

Ludlow Heritage

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10p



The northern end of the excavation site in Corve Street, showing volunteers at work.

Ludlow Carmelite Friary Dig

Few Ludlovians can now be unaware of the activity going on behind the stone wall of St. Leonard's churchyard opposite Stone House in Corve Street. Following a planning application by Treasures Estates to build a house between the yew trees and the stone-mason's yard, the Archaeological Field Unit of Birmingham University in conjunction with the Historical Research Group have organised the excavation of the development site, an area of some 500 square yards bordering the street. This can now be seen to advantage from a viewing platform specially provided.

St. Leonard's churchyard has long been known as the site of the former Carmelite Friary established in Ludlow in 1350 by Sir Laurence de Ludlowe, Lord of Stokesay Castle, whose family fortune was made from wool. Described by the 16th century antiquary, John Leland, as a "fayre and costly thing", the precinct covered in all some three acres with most of the conventual buildings probably occupying the north and east of the site. Robert Mascall, confessor to Henry IV and Bishop of Hereford, is but one of several Ludlow Carmelites who attained eminence for their learning and piety.

So completely was the convent demolished shortly after its dissolution in 1538, that very little is known of its layout or size compared with similar foundations elsewhere. Thomas Vernon who, as heir to the founder, presided

over its destruction, left only the slenderest documentary evidence and the chance therefore to excavate even so small an area of the whole is a unique opportunity and provides us with the first sizeable excavation in the town since 1907.

Following the trial excavation in October last year the Archaeological Unit pressed ahead with the aid of funds provided by the Manpower Services Commission on condition that the town could help support the project financially. So far £2,500, about half the sum required, has been raised to enable the Unit to dig until the end of July and investigate the early mediaeval pre-friary levels (six tenements on Corve Street were demolished in 1350) which archaeologically are as important as the friary itself. It is also hoped that this sum will finance the publication of the history of the friary and the excavation report during the winter.

What is urgently needed is the recruitment of more subscribers who, for ten pounds (or more if they so wish), would be kept abreast of any events or talks concerning the excavation and would also receive a copy of the book on publication. Any cheques would be most gratefully received and 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.

Peter Klein.

PLAQUES

Two years have passed since, due to the good offices of John Godrich, the Civic Society acquired funds which made it possible to carry out various projects in the town. To further this purpose, a small Projects Group was set up consisting initially of Secretary Ran Ogston, Architect Peter Howell, and myself. Early discussion centred on three possible areas in which we might become involved:

1. Floodlighting
2. The restoration of existing work
3. The erection of plaques on buildings of historical interest

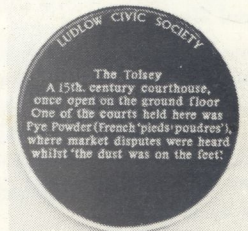
Enquiries showed that floodlighting would prove a very expensive and continuing commitment. It was decided, therefore, to concentrate on items two and three.

Restoration work has so far included the re-painting and gilding of the inscription above St Leonard's churchyard gate, and similar work on the coat of arms and latin inscription at Hosyer's Almshouses. This latter work was undertaken to augment the very expensive restoration being carried out by the Trustees.

By far the greater portion of effort has been directed towards the erection of plaques. The project group has been fortunate in being able to call on the assistance of the Historical Research Group in obtaining accurate information on the premises involved. Ran Ogston and myself visited the Royal Labels Factory at Chipping Norton where we received much helpful advice.

Finally, it was decided that the plaques would be circular, 15 inches in diameter, and made of cast aluminium. In keeping with Ludlow tradition, the colours chosen were white lettering on a dark blue background. White, the Plantagenet colour of the Mortimers, and dark blue to accord with the 'Ludlow blue' legend. These colours are stove enamelled onto the plaques.

A total of 15 plaques are in place. Others on order will complete the cover of the main streets up from the Feathers Hotel, along the ancient market tract between the Tolsey House and the Castle, and down to the Dinham Craft Centre.



With almost every building in town worthy of mention, it has been necessary to exercise some selectivity. When other streets have been covered, and the scheme is complete, as many as 100 plaques may be in position. Initial reaction to the plaques from local residents, the business community, and visitors, has been very favourable.

Bill Acklam.

Ludlow Civic Society Ludlow Historical Research Group

Chairman's Annual Report 1983-84

One of the surest indications that a Society is alive and well is the appearance of new ventures, and it is therefore with great pleasure that I write the first Annual Report to be published in LUDLOW HERITAGE NEWS. I have long been concerned that members of the Society who live away from Ludlow get very little for their membership, and this newsletter, which will be produced jointly with the Ludlow Historical Research Group, should prove to be an appropriate medium for keeping people in touch with developments on the conservation and local history fronts.

