

# TCHT Newsletter

## Titterstone Cleve Heritage Trust

Autumn 2010

Registered Charity No. 1120659

### Welcome to the Autumn issue of the TCHT Newsletter.

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#### Forthcoming Events:

**Saturday 25th September 2010:**

### TCHT Autumn Fayre

(see opposite) Advance tickets

[www.thecleehilltrust.co.uk](http://www.thecleehilltrust.co.uk)

**Saturday 9th October 2010:**

### The Serpent Gathering

(see inside)

#### THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!!

WE ARE NOW ABLE TO BUY THE NOVERS WOODLAND AND START WORK ON PHASE ONE OF THE PROJECT



Thanks to all the "Friends of TCHT" and those who so generously donated to the project fund!

See page 6 for more details of the Novers Project!

### TCHT AUTUMN FAYRE 25TH SEPTEMBER 2010

MIDDAY TO 5PM AND 7PM TILL LATE  
(gates open 11am)

at Mahorall Farm, Nash

PART OF THE CLEOBURY FRINGE

Adults £3 each Children free  
Family—2 adults and kids £5

BIRDS OF PREY  
"BATTLE OF THE GIANTS"  
BLACKSMITH  
VINTAGE FARM VEHICLES

BEE KEEPING

ARCHERY

BASKET MAKING

RAG RUGGING

PEGLOOM WEAVING

FELT MAKING

FOREST AND WOODLAND COOKING

MEDICINAL PLANTS

IRONAGE COOKING

VEGETABLE STALL

SHROPSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

PLUS

Tombola, Raffle, Skittles, Splat the Rat  
and much, much more!!!

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From 7pm

Novers Project Presentation

Films: Rebecca Hoskins—Farm of the Future  
and/or Martin Crawford's—Forest Garden Year

From 9pm Live music with

### HAGGLEBAG & Friends

"Full on Irish with a hint of Bluegrass, country and  
English music thrown in..."

**FOLLOWED BY OPEN MIC**

Food, Local Beer & Cider available

Tickets £10 available now!!  
(£12 on the day)

Contact us for more details!

# The Titterstone 'Terror' Richards Castle Soap Box Derby July 2010

Sitting in the cramped cockpit of the Titterstone Terrier, built to accommodate Darren's somewhat slimmer figure than my own, perched atop the ramp waiting for the soapbox ahead to launch and beginning to think "*what the .... am I doing here*". When the plan was hatched 2 months ago it seemed like a good idea, now I'm not so sure. With three weeks to go to the run it had still been a cosy plan. Then a flurry of activity by Darren and Dingle created the TT. Small and beautifully marked and from its first prototype run, which ended in disaster on the Dhustone Lane as the TT tried its hardest to spit Darren out, very much with a will of its own. My first drive of the slightly modified beast should have been a discrete test run on Titterstone summit. That was sabotaged by Darren driving the TT into a large metal gate and buckling a wheel, back to the shed. So instead here I sit for a first run before an audience of several thousand spectators lining the Richards Castle course, "*so no pressure then, Hey Ho !*".

The gates up and were off. First run I tell myself so take it slow and easy after all I have never done more than sit in the thing before. I totter down hauling on the brake on every bend and with the commentators voice in my ear saying "this could be the wooden spoon run". "*Damn right , I'm down here, your up there and I'm going quite fast enough for a first time ever in this contraption*". Then the last bend, over the line and bounce to a stop. "*Made it, but two more runs to go !*".

"*Glutton for punishment, idiot, old enough to know better*" are just a few of the thoughts flitting through my head as I sit all too soon once again on the launch ramp. This time no excuse of being the first run either, have to go for it. "*After all its just a soapbox, gulp!*"

The gates up and the TT roles down the ramp, "*so far so good*". Gathering speed now, keep off the brake, *not that it does much*. A short straight, not too bad, quite enjoying it, then into the first bend, a 90 degree left, brake short and hard and into the bend. Through and going well, another straight, longer and faster than the first, gathering speed, letting the TT go, hanging on, then into the chicane, cattle grid on the left, aim to the right between bales of straw, haul on the brake then let her go, through. Then the hill proper opens up, steeper now curving to the right and with a less than smooth surface *Oh SUGAR !*

The TT is bucking, jumping from wheel to wheel, no suspension so from 4 wheels to two wheels to airborne in as many seconds. Back wheels trying to overtake front. The TT jumps sideways to the left then back to the right.

