

"Caring for our environment"

Centre : **COOLRAIN**
County : **LAOIS**
Category : **A**

Results

Date of Adjudication : 16-06-96

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded
Overall Developmental Approach	50	27
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	30	16
Landscaping	40	25
The Built Environment	40	25
Litter Control	40	36
Tidiness	20	14
Residential Areas	30	20
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	40	30
General Impression	10	7
TOTAL MARK	300	200

Adjudicator's Comments

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

It is good to read, in the answers to the questionnaire, of the local support for your committee, and for the practical help given by residents. The FAS scheme is obviously having a satisfactory influence on the visual aspect of the village. Provision of the Ordnance Survey map has been very useful - few other committees think of this. On your map for next year, please mark all the locations where you have made improvements over the past twelve months, as it is not always possible for a new adjudicator to identify which have been recent.

WILDLIFE AND NATURAL AMENITIES

Coolrain seems ideal for (for example) a circular walk with permanent and well-designed signs drawing attention to the very many interesting sites and their histories and this can be done while respecting adjoining private properties. For example, the history of the Mill, its buildings, waterworks and manufacturers, of the laying out of the local roads, of the bridging of the river, of St. Raban's Well, of the fascinating ruined church and grave yards, of the site of the Constabulary Barracks (explaining what it was), of the handsome Georgian Country houses which must have colourful family histories, etc. Coolrain contains a microcosm of Irish country life of previous centuries within a few acres, in a unique way. There may be an agency which could help in this work; parish histories could be consulted in the County Library.

LANDSCAPING

Progress seems to have been good since last year. The shrubberies and floral displays were most attractive. The broad verge on the west side of the T-junction should be ideal for a further shrubbery. There is room for more tree planting. Conservation of the graveyard is clearly ongoing.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The traditional thatching, both at the Village Inn and a private residence, is immensely picturesque and appeared to be well-tended. (The adjudicator will enquire why the Thatch Award has been discontinued.) None of the business premises have the exceptional qualities of design and craftsmanship essential for entry in the national competition, but all were extremely attractive and well presented. Ivy might be planted to take the bleakness off the ruined church; this is the kind of rather unprepossessing ruin which some communities have made into a surprisingly attractive feature.

LITTER CONTROL

There was virtually no litter on adjudication day.

TIDINESS

Where weeds have been poisoned, dead weeds should be removed, as brown remains can look as ugly as growing weeds. The post-and-wire fence opposite the restored Georgian arch is untidy - this type of fence requires much maintenance and is a notorious weed-collector. A beech or quick hedge might be considered, or wooden paling, or indeed another splendid wall - all costly, but spread over a few seasons might be feasible.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Private homes were well looked after. The old house (once a school) on the south-west of the cross roads was especially attractive. There are fine examples of 18th-19th century country houses. The thatched cottage was much admired, both for itself and its surroundings and sensible wooden palings. A beautifully restored archway and wall outside a Georgian house was also favourably noted. Cottage-style

gardens with climbers and ramblers growing over walls, ditches and fences, are much preferred to more formal lay-out.

ROADS, STREETS AND BACK AREAS

Verges were well trimmed on adjudication day. Stone walls were most impressive indeed, whether new or repaired. Old thorn hedges splendid, here and there. The handsome entrance gate at the T-junction is rather bare: planting, such as cotoneaster, on the curved walls might help. It is the kind of place one would expect to find mature timber.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

A charming village, new to this adjudicator, full of exciting possibilities to be explored and implemented.