gift and Food Fayre at Concord College opens its doors at 1.30pm. Wide range of stalls and refreshments available.

29th November

Enjoy a screening of the classic musical 'The King and I', live from The London Palladium. The screening begins at 7.00pm. Tickets are £12.00 for adults and £8.00 for children, and for an additional £15.00 per person, you can also enjoy a two course pre-theatre meal with wine or a soft drink at The Place restaurant. Call 01694 722209 to book performance tickets or to reserve your table at the restaurant.

1st December

The annual Much Wenlock Christmas Fayre kicks off at 10.00am. Enjoy music from local brass bands and choirs, be entertained by street theatre and meet Father Christmas. The day ends with a candlelit procession and carols in the square. Disabled parking available and park and ride from a number of local car parks. Please see www.wenlockchristmasfayre.org.uk for more detailed information nearer the time.

1st December

Make an eye-catching decoration for your Christmas home or garden at Attingham Park. Join an all-day workshop to make a 4ft tall willow reindeer! Materials, tools and expert help provided. The cost is £75 per reindeer. Go to www.wildcraftist.nutickets.com to book a place.

1st to 23rd December

Re-live a wartime Christmas at Attingham Park. The mansion will be dressed for a 1940s Christmas. Entry is free for National Trust members and the usual charges apply for non-members, but all admission to the mansion will be by a times ticket only. Please contact 03442 491895 or go on-line at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events to book your places.

3rd December

The classic Christmas treat, 'The Nutcracker', performed by The Royal Ballet, will be screened live at Church Stretton School. The performance begins at 7.15pm. Tickets are £12.00 for adults and £8.00 for children, and for an additional £15.00 per person, you can also enjoy a two course pre-theatre meal with wine or a soft drink at The Place restaurant. Call 01694 722209 to book performance tickets or to reserve your table at the restaurant.

4th December

An evening of Christmas festivities at Cardingmill Valley, from 4.00pm to 9.00pm. This free event includes Christmas craft sessions from 4.00pm onwards, local musical guests, and the opportunity to purchase some Christmas gifts from the National Trust shop, while enjoying a mince pie and mulled wine.

8th December

Join the WI at Pitchford Village Hall for their Annual Christmas Fayre from 10.00am to 2.00pm. Gifts for sale and refreshments to enjoy on the day - including bacon butties!



9th December

Create your own Christmas tree decorations using natural materials at a workshop at Attingham Park. Tickets cost £5.00 per person (non-National Trust members will also need to pay an entry fee). Please go to www.wildcraftist.nutickets.com to book a place. Suitable for all the family, including children over 5.

10th December

The story of 'Peter Rabbit' will be screened at Church Stretton School at 7.30pm. Tickets are £4.00 for adults and £2.00 for children. Please call 01694 724330 to book your tickets.

21st December

'Pub Night' at Pitchford Village Hall. Get together with friends and neighbours for a pint and a chat. Doors open at 7.30pm.

5th January

Start burning off those Christmas calories with a fun run at Attingham Park. 'Jog Off Your Jumper' gives you the chance to wear your Christmas jumper for the last time until next Christmas. Registration for this 1 mile run begins at 10.00am and the run begins at 11.00am. Please see the Attingham Hall website (www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events/) for details of entry fees. All runners will receive a medal!

17th January

Lunch and a lecture at Cardingmill Valley. This is the first of a new series of walks, talks and lunches, led by the local ranger team. Tickets are £10, to include lunch. Book your ticket by calling 03442 491895 or on-line at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/carding-mill-valley-and-the-long-mynd/whats-on.

18th January

The first 'Pub Night' of 2019 at Pitchford Village Hall.

30th January

'La Traviata' will be screened live from the Royal Opera House at 6.45pm at Church Stretton School. Tickets are £12.00 for adults and £8.00 for children, and for an additional £15.00 per person, you can also enjoy a two course pre-theatre meal with wine or a soft drink at The Place restaurant. Call 01694 722209 to book performance tickets or to reserve your table at the restaurant.



