



been baked it is likely that other products will have been cooked as the ovens cooled. The villagers would have been expected to deliver what they required baking to the bakehouse by 6.00 o'clock in the morning and it would have been ready for collection around lunchtime 12.30 -1.00p.m.

The bakehouse was located in the corner of what was a close, or field, which according to records in 1842 was owned and occupied (used) by Sir George Beaumont, possibly as part of his estate farm. It is not known who the bakers were, but it is likely that they were allowed to make a charge for the service that they supplied.

There were other communal bakeries in the parishes around Coleorton; there was one in Aqueduct Road and it is believed that there was one in Farm Town, but this particular bakehouse is one of the last surviving communal bakehouses in the country.

Coleorton Hall would have had its own facilities to ensure that it had sufficient bread for both the residents and the staff at the hall. Locally grown and milled wheat would have been used for the bread. There were a number of local mills in the area, a post mill at Farm Town, a water mill and Hough Mill at Swannington (which can still be viewed).

Continue along The Moor and turn right into Pitt Lane and return to the car park.

Suitability of this walk

This trail is not suitable for those with wheelchairs or pushchairs; there are a number of stiles to be negotiated and gates which are unsuitable for these. We would also ask walkers to take great care crossing roads and in particular the main A512 where vehicles can be moving very fast.

Refreshments

Liquid refreshments and food are usually available from both The George Inn and The Angel Inn during licensing hours.

Car Parking

The car park at Coleorton Wood is free, but please be aware that the gates are routinely locked around dusk. The closing time is always posted on entering the car park.

Privacy

We ask that you respect the privacy of village residents and ensure you do not trespass on private property. Please observe the Countryside Code.

We hope you have enjoyed this first walk, why not join our group or make a donation by becoming a Friend of Coleorton Heritage. The Coleorton 2000 Committee is committed to conserving local heritage. Contact: heritagewarden@coleorton.org.uk for details of how to join or to donate to Coleorton Heritage.

This leaflet has been jointly funded by the Coleorton 2000 Committee and Coleorton Parish Council.

Coleorton Village Heritage Trail



Aerial photograph of Coleorton Hall and surroundings by kind permission of Lesley Hextall, photographer.

