

Village Views

November 2019

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

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

'We Don't Buy Crime' and 'Smartwater'

All Parishioners were invited to a Meeting on 10th September 2019, to find out about the West Midlands Police initiative 'We Don't Buy Crime' and the use of Smartwater.

Smartwater is a water based solution with a unique forensic code. It is invisible to the naked eye but can be seen under UV light. Only a small amount needs to be applied to an item and left to dry. From then on, the item is permanently marked and if found can be returned to the owners registered address.

'We Don't Buy Crime' towns and villages are those where a majority of residents have marked their possessions with Smartwater and registered their property address. When 70% of households in an area have been registered, street signs are displayed, indicating that Smartwater is in use. The purpose is to let potential offenders know that if they commit crime in the area, they are likely to get caught. More information can be found on the Parish Council Website: www.actonburnellparishcouncil.org.uk under Community Information.

The Parishioners and Councillors that attended the meeting, all felt that this

initiative could benefit and protect every household in the Parish. Following a meeting of the Lightsource Community Benefit Fund, the Parish Council, as Administrators, decided that the Fund would provide for every household in the Parish Council area to receive a Free bottle of Smartwater.

For the 'We Don't Buy Crime' initiative to be effective, a majority of households in the area must sign up. The Parish Council will be contacting Parishioners and asking them to return a form to register their interest.

If you have not received a letter from the Parish Council or have mislaid your copy, please contact the Parish Clerk for a copy, as soon as possible on clerk@actonburnellparishcouncil.org.uk or **07768 437032**.

Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the last PC Meeting in September can be found on the website www.actonburnellparishcouncil.org.uk

Select the heading Council Information then Meetings.

In the list under Previous Meetings click on the specific meeting you want and you can view any posted documents.



COLLEGE'S FUN DOG SHOW RAISES OVER £1,000 FOR GUIDE DOGS

Concord College's outreach team is nearly half way towards its goal of raising £2,500 this year for Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Over £1,100 was raised by the outreach team at Concord College as a result of their first-ever fun dog show.

The event, which was largely student-led, attracted visitors to take along 50 dogs for an afternoon filled with fun, competitions, treats and stalls.

The outreach team was delighted with the attendance and the money raised for Guide Dogs. Said student Edelyne Tanadu: "Being able to give back to the community is core to outreach and we are glad that the dog fayre helped instil the giving spirit to Concord students and the community alike."

Mary Conner, for Guide Dogs, said: "The students from Concord College have shown drive and energy to organise the fundraising activities.

"They show real passion for helping people with sight loss and giving them back their independence. Thank you for making us feel so welcome," she added.



THANK YOU!

The editorial team would like to thank Gilly Turner for her hard work in helping get the new look Village Views off the ground. Gilly has been responsible for handling advertising in Village Views, and her local knowledge has been invaluable. She wants to spend more time on her Village Hall commitments, so sadly is leaving the editorial team.

VOLUNTEER URGENTLY NEEDED!

Enjoy reading Village Views?

Like to get more involved?

We are looking for a volunteer to join our small editorial team to take responsibility for the advertisements that appear in every edition, and to help source possible advertisers for the annual Directory. You will need to have a bit of local knowledge in order to identify possible advertisers, and be prepared to handle sending out annual invoices and following up payments where necessary.

The editorial team meet around four or five times a year, and in between keep

in touch by email. You will get plenty of support from the friendly team, and will also have the opportunity to help in decisions regarding Village Views and Directory content, funding and delivery.

You can be provided with a free email account to enable you to contact advertisers without using your personal account, but you may need to be occasionally available to be contacted by telephone.

If you are interested, please talk to one of the team (Chris Harrison, Karen Fisher and John Glover) for more information, or call Chris Harrison on **01694 731120**.

The closing date for contributions to the next edition will be 18 January 2020.

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

What's on

9th November

Mad Jack's annual five mile race around the grounds of Attingham Park, through ponds, obstacles and undergrowth. Contact Shrewsbury Athletics Club on www.shrewsburyac.org.uk/our-races/mad-jacks-5/ for more information and to book a place. For runners over 16 only.

9th November

Learn how to weave a willow star at an Attingham Park workshop. All materials and tools provided, along with expert tuition. There is a charge of £27.50 per star. To book a place, please contact www.wildcraftist.netickets.com or call **07968 071588**.