REMEMBER & CELEBRATE

EXACTLY 100 YEARS SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR 1

To mark this historic occasion, there will be a service in St Mary's Church, Acton Burnell at 17.30 on Sunday 11 November 2018.

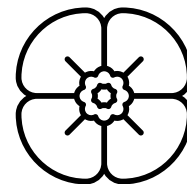
This will be followed at 19.00 by a bonfire beside the Ruckley road on Acton Burnell Hill, which will form part of a chain of over 1,000 beacons being lit across the UK to mark the centenary.

Parking will be available on the roadside and in the field close to the bonfire site. The walk from the road to the beacon will take around 10 minutes. For those who may find the walk difficult, 4x4s will be on hand to ferry you to the bonfire. Marshalls will be on hand to direct you to the right spot!

Food and hot drinks will be provided at the bonfire site. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear and bring a torch.

Please note that there is livestock in the field, and so dogs will not be allowed.

Please join us at either or both of these tributes to the men and women who took part – and in so many cases died – in 'The Great War'.



FESTIVE TOURS OF PITCHFORD HALL

Enjoy a December visit to Pitchford Hall and see the house decorated for Christmas. Mulled wine and mince pies will add to the Christmas spirit.

Tours will take place on 5th and 8th December at 2.30pm. Tickets cost £25 and can be purchased on-line from

www.invitationtoview.co.uk.



LONGNOR SCHOOL OPEN DAY

Longnor School will be having an open morning for prospective parents on Thursday 15th November from 9.30am to 11.00am. Please bring their wellies as the school will be sharing what they do in Forest School sessions. If parents can't make that date they are welcome to phone the school (01743 718493) to make an appointment to see the school in action at another time.

CONCORD COLLEGE CHRISTMAS GIFT AND FOOD FAYRE

Food and festive delicacies

Christmas gifts

Guided tours of the campus

Sunday 25th November

1.30pm to 4.30pm

Christmas Services

Acton Burnell

16 December 3.00pm Carol Service
Christmas Day 10.30am Family Communion

Frodesley

16 December 11.30am Crib Service
Christmas Day 9.00am Family Communion

Pitchford

16 December 3.00pm Carol Service
Christmas Day 10.30am Family Communion

MIDNIGHT COMMUNION

Conover 11.15pm Christmas Eve

Concord College students at Theatre Severn

Students from Concord College will be taking to the stage at Theatre Severn to present 'A Celebration of Peace: Music and Dance from around the World'. The performance will celebrate the College's cultural diversity, with students performing dance, drama, music and narrative pieces, many in traditional costume.

The performance will take place on 17th November at 7.30pm, and tickets can be obtained from Theatre Severn.

Severn Hospice Christmas cards and calendars are now available to buy at **Acton Burnell Post Office**. Call in to make a purchase and support this important local charity.



FROM DAN MORRIS, COUNCILLOR, SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

A decade or more ago you'd often hear that you could tell that the council financial year was coming to a close, because loads of roads were being repaired and the budget needed to be spent! In 2018 Shropshire council doesn't have that luxury. In fact the opposite is true, and now we all see pressure on services and efficiency savings. In this financial environment people often ask me where does our council tax money go or what am I getting for my council tax in 2018. So I thought it would be useful to look at where our hard earned cash goes and why there is pressure on the budget.

Shropshire Councils annual Income is £562 million per year. £146m comes from Council Tax, £171m from Grants (Government and other), £124m is the dedicated School Grant, £81m from Sales/Fees/Charges and £40m from Business rates.

The £562 is spent in 4 main areas – Children's Services £186m, Place and Enterprise £133m (spending in Infrastructure and Communities for example), Adult Services £132m (for example social care operations), Resources and Support £92m (for example Finance, Governance and assurance) and £19m on Public Health.

So why is there pressure? One of the major grants the council gets used to be the Revenue Support Grant supplied by national Government, but in the 5 years to 2018 this dropped by £55m to only £13m. The thinking is that Councils have to become more self-

reliant and retain the benefits of more locally generated sources of income. So the Council in time will probably get to keep more business rates receipts. However because in Shropshire we have many small businesses and not much Industrial or Manufacturing (relatively) our Business rate receipts are lower than other councils. In addition is the good news that our population in Shropshire is getting relatively older, but by growing at a rate that is 30% higher than the national average it creates huge pressure on Shropshire's social services.

