

Ludlow Heritage News

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The Prince Rupert, one of Ludlow's old inns



Photograph by Peter Klein

The pebble-dash hides a timber-framed building, probably dating from the mid-17th century. It became an important inn, known originally as the Prince Rupert. The Prince, one of the commanders of the Royalist army, often visited Ludlow during the Civil War of 1642-46.

When passing the Olive Branch restaurant at the top of Old Street, try to imagine the building as it was in the early 18th century, then known as the Prince Rupert Inn and dispensing hospitality of a different kind.

Study of the parish church rate book for 1724 shows that there were then 35 innholders in Ludlow, serving a town of about 2,000 inhabitants. One of the more prosperous was Rice Prickett, owner and landlord of the Prince Rupert. When he died in 1729, an exceptionally detailed inventory was made of his possessions. Their total value was £406 10s 9d, greater than that of any other Ludlow innkeeper during the 1660-1760 period, except for Thomas Hitchcox of the Bear (now Boots chemists), who had goods worth £550 when they were assessed in 1695.

Like the other larger inns of the town, the Prince Rupert provided for the basic needs of townsman and traveller alike. Here, those in need of lodging could surely find a bed to suit their purse among the 15 feather

beds whose support ranged from a humble truckle bedstead to one with 'Blew hangings, rail and tester'.

Most of the chambers combined the functions of bedroom and sitting room, furnished with bed or beds, tables, chests, cupboards, looking glasses and chairs of various kinds (wooden, cane, leather and embroidered), 16 of them in 'the Best Room'. Pictures abounded, 49 in all; there were black and white pictures, 'paper pictures', pictures with gilded frames and in the passage room 'called the Dolphin' a picture of Prince Rupert himself, though valued at only 1s. The Parlour housed the most valuable single item of furniture, a clock and case valued at £6.

The household linen was stored in the room over the shop called 'the Hose'. There were 42 pairs of sheets, nearly three for each bed, plus many napkins, tablecloths and towels in hempen, flaxen, 'huckabag stuffe' and damask cloth. The two wash tubs in 'the backside' must have been in constant use!

Large quantities of food must have been prepared and cooked in the kitchen, if we are to judge by the numbers of pots, pans, kettles and dishes of pewter, brass, copper and tin. Included amongst them was a toaster for cheese and a roaster for apples. Eight spits were here for the roasting of meat and game. Tea and coffee would have been brewed respectively in the 'copper tea kettle' and 'tin coffee pot'. Here too were kept the 22 candlesticks of iron, pewter and brass, presumably to light the guests to their rooms; and also 12 chamber pots for their comfort and convenience.

The brewing of ale and beer would have formed a substantial part of the work carried out at the inn. The brewhouse, probably backing on to what is now Pepper Lane, contained the brass furnace, mashing and watering tubs, coolers and all the necessary equipment to produce the stock of 549 gallons held in hogsheads in the cellar.

Although ale and beer seem to have been the most popular drinks, those with delicate palates had a choice of sherry, canary and Rhenish wine. Hopefully, the '3 doz. of decayed Rhenish' were simply well matured! Cider and perry were available, as was rum which might have been served in hot punch from the 'Japan' punch bowl.

Horses would have been a familiar sight at the inn and provision was made for their stabling, feeding and harnessing. Among the items of harness were a pack saddle and girth and it would have been possible to hire a pack horse or change a mount when making a journey. Rice Prickett was an assessor of the 39 horses shown on the remarkable inventory of Francis Herbert of Oakly Park (d. 1717), no doubt using the specialist knowledge often acquired by innkeepers.

No mention is made of servants' rooms, though the church rate entry shows that there was one residential maid. Rice Prickett and his wife were working landlords and, apart from a few books, no items suggesting their relaxation are to be found.

Some of the inventory's items and their locations invite speculation. Was not the Parlour a strange place to keep the 'hatchet and chisewell', the garden shears and the hay knife? Why were the horse beans in 'the Children's Room'? Were the 'boxes and bushels of ashes' to strew on the slippery stable yard?

Like other Ludlow innkeepers, Rice Prickett often fell foul of the law. In 1727, for example, he was presented to a local court for 'keeping Shuffle board tables' and for serving drink during divine service. Such records help us to recreate the bustle and noise that once abounded here, a contrast indeed to the coffee drinkers of the modern Olive Branch.

