

Ludlow Heritage News

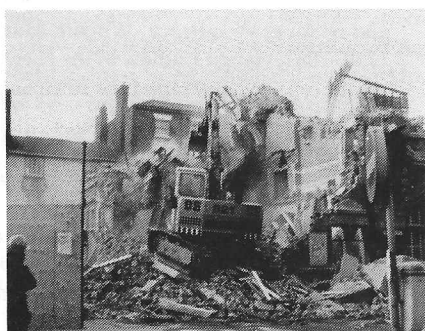
No. 5 May 1986

25p

Published twice a year by Ludlow Civic Society and
Ludlow Historical Research Group

GOODBYE TOWN HALL

I doubt if any other event in the history of Ludlow has been so well recorded as the demolition of our only large Victorian building. The District Council has, I understand, over 4 hours of video film of the various stages. Just in case this does not stand the test of time any better than the 97-year-old building, I have taken some of the almost equally old-fashioned black and white photos for posterity.

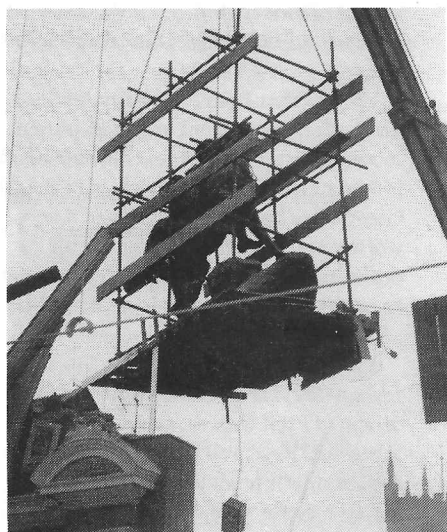


Was it really Blott driving that Excavator?

Most of you will now realise that the date 1887 on the west end of the building was a blatant lie, but placed there as the building was designed to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee. This has been proved by the contents of the lead box, found under the foundation stone; rather earlier than the builders intended it to be found, no doubt. An advert in the *Ludlow Advertiser* of 14 July 1888 asked for tenders for the demolition of the old market hall, and the erection of the 'late lamented' one. So it was no surprise to find an *Advertiser* of 15 September 1888, a copy of *The Times* 21 September and the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* of 21 September in the box with a note: 'Thomas Wyile made this box September 19th 1888'. With these, also in a remarkable state of preservation, was an advertisement for a football match, Wolverhampton versus Ludlow, and four coins in an envelope, 2/6, 2/-, 1/- and 6d, all dated 1887, the Queen's Jubilee. Ludlow obviously felt it could not justify putting any gold in the 'posterity box' at the time.

At the moment the Council is displaying the box and its contents at Stone House. Eventually, it is thought it will be part of the Museum display, perhaps along with Ludlow, Sheffield (a local firm), Hereford and Ruabon bricks from the building.

Enough has already been said on the subject of the Town Hall to fill several of these publications; but that 'monumental monument' known to most Ludlovians as just 'the horse', which stood above the doorway of the ballroom from circa 1905, has been the subject of many rumours as to its condition. I would say, that considering it is the only plaster from which the mould to make the magnificent memorial to the South Australian Volunteers outside Government House in Adelaide was made; it withstood its 'flight' out of the remains of the roof very well.



Photograph courtesy Peter Bartlett

Its legs are cracked and chipped, but the only real problem is where to put it on permanent display. It was the work of a Ludlow man, Adrian Jones; the son of a Broad Street vet. He was also commissioned, among other works, to design and make the Quadriga on Constitution Hill, London. It may be the only one of the the sculptor's large models left, as it would be normal practice to destroy them after the bronze had been made. Jones presented this one to his native town.

There is interest in his work in Adelaide too. The Museum has had a quantity of information from a relative of the rider of the horse, as to the cost, transport, and erection of the monument. Jones modelled the head and uniform from a Quartermaster Sergeant Goodall of the South Australian Horse who was in London at the time.

I have heard several people say, regarding the Town Hall, 'It's sad to see it go' while others say, 'It's rather a blessing' or words to that effect. Personally, I liked the ballroom, and though out of scale and style with its neighbours in Ludlow, it was a quite reasonable example of its age. Now it has gone, for the record, the last recognisable wall and windows fell on Wednesday 26 March. I'm in the 'open space society' and not alone it seems. If we go back far enough of course, the site was part of a much larger market place, stretching eastwards.



Open Space - courtesy Peter Bartlett

Though Pevsner called it 'Ludlow's bad luck', another remark of late has been, 'We're going to miss it in a funny sort of way'.