So what can we do about it? Well unfortunately Council Tax will likely increase again next year, albeit not by as much as this year. In addition the council has to become more commercially focused to generate income. The recent purchase of the Shopping Centres in Shrewsbury adds £2.7m net extra per year to the council income, which is an equivalent of 2% extra on council tax. We will have to see more of this commercial thinking in the coming years. Finally we have to keep looking at ourselves as a council and thinking how we can work smarter and more efficiently.

My next drop in surgery is at the Horseshoes Inn Dorrington on Monday 12th November between 5.00 to 6.30pm. As always, if you have any questions or matters you think I can help on, please do get in touch by email (dan.morris@shropshire.gov.uk), on twitter (@dan4burnell), on facebook ([dan4burnell](https://www.facebook.com/dan4burnell)) or by phone (07902408400).

WI NEWS

Acton Burnell WI are having their AGM on 8th November which will give us time to reflect on a very successful year. Highlights included our subsidised Annual Dinner in March at the Riverside Inn, a garden meeting in June at the home of Brenda Herod, a visit to the Country Rose Centre at Hadnall and a Barge Trip using boats from the Lyneal Trust to Ellesmere. The National AGM in Cardiff was a huge landmark when delegates from all over the country voted with a majority of 98% to create financial parity between mental and physical health services and the WI as a movement will be endeavouring to make our voice heard in the most influential circles.

Coming up, after a thought provoking talk from a member of the Signal Deaf Charity, we have decided to adopt this as our designated charity for our funds from the Annual Christmas Fair, which this year will be held on 8th December at Pitchford Village Hall. We do hope you will come and support us once again. We were overwhelmed last year when, despite the awful weather and icy roads, we managed to raise just as much as previous years and people came out in droves to support us. We are keeping our fingers crossed that things will be a bit easier this year.

We have had several visitors in the recent past who have come to see what we are all about, and I think they have been surprised that we are not as fuddy duddy as they thought. We favour NOT ONLYjam and Jerusalem, BUT ALSOsports, laughter, the arts, current affairs, quizzes, (Gardeners Question Time coming up), all sorts of speakers, craft and cookery demos, in fact something for everyone. We even have our own darts team! And remember, you are allowed to come as a visitor three times before joining. If you are interested, or reluctant to come on your own, please get in touch with me, Beth on 01694 731657 (beth.davies1@hotmail.com) and I promise you will be WELL looked after. We also provide quite a decent supper!!

PHONE BOX REJUVENATED

As many of you that travel through Pitchford may have seen, the phone box has been spruced up.

I would just like to thank everyone that has helped. Ed and Jo Jackson, Elizabeth Wicks, Emily Davidson, and James and Paul Johnson. I would also like to thank Matt Preece and Buildbase for donating the stone. Great team work!

Cllr Tracy Johnson

Acton Burnell WI invite you to their

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS FAYRE

on SATURDAY 8th DECEMBER 2018 at PITCHFORD VILLAGE HALL

10.00am to 2.00pm

Proceeds to be split between WI funds and the Signal Charity for the Deaf

Grand draw, cakes, preserves, books, Christmas wreaths, flower arrangements, gifts, Christmas novelties, cards and stationery, jewellery, scarves, accessories and hand-made tree decorations and for refreshments..... our famous BACON BUTTIES

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

What's that bug: Ants

Ants belong to the order Hymenoptera jointly with bees, wasps and sawflies. They have a complete metamorphosis life-cycle, passing through the development stages of egg-larva-pupa-imago (adult). They are social insects, living in communities of numerous individuals. Ants have fascinatedly intrinsic behaviours. Some of these complex and diverse behaviours can be observed outside their nest between the busy periods of June and September.

Do ants really fly?