By Dorothy Arrowsmith

LUDLOW CIVIC SOCIETY

Chairman's Annual Report 1984-85

The past year has not been an easy one for the Society. Several contentious issues have come before the Committee and these have underlined the vulnerability of an historic environment like that of Ludlow to unsympathetic development. This report will therefore be largely devoted to a review of some of the major cases considered by the Committee during the year.

The disturbing situation at No. 10 Broad Street was referred to in *Ludlow Heritage News* No. 1. Following protests by this Society and other bodies and individuals, the application for retrospective Listed Building Consent was called in by the Environment Secretary, but was subsequently returned by him to the District Council for determination. Though the façade has been restored to its pre-1984 appearance, it remains true that one of the best seveneenth century ornamented frames in Ludlow was destroyed without the Department of the Environment taking any proceedings under the relevant acts.



No. 10 Broad Street: the plaster work concealed a timber frame matching that of the neighbouring Wool Shop



No. 16 Bell Lane: early nineteenth century shopfront



No. 16 Bell Lane: after alterations

It should not, however, be thought that the Society is in constant disagreement with the Planning Authority. Very often our view coincides with theirs, as in the case of the supermarket development, where the Committee, albeit with reservations, considered that the Fine Fare proposals for the Galdeford site would be the least environmentally damaging. Similarly, the Society has consistently supported the principle of comprehensive rather than piecemeal development for the site to the rear of Quality Square and the Cottage Hospital. In these and other instances we have been in full agreement with the Council.

During the past year the Project Committee has continued its programme of erecting information plaques in the town centre. Despite some short-lived adverse press comment, both visitors and residents have reacted overwhelmingly in favour of the scheme. The work at Hosyer's Almshouses has now been completed, and, in addition, the Society has also made a contribution to the cost of excavation of the Carmelite Friary in Corve Street.

Last June a successful field meeting was held at Wigmore Abbey under the expert guidance of Mr J. W. Tonkin, who also gave the Reeves Memorial Lecture in November. A group from the Bewdley Historical Society gave a most interesting presentation in October, and other speakers included Mr Harry Baker and Mr Peter Hewitt. For the first time in several years the February meeting was postponed due to adverse weather conditions, and the lecture on Anglo-Saxon churches will now take place after the Annual General Meeting.

Once again, may I thank the Committee for their unstinting efforts and support during the past year, and I would particularly like to thank Ran Ogston for his continued sterling work as Secretary. I would like to conclude by reminding members and non-members alike that the Society exists to protect and enhance the town for which we all care. The more members the Society has, the stronger its voice will be.

Martin Speight

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Wednesday 22 May: **Annual General Meeting of the Civic Society**, 7.30 pm at the Prince Charles Suite, the Feathers Hotel; followed by a lecture on Anglo-Saxon churches by Dr Martin Speight.

Monday 17 June: **guided tour of Bewdley**, organised by David Lloyd and members of the Bewdley History Group. Assemble in Load Street, Bewdley, outside the Town Hall/Museum at 7.15 pm. Large car park on opposite side of street. Numbers limited to 50 to allow access to house interiors. Please book places with Ran Ogston (see below) as soon as possible.

Guided Tours of Ludlow by members of the Historical Research Group. Tours start from the Cannon, Castle Square, at 2.30 pm and last about 1½ hours. 25p. Reduced party rates. Each Saturday and Sunday from Easter to late September; Bank Holidays except 27 May; Wednesdays and Thursdays from 24 July to 29 August inclusive.

Will members of both societies please do all you can to publicise these tours and encourage your friends and visitors to come on them.

HOW TO JOIN THE SOCIETIES

Full details can be obtained from the secretaries:

Civic Society, Ran Ogston, No. 1 The Vineyard, Ludlow (telephone: Ludlow 4718)

Historical Research Group, Margaret Shaw, Cliffdene, Dinham, Ludlow (telephone: Ludlow 2850)

The replacement of an early nineteenth century shop window at No. 16 Bell Lane was opposed by this Society on the grounds that it would remove the very reason for the building's inclusion on the statutory list, and make a nonsense of the policy of listing for group value. Unfortunately the Planning Committee did not agree, and it is rather ironic that in another part of the town a very convincing replica of a Georgian shopfront has just been reinstated.

Chairman's Annual Report, 1984-85

There have been 45 subscribing members and attendance at the Friday evening documentary sessions has rarely fallen below 25. Every member has made a significant contribution while some have got through a great deal of work, much of it in their own homes.