13th November

Inaugural meeting of the New Village Hall Steering Group at the Village Hall starting at 7.30pm. Looking for local volunteers to assist with plans to refurbish the hall, including identifying and applying for grants and organising fund raising activities. Secretary and Treasurer also needed! Please call Gilly Turner (Chairman New PVH Steering Group) on **01694 731330** or email pitchfordvillagehall@outlook.com if you plan to attend.

13th November

An evening of live music at Carding Mill Valley Chalet with 'Son of Town Hall'. With performances described as three parts concert and one part theatre, this duo promises an entertaining evening. Tickets £11.00 per person (adults only please). To book tickets, please call **03442 491895** or book online by following the links from www.nationaltrust.org.uk/carding-mill-valley-and-the-long-mynd/whats-on

15th November

Pub Night at Pitchford Village Hall. Come along for a pint and a chat with your friends and neighbours. Hot sausage rolls and pork pies will be available. Doors open at 7.30pm. Everyone very welcome.

16th November

Students from Concord College will be presenting an evening of drama, dance and music exploring the theme of 'identity' at Theatre Severn. The performance begins at 7.30pm and tickets are £10 (available from Theatre Severn or via www.theatresevern.co.uk). Proceeds in aid of The Rotary Club, the WI and the Anthony Morris Foundation (a foundation set up in honour of Anthony Morris, Principal of the College from 1975 to 2005, to provide scholarships to students who would not otherwise be able to afford to attend the College).

16th & 17th November

Craft a 4 foot tall willow reindeer to take pride of place among your Christmas decorations. This workshop at Attingham Park will provide you with all the tuition, materials and tools needed. Each deer will cost £86.90. For more information email info@wildcraftist.com or call **07968 071588**.

20th November

Christmas comes to Shrewsbury when the lights are turned on in the Square. Music and activities taking place around the town from 4.30pm onwards. The lights go on at 6.30pm!

23rd November to 1st January

Watch the Attingham Park fallow deer being fed every weekend at 2pm, and learn more about these beautiful creatures. No need to book, but usual Attingham Park admission charges apply. Dogs on a short lead only, please.

24th & 30th November, and 7th December

Using wood cut from trees on the estate, make your own festive robin at one of Attingham Park's workshops. Suitable for all ages, but please note that some woodworking is involved, so all children must be accompanied by an adult. There is a charge of £10 per robin. To book a place, please contact attinghamevents@nationaltrust.org.uk or call **03442 491895**.

24th November

Come along to Concord College to enjoy the annual Christmas Gift and Food Fayre. Delicious refreshments available throughout the afternoon, and a wide range of stalls selling crafts and gifts. From 1.30pm to 4.30pm.

30th November to 23rd December

Come along and enjoy the Mansion at Attingham Park in all its Christmas glory; this year featuring decorations inspired by nature. Entry to the Mansion is by timed ticket only during the Christmas period, but entry is free for National Trust members, and non-members pay only the usual admission charge. Please book your tickets by calling **03442 491895** or booking online by following the links from the National Trust website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/attingham-park/whats-on

2nd December to 19th December

(weekdays only)

Enjoy storytime with Father Christmas and his gnomes at Attingham Park. Suitable for children aged 5 to 11 years, this event includes light refreshments and a baby fawn toy for all children attending. Tickets are £10 per person (please note that everyone attending will need to have purchased a ticket – adults and children). The event lasts about an hour, and story sessions start at 3.30pm, 4.45pm and 6.00pm on each day. To book tickets, please call **03442 491895** or book online by following the links from the National Trust website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/attingham-park/whats-on

6th December

Longnor School Frost Fair will be taking place from 5pm to 8pm. Come along to enjoy a festive evening of crafts and games, with the chance to buy Christmas gifts from a range of stalls.

7th December

The annual Christmas Fayre takes place at Much Wenlock from 10am, with stalls, entertainers and choirs, and finishing with candlelit carols in the square. Please note that parking is at a premium at this busy event, and organisers advise using the park and ride facilities (cost £4 per car) which will run from William Brookes School and the Stretton Road Car Park (also known as Edge Renewables) throughout the day.

10th December

An evening of Christmas festivities at Carding Mill Valley Chalet from 4.00pm to 8.00pm. This free event includes Christmas craft sessions for all the family. The tearoom and shop will be open with mulled wine and mince pie slices on the menu, with festive music provided by some local musical guests.

18th December

Carols in the Square in Shrewsbury. Enjoy the chance to sing along with carols old and new in Shrewsbury Square from 5.30pm. Wrap up warm!

20th December

Start your Christmas celebrations with an evening at Pitchford Village Hall Pub Night. Mark and his daughter Ruby, who entertained us so well at the Burnell Bash, will be entertaining us with their live music and there will be free mince pies and mulled wine! Doors open at 7.30pm.