In summer, winged female and male ants emerge from separate colonies aiming to mate. Once they find each other, their nuptial flight takes place. Upon successful mating, the female will drop to the ground, remove its wings and look for a suitable nesting site where it will start a new colony. The queen will tend to the first brood, which will be the first set of sterile working ants. From then on, the workers will be responsible for looking after subsequent broods. When the colony has reached stable numbers, it will look to expand by producing winged fertile females and males. Great numbers of winged adults that emerge do not survive and become a food source to other animals.

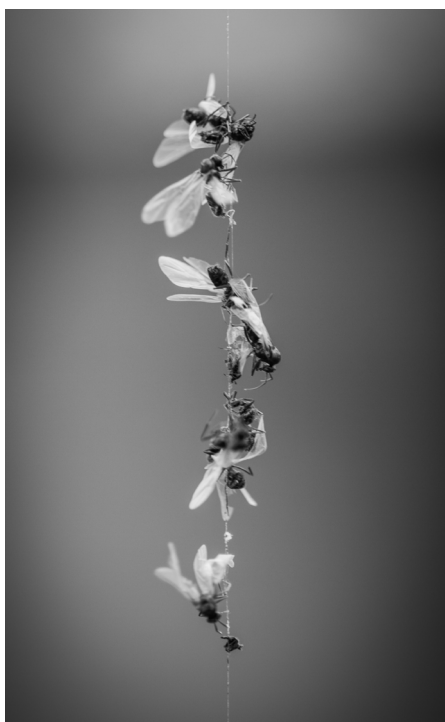
What do ants eat?

Many ant species are omnivores, having a varied diet of plant and animal origin. Some ant species are carnivores or prefer to feed on fungi. Ants can collect honeydew, a sugary rich liquid, produced by bugs such as aphids, mealybugs or scale insects. The nutritious honeydew is fed to the larvae whom are unable to feed for themselves. Ants will fight off any predators attempting to feed on honeydew producing bugs. Although, ants will feed on the bugs if numbers become too high. Plants receive additional protection by having the honeydew, which can cause sooty mold, collected from their leaves.

Are ants pests?

An insect is normally called a pest when its actions are of an economically damaging nature. Ants do not fit this description but are often considered a nuisance by some members of the public. For example, trails of small black ants (*Lasius niger*) can be seen in houses when following the scent of a food source. The yellow meadow ant (*Lasius flavus*) is undesired by some lawn proud gardeners. This is because mounds on lawns can appear during nest expansion. Although, it has been found that plant communities can be more diverse over and around ant nests compared to their surroundings.

Ana Natalio and Nick Antill



INTERESTED IN LOCAL HISTORY

Whilst walking in the Spring, Beth and I started chatting about our footpaths, bridleways, roman roads, ruins, old houses and cottages and field names and in no time at all we realised we had a wealth of historical facts and stories already, relating to Pitchford.

It occurred to us that there many be other people out there also fascinated by local history and we decided to try and start an informal group during the winter months to collect old memories, stories, pictures, photos, etc.

If there is anyone who would like to get involved and/or help us collect stories and information about our village, please contact Beth Davies on beth.davies1@hotmail.com or 01694 731657 or Daphne Lewis on ldaphne26@yahoo.co.uk or 01694 731357. It is not our present intention to write a book – but some of our discoveries could lead to some interesting features for Village Views!

Daphne Lewis and Beth Davies

CONCORD COLLEGE PARISH SWIMMING CLUB SCHEDULE 2018 - 2019

Residents of the Parish of Acton Burnell are very welcome to use Concord College swimming pool free of charge.