Howard Cheese

This article was contributed by a keen member of both the Research Group and the Civic Society. Howard is a native of the area. We are pleased to include in this issue an article contributed by 'new locals', on why they chose Ludlow. We are delighted the town attracts such caring residents.

The next issue of *Heritage News* will carry a history of the Town Hall site, together with reports of the discussions which the Civic Society and the History Group will be having at their Annual General Meetings.

Chairman's Report 1985-86

In my report I am very conscious of the fact that I am not only following in the footsteps of three very distinguished Chairmen, I also have the awesome responsibility of being Chairman during a momentous period in the history of the town. I trust all members will make their views on the future of the Town Hall site known to the Committee. In this way, we can truly act on behalf of the members.

Last 'summer' members of the Society visited Bewdley as guests of the Bewdley Research Group; and those who attended, despite the rain, were treated to an entertaining and educational evening.

The Fred Reeves Memorial Lecture, with which the season started, was a delightful and intriguing tale of careful investigation by David Holgate. David, an expert on New Hall Porcelain, traced the story of porcelain along the Severn Valley, naturally ending near to home at the Coalport factory.

Harry Baker was remembered at the Christmas meeting of the Society – a lively tour of Ludlow pubs taken while seated comfortably in the Prince Charles Suite at The Feathers.

The Spring Season started with a lightening tour of historic towns with Lewis Braithwaite. It was unfortunate that owing to a change of evening, many regular members were unable to attend this meeting. Those who were able to be present were left in no doubt as to the disastrous effect of unthinking architectural expression.

A joint meeting with the Research Group ended the season. We were privileged to have as our speaker, Peter Smith, who charmed the audience with a magnificently illustrated talk on the Houses of the Welsh Countryside. While in Ludlow, Peter was able to shed some further light on the Ludlow houses he visited.

This year has seen the placing of a series of plaques in Broad Street. While there are still some in the pipeline, the Committee feels that this scheme is largely completed, and careful thought is to be given to the placing of future plaques. It is hoped that the Society will be involved in the plans to create an amenity area of the south side of the parish church.

An objection was made to the development of the Clifton Cinema site by McCarthy &

LUDLOW CIVIC SOCIETY

Stone, on the grounds that they had not taken the existing street scene into account. Many members have pointed out to me that the present site is such a disaster to the street, nothing could detract further. However, it is the view of the Committee that new building should only be permitted within the town when there is to be a clear improvement – especially when it is envisaged that the builder will only be developing the site for profitable, not charitable purposes.

I was delighted to be invited to visit the Buttercross in the course of its restoration, and also to join the celebrations at its completion. The Town Council is to be congratulated on this project. I also understand that a substantial grant has been negotiated, hopefully saving the ratepayers a sum in the region of £25,000.

I hope members appreciate the new posters which were designed for us by Simon Bean, a student at Ludlow College, and first used to advertise the Peter Smith lecture. Another College student, Jane Stanton, designed the logo for the new membership leaflet. It is very gratifying to receive so many requests for membership, and after nearly a year of photocopying typed sheets, we now have what I hope you will agree, is a 'new image'.

I regret that I have been unable to persuade our excellent and ever-patient secretary, Ran Ogston, to continue in office. However, we are very fortunate in that the Committee has already received a very worthy and efficient nomination for the position. I am sure we all wish Ran a very happy 'retirement', and hope he will remain an active member of the Society.

It seems no time at all since Martin Speight and David Lloyd fulfilled a long-held dream of Fred Reeves, and started the Historical Research Group. A small grant of £50 was made to set the group on its way, and it is wonderful to see how it has gone from strength to strength to celebrate its 10th birthday this year. The Civic Society congratulates the group, and looks forward to the 21st birthday.

Finally, I thank most sincerely all those who have helped so willingly during this last year, thanking visiting speakers, checking planning applications, and generally making life so much easier, and the Society to function more efficiently.

Joan Nash

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 10 May 1986

Prince Charles Suite, Feathers Hotel

The President, Julian Critchley, will address the members. Those wishing to attend should let the Secretary have a self-addressed envelope marked JC, as soon as possible, so that tickets can be allocated.

Wednesday 4 June – Annual General Meeting

Prince Charles Suite, Feathers Hotel

To be followed by a discussion on the future of Ludlow Town Centre.

Saturday 12 July

Visit to Woodstock as guests of Woodstock Civic Society; this has been arranged by Ran Ogston, a former resident of Woodstock.