During the past year the Project Group has been hard at work with the programme of erecting commemorative plaques. This is dealt with more fully in Mr Acklam's article, and it is worth noting that mention of the scheme in the journal of the Civic Trust has brought inquiries from two other Societies wishing to emulate us.

The Society has assisted the Trustees of the King Edward VI Charity, by adding a number of decorative touches to Hosyer's Almshouses, which have been the subject of an admirable restoration scheme. The armorial plaque and inscription have been repaired and regilded at the Society's expense, and a translation of the inscription, engraved on copper, is soon to be mounted near the entrance. These schemes of improvement have been financed out of the interest on the endowment which we received two years ago from the Housing Association.

When writing this report I am always very conscious of the efforts which so many people have made on behalf of the Society during the year. They are too numerous to mention by name, but my sincere thanks go to them all.

Martin Speight.

Excursion to Wigmore

Mr Jim Tonkin, former headmaster of Wigmore School and foremost expert on Herefordshire buildings, has agreed to conduct a party round Wigmore Abbey on the evening of Monday 25th June, by kind permission of the owners, Mr and Mrs Parry.

Wigmore Abbey is one of the most interesting monastic remains in the area, and was founded in 1179. Many of the Mortimers of Wigmore Castle were buried there. The Abbey was destroyed by the Welsh, rebuilt, and destroyed again by Henry VIII.

Members of the Civic Society are strongly recommended to take advantage of this tour as the buildings, which are of considerable interest, are in private hands. A coach will be provided and members will be circulated with further details nearer the time.

Ran Ogston

Chairman's Annual Report 1983-84

The group has met regularly on Friday evenings to transcribe and process a range of documents. There have been about 40 subscribing members with weekly attendance ranging from 15 to 35. This number includes half a dozen members from Richard's Castle, who have been working on the documents of their own parish. Their presence has reminded us of the close historic links between Ludlow and Richard's Castle and has been beneficial to research on both places.

Some members have been analysing the material transcribed in previous years. Analysis of some 500 pre-1660 wills is now almost complete. Six members have been processing the 18th and early 19th century Easter Books, in which annual payment of church rates were recorded. Analysis of voting lists of the 1830s and of a list of relief to the poor in 1817 is now complete. Two members have been working on the Griffiths scrapbooks, kindly loaned by the Museum, and others have made a study of the Workhouse in the 1750s.

Work on earlier original documents continues. The Corporation Register of leases for the 1660-1720 period is now almost all transcribed onto file cards. A large number of 17th century taxes have been transcribed, including the Ship Money assessment of 1635. Several members have continued to work on probate inventories and we hope to complete the full Ludlow collection in 1984-85. The Powis papers, photocopied from the originals at the National Library of Wales, continue to yield important information on domestic and commercial life. Portions transcribed include medical prescriptions used by the Fox family at Bromfield. Two fascinating lists of books are also being processed.

Two important purchases have been made with Group funds. We now own a complete set of the 1:500 O.S. maps of Ludlow, published in 1885. These are an indispensable base for serious work on burgage plots and the town plan. The availability of a micro-film copier at the Local Studies Library in Shrewsbury has also enabled us to obtain portions of the 1851 census and a complete social and demographic analysis of the town in that year is now in hand.

An on-going task over the last four years has been the complete transcription of the Church Wardens' Accounts from 1577 onwards. Several members have contributed in the past but this year John Lamb has transcribed vast quantities of these fascinating documents, most of them at home from photocopies. His is certainly the individual best performance of the year.

The labours of the Group since its formation in 1976 are providing much

of the material to be used for a major two volume History of Ludlow to be published by Phillimore before the end of the decade. An introductory volume, incorporating some of the Group's results, is to be published this summer.

Several members of the Group now share the leadership of the Guided Tours of Ludlow, which have become our major source of income. We were well represented at a day conference at Birmingham University and Edward Collier and Rita Storey contributed to a day school for local history groups organised by Barrie Trinder. Experienced members of the Group are being encouraged to speak on Ludlow to various clubs and societies while the Chairman was asked to give a talk in Bury St. Edmunds, which has resulted in the formation of a group run on similar lines to our own.

