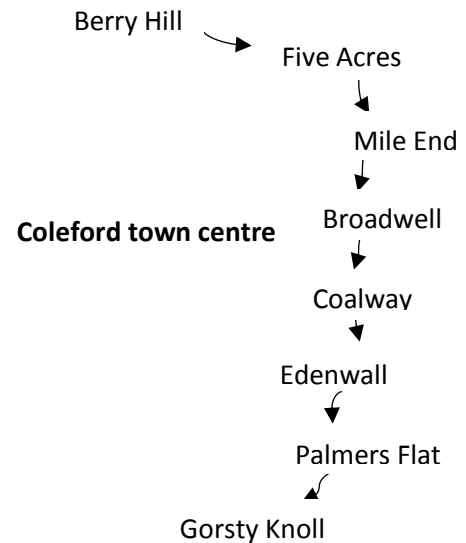


Character assessment of the Eastern Arc of settlement from Five Acres – Palmers Flat

Location

Mile End is the furthest north of the series of linked settlements, where roads from Coleford cross with what was the B4432 from Five Acres round to Milkwall. (Five Acres and Berry Hill also follow this pattern, but are situated in West Dean parish, and in the adjoining Berry Hill/Christchurch NDP area). The settlements also relate to their past heritage ie to the mining of coal and iron, sheep badgers, and also to the edge of the statutory forest. They form an arc of settlement on the edge of Coleford parish, curving around the ridge above the town, and near to the outcropping of coal seams. The pattern can be compared to the rim of a wheel, where the spokes run from the outer settlement to the town centre at the hub. (see diagram 1).

Diagram 1



Landscape

The ridge on which the arc of settlements is formed is the slightly undulating rim at the top, sloping quickly down into the shallow bowl where Coleford town is found. The outer edge, sometimes the eastern boundary of the parish, is usually steeper, eg down to the Cannop Valley, further south east at Channings Hill, thence to Gorsty Knoll and out of the parish to Fetter Hill. To the north the ridge continues fairly flat till the slope down at Long Hill. From the east and south east, whichever way Coleford is approached, it is uphill to about 220m, one of the higher parts of the Forest dome, mainly limestone. This is especially significant in snow, when small roads/houses can be cut off.

Each of the peripheral settlements has its own sense of place: none are perceived as part of the town of Coleford. Although they are not clearly divided on the ground within the arc, that settlement edge is separated in landscape terms on one side from Coleford town centre by valued green farmland, golf courses and grassland (Green Ring 1); and on the outer side by forest - trees and meend (mostly Forestry Commission land).

The green infrastructure is vital to the layout and feel of these communities: this might be important stands of mature oaks eg at Edenwall; the wilder meend toward Gorsty Knoll or the mown green/mesne at Prosper Lane, Coalway. The Forest proper forms an eastern boundary.

There are few accessible water bodies: Jugs Hole, the pond in the woods at Five Acres (just outside this NDP area) and the lakes on each golf course are notable. There is significant evidence of wet lingering underfoot after rainfall in the marginal woods, but no real streams, reflecting the (mainly) limestone beneath. This is the watershed for drainage either to the east toward the Severn, or west toward the Wye.

1. Arc settlements signed at Broadwell Bridge



The heritage landscape is varied: from the forest edge with old quarries and remnants of coal mining to the focus at route crossings with 19C older community buildings and ex-pubs. The green pathways and clustered cottages hark back to an industrial past, no longer active except in the shape of the settlements and landscape. This is a later link to the archaeological and green landscape to the immediate south at Gorsty Knoll.

Settlement character

Mile End:

Mile End Cross is the centre: this road links to A4136 Gloucester-Monmouth, busy with commuting and HGVs and an uphill approach from Coleford, it has a history of accidents. Many of the functions there closed years ago, the chapel and pub included. Beeches Garage remains, and a local sawmills which continues the use of timber locally. Toward Coleford is Forest Hills golf course, which maintains the green infrastructure including some water management. Local agriculture is both arable and pastoral, with some diversification into car boot sales and small industrial/leisure units



2. Mile End Cross, looking NE

Housing is dominantly 2 storey, different sizes, semi and detached and of different ages in 20C. There are still the traditional early 20C houses, with small front garden and iron gate; some newer housing estates have replaced fields/paddocks, but retained some grass and the wall boundaries, whilst infill housing has varied boundaries, but gardens and porches are common features. Hedging, verges and tree/shrubs add to the important link and wildlife corridor into the forest edge. Informal green spaces are evident as well as formal play areas. Mile End cemetery has a significant position off the main road, on the edge of the Forest, and provides services for neighbouring parishes as well as Coleford.



