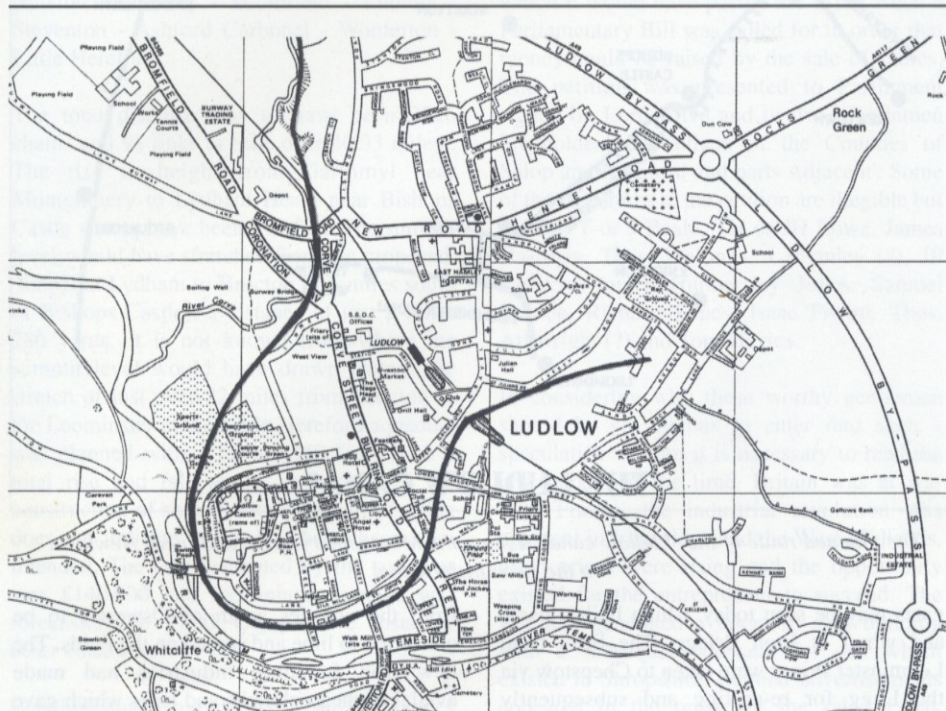


Ludlow Heritage News

No. 28 WINTER 1997

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The route for the proposed 'Ludlow canal' - forming a loop just outside, and three-quarters of the way around the town wall.

HOW A CANAL ALMOST CAME TO LUDLOW

The story of a plan that could have changed the look and the future development of Ludlow told by Bryan Heatley

Canal mania was at its peak in 1793 when decisions were made which, if implemented, would have brought a canal to Ludlow. Already the new waterways existed in the newly industrialised areas and by this date several rural canals were planned.

The reason for the wild enthusiasm for this new means of transport was effectively the low resistance of water. A pack-horse could move, perhaps, one eighth of a ton. The same animal could move five-eighths of a ton by stage wagon on soft roads, but 30 tons by river barge and as much as 50 tons when dragging a narrow boat along a canal with no current. It is clear that the advent of the inland canals was indeed a transport revolution.

In the Ludlow area there were major transport problems. Coal was expensive because of the distance it had to be moved to the town. The long established forge at Bringewood on the Teme, close to where Downton Castle now stands, was moving iron by pack-horse but when it progressed to the production of tin plate this form of transport proved unsatisfactory as the material arrived at its destination damaged. The manufacture of plate was moved to Stourport where the river allowed smoother transit. The turnpike roads

were not to exist for some years: it appeared that there was a clear need for a canal.

Then, in 1777, one Robert Whitworth reported to certain gentlemen of Herefordshire that he proposed a canal from 'somewhere near Bridgnorth and through several collieries in that country and down the Corve Dale for some distance, and then over the country to the extremity of Herefordshire near Leintwardine'. He goes on to comment on the expense of bringing the canal from Corve Dale to Leintwardine, saying that he feels that if the cost was excessive the line could 'be brought with the greatest of ease down to Ludlow, and from thence to the proposed line (of the projected Leominster canal) from Stourport, near Orleton'.