Like Ludlow, Woodstock was very much a centre of the leather trade, being one of the leading centres of glove manufacture – second only to Worcester. A former mayor and rector of Woodstock, William Mavor, 1758-1837, visited Ludlow in the early nineteenth century, and noted the town as 'a place of some consequence'.

We believe that Ludlovians visiting Woodstock will have a similarly favourable opinion of that town.

The Committee was delighted to hear of plans for a new street lighting scheme for Ludlow. We understand the proposals are for an 'improved' version of that used in Woodstock. This will give an ideal opportunity for Ludlovians to talk to people with first-hand experience of such a scheme.

Members are invited to book their places on the coach, which will leave Castle Square at approx 9.00 am, and return to Ludlow at approx 7.00 pm. Full details have not yet been worked out, but it is anticipated that there will be some time for individual 'exploring'.

A guided tour of the town will be given by members of the Woodstock Society, and tea will be taken as guests of the Society before leaving for Ludlow. Members will be responsible for their own lunches, either taking a picnic meal or visiting one of the many excellent hostelrys in the town.

Cost £5 per person – payable when booking.

Environment Weeks

28 April-10 May 1986

DO YOU KNOW YOUR TOWN?

A display of photographs of architectural detail is to be mounted in the window of the Staffordshire Building Society. Members of the public, and the Society, are invited to try to identify all these photographs.

Entry forms will be provided, and should be placed in the box which will be found at the Ludlow Library before Friday 9 May. A prize of a £5 book token will be awarded to the first correct entry drawn.

Questionnaire

Copies of a Questionnaire will be placed in various locations in the town, asking for views on the matters ranging from the future of the Town Hall site, to the provision of leisure areas in the town. Members of the Society may send their views direct to the Secretary, or place them in the box which will be provided in the Ludlow branch of the Shropshire County Library.

How to join the Societies

Full details can be obtained from the Secretaries:

Civic Society – Ran Ogston, 1 The Vineyard, Broad Street, Ludlow (telephone 4718)

Research Group – Margaret Shaw, Clifdene, Dinham, Ludlow (telephone 2850)

LUDLOW HISTORICAL RESEARCH GROUP

Chairman's Annual Report 1985-1986

The Group has met regularly on Friday evenings at the Further Education Centre in Lower Galdeford. As last year, there are over 40 subscribing members and weekly attendance has usually been above 30, necessitating the use of two rooms. We welcomed a number of new members in September and our age range is now 21 to 80+! Of those who have left, we particularly miss Rosemary King, an enthusiastic member since 1977, who has now moved to Farringdon. During the autumn term we greatly appreciated the help of Rene Barry, an archivist from the County Record Office.

At the beginning of the year members opted for one of six groups. One group has been analysing the 1660-1760 wills and inventories which were transcribed in previous years. Fire utensils, 'brass pewter and tin', beds and bedding, glass and luxury goods, furniture, books, and brewing equipment were the items studied.

Another group has been transcribing and punching cards for the rural parishes around Ludlow. Each parish has a co-ordinator and a card index is being made. Another group has been transcribing earlier documents, including 16th century Corporation rentals and 17th century tax assessments. Although

not attending on Friday evenings the work of Michael Faraday in London continues to be of outstanding value to the Group. This year he has been concentrating on medieval De Banco rolls, which give details of debts from which trading links can be deduced. The extent of Ludlow's trading area was immense and two references have been found to links with merchants from Florence in Italy!

A fourth group has been processing documents already transcribed, including early 17th century wills and the invaluable account book of Sir Charles Fox of Bromfield, begun in 1593.

A larger group has been working on the tenurial reconstruction of Castle Street, High Street, the west side of Mill Street, the west side of Old Street and Dinham. Progress has been variable, for many problems have occurred; but it is clear that eventually the history of these streets can be worked out in as much detail as that already achieved for Broad Street and Corve Street. The contribution of Stephen Dornan, who has abstracted vast numbers of title deeds for all parts of the town, deserves special mention.

A sixth group has been working on the town fields, especially the area east of Ludlow. Here again there have been

problems but the use of the very detailed survey of Corporation lands made in 1584 looks like providing a breakthrough.

During the summer of 1985 the town tours were particularly successful and over 2,500 people were shown round Ludlow. The proceeds of these tours have met most of our costs including an enormous amount of photocopying and the purchase of file drawers and other equipment.

As usual a number of talks have been given. Members of the very active Newport Local History Society spent an evening with us, and four members visited St David's University College, Lampeter, where work on Ludlow is used as an introduction to local history techniques.

The long-awaited Research Paper No. 5 on The Feathers has now gone to press and should be published in June. The successful Carmelite Friary Dig last summer is now being written up and will be published as Research Paper No. 6 later in the year. Work on the next Phillimore volume continues steadily, and many more publications are envisaged for the future.