3. Early 20C forest stone house with porch



4. New housing: note mix of materials, porches, walls, green verge



5. Lane with forest behind, mixed housing, hedges

Key views



6. Forest Hills down toward Coleford

Key features/landmarks:

- Forest edge
- Forest Hills golf course and hotel;
- Mile End cemetery;
- 8. Beeches garage



7. Forest Hills toward Lower Lane



9. Forest edge

Broadwell:

Broadwell Bridge shows little evidence of being a bridge today, as the water is culverted; it is more a central crossroads with a very few services, and some interesting heritage. Poolway Rd and Wynols Hill clearly show the green break down the hill between Coleford town and here. The link road around the edge once the B4432 crosses at the Bridge. Subsidiary roads are narrower and residential, mainly with pavements, where development has taken place into the meend which separated Mile End and Broadwell into the 20C. Whilst there were once more functions locally, notably pubs and shops, they have all closed (but see key features/landmarks later). The numbers 30 & 31 buses to Gloucester pass roughly hourly, but at half-hourly intervals, and buses to Monmouth stop 4 times in the day. The main recycling point for the Forest is located in Speech House Road (the B4226 from Cannop to Coleford), where Concrete Utilities (the biggest employer in Broadwell) is also sited on the forest edge.

The green infrastructure is similar to that at Mile End, with the two green edges, but there is more use of tracks into the Forest by walkers and BMX bikes, although informal ways are not signed to Cannop and the main Cycle Trail. There is some camping/caravanning space off Speech House road. Mesne is still there, but sporadic as much of the coniferous plantations reach into the periphery, as well as housing extending out.





11 Mesne near old coal workings

Few buildings in Broadwell predate 1900: part of the earliest area is known as the Land Society (Machen /Howard /Campbell Roads) where members built on rectangular plots in a field they purchased. The plots are very regular, with late 19C early 20C houses showing some common features: small front and large back gardens (to feed a family); slate roofs, sash style windows, chimneys, porches. Many houses have been altered, rendered and extended, with some conversions.

13. Land Society: narrower roads, right angled junctions

Ribbon development along North and South Roads is a mixture of ages and styles of housing. The building line of the streetscape varies significantly as some houses have small front gardens, some none; some front the road, some are end on. Access – whether pedestrian or car – is varied or piecemeal, with some roads meeting with curved, differently angled egress to North or South Rd, others are right-angled with difficult visibility. Apart from North/South Road and the B4226 there are no through roads.

In the 1930s and 50/60s council housing took up much space in estates off North Rd. At the end of the 20C some smaller estates of market housing were built on the east side of South Rd. Green verges are evident in both, but gardens have shrunk.

Parking is on-street, on-plot, hard standing and informal use of forest waste.

10 Factory screened on forest edge



12 Jugs Hole pond



14 Part of the linking road around the arc



15 Verges remain with later council housing



16. late 20C terraces, downhill with parking courts



17. Older council housing on edge of forest, much now privately owned

Key views



18 Mesne, hedge, field, forest



19 Speech House Rd to Cannop steep winding road downhill past recycling centre



20 On the eastern side, separating the arc from Coleford town centre, mainly over grassland – agricultural and golf courses



21. Broadwell toward Berry Hill

Key features

- Broadwell Memorial Hall
- Evergreen Hall
- Social Club
- Church of the Good Shepherd
- Broadwell AFC
- Salvation Army at the old Bird in Hand



22 Social Club



23 Broadwell Memorial Hall



24 Evergreen Hall – 3 community buildings within 50 yards of each other



25 Church of the Good Shepherd



26 Broadwell AFC

Coalway

The north of Coalway, where it joins with South Rd Broadwell, is the highest point, and lands slopes down to the Cross and to east and west; from the Cross there is a minimal slope along the main road to Edenwall, but steepens to east and south toward Fetter Hill and into Palmers Flat. Pumping is required to take services over this watershed toward the Severn rather than the Wye.