The people of Leominster had long been interested in water transport. A plan using flash locks to make navigable the River Lugg to its confluence with the Wye had been attempted in 1714 but the engineer, a Mr. Chinn, carried out his work 'so improperly, ignorantly and unskilfully' that the undertaking proved abortive. He absconded and his security was obliged to refund a great part of the money. He did not build proper locks but put in flood gates at bridges. The remains of some of these

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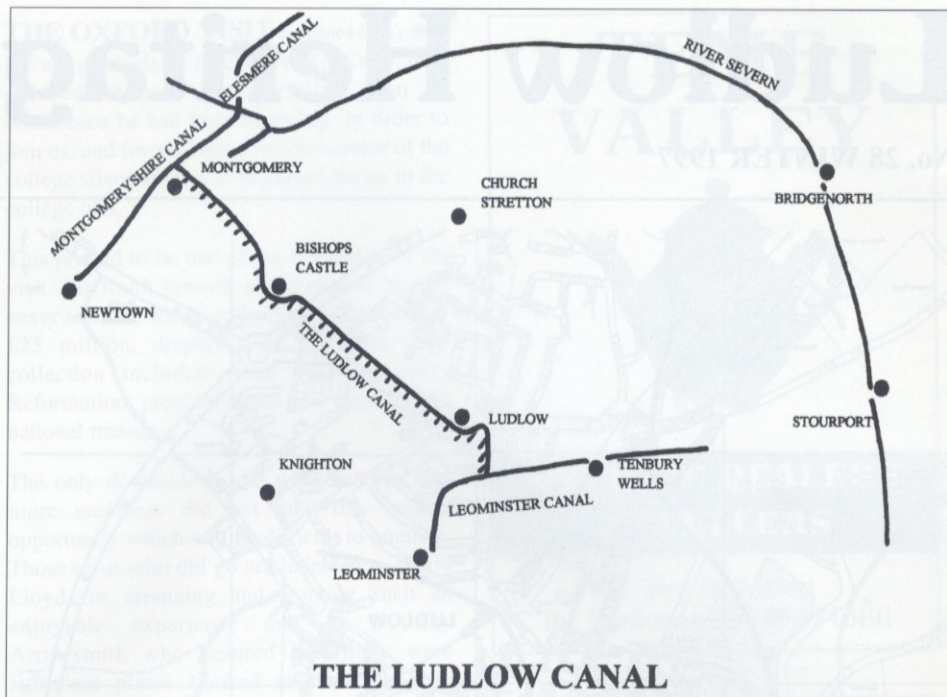
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THE LUDLOW CANAL

The planned route of the 'Ludlow canal' linking the Montgomeryshire canal near Newtown to the Leominster canal

gates may be seen today. Chinn built a basin and wharf at Eton Bridge. The bells from Leominster Priory were taken to Chepstow via the Lugg for re-casting and subsequently returned 'when increased to eight' by the same route.

In 1791 William Faden of Charing Cross published a map showing the line of the proposed Kington, Leominster and Stourport canal (otherwise referred to as the Leominster) with a branch heading NW from the southern part of Leominster to Leintwardine and crossing the Lugg just SE of Mortimers Cross. Why Leintwardine features in two canal proposals is not clear. Perhaps it was to tap the traffic generated by the Bringewood forge, or to connect with the Teme which itself had been a candidate to be made navigable. Efforts to improve such a fast flowing and shallow stream would have been fruitless, although the eighteenth century was a time for making waterways navigable. (A major work, carried out by Dutch engineers, was the canalisation of the Dee to the West of Chester).