Welcome to our village

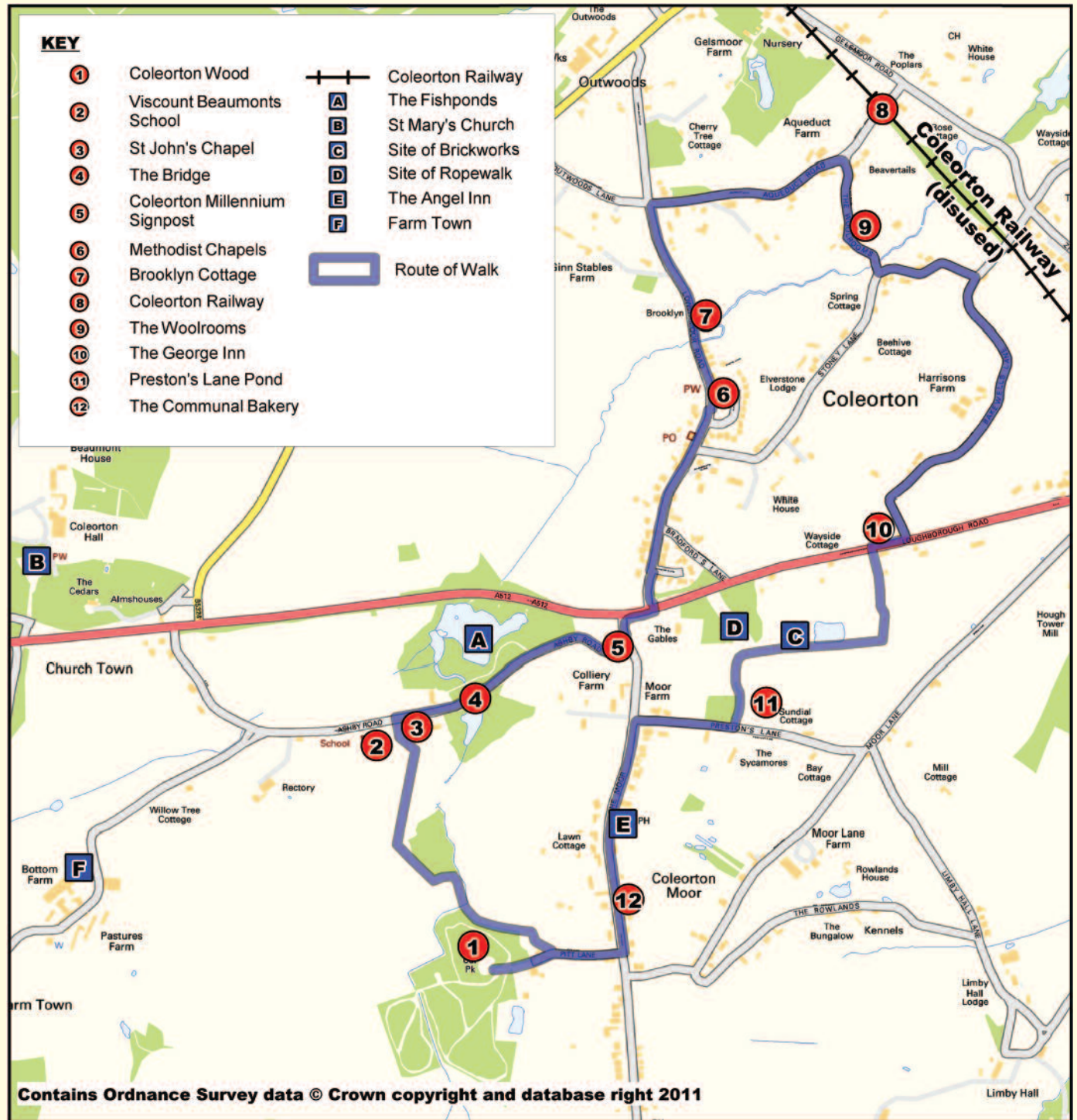
As you walk through the village, its long and substantial heritage is not immediately obvious. One clue is in the name Coleorton, or Cole Orton. The village has a very long history of coal mining, which almost certainly dates back as far as the 1200's, although the only records of this relate to the neighbouring village of Swannington. In the 1990's evidence of deep shaft mining, dating back to the Tudor times (1540), was discovered within the parish. The mining of coal in the village finally ceased in 1968 when the New Lount Colliery was closed, and as you walk through the village it is now almost impossible to see any clear evidence of this long Coleorton heritage.



Deep shaft mining in Tudor times.
Source: De Re Metallica.

At the time of the Domesday Survey, 1085, the village had two major land owners; Robert de Buci, who owned the manor of Overtone, and Henry de Ferrers, who owned what is now called Farm Town. Over the years the names of these two respective manors have changed; the first becoming Overtone Maureward and the second becoming Overtone Sauce. At some stage these two manors came together as Cole Overtone, a name that recognises the importance of coal to the village, and it is this name that has evolved into the current name of Coleorton. This partly explains why our village is very dispersed with a number of distinct districts; these are, Church Town, Farm Town, The Moor (also known as Moor Town), Lower Moor (also known as Rotten Row) and Peggs Green.

The other main source of heritage within the village is Coleorton Hall, the home of the Beaumont family who were Lords of the Manor of



Coleorton from 1426 for over 500 years. The Hall was sold by the Beaumont Family in 1948 and has since been developed into a number of private residences.

The parish church of Saint Mary The Virgin stands close by Coleorton Hall and has been well supported by the Beaumont family throughout their 500 year ownership of the village. It is believed that the church dates back to 1179, although the oldest parts of the current church are contained in the tower, it is believed that these date from the 14th century. Both the church and a previous Coleorton Hall suffered significant damage during the Civil Wars when the Hall was taken over and used as a garrison by the Parliamentary forces to make raids against Royalist forces at Ashby Castle. This resulted in the church requiring significant repair and the hall was completely burnt down and had to be rebuilt.



Sir George Howland Beaumont

The most famous of the Beaumonts is Sir George Howland Beaumont (1753 – 1827), the 7th Baronet of Stoughton. This Sir George was a respected amateur artist, an art critic, an art collector, a Member of Parliament and moved within a circle of famous artists, writers and poets of his time. When Sir George moved to Coleorton in 1804, having rebuilt Coleorton Hall, he was visited by a number of these

now very well known people. A list of the most famous of these would include William Wordsworth, John Constable, Sir Walter Scott, Sir David Wilkie and Samuel Coleridge. Sir George was instrumental in the establishment of the National Gallery, gifting 16 paintings of his own collection and ensuring that Parliament bought 38 of the collection of John Julius Angerstein.