Apart from the guided tours we have become involved with the local community in several ways. Three members of the Group are co-operating to produce a History of Ludlow Festival, and we have also become involved in other ventures. Our secretary is representing us on the group convened to celebrate the supposed foundation of the castle after 1086, while we have been asked to give advice on historical matters to both the Town Council and the South Shropshire District Council. Eight members of the Group contributed to a Christmas entertainment for the Civic Society. The Group organised the initial meeting to fund the excavation at St. Leonard's churchyard and some members have been closely involved with subsequent developments.

Although our purposes are serious and academic our mood is often light-hearted. The mid-evening tea is a pleasant break from historical study and new members can be sure of a friendly welcome. Our regular Friday meetings recommence on Friday 21st September, and further details can be obtained from the Secretary.

David Lloyd

Town Tours

21 April–30 September General Tours:
1½ hours, 25p (children free), Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays.
2.30 pm at the Castle Cannon, Ludlow.
Tours of about 3 hours, 50p with a short tea break (* including buildings not usually open to the public):

Sunday 27 May

* Timber Framed Buildings

Saturday 9 June

* Georgian Town Houses

Sunday 15 July

* Buildings associated with the Council of the Marches, including the 'Feathers Hotel'

Saturday 11 August

* Buildings associated with the Medieval Palmers' Guild

Sunday 26 August
Ludlow Castle

Saturday 8 September
St Laurence's Parish Church

Conservation News

Ludlow's timber-framed buildings are an impressive feature of the town's heritage, and it is always gratifying to see judicious restoration taking place. It was particularly pleasing to witness last year the stripping of the black paint from the timbers of Bodenham's shop at the head of Broad Street. The early fifteenth century 'Corner Shop' ranks as one of the premier mediaeval buildings in Ludlow, and its owners are to be congratulated on their foresight in taking advantage of the closure of King Street for road works to carry out this excellent face-lift.

The last couple of years or so have seen a number of timber frames exposed for the first time in many years. The uncovering and restoration of the fine mid-seventeenth century facade of Messrs. Scott's in the High Street calls for special mention. The craftsmanship of the new work is of the splendid quality which we have come to expect of Messrs. Treasures.

Missed Opportunities

The great contribution which these two restorations have made to the appear-

ance of the town centre tends to underline the opportunity which has been missed with the premises owned by Granada at 10 Broad Street. The frame which was exposed during repairs in March was almost identical to that of the adjoining 'Wool Shop' and confirmed the accuracy of Samuel Scott's painting of c.1765. It was a great disappointment that this frame was not exposed and conserved, instead of being so quickly plastered over. Opportunities such as this come rarely, and it was saddening to see that the potential of the building was not realised.

Another missed opportunity occurred recently in Old Street. It has been encouraging to see the improvement of property in Old Street following the opening of the bypass, typified by the local authority's scheme for the former Trustee Savings Bank. How unfortunate therefore, that the County Highways Department should have chosen to use unsightly black tarmac for the pavement in this part of the street, particularly when they have taken such trouble with surfaces in other parts of the old town. Protests have been made by the Society and by local residents, so far with no effect.

Scotts — a Success Story

These photographs, kindly loaned by Mrs C. Scott, show the shop at No. 4 High Street, before and after the restoration of 1981.

Before



After



Shakespeare and Ludlow?

Shakespeare may never have been in Ludlow, but his doctor son-in-law paid a number of professional visits to the castle.

John Hall, who married Susanna, Shakespeare's elder daughter, was among the country's most highly regarded medical experts in the first half of the 17th century. The lordly and powerful from throughout the Midlands called him from Stratford-upon-Avon, where he lived, to attend them.

In his methodical way he kept a case-book of his patients and their illnesses, and of the distances he rode to treat them. The furthest distance he records is the 60 miles to Ludlow, where his

patients were the Earl and Countess of Northampton.

The Earl was President of the Council of the Marches from 1617 (the year after Shakespeare's death) until he himself died in 1631, but it was the Countess whose illness comes down in history in Dr Hall's notes. She had dropsy and he somewhat laconically writes that he administered a purge so drastic that "she passed 41 stools in three days, but within 20 days was cured".

The Northamptons must have been satisfied with this drastic treatment, because Dr Hall records that in all he stayed at Ludlow Castle on nine occasions.

Harry Baker

Recent publications on Ludlow

Gerald Acton and David Lloyd, **LUDLOW WALKS** (the authors, 1983); 6 page leaflet, 30p. A great deal of information is packed into this attractive leaflet, which describes three different walks.