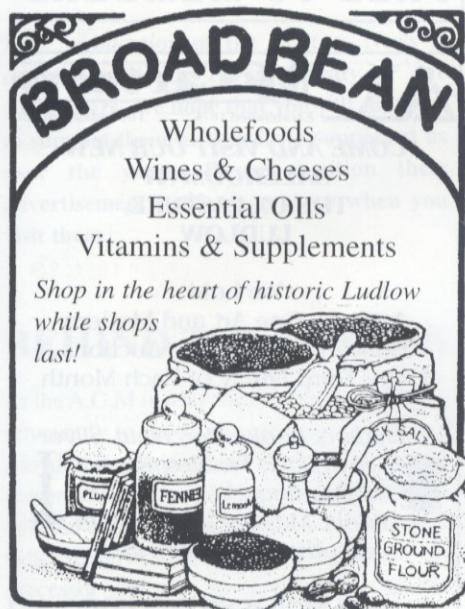
Canals in the Marches were built. There was the Montgomeryshire, the Kington, Leominster and Stourport, and the Hereford and Gloucester. The closest to Ludlow, the Leominster, never reached any of the three towns mentioned in its title but an eighteen mile stretch was constructed and used between a point one mile north of Leominster and a wharf near Mable, a short distance from Newnham Bridge. The opening of this canal was marked by the movement of coal in boats, built by a Mr. Bird at Tenbury, to Wooferton. Freight expected to bring revenue to the new canal included coal, grain, cider, timber and Leominster 'ore' (wool). On the Montgomeryshire the traffic was also of an agricultural nature, the bulk being limestone

from the quarries south of Oswestry to be converted to lime and spread on the fields. The new iron founding industries had made available cheap ploughs and tools which gave the farmers confidence to improve their land to achieve a greater yield for the increasing population.

A reprint of the surveyor's fine plan for the Leominster is currently available. Its line may still be traced and a walk about some of the remaining structures proves rewarding. The three span aqueduct in Little Hereford is impressive although it was in part demolished early in the 1939-45 war. Another massive brick aqueduct exists near Newnham Bridge; some grandiose embankments can be seen and a few canal bridges remain including one at Easton Court. Wharf House on the A49(T) one mile north of Leominster still stands, although much modified. This was the terminus of the canal. At the eastern end of navigation the southern portal of the never used but now partially collapsed Southnet tunnel remains.

The engineer for the Leominster was one James Dadford Junior. His father had been a principal assistant to that great early canal builder, Brindley. Young Dadford surveyed a route for a canal to join the Leominster and the Montgomeryshire and on 11 November 1793 deposited a plan with the Justices of the Peace of Salop. It included a list of landowners and occupiers 'of the lands through which the canal is intended to be made from Garthmyl in the County of Montgomery to the aqueduct on the Leominster canal over the river Teme four miles south of Ludlow in the County of Hereford'. It also included a table showing the rise and fall of the canal.

The planned route was as follows:- Garthmyl (or Garthmill) - River Severn at Cae Howell -



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The total distance was to have been 3226 chains and 95 links (a little over 40.33 miles). The rise in height from Garthmyl near Montgomery to Lydham Heath near Bishops Castle was to have been 298 feet. The summit level would have stretched from the proposed tunnel at Lydham to Brocton (1.5 miles south of Bishops Castle), a distance of just 3 miles 286 yards. It is not known from where the summit level would have drawn water. The stretch of just over 22 miles from Brocton to the Leominster at the Little Hereford aqueduct was planned with a fall of 349 feet. Such a total rise and fall would have required the construction of some 80 locks! Dadford's plan does not indicate precisely where these were intended. The cost estimated by the surveyor was £140,000 and the annual tonnage was forecast to be 9,000. Comparative costs for other canals were:-

Loughborough Navigation (1776-8) 9.25 miles for £9,200, i.e. £994.6/mile

Leicester (1791-4) 15.75 miles for £35,000, i.e. £2222.2/mile

Leominster (1791-4) 18 miles for £91,500, i.e. £5083.3/mile

Bishops Castle/Ludlow estimate (1793) 40.33 miles for £140,000, i.e. £3471.4/mile

Dadford's original estimate for the Leominster was £83,000 in respect of the 31 mile canal from Leominster to Stourport, an average of £2,677.4/mile. Although inflation in 1791 was about 10% per annum it can be seen that this was totally unrealistic, especially as the eighteen miles completed was the least difficult engineering task of the planned 31 miles. Both the Leominster and the proposed line through Ludlow were highly speculative agricultural canals. The Bishops Castle/Ludlow estimate seems extremely low when compared with the actual cost of the constructed Leominster. Expenditure would also have been influenced by the number of locks; 16 in the 18 miles of the Leominster compared to 80 for the 40 miles of the proposed Bishops castle /Ludlow.

It appears that the canal would have entered Ludlow from Bromfield and then was to have squeezed between the walls of the castle and the Teme, continuing across Broad Street just below the Broadgate and to have left the town via Old Street for Steventon and Ashford Carbonel. Had it been built and remained to this day then Ludlow would have been a very different place: perhaps even more attractive!