The area has a geological structure where the seams of coal are associated with the seams of clay and this factor has been utilised to develop an extensive brick manufacturing industry alongside the collieries. Bricks manufactured in Coleorton were of a high quality and much sought after; many of the bricks in St Pancras Station were supplied from Coleorton brickyards. The clay was also used to manufacture tiles, pipes and pottery with a ready supply of coal to feed the kilns.

In the 13th and 14th centuries most of Coleorton and the area around was moor land, and apart from coal, the other main industry was the supply of wool to Flanders. As agriculture developed it became a major industry for the village and is the only one to remain.

These mainly physical industries encouraged the growth of inns and ale houses in the village and it is likely that there were up to twelve public houses in the village over the years. Of these only four now remain, two of which can be seen on this walk.

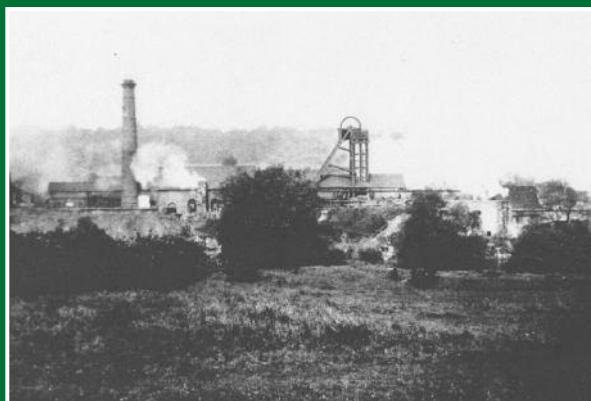


Dingy Skipper butterfly on Birds Foot Trefoil

The village is also blessed with a rich natural history; with its very rural setting, its ancient hedgerows and its two nature reserves. Both of the nature reserves are on the sites of former collieries, New Lount Reserve is the site of the former New Lount Colliery that ceased production in 1968 and Coleorton Wood is the

Site of Coleorton Colliery (locally known as “The Bug and Wink”) and ceased production in 1933. Both sites are continuously being developed to improve their wildlife value and to develop them as public facilities. These sites, and others around the village are the home of some rare and protected species and we are proud to have such a wonderful natural history on our doorsteps.

Our village has a very rich history and is steeped in heritage we hope that you will enjoy this walk through the past and the present; should you require any additional information on our village you can contact the Heritage Wardens at heritagewarden@coleorton.org.uk



Bug and Wink Colliery, early 1900's

Heritage Walk No. 1

The walk starts in the car park of Coleorton Wood. If you have time, do take a walk around the wood and enjoy the wonderful selection of trees and other plants.

1. Coleorton Wood

(Situated at the end of Pitt Lane)

Coal mining has been carried out in the Coleorton area for hundreds of years. From 1875 through to 1933 this particular site was worked as Coleorton Colliery, with the more local name of "The Bug & Wink Colliery". The large spoil heap was removed during the Second World War, but the buildings were allowed to decay. In 1975 the mine shafts were sealed, the buildings demolished and the area was reclaimed for agricultural pasture land. The remaining spoil and brick rubble was spread over the entire 15 acre site and it was then covered by a thin layer of topsoil.

In 1991 the site was planted with trees, contributing to the National Forest, by Leicestershire County Council. Before planting, the whole site was ripped with a sub-soil plough to break up the compacted ground, and fertilisers were added to improve the poor soil.

Trees were selected to take account of the poor soil, and they are a mixture of broadleaf and conifers. Shrubs were planted at the edges of the tree blocks.

