



Explore Coleford in Heritage Open Days September 15 2025

Fourteen people joined in the walk around Coleford starting from the Main Place, the community centre in Coleford. As some people had lived locally for years, and some were visitors, Marilyn Cox, the leader tailored the walk appropriately for that and the 1.5 hours duration advertised.

Setting off along the path by the GWR museum, we discussed the importance of the two different lines which came into Coleford, and the tramways which were evident before. All of these were related to the industrial heritage as a mining centre for iron and coal. The relics on the ground are there, but need walkers to look above ground and away from some of the obvious features too.

We admired the Clock Tower, the iconic centre of Coleford and a Grade II listed building, the remains of the octagonal church demolished in 1883. This prompted a recommendation to the [Coleford Hidden Heritage App](#), available free through your smart phone. The Foresters' Forest project has produced a series of these apps related to the wider Forest of Dean and its geology. They are useful guides to walks of different areas and interests.

Some discussion ensued around the Mushet's – two generations of chemists who completed the final aspects of the Bessemer process in Coleford, allowing the steel industry to flourish. Their sites are Scheduled Ancient Monuments outside the town itself, but their mural features in Mushet Walk, next to the Tourist Information Centre.

With reference to the Battle of Coleford 1643, and Keith Morgan's poem of that name, the politics of the Civil war followed the route from Newland through Coleford toward Gloucester. The Sealed Knot mark this event each February.

Walking up St John St we looked at the first storeys, the architraves and sash windows and significant doorways which show previous uses for the wine vaults, the (closed) bank and the coaching inn at the Angel. People commented on the recent refurbishment of the White Hart, debatably the oldest pub in town.

Mention was made of the local art and literature scene through the mural in Staunton Road where Dennis Potter, FW Harvey and Joyce Latham feature. Potter is known for the Singing Detective and was born at Berry Hill. His last play, Karaoke, was filmed partly in Coleford.

Finally at Bank House we saw the home, in Forestry England, of the Deputy Gaveler who is in charge of the Freeminers gales. Those people over 21, who have worked underground for a year and a day, and were born within the Hundred of St Briavels can apply to be a Freeminers, and have the right to mine for iron or coal within the Forest. Some ochre is also mined at Clearwell Iron mines, near Puzzle Wood, where Doctor Who and Star Wars have been filmed.