Enrolment in the Parish Swimming Club is required for those wishing to use our pool. To become a Club member please complete an application form which can be obtained from:

julia.kerslake@concordcollege.org.uk

The pool is available to use from 4.45pm to 5.30pm on the following Tuesdays and Thursdays:

November: 6th, 8th, 13th, 15th, 20th, 22nd, 27th and 29th

January: 10th, 15th, 17th, 22nd, 24th, 29th and 31st

February: 5th, 7th, 12th, 14th, 26th and 28th

March: 5th, 7th, 12th, 14th, 19th, 21st, 26th and 28th

May: 7th, 9th, 14th, 16th, 21st, 23rd and 30th

June: 4th, 6th, 11th and 13th



Looking towards Burnell Hill from under Lodge Hill

Local Strolls: The Acton Burnell Circular

The next in a series of local ambles from Pitchford resident and ex-geography teacher John Glover

Annoyingly, a bit of damage to my knee has stopped me – temporarily – from playing in the hills and as such I was looking for a flattish stroll which could keep me occupied until the ‘knee gremlin’ got bored with my leg and decided to pick on someone else (apologies if it’s you!!).

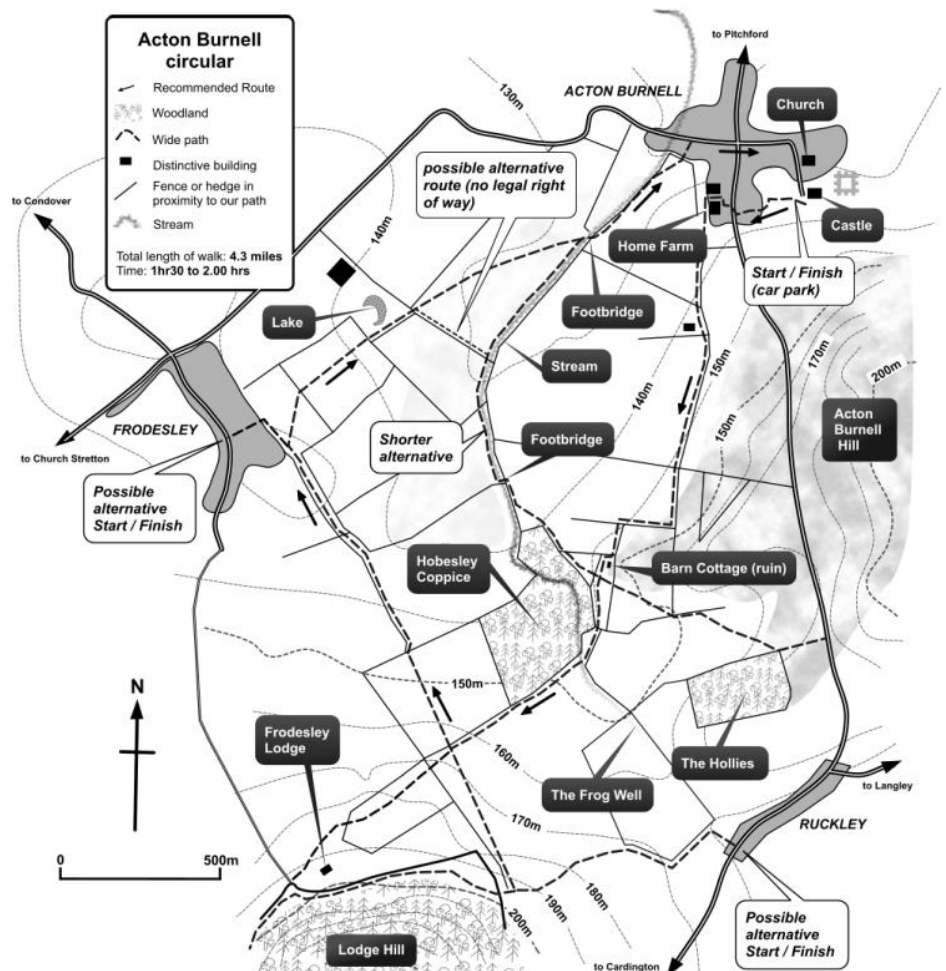
The fields to the south of Acton Burnell were a revelation. OK, it’s flat, but the paths are sound, the surrounding country is superb and there is interest all along this route.