Leave the car park and walk up Pitt Lane and just past Wisteria Cottage go through the gate on your left. Follow the footpath back alongside the wood and down the hill, across the bridge over the brook and round the edge of the farmer's field, then down through the open meadow to Ashby Road. On your left is:-

2. Viscount Beaumont School

The School was founded in 1702 following the establishment of a trust, set up in the will of the third Viscount Beaumont; a tithe was placed on Swannington with the rents and profits used to establish and maintain a school and hospital for the village. The free school was to teach children to read and write and the original building was capable of teaching 60 boys and 60 girls. Canon W. B. Beaumont was responsible for building the current school in 1867. A pupil of the early 20th century remembers children marching around the playground chanting tables, using chalk and slates, blazing open fires in the class rooms, pupils stoking the boilers and how.... the front row of seats was reserved for the Beaumonts and the Rector. On 19th July 1926 free school meals were started at the school despite the fact that the school had no facilities to supply these meals.



This meant that 69 children had to march from the school at 12.15p.m. to the Methodist Chapel, where they could provide the meals. The school now serves as a primary school for the village.

The School Hall

On Your right is:-

3. St John's Chapel

(viewed from the outside only, except during services or by special arrangement)



The inscription under this window reads: In Memory of William Beresford Beaumont M.A.



Stained glass windows in St. John's Chapel

This small mortuary chapel was built in the mid 1800's to accommodate burials away from St Mary's churchyard, and also as a place of worship for that growing part of the congregation now living on The Moor. As the majority of the congregation was made up from estate workers and The

Hall's domestic staff, who had been used to attending services at St Mary's Church, there were difficulties with the congregation, and it appears that the chapel was not well supported. The chapel was apparently not consecrated when it was built, and may have been used mainly for burials. More recently, in the 1960's, after a period of some neglect, it was renovated and consecrated by the Bishop of Leicester. The chapel contains three stained glass windows, two of which commemorate Canon W. B. Beaumont who was rector of Coleorton from 1864 - 1901.

Turn right and walk along Ashby Road until you reach the bridge. On your left is Bell Cottage. There was a coaching inn here called "The Bell Hotel" which was pulled down in the early part of the 19th century. The current cottage was once part of the stable block to the Bell Hotel.



The Fish Pond Bridge pre 1938

4. The Bridge

(A Grade 2 listed building on Ashby Road)

In earlier times there would have been either a bridge, or a ford, to cross the stream carrying the drainage water from the south side of the village. The current bridge was probably built at the time the Fish Ponds were created (around 1826), by damming the two streams draining from the south of the village. It was constructed, using locally quarried Coleorton sandstone, with two arches and originally carried a single track road across the stream. By 1938 the traffic volume and vehicular size demanded that the road and bridge be widened. The bridge was taken down stone by stone, each one numbered and stored on site. The stones were rebuilt in precisely the same order as they were removed; thus the outside walls of the bridge are the same as they were in the original bridge. Two new arches were built and the arch nearest the crossroads was fitted out to serve as a new boat house, with mooring rings set into the walls. Bats now roost under the bridge.

Carry-on down Ashby Road, but do occasionally look to your left where you should get a glimpse of the Fish Pond, a breeding site for up to 7,000 toads and once the scene of winter ice skating. Continue to:-

5. The Village Millennium Signpost

(on your left)

To celebrate the start of the 21st century, the Coleorton 2000 Committee worked to create the millennium feature at the junction of the old Ashby Road and The Moor. The paved seating area is bordered with flowers with a central large carved oak signpost in a granite plinth and embellished by the Beaumont crest and features of a forest. It depicts the village's rich past through to the future with the creation of the National Forest. The time capsule planted by the children of Viscount Beaumont School lies beneath the post.

Turn left onto The Moor and walk up to the main road (A512). You are now at a staggered cross-road, please take care crossing over this main road. Walk up the hill and before crossing the road turn round and view both Coleorton Hall and the spire of St Mary's Church.



St. Mary's church

Once on the other side of the A512, walk down Lower Moor Road. The site on your right with new houses on was once the location of The Beaumont Arms, a large inn, with close connections to the Coleorton Hall Estate.



Coleorton Hall, entrance

Interestingly the new road has been named “Overton Close”. The name Coleorton has evolved from two villages Overtone Maureward and Overtone Saucy and was almost certainly known as Cole Overtone before being renamed Cole Orton.

As you walk down Lower Moor Road you pass Bradford’s Lane on your right. Bradford was a blacksmith and his forge was located in this small lane. On the opposite side of the Lower Moor Road to Bradford’s Lane was yet another pub, “The Blacksmith’s Arms” which was demolished in the mid 1900’s.