David Lloyd

SOCIAL SERVICES - LUDLOW - 18th Century

Some work has been carried on by Roy Nash on the plight of the poor in the 18th century. From a study of material so far received, we learn that each 'Ward' of the town made a payment towards the upkeep of the Workhouse in Old Street. Payments could also be made directly to needy families, on the instruction of the Bailiffs, by the Overseer of the poor in each Ward.

The following series of extracts speak for themselves - Anne Russell did not make it to the Workhouse.

From the Parish Register

1751 Margaret, base child of Anne Russell
bap

1751 Margaret, base child of Anne Russell
bur

1753 Francis, base child of Anne Russell, Bap

1758 Martha, base child of Anne Russell, bap

1758 Martha, base child of Anne Russell bur

1759 (Jan) Anne Russell, spinster, bur

From the accounts of the Overseers of the
Poor

1758 Paid to Anne Russell 12s 6d

1759 9 January To Mr James Sharpe,
Overseer of the Poor of the Parish of St
Lawrence, Ludlow.

You are hereby justified in the payment of
two half crowns to the relief of Anne Russell
and are ordered to get Mr Davies or some
other apothecary to attend her and give such
further relief as shall be necessary. Wm Child

Rbt Jones
Sam Waring

Mr Sharpe's order for Anne Russell

A pectoral mixture	1	6
a balsam mixture	2	0
a cordial draught	6	
a cordial strengthening mixture	1	0
	5	0

1759 16 January

Expenses to burying Anne Russell
(inc two coffins) 8 0

An attempt was made to recoup the 'losses'
made on this case.

Anne Russell - an account of her goods:-

	s	d
2 oak coffers	3	0
1 dresser of drawers - claimed by F Beb		
1 small box	6	
a small old trunk (Laurences)		
1 very old rotten bed and		
2 very old nasty blankets	1	6
1 old bolster and 2 old pillows (flock)	1	0
1 pair small old oak bedstead	1	6
8 wooden trenchers	4	
2 earthen dishes	1	
1 pair old iron pot hooks	3	
1 small tin funnel, 3 qt bottles and		
1 pint bottle	3	
1 rolling pin	1	
1 wooden pepper box	6	
2 old tables	1	0
1 handkerchief and apron	2	0
1 small old hat	3	
1 small old iron pot and saucepan	1	0
1 old gown and pettycoat	1	6
	14	9

We even know the purchasers of some of
these goods:

Mr Jones - one coffer	1	0
Mary Weaver - bedding	3	0
Sarah Powell - gown and pettycoat	3	6
Mrs Gethin - crocks and bottles, one tin funnel etc		4½
Alice Powell - apron and handkerchief	2	0
Elizabeth Davies - one box, one old hat		9
Jane Davies - one pot, one saucepan	1	0

And what of young Francis - orphan, aged
6½ years?

20 February 1759

Paid to Charles Morgan for clothing of young Russell:-	15	9½
Bought of Edward Ingram 2 yd less ¼ Russia Drab at 1/5 per yd	2	9½
2 quarters of linsey		10
canvass 4d thread 3d buttons 5d	1	0
for making one frock (smock?)	3	0
for 2 shirts	3	0
2 handkerchiefs	1	0
for a hat 1/- for a pair of shoes 2/9	3	9
for 2 pairs of stockings	1	2
	15	9½

We have yet to discover how young Francis
fared in his new clothes, or even to which
trade he was apprenticed.

AN ADVENTURE IN LUDLOW

We chose Ludlow for our home from home with almost as much care as we chose each other. Eagerness to experience English life together grew as we travelled in this country from our native United States. It was like planting an acorn, forgetting it, returning to discover it rooted and sprouting strong shoots. Then, the decision having made itself, we sought a fertile site for transplanting ourselves.

Possibilities were plotted from America using unexcelled British maps and periodicals. In turn, Cornwall, Dorset, Devon, Gloucestershire and Avon beckoned with promise. Over the sea we flew to check them in person. Each failed, on inspection, to meet the rigours of *The List*. The List was our authority for fulfilling needs and desires. It read: 'needed: a small easy-care house with south/west garden in a spirited English town of 7,500–10,000 pleasant people, history, atmosphere, quiet, naturalness, services . . . within walking distance of shops, transport, medical/cultural facilities, library, restaurants. Views to countryside with hills, hedgerows, trees, footpaths. Equable weather.'