All instinctive now, no time for thought, steering wheel is a live thing, half way down the long right hand curve. Bottom left hand bend in sight. Try for a racing line steer to the right and aim for the left apex, haul on the brake, slows a little, then through the bend, still on the tarmac, still in one piece, going to make the finish.

Through the finish, feels like a hundred miles an hour not the 30 odd that it is. Bounce up onto the grass into the finish area and swing the wheel round to miss the straw bales. Helmet off and struggle to extricate myself from the TT cockpit.

The force on the last left hand bend has buckled the offside front and rear wheels, our ancient post office bike wheels were not built to take the side forces generated hopping around bends for a fall of 50m in 500m. But we are otherwise both intake, and the time keepers clock shows a respectable time, so honour is satisfied. But I have to admit to a level of relief when Darren similarly buckles the last pair of replacement wheels on his next run, I don't have to go again, **phew !!!**



Would I do it again, **YOU BETCHA !** But hopefully with suspension and with better brakes. Thanks to Darren and Dingle for building the TT and to Lee for the paintwork. The TT will be on display at the TCHT Autumn Fayre.

Watch this space for News on the Dhustone Derby

CONGRATULATIONS TO DARREN & JANE ON THE RECENT BIRTH OF THEIR NEW DAUGHTER

**Glynn Barratt** (soapbox survivor)

## **A Review of the Oscars (event) By Chris King Turner**

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> of June was the TCHT illustrated talk and film show evening down at Oscars in the Assembly Rooms, Ludlow. A very good turn out of about 50 people came to learn more about the archeology and history of both the hill and the people that have worked and lived there. The three presenters were refreshingly contrasting and served to keep the audiences interest and to promote the work of the TCHT.

Glynn Barratt started the evening with a comprehensive presentation of the history of Clee Hill spanning from prehistoric times to the present day with brilliant visual displays and a fascinating talk. The talk was a bringing together of many previous research projects on the hill and also new unpublished work which was genuinely interesting about aspects of the history previously unknown. The amount of research and information was first class and the passion of interest that Glynn has about the hill was clear.

Alf Jenkins then recounted his invaluable memories of his time living on the hill which added some first hand realism to the evening. He talked about his memories being brought up on the hill and the characters he met that worked in the once thriving quarries. The importance of the lime quarrying particularly at the Novers were explained and how it was quarried then burned and the importance of the end use of the lime. He highlighted the multitude of other small industries that once existed including the brickyards, the stone nappers, and the Bell pits which all served to compliment the main quarrying industry. He also talked about the ground breaking engineering challenges that were implemented Including the Benson Brook Hydro Scheme, the Inclines and the Arial ropeway.

Chris Neal then highlighted the dreadful situation with the recent illegal poisoning of the Peregrines on Clee Hill and also highlighted the dangers to the public and other animals that this act could have led to. He also showed various films explaining about the vital conservation work he is involved with concerning endangered species in different parts of the world. His captivating flying display, with several of his much loved birds including Molly a 12 year old barn owl provided a fitting finale to the event.

A thoroughly good evening, which was extremely well received and a real achievement for the Trust to make good headway in explaining what TCHT is trying to do.

Well done to all who were involved!