Harry Baker, **AN ALPHABET OF LUDLOW PUBS** (Harry Baker, 1983); 30 pages, £1.00. An entertaining but carefully researched account of all Ludlow's pubs, from 1862 until the present day.

Alec Clifton-Taylor's **LUDLOW** (B.B.C., 1984); 30 pages, £1.95. An off-print from *Six English Towns* (1978), but adds a handsome tribute to Ludlow Research Paper No. 3.

Alfred Jenkins, **TITTERSTONE CLEE HILLS: EVERYDAY LIFE, INDUSTRIAL HISTORY AND DIALECT** (Alfred Jenkins, 1983); 156 pages, £15.00. A well produced collection of photographs and recollections of a distinctive part of the Ludlow district.

Peter Klein, **A GUIDE TO ST. PETER'S CHURCH, STANTON LACY** (Stanton Lacy P.C.C., 1983); 24 pages, A pleasing and erudite booklet on the church of Ludlow's parent parish.

David Lloyd, **THE HISTORY OF LUDLOW MUSEUM, 1833-1983** (published by private subscription, 1983); 24 pages, £1.00. Tells the remarkable story of our local museum. Attractively designed by Studio Press, Birmingham.

David Lloyd and others, **LUDLOW: OFFICIAL GUIDE AND MAP** (Ludlow Chamber of Commerce, 1984); 64 pages, 50p. This was planned to complement, not rival, other publications. Includes recently researched information on the castle, and walks and drives in the vicinity of Ludlow.

Dr. Martin Speight, **LUDLOW IN OLD PICTURE POSTCARDS** (European Library, Zaltbommel/Netherlands, 1983); 80 pages, £6.95. A collection of postcards and photographs from the 1880-1930 period, with informative and perceptive captions.

Dr. Barrie Trinder, **A HISTORY OF SHROPSHIRE** (Phillimore, Darwen County History series, 1983); 128 pages, £7.95. Scholarly but easily comprehensible, this is the best general history of the county produced so far. Rates Ludlow with Offa's Dyke and Ironbridge as a 'historical treasure of exceptional value'.

HOW TO JOIN

1) Ludlow Historical Research Group

Further details if required from: Mrs Margaret Shaw, Cliffdene, Dinham, Ludlow, SY8 2JE. Tel. 0584 2850.

2) Civic Society

Mr Ran Ogston, 1 The Vine Yard, Lower Broad Street, Ludlow. Tel. 0584 4718.

Ludlow after Waterloo

A study of the social history of the town by John Law based on a scrap-book of Thomas Griffiths, a Bull Ring printer (kindly lent by John Norton).

In 1815, our nation of shopkeepers had just emerged from a 22 year war against the French; the toll had been immense. The National Debt, which before the war was below £250m, now stood at an unprecedented £861m. In the dark, satanic mill towns of the Midlands and the North, the direst poverty and crime proliferated. In primarily rural areas, such as South Shropshire, agriculturists, despite the protection of a rigid system of Corn Duties, faced the unfamiliar prospect of bankruptcy and a restless peasantry.

Ludlow seemed to escape the worst of the socio-economic ravages of the period and yet, in many important respects, the town was clearly a microcosm of a larger general picture.

The town's inhabitants increased from 3,897, recorded at the first national Census, to 4,820 in 1821, and yet within this comparatively small number, the gulf between the social classes was immense. Some 6% of the population was in receipt of Poor Relief of one kind or another; in 1817, 38 wretches languished within the sombre interior of the town workhouse — the eldest, 81, the youngest, two infants barely one year of age. These hapless creatures experienced daily the austerities of institutional life — a gloomy existence in no way leavened by a severely frugal diet. The Bill of Fare for Sunday 10th November 1817, for example, offered the following irresistible delicacies:

Breakfast: Pint and half of Broth or Onion Porridge and 6 ounces of Bread

Dinner: 6 ounces of Meat after dressing and 1 pound of Potatoes

Supper: 1 pound of Potatoes

The still sad music of humanity proffered no less bleak a harmony for those 'fortunate' enough to escape the rigours of the Poor House. The average number in receipt of outdoor relief during the period under review hovered between 150 and 210. Frequently, of course, the declining fortunes of the glove trade and associated labours accounted for a good deal of the town's hardship. In an age when public hanging was not uncommon, however, and some 200 capital offences disgraced our Criminal Codes, it was not surprising to occasionally find families who father had been transported to our penal settlements in Tasmania. Now and again, poignant and moving entries start from the pages of the Poor Law records — as for October 1818, viz:

TRUEMAN'S CHILD (age 7) of GOALFORD (sic) allowed 1s 6d — Father dead in Hereford Goal (sic).