Parking at the castle in Acton Burnell, it’s a given to take 10 minutes wandering around this atmospheric old ruin. Back in the 13th century, Robert Burnell already had a house in the village when he became best mates with Edward 1st and when the latter became king in 1272, Robert became Chancellor of England and the Bishop of Bath and Wells and set out to fortify his house into the ‘castle’ we see today. In 1283, while Edward was out up to mischief in Wales – something which was a regular activity for him – he stayed in Acton Burnell where he held a Parliament in the tithe barn next door to the castle. The last end wall of this can still be seen in the grounds of Concord College next door. This is actually very significant in that it was the very first Parliament where ‘commoners’ were invited and as such set the grounds for our current system in London which has been copied in most of the rest of the world. That is a real “wow” fact and happened here in our patch of land! St. Mary’s Church next door was also paid for and built by the same Robert Burnell. I wonder – did Robert take his name from the village of Burnell, or was the village named after him?

Much later, in February 2004, some students visited the castle after dark and came away with what they claimed were untouched genuine photos of a ghost appearing in the ruins. A “misty face of a young woman in a white lace dress” was the claim. Who knows, but the castle does have real atmosphere and is well worth a ‘pre-amble’ before the ‘real amble’!

Back to the car park outside the castle, walking away from the ruin, the track follows a line of bushes for a short distance to a stile over which you follow the right hand edge of the small field, crossing another stile into another small field until you reach a gate through which you pass along a small track by some newish houses until you reach the Ruckley road. Crossing this and veering slightly to the right, you follow the footpath sign through Home Farm, passing the brick buildings on the left and round through the courtyard which contain a couple of metal barns, and out onto the farm track on the other side. This footpath has changed from that marked on the OS map which states that the right of way is to the south of the farm, so in this case, ignore the map!

Turning left, the farm track is clear and routes you to the south, passing a new barn on your right and with great views of Lodge Hill, Caradoc and the Lawley in front of you. Looking across to the right, the land appears flat and featureless. However, a looking a little deeper, you can see where the stream has cut down a little, allowing surface water to gently wash the land on either side into its channel over the years, to form this gentle dip. The ground here is quite soft because it is all material left behind by the glaciers that came down from the north, dragging the sediment it eroded while on its journey and leaving it



smear all over our area and on top of the solid rock a few feet below, when the ice melted 12,000 years ago or so. The 'posh' name for this ground moraine is "till" and a careful study of it called "till fabric analysis" can tell you lots of interesting stuff about it. The stones it contains were streamlined and aligned along their long axis as they were dragged along under the ice. This gives you two possible directions in which the ice was moving at this particular point, the correct one of which can be determined by looking at the geology of the stones and comparing them to where these same stones form the bedrock in other parts of the UK (or even abroad) today. In this way we can tell where the ice originated and the direction of travel through 'our patch'. Sometimes, the stones are pressed down into the ground at one end of their long axis and this can tell you that there were re-advances of the ice sheet as it pressed down over the material left behind by a previous glacier, shoving the upstream end deeper into the till.

Following the track, it rises up gently to a distinctive ruin on the top of a small hill. This is Barn Cottage and it's quite atmospheric sitting on this prominent spot overlooking the surrounding land and Hobesley Coppice just across the way. I wonder if the former residents sat in their window thinking in awe and wonder about what it was like in the ice age and whether or not to go outside and conduct a till fabric analysis!!



Barn Cottage

At this point, we enter a small paddock. Cattle graze the field here and at the time of writing, there is a bull to keep them in check. Bulls are unpredictable. Some are gentle and some are vicious. Beware just in case, as the signs on the gates warn you!

At the south end of this paddock, you pass through a gate (or over if it is padlocked) into a small triangular field, the far end of which has an exit on the right over a small bridge which acts like a kind of dam, in a small clump of trees. The source of the brook is a few feet further upstream at the other end of the field. This is called the Frog Well and is reputed to never run dry, always be cool in summer, always warm in winter and be looked over by Satan and a couple of sidekicks in the form of three frogs!

Moving swiftly on then, the track continues by the side of Hobesley Coppice and then along a hedge until you reach a cross-roads a couple of hundred metres further on. Turning right, you descend north-westwards across a gloriously

open field with wide sweeping views of the Long Mynd, the Breidden Hills and the Berwyns. Taking the right hand gate at the bottom, you continue towards Frodesley and after another field enter into a farm track hedged on both sides. The gates from here on in seem to have a bit of ribbon tied to them showing you the way until you reach another open field on the edge of Frodesley where you take a diagonal track across it to the right.