4th January

Pop on your Christmas jumper and bring the family along for a one mile fun run at Attingham Park at 9.30am. Suitable for children and adults. Everyone who takes part will receive a medal to mark the event! Tickets are £5.00 per person, and places must be booked in advance by calling **03442 491895** or by the links from the National Trust website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/attingham-park/whats-on. Please note that non-National Trust members will also need to pay a reduced entrance fee to Attingham Park of £5 per adult and £2.50 per child.

17th January

Banish the post-Christmas blues with an evening at Pitchford Village Hall Pub Night. Drinks served from 7.30pm.

23rd January

Come along to Carding Mill Valley Chalet and join Area Ranger Patrick for a light hearted but informative look at 24 hours in the life of a Ranger looking after the Long Mynd, followed by a lunch of soup in the tearoom. Tickets are £11 per person. Please call **03442 491895** or book online by following the links from www.nationaltrust.org.uk/carding-mill-valley-and-the-long-mynd/whats-on.

Concord College

CHRISTMAS GIFT AND FOOD FAYRE

Food and festive delicacies | Christmas gifts

Guided tours of the campus

Sunday 24th November | 1.30pm to 4.30pm



CONDOVER COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS FAIR



Sunday 1st December, 10.30am to 3.30pm

CONDOVER HALL

More than 40 stalls, including handmade crafts, food, gifts.
Live music and festive fare!

Free entry. Limited parking on site, but additional parking at school

LONGNOR CE SCHOOL NEWS

Autumn Term

During the autumn term, the school has focussed on topics including The Great Fire of London, The Stone Age, and Pirates. The topics taught are enhanced by trips and visits which bring the themes to life. Recently the older children have been to the Liverpool Maritime Museum to find out more about pirates and Class 3 visited the Discovery Centre in Craven Arms to learn more about the Stone Age, especially the woolly mammoth.

We started our science this year with workshops for each class. The theme for the day was materials so it linked to the science we are teaching in class. Each session involved the children making their own slime, which they really enjoyed.

Our girls and boys football teams have recently been taking part in tournaments in Shrewsbury against many other primary schools. The children have enjoyed taking part and have shown true sportsmanship. The older children have been to Millichope Park to take part in a cross-country competition and Year 2 went to Church Stretton secondary school to take part in a sports festival.

We have increased the extra-curricular clubs we are offering this year to include

multi-sports, tennis, street dance, netball, choir, gardening and chess. The clubs change from term to term depending on what activities people are offering and what the children are keen to learn.

Open Mornings

We will be holding open mornings for anyone interested in joining the school in reception or Little Owls preschool. There will be two opportunities to see the school in action, Tuesday 12th November and Friday 15th November, 9:30am – 11:30am. Bring your wellies so you can experience forest school activities. Everyone welcome.

Frost Fair

The school circle will be organising a Frost Fair on Friday 6th December 5pm – 8pm. A festive evening of crafts, games, a chance to purchase some gifts from local stall holders, visit Santa's grotto, enjoy the choir, with delicious food and festive drinks.

The website www.longnorschool.org.uk is continually updated and tells you about all the exciting and inspiring things we get up to at Longnor C.E. Primary School. To contact the school please email admin@longnorschool.co.uk or phone Rachel Reynolds or Louise Childs on **01743 718493**.

Supporting Severn Hospice this Christmas

Severn Hospice Christmas cards and calendars are now on sale at Acton Burnell Post Office. Send your family and loved ones a Christmas message and support a very worthwhile local charity at this special time of year. Severn Hospice has to raise two thirds of its costs through fundraising and donations, so every penny you spend helps!

Severn Hospice will also be holding two 'Lights of Love' services at St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury on 1st December, at 1.30pm and 3.30pm. You are invited to come along to join in remembering loved ones, celebrating their life and reliving happy memories. All guests are welcome to dedicate a light on the Christmas tree to someone special.

The Severn Hospice Christmas tree will stay in place throughout the festive period.



Christmas Services

Acton Burnell

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

Condover

22 December 6.00pm Lessons and Carols
Christmas Eve 6.00pm Candlelight Crib Service

Frodesley

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

Pitchford

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

Ryton

16 December 6.30pm Crib and Carol Service
Christmas Day 9.00am Family Communion

MIDNIGHT COMMUNION

Condover 11.15pm Christmas Eve



Little Owls - Part of Longnor CE Primary school

There are places still available. Please contact admin@longnorschool.co.uk or phone **01743 718493** for further details.