On the 11th September 1793 it was reported in the Hereford Journal 'that application is to be made to Parliament in the next session for leave to bring a Bill for making a navigable canal from the Montgomeryshire Canal to the Leominster Canal'. The townships through which it would have passed are listed. Such a Parliamentary Bill was called for in order that money could be raised by the sale of shares. The petition was presented to Parliament signed by Lord Clive and twelve 'Gentlemen Freeholders and others of the Counties of Salop and Hereford and parts Adjacent'. Some of the signatures to the petition are illegible but include T or J Beale, TH or JH Lowe, James Hastings, Thos. Wellings, J Plymley (?), JP Roberts, James Hunnersley Jones, Samuel Sneade, Richard James, Isaac Frowd, Thos. Arkwright (?) and Tom Davies.

In considering why these worthy gentlemen should be so anxious to enter into such a speculative venture it is necessary to read the newspapers of the time. Britain was at war with France, the industrial revolution was apparent in Ironbridge and the West Midlands, grain prices were rising and the opportunity existed for the entrepreneur to succeed. The war had generated a boom in ship building with a subsequent demand for oak which existed in Shropshire. Regular advertisements appeared in the press for the sale of oak plantations. It may be that the landowners saw the canal as a means of moving oak planks to the Bristol Channel. The industrialisation of Britain brought with it a change from the use of charcoal to the more efficient combustion of coal. The Leominster reduced the price of coal at Wooferton from 30 shillings per ton to 15 shillings. The Montgomery brought to Western Shropshire limestone which greatly improved the fertility of the countryside. All these factors and others which it is not possible to visualise must have influenced their judgement. It appears that the area around Bishops Castle had more to gain from the project than did Ludlow.

A meeting was held in the Town Hall, Bishops Castle on 18th December 1793 'for receiving subscriptions for carrying into execution the intended canal to link Liverpool and Bristol'. The notice advertising the meeting is headed 'The Ludlow and Montgomery Canal'. The Chairman of the meeting, the Rt. Hon. Lord Clive, 'resolved that the full project was too expensive and to be withdrawn but it appears to the meeting that a canal from the Leominster Canal at Little Hereford to or near the turnpike road on Lydham Heath (part of the original plan) may be exercised with advantage to the country in general. It was resolved that a subscription be entered into and that application be made to Parliament in the present session for carrying into execution subject to the following conditions - that of the estimate of £73,000 50% must be subscribed before any part of the canal be commenced, nor should any start be made until after six months after the conclusion of the present war. The meeting be adjourned to the Crown Inn at

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*Ludlow's Broadgate, in front of which the proposed Ludlow canal would have passed!
Photograph by Gareth Thomas, FRPS.*

Ludlow on 8th January 1794'. The resolutions were to be published in the General Evening Post, Hereford and Shrewsbury and in Aris's Birmingham papers.

The effects of the changes proposed at this meeting were to abandon plans for the northern part of the proposed route linking Bishops Castle to the Montgomeryshire Canal and to reduce by almost 50% the estimated costs. This northern section would have proved difficult to construct as it crossed hilly country with a rise of 298 feet in less than 14 miles from its junction with the Montgomeryshire. The cancelled portion was that which was the more expensive to construct representing only 34.8% of the planned length but appearing to include 46% of the proposed locks. The gentlemen of Bishops Castle were obviously more anxious to encourage trade links with the already prosperous south of England than with the industrially developing north country.

It is interesting to note that some 72 years later the plan to build a railway from Craven Arms to Montgomery was similarly curtailed. The line, which never made a profit, reached Lydham Heath from where a branch was built to Bishops Castle, but the planned route on to Montgomery was never constructed. The hills and the low density of population which would have ensured low freight receipts killed both the proposed rail and canal links.

The reference in the Hereford Journal to the linking of Liverpool and Bristol is an example of the extreme enthusiasm which brought about canal mania. The two cities were already linked by the canal system through the Midlands although it is true that this would have provided a shorter route. It seems highly improbable that the trade between the two ports could have been carried on more economically by canal than by coastal

shipping, but the dangers of sailing vessels in the late 18th century cannot be over emphasised.