Coalway Cross, formerly known as Coalway Lane End, gives a centre, and the majority of services are found within a short distance – shops (including a post office), schools, churches, recreation ground, but not all in the same cluster. The shop at Old Rd/New Rd junction is midway between the 2 churches, and harks back to a 19/20C cluster. The road narrows into a pinch point and the bus stop was moved slightly to help this. The 31 bus to Gloucester passes roughly hourly, and buses to Monmouth stop 4 times in the day. 100 yards along Coalway Rd are the 2 schools, afterschool club and playgroup, the recreation ground, changing rooms and hall. Edenwall Rd has a shop and coach firm and Parkend Rd the Crown Inn. Although functions have been lost

here over the years - shown by remnant place names - some have been gained, mainly from Broadwell. There is still a local tendency to give directions via places which no longer exist!

To the east approaching Edenwall and south at Parkend Walk is mesne and forest, with some significant stands of dominantly oak, but with other mainly native trees and shrubs eg birch, holly, some sycamore. The areas of mesne are sometimes rough, with some sheep, boar and rabbits in evidence, and some have been cared for informally, used for play, and parking, or just as green. There are green verges, even banks, linking in remnants of mine waste, huddled cottages and gardens. From most parts of Coalway, some sort of green space/trees can be seen, and access to forest is within 5-10 minutes walk.



27 Parkend Walk - community tree 28 Outhouse/garage



29 Mown meend with forest backcloth

Whilst the key roads are from Parkend to Coleford and around the edge, subsidiary roads are narrower, some with pavement one side, and some without, and tend not to be through roads (except for Old Rd). There is a real contrast between a. the unplanned lanes and historic growth associated with 19C mining and workers cottages, often around the forest edge, and b. the 20C housing along the main roads with some infill, and c. housing estates, where traffic was planned in.

- a) Unplanned lanes eg Prosper Lane give onto the west of the mesne/ forest edge. Although there has been some modern infill, much of this area consists of cottages – terraced/semi and detached - with gardens, porches, stone garden walls, and gates. Often houses have been combined into one, or extended. There are also “typical” houses of Forest stone – some rendered - of larger size, but all are 2 storey and usually front on to a lanes which are of differing standards and widths.

Clusters of houses form microcommunities.



30 changed buildings
around lane

Some parking is accommodated on the plots, but there is also use of forest waste for informal parking. Frequently there are older outbuildings, sheds, former outside toilets and/or pig sties in various states of repair. Some plots are larger, or have a small “field” with hedges/fences where chickens/animals may be housed. Evidence of boar is pervasive.

31 extended cottages



- b) Along the 4 roads leading from the Cross are houses in rows, fronting onto the street. They are individual, but of similar design some 19C, most 20C with later infill. Many streetscapes show variation section by section. These tend to be larger 2 storey properties with larger gardens. They vary with brick or stone construction with tile or slate roof, dependent on age.

32 Coalway Rd and golf course separating Coalway from the Town Centre



- c) Council housing estates were built mainly immediately post war, and the Wynols estate in the 1970s completed building on the site of a POW camp. Many of the houses are now privately owned. In Wynols Court bungalows were built specifically for older people, once with a Warden on site (photo 33).



33

Birch Park is the largest modern estate in Coalway with 49 properties, but Forsdene Walk, Crown Meadow, all have roads leading into them which are no through roads. More recently smaller developments have been constructed around Old Rd and Prosper Lane. Each development is designed with a more urban look, except for Walnut Close which has retained the mature walnut tree in the central green space, and is grouped around it. Cattle grids are often found at the entrances to try and keep out the free ranging sheep.



34 Walnut Close, a modern small estate

Key views



35 Parkend Walk to Coalway Cross

- Coalway Rd toward Coleford (32)
- Parkend Walk to Coalway Cross 35

Key features



36 shop and post office on the Cross

- Shops
- Churches
- Crown
- Schools
- Rec
- Trees - Walnut Close & Parkend Walk

37 Crown Inn



89 Infants School, Juniors, after school club, and playgroup



39 Coalway Rec

Edenwall and Palmers Flat

Edenwall Road is at the top of the ridge, fairly flat, it links Coalway Cross to Channings Hill (Palmers Flat) which is steep enough to cause problems approaching in icy conditions from the south. A second valley slopes off the ridge toward Fetter Hill and Lower Palmers Flat.