With the Wrekin and Burnell in front of you, you go over a couple more stiles, passing a small lake on your left before you reach another field. Here, the 'official' track takes you diagonally across the middle of the field, but at the time of writing, this was being ploughed and seeded with next year's crop and the path had gone. Rather than wreck the farmer's hard work, I took an unofficial detour following the hedge to the right along the wildlife verge to where it meets another public right of way on the far side by the same stream that emanated from the Devil's own well discussed earlier! This is marked on the map.

Turn left and parallel the stream, at the far end of which the track veers off to the right through a small bushy area and across a footbridge. Following the path still further, you reach Acton Burnell. Take a right here and stroll towards the crossroads where you go straight across entering the road towards Concord College and back to the car park by the castle.

All done. There is a short cut reducing the stroll to a little over two miles from Barn Cottage towards the right and along the northern edge of Hobesley Coppice which is also lovely if you don't fancy tackling the bull or your knee is playing you up a bit!

As for your faithful four-legged friends, this is a friendly route but please do take note of the signs some farmers have put up asking for close control where crops are newly planted and on leads where you pass through where sheep are grazing. There are a couple of places where you may have to lift your hound over a gate if padlocked or a stile if there is no cut-out beneath. As for the bull . . . , over to you!

Open spaces, big skies and lovely hills coupled with a bit of geography, geology, history and mystics. What more could you want? Now if only there was a pub in Acton Burnell!!



Acton Burnell castle



News from **Pitchford Village Hall**

Pub night in September was a busy and lively affair. The hall was full to bursting of the good people from across the four parishes where a lovely buffet of free food, put on by volunteers including the Management committee, went down a treat, along with the ever present barrel of beer and accompanying drinks. The grand draw took place with over 22 prizes donated from individuals and organisations across the area being picked up by lucky ticket holders. Over £300 was raised towards the upkeep of the Hall which was brilliant. A massive thank you to anyone and everyone who donated a prize – your generosity was incredible – and an equally massive thanks to all who bought a ticket. The Hall is the centrepiece of our community and it is so important that we keep this little gem going! We also had the ‘Grand Onion Weigh-in’ on the night and there were some astounding entries. Was it pure skill or was the strategy of some to drive past Sellafield to generate mutations? I presume the former and as the photo shows, they were impressive. The winner was Alan Hotchkiss while his wife Trina picked up second prize. Trevor Clay picked up the ‘bronze medal’ while young Francis Davies got the prize for most unusual entry. How he managed to shrink his entry I’ve no idea!!

November’s pub night is scheduled for Friday 16th and the Nippy Chippy will be available for those who want it!

A more serious matter however, is the state of the Hall. This is a real cause for concern. It is crumbling around our ears and while fixes are pending via an insurance claim, the thoughts of the Management Committee are edging towards a feasibility study for a replacement facility. Clearly, this is not imminent, but in the first edition of the Village Views in the new year, we will be asking you for your thoughts via a short questionnaire. It would be useful in the meantime if you could think about the type of facility we would want, how it could be used, the degree to which you think – genuinely – you would support events and other functions. Thoughts on location – current or elsewhere – are also relevant. Full details will appear in the next edition after Christmas. We would however, even at this early stage, like to ask you make every effort get your thoughts to us when the time comes, in whatever format this will take. A positive response from the community means we are more likely to get a facility which the area deserves and apathy could have the opposite effect!

In the meantime however, please do continue to support the Hall and if anyone is thinking of hiring the venue for a private (or even public!) function, please contact Mike Price (email: price622@btinternet.com; mobile: 07740 067955) or Christine Jones (email: csjay@btinternet.com; mobile: 07538 744807). Costs are very cheap!!

John Glover



Grand Onion Weigh-in. Trina Hotchkiss, Trevor Clay, Alan Hotchkiss and Francis Davies