The meeting at the Crown at Ludlow was adjourned more than once and seems never to have taken place. The Parliamentary Bill, if it were ever to be drafted, never became an Act and the construction of the Ludlow Canal as it had become known was never commenced.

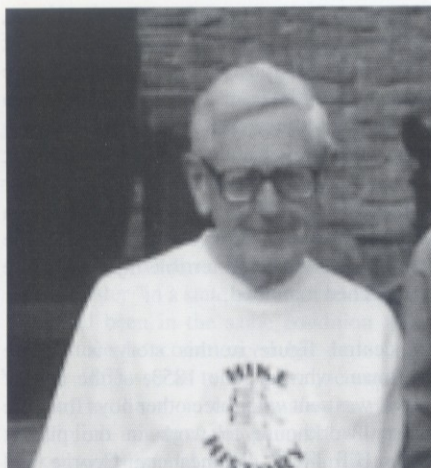
There is no record of the events which brought about the abandonment of the project but it is possible to imagine what some of the factors may have been. It would have been obvious that Dadford's estimates of cost were highly suspect. It is possible that the quality of his work may already have been questioned as it was by that great canal engineer John Rennie in the following year. The war and inflation may have dented confidence. The future market for oak and grain after the end of hostilities may have appeared uncertain. The industrial revolution was bringing about the closure of rural industries, such as Bringewood Forge, and concentrating metal working near the coalfields. Even the corn mills which had constituted profitable assets of country estates were closing as water power gave way to steam.

Rural canals were not proving profitable. For example, the Leominster investors had bought shares at £100, no dividend was ever paid and when the canal was purchased by the Shrewsbury and Hereford Railway Company in 1860 for £12,000 the investor received just £16 per share. It was reported in Leominster that by 1808 the cost of running the canal had caused the price of coal to rise to £1-10-0d per ton, just what it had been before the cut was built. A glance at the stock exchange price listings of the period confirms the plight of the rural canal. At the same time some of the

RON KITCHENER

An appreciation by David Lloyd of the contribution made by Ron Kitchener, who died earlier this year, to the work of the Ludlow Historical Research Group and the Civic Society

The death of Ron Kitchener in August has robbed Ludlow Civic Society of a loyal and committed member, who served on its committee for a number of years. It also deprived Ludlow Historical Research Group, which began as an offshoot of the Civic Society just twenty years ago, of a very hard working Chairman, under whose guidance much high quality work was undertaken and achieved. Though the Group has been fortunate to find a new and capable chairman in Derek Williams, Ron's particular style of leadership served the cause of historical research in Ludlow very well - and it is of this work that I wish to write this appreciation.



Soon after arriving in Ludlow in the early 1980s, Ron and his wife Belle became regular members of the classes on the history of Ludlow which I was then running for Birmingham University on Tuesday evenings. As a retired engineer, Ron had a fresh and enquiring approach to many aspects of Ludlow's history, but it soon became clear that he had a particular interest in two topics; the mills of the Rivers Teme and Corve, and Ludlow Castle.

Ron soon became the expert on the mills. He read deeply on mill technology and combed the Group's papers for local knowledge. His expertise was widely recognised and he was soon giving talks to groups and societies outside Ludlow. On the castle, too, he showed a very practical approach, and his fine scale model of the inner bailey in Tudor times, made originally as the centre-piece of one of our exhibitions, now has an honoured place in Ludlow Castle itself, and is a valued aid for explaining the castle to visitors and students.

Another area of the Group's work in which Ron became particularly interested was the town tours. A well informed and articulate guide himself, Ron together with Belle organised the tours for many years, and the town owes a great debt to them both. The large bank balance which the group now has - a nest egg for some future project or publication - is the tangible proof of the success of the tours during "the Kitchener years".

HOW A CANAL ALMOST CAME TO LUDLOW (cont'd from page 4)

industrial navigations, notably the Loughborough, the Coventry and the Stourbridge were prospering.