CKT

## **The Serpent Gathering**



**Sat  
9<sup>th</sup> Oct  
2010**

**From  
Midday  
at the**

**Royal Oak Clee Hill**

**Prehistoric  
Titterstone Clee**

**a talk by Glynn Barratt**

**Tales of  
Titterstone**

**Story Walk by Suzanne Thomas**

**Join us later from 7.30pm**

**“Sing Say or Pay”**

**Donations to Titterstone  
Clee Heritage Trust**

**For more details please visit**

**[www.thecleehilltrust.co.uk](http://www.thecleehilltrust.co.uk)**

# The Potteries and Pottery of Cleve Hill

By Sue Dawes

Sue's article about the clay stuff that comes out of the hill and what people made with it in the days when they didn't have telly! :)

## Slipware shards found at Hopton Wafers, are these from Cleve Hill potteries ?

### Making Traditional Slipware:

Slipware is a clay pot that has been decorated with a coloured SLIP (a liquid coloured clay) Lead-glazed and fired in a kiln to an earthenware temperature between 890c and 1100c.

The decorative slipware process is the same for all slipware pieces. First the body of the pot is formed; all the pieces that have been found in our garden at Hopton have been made from a light buff or pinky clay and all the broken pieces seem to have come from shallow bowl shapes.

The slip decoration starts by pouring a thin coating of the liquid clay over the whole surface of the clay body. The pouring slip has a thin batter like consistency and is usually of a contrasting colour to the body of the clay, for example, brown on white. The samples that have been found at Hopton have a brown slip on a buff body and a white slip on a buff body.

Slip trailing is the method of applying the decorative pattern on to first slip layer. The decorative pattern can be applied using a quill, rubber bulb or pipette or any vessel that can allow the controlled application of thin lines of coloured slip.

Once the body of the pot has been covered with a layer of coloured slip a decorative pattern in a contrasting coloured slip is trailed over the top, the patterns can be very complicated and depict plants, people, and animals or have just simple lines that have been drawn through each other. The final stage is the application of the glaze which sealed the surface and gave the pot its characteristic glossy appearance.

The examples from our garden have several simple line patterns on the surface: -

1. The Smallest piece has a pinky/ buff body with a brown slip covering and a white line slip trailed over the surface. This can be easily seen on the cross section. There is a very worn glazed surface.



2. A buff body with a shallow curve to the surface, the rim has been finished with a regular pinched pattern that was done before the slip pattern had been applied. In cross section you can see that the body was coated with a white slip and then a brown fine line slip trailed on the top surface, while the slip was still wet you can see where the potter then pulled the brown through the white to form a swirl pattern. This piece has also been glazed to give the glossy surface which now has a crackled appearance.



3. The largest of these pieces has a dark buff body and from the curved surface it must have once been from a large flattish platter with a slightly flared edge. The edge has been very neatly finished with a regular pinched rim done before the slip pattern had been applied. In cross section you can see that the body was coated with a white slip and then a brown line slip trailed over the surface in a circular pattern, once this had been done and while the slip was still wet a fine pointed tool was used to pull the brown line through the white to give this regular spiky pattern. This was also glazed. On this piece you can also see that there was a small amount of glaze on the back that had been stuck to something while it was in the kiln. On both of the clay samples with the pinched edges there is no glaze on the rim of the samples.

**Marbling:** - First coat your plate with a white slip then while still very wet trail onto the surface a few widely spaced line of a contrasting slip and gently move the plate around, causing an pattern to emerge.

None of these pattern types have been found on the examples found at Hopton.



Examples of Clee Hill potters work

This method of decoration has to be done quite quickly before the clay slip dries, if the slip dries too much you would not be able to draw the coloured slips through each other to create a pattern.

There are other pattern types that can be achieved for example: -

**Sgraffito:** - This means 'scratched' so the potter would scratch a pattern through one slip to the contrasting clay underneath, this method can only be undertaken when the clay is at the leather hard stage.