Shropshire insinuated itself subtly. We read Julian Critchley's nostalgic tribute to it in a *London Illustrated News* series on the counties. 'It is a castellated county of long vistas,' he wrote, 'in which horizons are indented with the sharp profile of distant hills . . . pastoral . . . quiet. Ludlow is a workaday town packed on market day with farmers' wives in Doris Archer hats, full of seedsmen, saddlers and butchers selling their own black puddings.' The scent of the chase quickened our nostrils. Then we read 'Ludlow . . . a Shropshire Sojourn' by Irene Corbally Kuhn in *Gourmet*, an American magazine: 'Where else in England could one find a prosperous, lively, country town that, apart from a variety of other charms, constitutes an architectural museum? . . . continuity of English history . . . gives Ludlow a special air and their inhabitants their ease with themselves.' Ah, we were on to something. We sent for the blue Official Guide and map of Ludlow. Almost too good to be true, it fulfilled every detail of the resolute list . . . even to weather: 'climate is pleasant . . . rainfall under 30 inches a year, and sunshine well up to the average for the Welsh Border Counties'. And there were bonuses: a castle, a river, a summer festival. Expectantly we flew to London on 5th November 1982. A few days later we drove over the Teme at Ludford Bridge, under the Broad Gate, up elegant Broad Street, on to the Feathers, which, in Americanese, 'knocked off our socks'. Already we were whispering 'this is it'.

After dinner, walking about we saw black and white buildings accented by moonlight, St Laurence's church tower lit against a light night sky, colourful local vegetables arranged like a Chardin still-life in Cade's window. We

were ready to shout 'this is it'.

Things arranged themselves as neatly as though they were meant to be. A local bank manager and his wife took us into their charming self-catering flat. Within a month the small house was available for sale in Mill Street, just where we wanted it to be. Its south-westerly garden looked to Whitcliffe and listened to the river.



The Mill Street house at the time of sale

A local architectural partnership worked with us though we must have been a pain: Americans don't know proper English words like architrave, skirting board and tap. They recommended superior builders who renovated the house skilfully. On a breeze block awaiting plastering they inscribed 'Bill and Connie Brooks, 1983' for our pleasure and for posterity. Before Christmas that year all was ready for our occupation: comfortably renewed, with reassuring antiquity retained.



The Brooks's house after modernisation

Proof of the pudding in an undertaking is whether one would repeat it. 'Yes,' we say resoundingly. Our English experience is being the time of our lives. Lovely Ludlow has accepted us . . . a couple of clamorous colonials, with warmth and good humour. We have been helped to feel happily at home in this, the gentle land of our antecedents.

Constance G. Brooks

The Castle Bookshop in Ludlow has recently published a new list of *Books of Local Interest*. Among the latest additions are:

The Domesday Book of Shropshire
F & C Thorne Hardback £12.00 Limp £8.00
This is the latest volume in Phillimore's *History from the Sources* series. The text is in the original Latin with a modern translation on the opposite page, and with copious notes, maps and indices.

Towns of Character with Hutch
W A Hutchinson Paperback £5.25
Includes a chapter on Ludlow with some delightful sketches by the author.

Bentley's History of Worcestershire
Gordon Hopkins Paperback £2.95
Canon Hopkins introduces extracts from a History and Directory of Worcestershire published in 1840. Joseph Bentley's idiosyncratic style paints a vivid picture of the life of the times from picturesque rural villages to industrial landscapes.

Policing Shropshire 1836–1967
Douglas J Elliott Paperback £5.40
This account of the origins and evolution of the County and Borough Police Forces of Shropshire, including Ludlow, is interwoven with anecdotes and stories of 'keeping the Queen's Peace' under changing social and economic conditions.

Footsteps Down Mill Street
George Merchant Paperback £1.00
'This is not a guide book but a light hearted record . . . it may be taken as a modest but completely reliable contribution to the social history of the time' (author's note). Need one say more!

Other bestsellers from our list include:
Ludlow, a Historic Town in Words and Picture
David Lloyd & Peter Klein Hardback £6.95
If you haven't got it yet, shame on you!

Ludlow Research Papers 1–4 still available:
Ludlow Houses £1.50
The Corner Shop £2.00
Broad Street £3.35
The Great House £2.00
Complete your collection ready for the publication of No. 5 – The Feathers

Houses of the Welsh Countryside
Peter Smith Hardback £35.00
Subject of a recent and much enjoyed talk by the author. This handsome and authoritative volume must be one of the most significant works on vernacular architecture ever published. Based on original fieldwork and research, it describes the development of Welsh domestic architecture from the Middle Ages to the Industrial Revolution.

Copies of our booklet will be sent by return, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

Peter Bell