An undated strip map of the road from Bristol to Chester by John Ogilby shows what appears to be a canal running east to west below the Ludlow Broadgate. This inclusion, as fact, of items planned but never begun was not unusual at the time. Another such example is the work of Priestly who in his 'Navigable

Due to a number of reasons, the Group in the late 1980s had difficulty in finding a chairman, who would have the time and skill to co-ordinate its activities. After some reticence due to his lack of formal historical qualifications, Ron agreed to take this on, and the survival of the Group at this time owes a great deal to his commitment. Under his leadership, a great deal of useful work was accomplished, including the publication of many volumes of transcriptions of Bailiffs' and Church Wardens' Accounts - high quality work which will be of value far beyond Ludlow. Ron also laid the foundations of the Group's own stock of copies of maps and papers, work which is being continued and systematised at the present time: and he encouraged and helped with a number of other initiatives. A keen "computer man", Ron spent many hours recording Ludlow's historical data on disc - and this will be an enormous help to future researchers.

It is fortunate that Belle is still an active (and vocal!) member of the Group, for through her some of Ron's enthusiasm lives on. I hope that his work will be commemorated in other ways, too, for example by the dedication to his memory of a forth-coming publication. Meanwhile, we rejoice in the many memories we have of Ron, and hope that the future of the Ludlow Historical Research Group will be worthy of that inheritance.

DAVID LLOYD

Rivers and Canals' published in 1831 refers to 'The Leominster, or Kington and Leominster Canal' as running from Kington to Stourport. In fact the canal never reached either of these two towns. Canal mania was not limited to investors.

One thing that does not seem to have changed over the last 200 years is the optimism of the estimators of the costs of major civil engineering projects.

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DID HE FALL OR WAS HE PUSHED ?

In this sequel to the article on the building of the Ludlow workhouse Derek Williams reveals the human (and inhumane) side of workhouse life



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In Victorian Ludlow boys from the workhouse, some as young as ten, were often sent to work as 'apprentice' miners in the Staffordshire coalfield. The shock of moving from the drab monotony of the workhouse to the bustling streets and noisy industries of the Black Country must have been intense. Their treatment in the mines was often harsh, even by the severe standards of the 1850s. Some were killed or suffered terrible injuries before they reached manhood.

The central figure in this story is George Smallman, who in June 1853, at the age of twelve, was sent with three other boys from the Ludlow workhouse to work in the pits at King's Hill Field, Wednesbury. George and two others went to the pit of John and Joseph Middleton, who already employed several Ludlow lads. The fourth boy, James Lane of Diddlebury - of whom more later - went to work in William Wynne's pit.

Five months later, on 3rd November, George's father Simeon Smallman asked for and was granted an interview with the Ludlow Board of Guardians. This took some courage, because until a little earlier Smallman had himself been an inmate in the workhouse, and complaints from paupers were often viewed unsympathetically. He told the Guardians that the Ludlow boys working for the Middletons were not only 'insufficiently fed' but also regularly kicked and beaten by the foreman in the pit. The Guardians directed William Russell, the Master of the workhouse, to investigate these complaints as soon as possible. His report was received, "highly approved and confirmed" by the Guardians at their next meeting: they accorded it the honour of being written in full into the Minute Book.

Russell had arrived at the pit early in the morning of 10th November. He introduced himself to John and Joseph Middleton and explained the purpose of his visit. The two coalmasters escorted Russell into the part of the pit where five Ludlow boys were working. He reports that he spoke to each boy in turn, and found that they were all in "excellent health". When asked how they were being treated, all except John Steward of Richards Castle said that they were "perfectly satisfied with their usage and their food". Steward complained about both.

Then followed a curious incident. Russell reports that "in passing along the passage of the pit, in a hole in the side, I found a handkerchief, and upon enquiring what it was the Master said it was one of the boys breakfast cloths, which turned out to be Steward's. I opened it and found it to contain at least half a pound of bread and butter". The three men returned to Steward who "admitted" it was the remains of his breakfast, which had been more than he could eat. The Ludlow boys

were then brought together, with the two Middletons still in attendance, and again asked if they had been ill-treated whilst in the pit. John Steward said that "the Doggy had beaten him severely with a strap" but his evidence had been discredited by the affair of the handkerchief. (It was odd that Russell should have picked up a handkerchief in the dark and unfamiliar passageway; odder that it belonged to one of the Ludlow boys; an even stranger coincidence that it was the handkerchief of the boy who had just complained about his food and treatment).