MESSAGE FROM **COUNCILLOR DAN MORRIS** SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLOR FOR BURNELL

Safety on the A49

This month we come back to the subject of road safety on the A49. It has been brought back into sharp focus recently with a very nasty accident involving a bus at the pedestrian crossing in Dorrington in mid-September. As you may be aware, as a major trunk road the A49 is not the responsibility of Shropshire Council, but that of Highways England.

This summer I have had meetings, along with Dorrington Parish Council, with the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia, senior managers for Highways England in the West Midlands, traffic safety engineers from Kier and members of Shropshire Council to discuss how to make the A49 safer outside and inside Dorrington. At the meeting with Highways England and Kier, that actually happened a day before the accident at Dorrington pedestrian crossing, we made the following suggestions/requests:

- Stepped speed limit changes on the entrance to Dorrington from the South
- Permanent safety enforcement cameras
- Vehicle activated signs on the entrance to the village (like the entrance to Bayston Hill)
- Better/bigger vehicle activated signs in the centre of Dorrington

- Gateway 'furniture' (such as 'white gates') at the entrance to the village

However, recently collected traffic data did not warrant permanent amendments to the speed limits approaching Dorrington from Leebotwood, nor did it warrant permanent speed cameras, nor more vehicle activated signs at the entrance to the village.

Mobile safety enforcement cameras will however continue in Dorrington and the police will also start to park a marked police car in the middle of Dorrington and the junction of Falkland Road and the A49. Highways England have also said that they will ask community speedwatch liaison officers to come and visit the Parish Council to talk about starting a programme within Dorrington. Volunteers have recently started doing this in the nearby villages of Longden and Pulverbatch.

Highways England will explore what opportunities exist to provide appropriate gateway furniture at either entrance to the village as a possible research project. They also thought the existing vehicle activated signs in the centre of Dorrington weren't adequate, and would support attempts to acquire larger signs.

Consideration will be given by Highways England to invest further in Dorrington A49 road infrastructure to improve traffic management arrangements during their next strategic planning phase starting in 2021. Because of the concerns raised about this stretch of road, and in the light of further anticipated development in Dorrington and the fact that Dorrington is a designated 'Development Hub' within Shropshire, this section of the road is now 'primed' as an issue and Highways England pledged to respond as appropriate going forward.

Finally going back to the accident in mid-September, there will clearly be an investigation into what happened, and Highways England have confirmed they will react to any recommendation for changes that come out of that investigation. There is also the possibility of a road safety meeting, open to all, taking place in Dorrington. We are in the early planning stages of that meeting and more details will emerge in due course.

Thank you for reading this! 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](https://twitter.com/dan4burnell)), on facebook ([dan4burnell](https://www.facebook.com/dan4burnell)) or by phone (**07902408400**).

THE STORY OF WATER AT FRODESLEY

Frodesley was originally a secondary Anglo Saxon settlement growing up along a low ridge which ran at right angles to the Roman road, Watling Street. The ridge provided a better drained site for two of the open fields which lay just east of the present cross roads either side of the Roman road. What became the Town Meadow had a slope to the south west, just west of the church. Ridge and furrow marks can still be seen, as well as a water meadow on the flat land below.

The problem with a dry village site is water supply. A shallow well was dug in the glacial gravels to the west of the church and can still be pin pointed as all the footpaths in the area led to it. Eventually it was only used by the poor cottagers as all the wealthy folk had deep wells dug down into the coal measure sandstone. In the 19 century a more accessible and probably more hygienic source of water was created for the poor as a well was sunk by the crossroads. A concrete slab now covers it just in front of the bus shelter.

A piped water supply followed in the early 20th century as a spring was fed into an underground tank beside the road up to the lodge. Then a borehole was sunk opposite the rectory which topped up the tank and fed water to most houses in the village. The pump only ran during the day so that at night the houses higher up in the village would lose their supply. When mains water arrived in 1976 houses were gradually connected up to it although some kept the village water as well- which was quite wise as early on it was more reliable than the one mains pipe!

Now there are ring mains so if there is a burst the water can be redirected. The village supply only came to an end last year by which time the original galvanized pipes were often springing leaks. A number households still had it as their only source of water and were connected to the mains, and a couple of residents with horses decided to sink their own boreholes.