This view south from Castle Square was published by Edmund Jones in *PEN SKETCHES OF OLD LUDLOW* (1912-13). It shows the White Horse Inn, a prominent building in Ludlow during the years covered by this article. The large number of chimney stacks reaffirms the documentary record of 11 hearths in 1663. This print was generously given to the Historical Research Group by Mrs F. Robinson.

At the other end of the social spectrum, the Earl of Powis, Viscount Clive, and the lesser local gentry strove industriously to fashion a benevolent despotism acceptable to those charged with the organisation of the town's affairs. Indeed, the generosity of the nobility is not in dispute. The Earl and Viscount subscribed £100 each in December 1816 for the aid of the poor, and some idea of the real value of such gifts may be gained from the fact that in 1820, the Rev John Hinde received exactly £100 annually in his capacity as Headmaster of the town Grammar School.

Such noble folk did, nevertheless, live a remarkably charmed existence for, while the town could not lay claim to the excesses and delights of, say, Brighton, Bath, Cheltenham, et al, there is ample evidence to suggest that there was a full and fulfilling round of social engagements which claimed the attention of Ludlow's ruling classes.

The Assembly Rooms annually accommodated the Hunt Ball; Gentlemen for 2s (Trades People 1s!) might witness at The Feathers remarkable displays of the Noble Art of Self-Defence during which they customarily laid huge wagers. The Ludlow Theatre regularly attracted the patronage of ladies and gentlemen. On the evening of Thursday 7th December 1820, Mr Incledon of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Mr Baker of the Theatre Royal, Dublin, and Mr Bianchi Taylor of The King's Theatre, Haymarket, begged, 'respectfully to inform the Nobility and Gentry of Ludlow' that they would have the honour to perform Variety (blending the Moral, Amusing and Instructive) Comic Songs, Ballads and Recitations; boxes were purchased at 3s each.

In April 1824, 'Persons of the first respectability' were urged to visit Mr W. S. Spence at his rooms in Broad Street where, with 'Singular Ingenuity A Most Striking Likeness' would be produced by means of scissors at charges ranging from 1s to 5s. The popularity of this novelty among such folk may be gauged from the fact that in Hereford Mr Spence took over 1600 profiles in 11 days!

With the gentry, of course, appearance was often of the first importance. Gentlemen were able to purchase top quality hats during the period for between 6s

and 15s; ladies were 'respectfully informed' in October 1824 by A & E Oseland that they had just received from London a 'Fashionable Assortment of Millinery' declining, of course, to enter into the vulgarity of prices! Mr J. Jones, at the Worcester Boot and Shoe Warehouse, Bullring, was equally respectful in his Announcement that ladies may purchase satin shoes at 7s per pair, and gentlemen boots at 20s ditto. Engaging matters for the landed interest, no doubt, but not likely to excite the enthusiasm of great numbers of Ludlow folk struggling to eke out an existence against a background of staggeringly high food prices and static or diminishing wages.

In the absence of organised law enforcement agencies, comparatively large rewards, man traps, and quasi vigilante groups of landowners were the usual devices employed to combat a fairly well-established pattern of rural crime. Rewards ranged from 5 gns to 20 gns, and were often extra to those offered by, for instance, the Munslow Association for the Prosecution of Felons organised in the post-war Ludlow area in the hope of apprehending the growing number of agrarian malcontents.

The picture, however, was not entirely gloomy; there was a developing and increasingly-literate middle-class. Grocers and clerics, mercers and medical men were discovered to be in possession of 'handsome mahogany chairs' and 'very good' pianofortes. The Rev J. Morris owned in 1821 a 'quantity of scarce and valuable books and a very excellent fine toned violin'; fellow cleric, David Francis, boasted in 1824, 'a Harpcichord and a neat Guitar and upwards of 100 vols of books'.

Ludlow, in the first quarter of the last century was arguably no better, no worse than any other town of similar size in England. It enjoyed daily Royal Mail and stage coach links from the Angel and Crown Inns with London, the North-west, Wales and neighbouring towns. And on 10th February 1824, supporters of the as yet uncut Ludlow and Severn Rail Road met at the Guildhall. A Committee of eleven lost no time in resolving that, '... a Rail Road Communication with the River Severn will tend greatly to promote the Trading and Agricultural Interests of this Town and Neighbourhood'.