None of the boys was willing to show Russell any "bruises, marks or scars", even when he offered to give them "all the coppers I had in my pocket" for the glimpse of a wound! Russell therefore concluded that the complaint was ill-founded, and said as much to the Middletons. Consequently he was able to mention in his report their "entire approbation" of his visit. The report ends with the recommendation that George Smallman should be formally apprenticed to Joseph Middleton at the end of the trial period.

What happened next nullified that recommendation. A few days after welcoming Russell's report the Guardians had a letter from Joseph Middleton with the news that "the boy George Smallman, at present with him on trial preparatory to his being bound apprentice, had met with a serious accident in the pit and that his jaw had been badly broken". (This was another coincidence, in that the boy whose father had initiated the enquiry should be injured so soon after; and what kind of mining accident might lead to a broken jaw and no other injuries?)

The Middletons sent George Smallman back to the workhouse and asked for another lad to replace him as he was no longer fit for the mining business. The Clerk to the Guardians briskly replied that "the boy George Smallman must first be suitably provided for by him (i.e. Middleton) before any other lads can be sent to him on trial".

Meanwhile James Lane, who had set out for Wednesbury with George Smallman the previous June, had lost his leg in a serious accident in William Wynne's pit. He, too, was back in the workhouse. George and James must have spent a lot of time together as they recovered from their injuries. The Guardians hoped to find some other trade for James Lane, and arranged for him to be apprenticed to the Ludlow tailor John Welsh. When this became known in the town, there was an immediate protest from Thomas Whitwell, the assistant overseer for the parish of St. Laurence. He wrote to the Guardians that Lane was "crippled and infirm from the loss of a leg, wherefrom he may become a burthen on the parish of Ludlow, in which by such apprenticing he

could acquire a legal settlement" (i.e. the parish would become responsible for his upkeep). The Guardians agreed: Whitwell's objection was "held to be reasonable and good" and the apprenticeship was cancelled. James Lane was left in the workhouse with little hope of escape.

This may help to explain why George Smallman suddenly "expressed a strong desire" to return to Wednesbury. In July 1854 he was formally bound apprentice to James Middleton. Now aged thirteen, he set off again for the Black Country with two other Shropshire lads: James Evans of Bitterley, aged eleven, and Aaron Morgan of Bromfield, aged ten. George Smallman had first hand experience of how hard and dangerous was the life of a miner, but it must have seemed more attractive than the austerity, petty restrictions and sheer pointlessness of life in the workhouse.

Both of the local officials who, by modern standards, showed such scant regard for the welfare of the boys in the workhouse, soon left

the Ludlow stage. Thomas Whitwell, whose protest to the Guardians may have condemned James Lane to a lifetime in the workhouse, was within a year dismissed in disgrace from his post as assistant overseer. Found guilty of embezzlement and the misapplication of parish funds, he was sentenced to three months in Shrewsbury gaol. William Russell was taken ill within a few months of his visit to Wednesbury, and died in March 1855. To succeed him the Guardians appointed David Shuter, who had been the porter of the Leominster workhouse. When the Chairman of the Guardians visited the Ludlow workhouse shortly after Shuter's appointment he found the new Master "in a state of intoxication" and that "he had been in the same condition more or less since he commenced his duties on 7th (May 1855) so as to be quite incompetent to attend to them or to maintain the necessary discipline amongst the paupers". Shuter was asked to resign and did so. William Russell had been Master of the Ludlow Workhouse for 17 years: his successor lasted 17 days.

DEREK WILLIAMS

DON'T PIPE DOWN SPEAK UP

Letter to the Editor from member Graham Berlyn requesting help in his research
22, Greenacres
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November 1997

Dear Sir,

I have been for some time engaged in local research to discover as much as possible about the 17th. and 18th. century clay tobacco pipemaking industry in South and West Shropshire and North Herefordshire.

I would like to ask if anyone has found any clay pipe fragments, and would be willing to lend them to me for recording purposes. All pieces lent will be returned. It would also help if finders will write their name and address and telephone number together with the date and place where the find was made, and put the find into a sealable bag. I would also be most grateful if you can furnish any information on where any possible concentrations of pipe remains may be found.

The great majority of clay pipes found will have been manufactured locally but as yet I have not been able to locate the location of any kilns. If anyone knows of, or suspects the site of, a possible pipe kiln, I would be most interested to hear about it.