Ron Repath

EXTENDED HOURS AT CONDOVER SCHOOL

Condover Preschool will be offering extended hours from January 2020. They will now be open from 8.15am to 5.30pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, with hours on Mondays and Fridays remaining at 8.45am to 3.30pm. This is to allow more working families to take advantage of the high quality, affordable childcare on offer, with full day rates coming in under £40 per day. It is a major change for Condover Preschool and they look forward to welcoming new children in the New Year.

Call 01743 873518 for further details or to arrange a visit, or alternatively, pop along for a Stay & Play on Friday 15th November, 9.30am to 11.30am, to find out more.

HARVEST SUPPER

A very big thank you to everyone who attended the Harvest Supper at Pitchford Village on Friday 27th September. We made a fantastic £990 which will be split between Acton Burnell, Frodesley and Pitchford churches.

A special thank you must go to everybody involved in preparing the hall and providing the food, much of which was donated.

Tracy Johnson



News from Pitchford Village Hall

FUTURE OF THE VILLAGE HALL

Over the past few weeks, things have become a little clearer in terms of how the Management Committee for the Village Hall are able to proceed.

Since the last edition of the Village Views, we have commissioned a Feasibility Study with a local firm to determine the varied costs of improving our facility, based on three options. These are:

- a complete rebuild on its current site
- a refurbishment of the current hall
- a complete new build on a greenfield site, possibly in Acton Burnell.

The first of these options was the one clearly favoured by a significant margin of those who responded to the survey we initiated back in the spring (74%). Whether this option is possible depends on two factors: cost (hence the Feasibility Study) and the Pitchford Estate Trustees, who own the land the Village Hall sits on, agreeing to extend the current lease. Without the latter, potential access to grants will be limited. At present, the lease comes to an end in just under 25 years in September 2044. Sadly, this length of time is not considered long enough by potential funding organisations to grant us funds to effect a rebuild, as they want to see longevity in return for their generosity, hence the request for the extension to the Trustees. Unfortunately, we have recently heard that this has been refused under the current terms and conditions of the lease. We are still trying to investigate what terms may be agreeable to both parties although, as it stands, the chances of building a new hall is currently less likely. As such, we now need to consider refurbishing the current Hall.

The formation of a Steering Group to look into funding options and move the project on has been held up over the past months but we are now able to move forward. Therefore, we are now asking for local volunteers who have the interest, the enthusiasm, the skills and the knowledge to help us get a facility we can be proud of. While we would love anybody with that enthusiasm and spare time to come along, we are also looking for volunteers to help in any of the following ways:

- acting as Secretary to the Steering Group
- acting as Treasurer to the Steering Group
- bringing their experience in applying for funding from the various bodies who may be able to provide awards to help us with the enterprise
- being able to help with fund-raising by creating events in the local area including the publicising of these

We are proposing to have a meeting for all who have an interest in taking this project forward, on Wednesday 13th November at 7.30 in the Village Hall in Pitchford. We would appreciate an email or phone call letting us know you are coming along. Please send this to pitchfordvillagehall@outlook.com or call Gilly Turner (Chairman New PVH Steering Group) on **01694 731330**. We would be very grateful for your help, as would, no doubt, the whole community!

We would also hope that should we progress with our efforts, you will all feel able to support any events we organise to build up the funds we need to make a difference to what is the only 'open to all' community social facility in the area and which is still in some danger of not lasting 'the course' without some form of community action!

PUB NIGHT

The September pub night featured the Grand Onion Weigh-in, which was won by Trevor Clay who moved up from second place last year. Second and third places went to Jeanette Reaney and Phil Short respectively.

Well done to all who entered and especially to Alan Hotchkiss who not only organised the event and provided the winners' cup, but crucially didn't take part this year, thus giving the rest of us a chance!



We hope you enjoyed the October Pub night along with the return of the Panini Van, and that you support us in November, where hot sausage rolls and pork pies will be on sale. In December, along with the usual free mince pies and mulled wine, we will have Mark and his daughter Ruby from Acton Burnell (who entertained us so well at the Burnell Bash) playing for us, thus giving us a little respite from Roy Wood and Slade. Rock on! Pub nights are always held on the third Friday of the month at 7.30 and are open to anyone in the area. For any newcomers to the area, it really is a wonderful and relaxed way to meet your neighbours!

ALTERATIONS TO THE VILLAGE HALL

The exterior side wall to the kitchen has finally been repaired and decorated, but that is as far as the insurance company are able to go leaving both the gable ends in need of significant repair (almost certainly at our own cost). As part of our efforts in the short term to freshen the Hall and make it more appealing, we have organised the Probation Service to come in to redecorate the interior of the Hall this month so hopefully those attending Pub Night in November will notice a much more pleasant feel to the place!

AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Management Committee will be on Monday 22nd January at the Village Hall at 7.30.

In the meantime, 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 (price622@btinternet.com or **07740 067955**) or Christine Jones (csjay@btinternet.com or **07538 744807**). Costs are very cheap!!

Pitchford Village Hall Management Committee

HEALTHWATCH SHROPSHIRE WANTS TO HEAR YOUR EXPERIENCE OF MAKING APPOINTMENTS TO SEE YOUR GP

How easy is it to get an appointment with your GP or practice nurse?

If you are unable to get an appointment when you need to, what other services do you use?

Are you able to get appointments outside normal surgery hours?

Healthwatch Shropshire, the local independent consumer champion for health and social care, would like to know about people's experiences of using their GP services. The NHS recommends that

people with fevers, stomach upset, aches & pains or headaches contact the local pharmacist instead of their GP. If people can't easily get an appointment with their GP and use other services such as their local pharmacy, Healthwatch would like to hear about that experience as well.

Lynn Cawley, Chief Officer, said; "We carried out some research in 2015 that showed patients lacked an understanding of how GP appointment systems worked and we are still hearing that message.

Now practices are offering 'extended hours' appointments, where patients can book to see a GP until 8pm on weekdays and over the weekend, and can book appointments online we would like to know how the patient experience has been affected. If people visited their pharmacy instead how did they find the experience?"

To take part, please contact Healthwatch Shropshire on **01743 237884** or enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk



The Rat waiting for a rock blast at Sharpstones Quarry, Bayston Hill

Local Strolls: *Where mammoths feared to tread*

If you are after a bit of peace and quiet, this little amble is probably not going to fulfil your dream! For the first and last half a mile, the traffic on the A5 will rattle your brain and for the rest of the first half of the walkies, the noise from a working quarry will intrude (although much less likely at weekends!). Having said that, stay with it. This stroll, although only a short three miler, is full of interest and fascination. A proper geography / geology field trip!

The walk starts from Maxfield Road, where you can park in the new estate alongside the show home off Oteley Road which runs parallel to the A5. A short stroll along the verge of Oteley Road running west will bring you to a gate to a field on the left where further housing is being developed and directly opposite the junction with Sutton Farm Road. Through this, a good track takes you over the A5 and then after a few yards, bends to the right and then sharp left. A kissing gate at this point leads to an open patch of rough ground across which a good path leads onto a track after about 200 yards or so. Veer right and this track will take you closer to Sharpstone Quarry and past various notices giving you the warning signals for

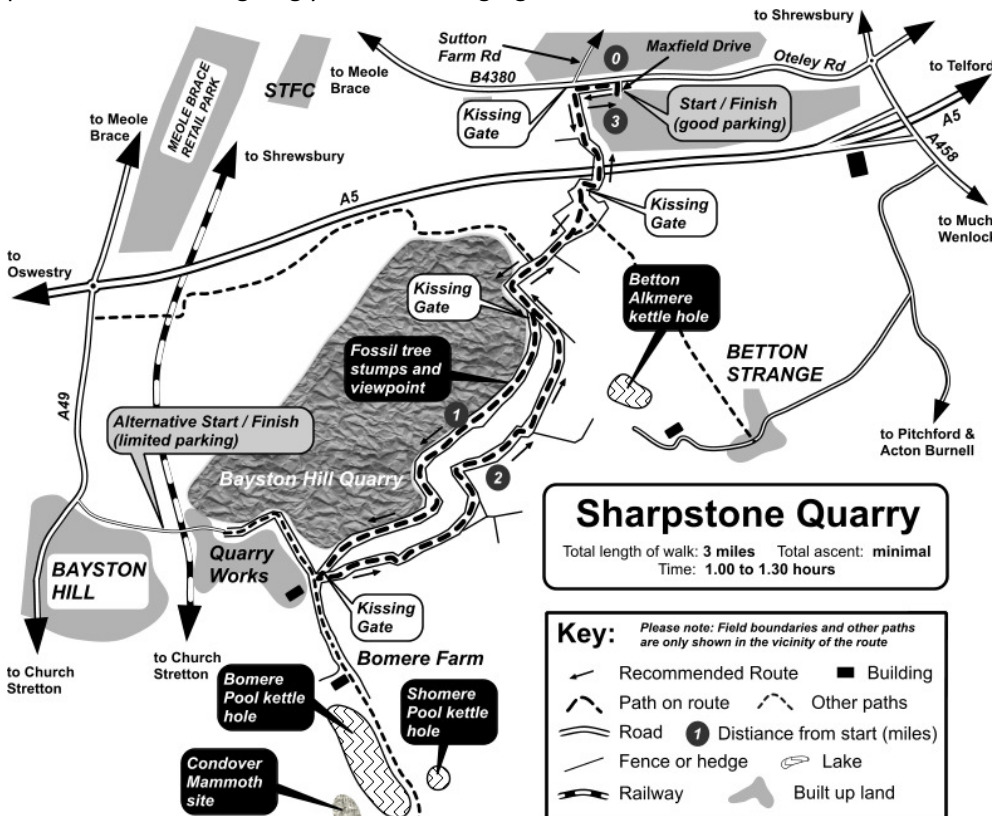
when they want to blow the place apart. The track then bends towards the left at a right angle and shortly afterwards you will see another kissing gate on your right leading to a smaller footpath, which you take. Within a few yards, you get increasingly good views of the quarry.