Our main task has been the transcription and processing of wills and inventories, especially for the 1660-1760 period. A few particularly informative inventories have been found but our understanding of Ludlow's trades and domestic life comes by collating snippets of information from a number of documents. The four bakers' inventories so far found, for example, all refer to bakehouse, bags and implements of trade but specialist tools such as a 'peel' (a stave with a paddle-shaped blade) and a 'kneading iron' are listed only on the inventory of Edward Atcheley (d. 1705). Perishable commodities and foodstuffs are rare on all bakers' inventories but Charles Vale (d. 1680) had 8s. worth of 'fruits and ginger' while the will of Ralph Sharrot (d. 1677) provides for his widow to be supported from the 'Biscetts, sugar-cakes, Naples and makiroons' sold in the family shop. The increasing occurrence of good quality linen, glassware, china, and tea and coffee pots testifies to the increasing comfort of life during the period, while the growing frequency of clocks—two in the 1680s, nine in the 1730s—tells the same story.

Continued transcription of the Church Wardens' Accounts and the Powis papers provides further details on the town while more church rate books have been analysed. Eventually, all this material will be fed into the tenurial reconstruction of Ludlow which remains our main objective. Transcription of the 17th century register of leases is now complete while the initiative of one member has revealed some splendid series of title deeds. Work on the early history of several streets is now in hand, including the enigmatic Raven Lane.

The town tours enjoyed another successful summer and provided the Group with its major source of income. Members produced a *History of the Ludlow Festival* and contributed to the 350th anniversary of *Comus* in a variety of ways. Talks have been given in many parts of the country while the Chairman was invited to the University of Buffalo in the USA to lecture on Ludlow Castle.

The Phillimore publication *Ludlow: a Historic Town in Words and Pictures* (£6.95) continues to sell steadily and can be obtained from the Castle Bookshop, Kings' Bookshop and elsewhere. The long-delayed Research Paper No. 5 on *The Feathers* will appear this summer and work on our definitive two-volume history of Ludlow is proceeding well.

David Lloyd

During the successful dig last year on the site of the Carmelite Friary in Corve Street it became clear that one season was insufficient to explore even so limited a site in depth, and that substantial 12th and 13th century levels with rubbish pits underlay the remains of the large friary building. The team from the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit under Annette Roe are returning at the beginning of April for a second if shorter season to explore what promises to provide us with invaluable evidence of the earliest settlement in Ludlow.

After last year's marvellous response your continuing interest and support are earnestly sought. Despite generous grants

from the Manpower Services Commission and the Robert Kiln Trust, a further £4,000 is needed (at the time of writing) to fund excavation and research costs. A project such as this is ultimately dependent, especially in these times, on the goodwill and generosity of the subscribers. Any further contributions would be most gratefully received, with new subscribers particularly welcomed. Cheques should be made payable to the 'Ludlow Archaeology Account' (no. 0116776) and paid in at Lloyds Bank, Broad Street, together with the donor's name and address. Contributors giving ten pounds or more will automatically receive a copy of the excavation report to be published in 1986.



A silver half-groat of Henry VII, struck by hand in about 1498. The coin, about 3/4 of an inch in diameter, was found in the demolition rubble of the Carmelite friary where it had probably been lost by one of the labourers working on the site in about 1540. Many years before, in 1437, the former Prior of the Ludlow Carmelites, David Chirbury, was held at the Marshalsea Prison in London after being accused of 'counterfeiting money, coining and washing gold and silver, and forging and clipping the King's coinage'. As Bishop of Dromore he received a general pardon from the King and was released, but it is clear that all this took place while he was still Prior at Ludlow and may have become necessary when there was a serious shortage of official coinage. So far, no coins of this period have been found in Ludlow but should some be discovered they will be the only medieval coinage known to have been struck in the town.

Peter Klein

PART OF AN EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY INVENTORY

One Bufflions	00:05:00
Coffea & Eda Cupd of all sorts	00:02:00
One Bed Bofter & other furnitur	07:00:00
Two window Curtains w th the hanging's of the Room	02:00:00
One large Bible & 1 Bpse w th other small books	01:00:00
Item In the little Chambr: 1 Bed & furnitur	03:00:00
Five Hans Chairs	00:12:00
One Clof floore & fire shovell & longed of Ind:	00:05:00
Two pictures att	00:02:06
One small table & window Curtains	00:05:00
One Dress	00:02:06
Item In the School 4 tabled, Desks & Benches	00:06:00
Arithmatick Book	00:02:00

This is part of the probate inventory of Charles Tyler, dated 1710. His goods were worth £121 16s. He lived in Dinham on the site of what is now Dinham Lodge. He is described as 'Gentleman' but the contents of his inventory and other evidence make it clear that he was a private schoolmaster. References to coffee and tea cups are rare at this period. Over 500 documents of this kind have been transcribed and processed by members of the Research Group.