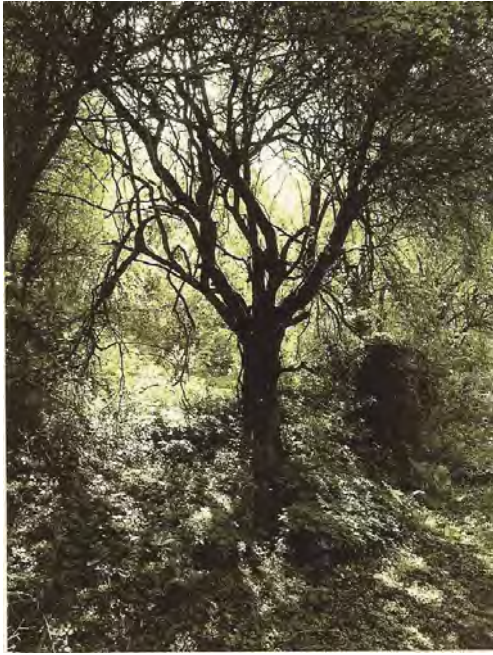
**Feathering:** - The base clay is covered with a thin layer of slip and then immediately lines of a contrasting colour are trailed onto the surface. Taking a fine pointed tool first draw the point through the slip one way then through the slip in the opposite direction almost creating a fish tail pattern.

The Clee Hill pottery industry grew up alongside the brick making industry, based on the wide range of clays available on the hill and on the expertise of kiln firing within the brick industry. The potteries themselves were small cottages industries with several examples recorded in census information in the mid 19th century. The Candlehouse toll house at Angel Bank was recorded at 1851 census as: 'Potter and Turnpike keeper', as was a farm site at Bitterley and The Pothouse on Hopton Bank. The industry seems to have been in decline by 1860.

If by any chance you have examples or photographs of pottery that may have been made in the Clee Hill potteries TCHT would love to hear from you so we can build up a collection of styles and types relating to this past local industry.

SD

## THE NOVERS PROJECT UPDATE:



In 2006 a catalyst to the foundation of TCHT was the coming onto the open property market of a unique piece of historic landscape, **The Novers Limestone Quarry**. The slopes of Titterstone Hill was once all forested but charcoal burning for the early iron industry, limestone, coal and stone extraction over a period of some 400 years removed all but tiny pockets of the early forest. The Novers comprising some 28 acres at Knowlegate, on the Tenbury road is a unique example of the early lime quarrying industry which flourished from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The site is one of Titterstone's secret places, an important historic site but perhaps more importantly one of the few pockets of relic woodland left on the hill. When the quarrying ceased the site was abandoned and slowly the native woodland came back, regenerated from the ancient forest seed bank. Hidden within the woodland lie ancient quarry working, remains of buildings, a mine and lime kilns, it is also home to a wealth of wildlife and **a truly magical place which captures the imagination of all who visit it.**

TCHT recognised the importance of this landscape and launched a project in 2006 to protect the site and to secure it as a community access woodland. TCHT approached the owner who agreed to allow the Trust time for the purchase price to be raised. They also lobbied English Heritage and convinced them that the site was of such value that English Heritage agreed to give 90% of the site protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, a designation which gives the Novers the same national importance as sites such as Ludlow or Stokesay Castles.

Once purchased TCHT plan to make the site accessible as a community access woodland for local people and visitors to the area to enjoy the tranquility of this secret place. The first stages once acquired will be the provision of a circular walk to allow people safe access to this truly fascinating landscape. Information will be gathered and on-site interpretation will allow the history of the area to come alive for visitors to enjoy. It will also be available as an educational facility for local and ultimately more distant schools, to bring children of all ages to enjoy access to this unique landscape.

TCHT plan to manage the woodland to increase its biodiversity setting aside areas for wildlife, they will work with Shropshire Wildlife Trust in this respect. TCHT will also organise and deliver various activities for people to become practically involved in. environmental courses including coppicing, processing coppiced products, fence construction, wildlife watching. The archaeological elements of the site will be used to explain the history of Clee Hill and to allow people experience of recording and conserving our local heritage.

And in the longer term there will be the creation of a forest garden, which will be managed to promote the native and traditional forest plants, that were once gathered as food by our ancestors. Children and adults will be able to experience how difficult or how rich life was in the distant past with a series of experience based events. The Novers project will create a resource which will be unique in the county and a project of national significance

TCHT has worked towards this vision for the last three years, putting together a series of grant applications to funding bodies. Some have failed but some have been successful so that now the acquisition and start of the project is very close. The project has been generously supported by a grants from the now abolished Shropshire District Council and more recently by Natural England's Natural Assets grant programme and by the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund.