The main road dominates especially down the hill. Others are access roads only. Volume of traffic on the steep hill is significant, having to pass cars parked mainly on the e side To the east, at the back of the hill against the forest, a metalled lane weaves round and small green spaces eg behind Stoneleigh are used for informal play. Another access road leads from Edenwall near the stile behind the other housing inside the golf course boundary.

Edenwall is less densely built up than Palmers Flat with rows straddling the triangle of mature oaks, but houses stand back from the road, and also occur in clusters to the east. Small front, large back gardens dominate. Cottages and houses are often extended. To the east an unplanned cluster acts as a hamlet of two- storey detached, semi detached and some bungalows (1950s) Locks Row is obvious: a terrace of workers cottages on road. Stone sheds and outbuildings are frequent.



40 Green informal play area

There is continuous ribbon development down the hill at Palmers Flat (45). Regular and irregular styles, outhouses and buildings are set close to and well back from the road on long, thin, short and wide plots. Sash

style windows – originally – are often altered. Chimneys of varying size from 2 to 6 pots. Most have porches, but varied shapes.

The Coach firm next to the ranch style shop off the track at Edenwall, along with parking on forest waste give some employment, but in a mainly residential area. There is a dramatic wirescape at Edenwall (41).



41

The golf course forms the western edge, toward Coleford. Mature trees stand in the triangle at Edenwall (42). Mainly oak, these are valued locally but Forestry Commission are practising some management, and possibly replanting as needed. Holly, birch, are also mixed in with shrubs, foxgloves/gorse/wildflowers, tracks and mesne.

There is a green backcloth of trees behind buildings on the east, with areas of intense greenery and bushes. Meend and rough ground (old coal workings) lead into mature Forestry plantations. Gorse, bracken, oak, spruce, grass with evidence of boars, edge away to multiple animal routes into the forest.



42 Oaks at Edenwall



43 mesne, gap through trees to cluster of houses.

Key views



44 towards old colour works, ironworks and quarries
Gorsty Knoll and Sling in background



45 Up Channings Hill, Palmers Flat

Key features

- Oaks at Edenwall
- Gibsons trading post
- Green at top of hill and behind Stoneleigh

Eastern Arc

Positive features and special qualities

- Forest and mesne edge - active green infrastructure; stands of oak
- wildlife corridors and informal leisure/play
- green infrastructure over Golf Courses and arable/pastoral land, views toward Coleford
- sports fields and play areas
- separate “village” identities, micro communities
- Coalway especially has local services
- Link to heritage but transitional

Negative features and detracting elements

- Impact of traffic (including heavy traffic) at crucial junctions especially at Broadwell Bridge and near the recycling centre at the top of a steep and winding hill; Old Rd Coalway; Palmers Flat; Mile End Cross where accidents happen frequently (main route for traffic especially heavy goods through Coleford to Gloucester).
- loss of pubs, shops, services at every settlement: only Coalway has any now
- 3 Halls at Broadwell, 1 at Coalway all trying to give services to local people and trustees try to keep them in good repair
- Wirescape is intrusive

Looking ahead –

- **Conserve** the identities of satellite settlements through keeping the green areas separating them from Coleford town centre and the transitional tree/mesne edge around the settlement next to the forest “proper”
- **Enhance** safe traffic movement at major junctions eg Mile End Cross/Broadwell Bridge/ Old Rd/ New Rd Coalway/ by schools/Coalway Rec
- **Create more cycle routes** – toward Coleford and Cannop, as much off road as possible
- **Create** a greener focus at Broadwell Bridge
- **Enhance** the triangle at Edenwall by careful husbandry of the stands at Edenwall and Parkend so that these mature trees last as long as possible, and give time to plant as they deteriorate;
- **Maintain** the heritage layout/buildings which make the area distinctive
- As services and employment in the arc decreases, **increase access to the town centre and to places of work**
- By upgrading lines and taking the electricity underground, minimise the impact and reduce concern about wires, power cuts and poor broadband;