Continue along Lower Moor Road and just past Beaumonts Green you come to:-

6. Methodist Chapels

(viewed from the outside only, except during services or by special arrangement)



Inside the Methodist Chapel built in 1901

The original Methodist Chapel was erected in 1839 and is situated at the end of Chapel Lane. By the latter part of the 19th century this building was becoming too small and a new, larger chapel was built alongside it and opened in 1901. When the first chapel was built, Sir G H Willoughby Beaumont (1828 – 1882) as lord of the manor would not allow non-conformist churches within the parish, and so it was located in what was then part of the parish of Thringstone.

Continue along Lower Moor Road, as you start to climb up the hill on your right is:-

7. Brooklyn Cottage

The cottage is an example of a typical miner’s cottage built in the early 1800’s. It has been added to over the years but was originally a small thatched residence with “two up and two down”, an earth floor, and an outside water pump, which would have been used by nearby villagers



An impression of Brooklyn Cottage as it may have looked with a thatched roof

for their water supply. The house remained thatched until the early 1940’s and was home to a small general store until the war, it is now a private residence.

Continue up the hill to the crossroads and turn right into Aqueduct Road. Further down this road, and after the slight bend, you come to a number of older properties; it is this area that was the original Woolrooms. Take a look at Frances’s Cottage on your right, a good example of the tiny cottages that were once commonplace in Coleorton. Continue until you reach what remains of the railway bridge that crossed this road; this is part of what remains of:-

8. Coleorton Railway

The railway, engineered by George Stephenson, was opened in November 1833. Originally the line ran from the bottom of the Swannington Incline, straight through Peggs Green, Gelsmoor, Newbold and terminated just beyond Smoile Colliery. It included two tunnels, one at Peggs Green, which was 480 yards long, and a second at Newbold; there was also a bridge spanning Aqueduct Road.



Impressions of 18th century coal transport across Aqueduct Road railway bridge

So, for a relatively short railway, a high degree of civil engineering was involved. The line was latterly (by 1862) extended to the Cloud Hill lime quarry in an effort to improve the financial viability. Two short branch lines were also added to take coal from both the Peggs Green and California collieries.

The railway survived for approximately 40 years and had a somewhat rollercoaster life, with some high points of profitable traffic and a lot of lows where traffic was inadequate. Overall the line was a financial failure, in part a result of the very competitive prices being achieved in the Leicester Coal market, due to a price-cutting war between the Derbyshire collieries and the new collieries at Coalville.

The railway also had a wharf at Gelsmoor, which was run by George Crabtree and operated transferring, coal, slack, lime and any other items that could be conveyed on the railway.

Although the line was a standard-gauge railway it was worked by horse drawn wagons for the whole of its forty year life, with the companies that used the railway supplying both the wagons and the horses. There is no documentary evidence that steam engines were ever used on the Coleorton Railway.

Turn around and walk back down Aqueduct Road, on your left is:-

9. The Woolrooms

Coleorton was surrounded by large areas of open moor land; Gelsmoor, Newbold Moor, Worthington Moor, Swannington Common, Thringstone Moor and Cole Orton Moor were large areas of open land, unsuitable for cultivation, but ideal as rough grazing land. Sheep were allowed to roam free over these moors and in doing so they maintained the scrub vegetation. In the middle ages this land was owned by Garendon Abbey who obtained income from the wool trade with Flanders. It is believed that the original woolrooms were a small number of dwellings used by the monks, with a sheepfold in that area, where the wool will have been processed and stored before transportation to a port.



Impressions of 18th century coal transport across Aqueduct Road railway bridge

More recently the Woolrooms was a cluster of cottages situated between Aqueduct Road and Stoney Lane. Almost all of these cottages have now been knocked down or significantly altered, but in their hey day they

represented something of an industrial estate for the area.

One of the cottages belonged to Charlie Marston who had a forge and manufactured nails; one at a time. Evidence of his forge can be found through the high levels of iron oxides in the soil. The Hall family, stone cutters, also lived in the area. The stone was brought from Whittle Hill in the Charnwood Forest, and was cut and dressed by the Hall family into whetstones. These were in high demand, and the family would travel as far as Sheffield, Birmingham and Coventry to sell them.