**The final part of the funding has come from the very kind donations given by members of the community of Titterstone Clee.** Launched at an open meeting in Knowbury village hall, and unanimously endorsed by the audience present the Novers appeal has successfully raised the remainder of the purchase price for the woodland and the project will be started in September. **THANK YOU ONE AND ALL.** Please see the TCHT website for more details over the next few months.

[www.thecleehilltrust.co.uk](http://www.thecleehilltrust.co.uk)

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## Clearing up on the Clee

### The litter pick 30th July 2010

By Suzanne Thomas

9 am on a Friday morning, we gathered at Clee Hill Village Hall to prepare. Heidi Steele from Shropshire Councils Street Scene had brought together many people from the different groups on Clee Hill, including the Landowner Mr Mark Wiggin, Cllr Richard Huffer, The Commoners Association, TCHT, AONB, Clee Hill Forum, the Youth Forum and Shropshire Wildlife Trust to join together in clearing up our wonderful hill.

After a short talk by Heidi and introduction by the Environment Agency representatives as to what you can pick up and what you call them in for, we were issued with gloves, pinchers and fluorescent yellow "westkots" and ventured up Dhustone Lane. We started with a bag each and these were soon filled up with cans, and bottles, and bits of rubbish that somehow or other got up there. Tyres enough to line the Top Gear test track and a lawnmower!



Great chunks of Scrap metal, bits of cars, were all hauled together and taken away to the Council Tip where things like that really should be disposed of! The youngsters that joined us were brilliant and the old stable block was almost sparkling when they'd done!

But it wasn't all Rubbish; among the waste and the twisted metal, there were seemingly delicate Harebells, and above us as we litter picked were many Ravens, the true guardians of the Hill top.

I heard them calling out, and was greeted by the aerial display of 10 or so amazingly agile birds, some young, and some elders. All fascinating. They followed us across the skyline as we moved from the car park round to the stables. And I hope they approved of our efforts.



It was a very productive day, both in terms of clearing away the litter and the coming together of many groups and people who have a common interest in the preservation and conservation of the fabulous Hill that is Titterstone Clee.

There are plans to do more litter picks, so if you'd like to help, please keep an eye open for the councils posters, or check our website [www.thecleehilltrust.co.uk](http://www.thecleehilltrust.co.uk) as we'll be promoting this worth while venture there too!



## Titterstone Tea anyone?

There are still some mugs available, if anyone would like to purchase one or two!

They are a limited edition, and there will be a different design available next year!

Why not start collecting them?

Available from the Trust  
@ £5 each!



## Titterstone Tales: The Stories and Folklore of the Hill The Clee Hill Serpent

What makes a Myth a Myth? Age? Belief? Historical coincidences?  
Or imagination and inspiration used when looking at a place?

Seasonal myths are found all over the world, so why not on the most prominent Hill of the South Shropshire skyline? There are myths of Rainbow serpents from the Ancient Maya, and Great Worms from Scandinavian myths and here on Titterstone Clee, there is the Serpent.

Oh yes, deep within the hill, according to myth, is a cavern formed when the centre of Titterstone was red and hot and moving. Within this deep cavern, is the nesting place of the Clee Hill Serpent.

She lays an Egg at the end of Summer, and stays deep within the hill during the winter months. The first signs of Spring show through the ground when the egg has cracked.

Around Easter, the Egg, that contains the life of Summer, bursts open and Green returns to the Hill in bright unfurling leaves.

The Hawthorn Blossoming heralds the emergence of the Serpent from the Hill and so Summer begins.

All through the summer, the Serpent is on the hill, you may catch sight of her, or at least glimpse the scales as black as night, yet shimmering with every colour of the rainbow.

As Autumn begins, she gathers bracken and heather to line her nest, and so the yearly cycle begins again.

Whether you believe this tale or not, is up to you, but then isn't that so with all stories?



Registered Charity number 1120659

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