THE BUTTER CROSS

The scaffolding which surrounds the Buttercross shows that at last 'something is being done' about this well-known Ludlow landmark, built between 1743 and 1746.

When William Baker drew up his designs for the Buttercross it is certain that he, like Ruskin 150 years later, believed that 'when we build, let us think we build for ever'. The soft stone, however, has not worn well and during recent years there has been concern about its rate of decay.

For some time little was done and it was tempting to imagine that those responsible were thinking along the same lines as Koko, who, when surveying his elderly bride Katsiha, remarked:

'There's a fascination frantic
in a ruin that's romantic,
Do you think you are sufficiently
decayed?'

However, things are improving, and it is gratifying that the first moves to save the building were taken by the Civic Society Chairman, Martin Speight, when he was Mayor in 1982.

Bert Houghton, the Town Councillor who has assumed major responsibility for the work in hand, reports that 'the scale of the present renovation should take care of the Buttercross for the next hundred years or so.' Over 600 individual stones have been examined by the stonemasons from John

* *The Mikado*

Laing, in conjunction with the architects, Catteralls of Shrewsbury, to ascertain the best form of treatment: refacing, cutting back to a depth of two or three inches, or completely replacing. Where the old stone has to be replaced, harder sandstone from Grinshill Quarry, north of Shrewsbury, is being used.

The Civic Society congratulates the Town Council. Future generations will hopefully be able to agree with Francis Bacon, who stated in his essay on *Nobility*:

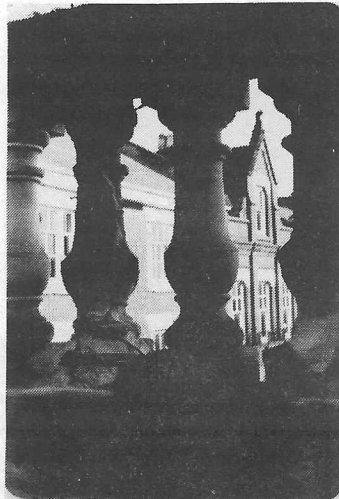
'It is a reverend thing to see an ancient castle or building of nobility not in decay'.

Joan Nash

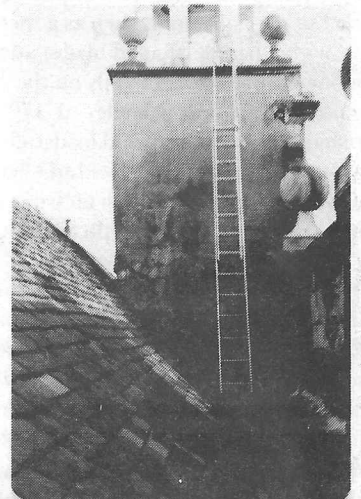
The photographs below, kindly supplied by Bert Houghton, show the alarming condition of much of the stonework on the Buttercross



Weathering has scarred the columns of the portico and widened joints between the blocks



Wire has been used to hold together this shaped pillar in the front balustrade



The stucco on the side of the clock-tower is badly decayed and beginning to peel



Window arch and stringcourse above, with spaces where the masonry has crumbled



This and other parts of the cornice are badly decayed

SCANDAL AT THE HIGH CROSS!

Modern stallholders at the Buttercross occupy a site which has long been used for trading. In the mid-sixteenth century, for example, there were three single storey shops, the largest of which was leased by the Corporation to tenants for 30s. a year. This led to a dispute which came before the Court of Chancery in London.

The 'bord' or stall was used for the selling of 'fish or other victuals' and had been leased to Thomas and Alice Cother.

In 1556-57, however, William Poughnill,

then Bailiff, took possession himself, allegedly because Alice Cother was 'a woman of evil conversation' who had 'eloped from her wedded husband' and was 'the concubine of another man'. Poughnill then assigned the lease to John Borne of Kent, no doubt at a profit; but nominees of Alice Cother continued to occupy the premises, so that Borne 'could not sell his fish'. Her 'inordynat lyving', it was argued, must end in 'recosylement' with her husband or she would be 'punysht for the terror of others'.

A few years later a two storey timber-framed building was erected on the site. This was called the New House and had a chamber for the Corporation on the first floor; but the ground floor was open on the sides and still had three shops. This building survived until 1743 when it was replaced by the Buttercross.

David Lloyd, using material researched by Michael Faraday