Run by Tarmac, your first impression is probably one of 'yuk'. However, while it is not very pretty, it can be fascinating to see the machinery at work and the scale of the operation. If you also manage to catch a blasting operation in progress, then, dare I say it, even exciting! In its defence however, you will be aware that you have to be almost on top of the quarry before you see it, such is the clever effort Tarmac (and other quarry companies) go to to disguise the blight, both visually and audibly, from the rest of the world. It's also worthwhile understanding that if you don't grow it, drink it or breathe it, it probably comes from a quarry (or mine or otherwise under the ground) making such places utterly vital to our way of life!!

The rock dug from the massive hole in front of you is greywacke (pronounced *grey-whackee!*). Formed during the Pre-Cambrian (at a time about 580 million years ago before there was any life on land), it is a sandstone laid down in the sea originating from eroded sediments brought down by rivers running off a nearby continent when our area was located near to where South Africa is now! This purple-green rock, which also appears on top of

the Long Mynd and nearby Haughmond Hill, is used for road surfacing. It has possibly the best level of friction in the world making it ideal for such purposes. Indeed, rock from here formed the basis for the asphalt used in the Abu Dhabi and Bahrain Grand Prix racing circuits as well as much of our motorway system here in the UK.

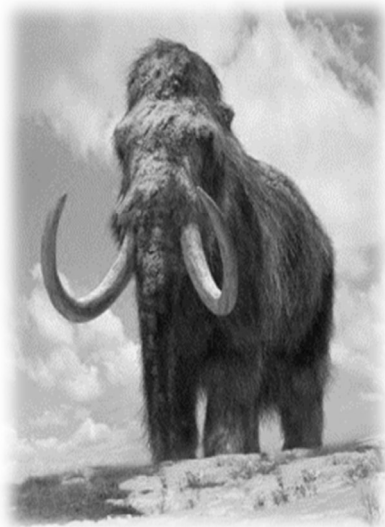
A little further on is a seat by a viewpoint of the quarry and just by these are a few lumps of rock which need a little closer inspection! Much later in geological history, on its journey from the deep south to where we are now and at a speed similar to that which your fingernails grow, our patch of land passed the equator and tropical rain forest dominated. These rocks are in fact fossilised tree stumps from



that jungle and the shape and texture are immediately recognisable. These hot humid forests would not have been inhabited by dinosaurs as these were yet to appear, but smaller amphibians and insects would have abounded.

Moving onwards, look to your left and a little back over your shoulder and you will see the farm at Betton Alkmere and a small round lake to its side. This is in fact a feature called a “kettle hole” but which has nothing to do with what you use to make a brew! It was formed in the glacial moraine left behind when the glaciers retreated 12,000 years ago at the end of the last ice age. Actually, the term “retreated” is a bit of a misnomer. When the climate warms, the ice doesn’t actually turn around and travel back to where it came from, but simply melts faster than the glacier moves forward thus giving the appearance of moving backwards! Chunks of ice become detached from the main ice sheet and were left as islands of ice on land which was then smeared with sediment washed out from the main glacier and which surrounded and built up around it. When this chunk of ice, maybe a few tens of metres across, melted away completely, there was a hole where the sediments couldn’t get dumped as the ice was in the way. This depression filled with water to form a lake. Shropshire is loaded with these and nearby Bomere Pool, Shomere Pool, Betton Pool and, further north, the meres of Ellesmere, are all examples of these.