Please ring me on **01584-873925** if you can help,

Yours faithfully
Graham Berlyn

THE OXFORD VISIT

*"The clever men at Oxford
Know all there is to be known
But they none of them know half as much
as intelligent Mr. Toad"*
[The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame]

That is, of course, with the exception of David Lloyd whose virtuoso performance of planning, knowledge, enthusiasm and leadership made the Society's visit to Oxford on 27 and 28 September 1997 so memorable and enjoyable.

Over 40 members set off from Ludlow via a short, but fascinating tour of Chipping Campden to find their accommodation awaiting them at Wadham College.

Mini tours of town and colleges, on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning revealed the cultural and historical and architectural development of the University city. At Brasenose College, Society member Dr. Alan Turner, an ex-student of that college, gave a personal view of its development and anecdotes from his years as a student.

We were privileged during the weekend to be the guests of our President Sir Keith Thomas and his wife, Lady Thomas. For dinner on Saturday evening, in Wadham's Old Library, we were joined by Lady Thomas for a delightfully convivial gathering. On Sunday morning Sir Keith himself provided a guided tour of Corpus Christi College, of which he is President. This included a witty and informed introduction in the chapel and also a visit to the college library.

(continued on page 8)

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BEHIND THE SCENES

At the A.G.M in May the Society was obliged, reluctantly to accept the resignation of David Lloyd as its chairman for personal and health reasons. Since David had to make his decision so close to the meeting there was not sufficient time to give considered thought to his successor and the meeting agreed that the election of a new chairman should take place at the first public meeting of the new programme in September. Neil Aikens, as Vice-Chairman, took over the reins during the summer months. There was an unusual surplus of candidates for vacancies on the committee caused by the loss of Ron Kitchener, due to ill health (see an appreciation of Ron's work on page 5) and of David Lloyd, and after a closely contested vote Brian McKibbin and Stan Jones joined the committee.

At the Special General Meeting convened at the start of the September member's meeting Brian Atwood was elected unopposed as the new chairman. Brian has been very active in bringing his personal style to bear on the workings of the committee and is keen to draw in interested members to the committee's work where they have a particular expertise to offer, but where they might not wish to sit through monthly meetings of the full committee.

THE OXFORD VISIT continued from page 7

We are particularly indebted to Sir Keith, who excused himself temporarily from a conference he had been attending in order to join us, and for arranging for the curator of the college silver to have it displayed for us in the college hall.

This proved to be one of the highlights of the visit. Sir Keith himself admitted that he had never seen the whole collection, valued at over £25 million, displayed at one time. The collection included some very rare pre-Reformation pieces that are now classified as national treasures.

The only downside to the weekend was that more members did not take this unique opportunity which will be difficult to emulate. Those of us who did go are indebted to David Lloyd for arranging and fronting such an enjoyable experience and to Dorothy Arrowsmith who ensured that there were sufficient places booked to make the trip financially viable.

1997-98 PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Wednesday, 10 December 1997

'A Diversity of Interests'

Julia Ionides and Peter Howell

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE

This meeting will be held in High Hall, Castle Square **NOT** the Assembly Rooms

Wednesday 14 January 1998

'New Year Soiree'

In St Peter's Church Hall

Ticket £5 (to include refreshment)

from the Treasurer

Wednesday, 11 February 1998

'This Green and Pleasant Land'

Tim Andrewes, Town and District Councillor.

Wednesday, 11 March 1998

'Ludlow Historical Research Group'

An evening of members' contributions

Wednesday, 8 April 1998

'Sir Stephen Glynne - Church Explorer'

Dr David Cox, Head of Victorian County History Records and Research Centre

Saturday, 19 April 1998

Visit to Coventry

Details and Booking Form from Dorothy Arrowsmith - 01584 875623

Wednesday, 13 May 1998

Annual General Meeting of the Society

7.30pm in High Hall, Castle Square.

Annual Subscription: £5.00 per member

Meeting Fees:

Members: £1.00 per meeting

Non Members: £2.50 per meeting

All meetings except the AGM and the Christmas Soiree will take place in the Ludlow Assembly Rooms and start at 7.30 p.m.

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