

STOP PRESS - 1/4/09

The World Organisation for Heritage announced in Oslo today that Littleham in North Devon, England has been designated "World Heritage Site" status. Speaking at the organisation's annual awards dinner at the Palace of the Norse in Oslo, Norway, Per Eric Lager, the President, said that "...Littleham is a jewel in the world's crown of gems." He went on to state that "...there had been little doubt in the minds of the panel of judges that Littleham was a great asset to the planet in terms of world cultural heritage and they had no hesitation in placing the little hamlet at the top of the new heritage site awards for 2009". He continued by saying that "...the decision from the 27 judges had been unanimous, the first time this had happened since the inclusion of the Taj Mahal in 1937". Apparently the clinching factor had been the presence of Fagleocitus Mammotheus (Giant Climbing Mite) in the area known as Frail Pool, a watery marshland at the centre of the village.

There has been some consternation from some of the residents of the little community in this very rural corner of North Devon. Whilst proud that their home has achieved such international recognition some villagers are concerned about the impact upon their quiet backwater. An awareness that other World Heritage sites like the Tower of Pisa and the Grand Canyon now attract visitors in their millions per annum cause residents to wonder how the community will cope. Suggestions that Yeo Vale be concreted over from Landcross Chapel to Littleham Mill to form a car park are currently under debate and already Macdonald's are in advanced discussions with the village elders with a view to establishing their first rural out let at Hooper's Water.

The water authority in a press statement today has said that current water provision would be quite inadequate to support such an influx of visitors. In these circumstances, they state, the creation of new reservoirs in the locality are indicated. In answer to questions to the Electricity Generators about their capacity to support all of the likely new drains upon their resources, the writer was told that the predicted demand would certainly justify the building of a new power station within the environs of the parish.

Clearly this accolade is a mixed blessing and there is much now to concentrate the minds of the folks who live in this small community. Whilst some outcomes are uncertain, there is one thing that is without doubt, things will never be the same again.

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