The path, constructed a few years ago by Tarmac when they extended the quarry, continues, providing brilliant views of our area to the south. Burnell Hill, Lodge Hill, the Lawley and Caer Caradoc rise up majestically and further



Mammoths like this really did wander in large numbers over the area around you

round to the west is the Long Mynd, Long Mountain, Earls Hill and Moel-y-Golfa on the Welsh border. A little further along, the path turns and twists by another viewpoint of the quarry and as you pass an information board, your eye is taken to the nondescript wood and gentle fields immediately to the south.

Don’t be sucked in by apparent indifference to this – this area is of national importance!! Back in September 1986, a local lady from Bayston Hill was walking her dog at the far end of Bomere, near where the scar is looking south. Eve Roberts spotted something out of place in a spoil heap

being created by a couple of quarry workers and to cut a long story short, it turned out they were mammoth bones. There was one adult, aged about 25-30 and three infants (although it is not thought that they were a family group).



The Rat camera hogging again and posing on one of the fossilised tree stumps

They gained a lot of prominence both in the scientific community and in the general public arena. The Condover Mammoth made the national news and Blue Peter turned up to get in on the action! The scientific community were excited because the remains, which dated from about 12,700 years ago, proved that these massive beasts were around for about 5000 years longer in Western Europe than was at first thought; and because they were the most complete mammoth remains found in the UK. The skeletons are housed somewhere in a museum in Ludlow while a replica of the adult can be seen at the Discovery Centre in Craven Arms. It seems that in the glacial wilderness of the time, these animals slid

down the sides of a kettle hole, like the one seen earlier towards Betton Alkmere, and got stuck in the mud at the bottom and died either from starvation or from other predators picking off some ‘easy meat’! Their bones got covered only to be revealed by the quarrying back in 1986. The head of the adult was never found. Get your spade out then!!

A little further on, the path meets a ‘T’ junction of tracks through a kissing gate and you pass through this and turn sharp left. It would be nice to have gone straight on but sadly the footpath around Bomere Farm is poor and then when it continues along the side of Bomere Pool, it is very overgrown and multiple signs make it very clear you are not welcome to hack through the trees to look at the lake itself (another kettle hole).

The good track takes you back underneath the rise up to the quarry on your left, past numerous beehives and small ponds. After a pleasant amble, you eventually return to where the permissive path made by Tarmac left the track and which you passed through a while back. A simple return along the route you already know will bring you back to the new estate and Maxfield Drive.

A pleasant short amble with more to think about than you might had at first have thought. To me, it is utterly fascinating to imagine the Siberian type wilderness that prevailed here not so long ago. The spectacular woolly mammoths along with giant deer, sabre-toothed tigers, giant wolves (25% larger than today’s smaller relatives) and woolly rhinos, among others, which roamed the area just as Neolithic Man was starting to wander in small groups over the land bridge from across what is now the English Channel and becoming the first inhabitants of Britain, is awe-inspiring. And then you see clear evidence of eons ago when Shropshire was journeying across a completely different part of the planet. Wow!

John Glover

What's that bug: Earwigs

Earwigs belong to the order Dermaptera with seven species known in the UK. They are hemimetabolous insects, undergoing incomplete metamorphosis. They will emerge from the egg looking like the adult form.

Can they sting?

Earwigs have forceps (cerci) at their posterior end, which are used for courtship, fighting and as aid in folding their membranous wings. Their cerci show sexual dimorphism, looking different in females and males. The latter tend to be larger and with a wider curvature.

Do they like human ears?

No report has been found of an earwig

deliberately choosing an ear as habitat or food source. This is likely to be an urban myth.

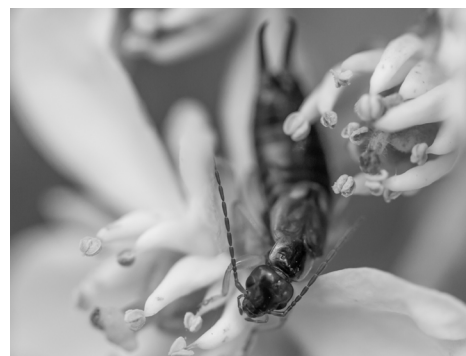
Where do they live?

Earwigs are quite elusive, often not seen during the day and prefer to come out at night (nocturnal) to feed. They are omnivores, feeding on a varied diet which includes decomposing organic material.

Earwigs are subsocial insects without complex social organisations, but the females show parental care. Females will protect their eggs and nymphs from predators, parasites and diseases by grooming, defending, relocating, and applying antifungal secretions to

them. They will continue until their brood has matured enough to fend for themselves, even if they must stop foraging.

Ana Natalio and Nick Antill



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