Just before you reach the start of the footpath Bensons Cottage is on your right; in the mid 1800's this cottage was occupied by the Richards family. Thomas Richards was drowned in 1863 when the NO. 3 Cole Orton Pit was flooded; his wife and their ten children became destitute overnight. It was under these circumstances that the neighbours came together in support. One neighbour was Simeon Stacey, the local butcher, who supplied them with bones from which, along with vegetables provided by other friends, they could make broth. In this way the family survived until the children were old enough to earn an income.

Follow the footpath into Stoney Lane and take a few steps along the road to your right so that you can see "The Thatches". A very large number of the original cottages in Coleorton were thatched and this is the last remaining example, although it has been extended. Turn around and follow Stoney Lane around the bends until you reach the bottom of Bakewell's lane. Turn right into Bakewell's Lane and walk up the hill. Towards the top of this hill, where the road bends to the right, is the approximate location of Billy Bakewell's pack horse business. Billy was the Eddie Stobart of his time transporting coal by packhorse throughout the region; a business he continued well after the introduction of the railway. Follow the lane to its end and turn right onto the main road; in front of you is:-

10. The George Inn

Take time to look at the Mining Heritage Trail Information Board, which has some additional information about the area.

The George was probably built towards the end of the 18th century, and originally known as the "Rose and Crown"; it is one of four public houses remaining in the village; many more have been converted to private dwellings through the years. Like most of the Inns that have been built in Coleorton, The George is surrounded by mining heritage, with evidence of early coal mining and the route of an early tramway within easy walking distance of its doors. An early 20th century publican was also a butcher.



An early 1900s photograph of the George with a pit pony being led out of the front door

A relative of his recalls that the public bar only had benches, was used by miners, and she remembers talk of meat hanging from hooks and grease dripping on the customers.

Carefully cross the main road and follow the footpath beside Wilford House. At the stiles take the footpath to the right between the two fields. As you progress along this footpath you will notice a number of ponds on your right; these are the remains of the clay pits, once part of the Beaumont's Brickworks, which were located between this footpath and the main road.

At the end of the footpath you cross a stile into a long meadow. This is known as "The Ropewalk" and is reputed to be the area used in the manufacture of ropes, which would have been essential in both the coal and farming industries. Walk around to the left to find the next footpath which passes along beside the:-

11. Preston's Lane Pond

As well as its human, industrial and artistic history Coleorton has an abundant natural history. As an example, this small pond is notable zoologically because it provides a breeding site for four of Britain's seven native amphibian species, one of them protected by law, that scourge of property developers, the great crested newt. The site has been subject to intensive study and amphibian population trends recorded for about 30 years. The field itself is 6 acres, but was once part of a set of 3 fields with the pond in the corner of one of them. During spring the common frog, common toad, smooth newt and great crested newt migrate to the pond to lay their eggs.



They move in from the surrounding land, particularly the woodland and diverse habitats to the west and north (50 yards away is the "Rope Walk", an area where ponds were used for seasoning the rope). The adults and the new generation of youngsters gradually return to their terrestrial habitats up

until the autumn. They may travel as much as a kilometre and these tiny animals (weighing as little as one tenth of a gram when they leave the water) perform prodigious feats each year surmounting the obstacles in their path.

Follow the footpath to the end, immediately opposite is the location of "The Packhorse Inn" yet another pub which has been developed into a private dwelling. It is thought that the "trains" of pack horses would gather in this area before setting out on their long trails.



Turn right down Preston's Lane. Preston's Lane is named after yet another one of Coleorton's blacksmiths, there were several generations of Preston's and their forge was right at the end of this lane on the right hand side where the lane meets The Moor. Turn left into The Moor and about 100 yards past the Angel Inn and opposite the small post box you come to:-

12. The Communal Bakery



(The Moor near the end of Pitt Lane)

We believe that this small brick-built structure was built around 1813 by Sir George Beaumont as a communal bakery for his tenants living in small cottages and crofts

situated on The Moor, Pitt Lane and Workhouse Lane (now Moor Lane).

The building had two ovens, both of which were of simple brick-lined construction, with a flue and a fitted metal door; they were similar to the ovens in the large houses at the time. The ovens were generally heated by lighting a fire inside the oven, made from burning dry brush wood, collected locally; coal being unsuitable for baking.

A specially located single brick may have been used to indicate when the oven was sufficiently hot. The cinders from the fire would be raked out and the heated oven was now ready for baking. When the bread had