

Ludlow Heritage News

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FREE



A Yellow-Necked Mouse, one of the many forms of wildlife, including badgers, otters and rare birds, photographed recently on the unspoilt river bank between Ludford and Dinham bridges - one of Ludlow's most precious green spaces. Photo: Gareth B. Thomas F.R.P.S.

SIX ENGLISH TOWNS, 2. TEWKESBURY: Christopher Regan, Chairman of Tewkesbury Civic Society

We continue our series on the towns chosen by Alec Clifton-Taylor for his first television programmes on English market towns, and his subsequent book published in 1978.

In some ways there have been remarkably few changes apparent in Tewkesbury since Alec-Clifton-Taylor's memorable and indeed inspiring series of programmes appeared in 1978. Of those buildings which he especially featured, only one has been significantly affected, and that is the Swan Hotel. It now houses an Iceland Store and a general stores. Although the façade above ground level was more or less preserved and the general effect from a distance is satisfactory, there is no trace of the old interior and the view that one used to have of the coach yard which was one of the pleasures of walking up the High Street. This development was much debated and is one of the cases where the eventual outcome was more unsatisfactory than had been anticipated.

The biggest changes make their impact as one approaches Tewkesbury. A vast development of six hundred or so houses is now well advanced on the southern fringe of the town and is split in two unequal sections by a Relief Road which runs from south of Gupshill to the Ashchurch Road. This road serves as a bypass for traffic whose destination is the main

Industrial Estates that stretch from the east of the old town to and beyond the M5.

The eastern approach to the town, i.e. from the M5, is frequently congested as there are major developments at either side and the previous pockets of ribbon development are mostly infilled. This also became the location of Tewkesbury School in the 1970s. Fortunately, the school complex is attractive in design and layout, but it is ever-growing and in itself generates a great deal of traffic. This approach to the town used to be characterised by a distant view of the Abbey, but it is now dominated by a very large Safeways. Safeways helped with the cost of building the Relief Road. There should also, in due course, have been a Northern Relief Road, but this has been abandoned on account of the action of pressure groups. Consequently the town is still plagued by a lot of traffic making for places such as Ledbury and Malvern. Attempts have been made with moderate success to encourage drivers to make more use of the détour provided by the M5 and the M50 (the old 'Ross Spur'), and there are weight limits in place, but rarely enforced.

The western approach via the old road from Worcester has barely altered until one reaches the confluence of the Avon and the Severn apart from a development perched on a fragment of land to the south of the road. This site was devel-

oped in the early 1990s, and although there were arguments about whether the development was a worthy one, it now seems to fit in well. It consists of a group of interlocking terraces. The dwellings, being narrow and of three storeys, are in character with so many of the older buildings in Tewkesbury and seem well-mannered.

The area least likely to be seen by the occasional visitor, unless tempted to take a boat trip, is the stretch of river from the confluence down to the Abbey Mill, known as the Mill Avon. Most of the industrial premises that occupied this area have gone, and their sites, in some cases after remaining derelict for many years, now sport several modest-sized blocks of flats. The earlier ones are rather a blot; their flat roofs and the absence of chimney stacks stand out horribly against the steeply-pitched roofs which characterise so many of the old buildings. Happily, there seems to have been a change of heart around 1980 and the general aspect from the Tewkesbury Ham is generally pleasing. But it is regrettable that it has to be mentioned that a development currently in progress is rather letting the side down. The initial plans included a terrace of six houses which in the plans appeared most suitable for Tewkesbury - varied textures and in no way confrontational. These plans were approved by our Planning

Appraisal Committee. However, the developer subsequently withdrew this plan and we were far less happy with its replacement - for seven houses. This plan was eventually replaced with one for eight houses, and the aspect facing the river is being heavily criticised.

As well as these larger projects, there has been a constant flow of applications over the years to infill small plots in the town, such as along the alleys, where there is space to add a dwelling or two. There has also been a big effort to bring back into residential use some of the accommodation above the shops that mostly front the main streets. There is of course great potential in a town that was developed on the burgrave principle. In many cases the old buildings at the back had become disused, and often there was no rear access. Nonetheless there have been some splendid restorations and rehabilitation to modern living standards. Some schemes have been in the planning and negotiating for a very long time in the attempt to persuade an adjacent property owner to make rear access possible. Quite a lot of this has been undertaken by Housing Associations and this can create problems where long term residents with a sense of good neighbourliness find themselves adjacent to occupants who might have a rather short term interest in their living quarters.

The Borough Council (and the Town Council, whose powers are very limited) have a good record for looking for solutions to the traffic problems and we have been going round and round this question for years, trying to work out a degree of pedestrianisation and a one-way system. This is all probably on hold for several years as the Borough Council has announced some rather significant ideas for redeveloping the area that Clifton-Taylor describes as 'one absolutely deplorable development in the High Street'. This will be the biggest project in Tewkesbury since the building of the



'Nodding Gables' - High Street

Town Mill in the nineteenth century. Looking back over the years that elapsed since the deplorable vandalism of the 1960s and the founding of the Tewkesbury Civic Society, the planning authorities have done much for which they have been given credit, and the Civic Society has been served by many people capable of being effective and remarkably dedicated in responding to the opportunities for consultation. Our Planning Appraisal Committee must have considered thousands of proposals over the years, and although the outcome is sometimes disappointing, the effort involved has been very worthwhile. The long term Strategic and Structure plans have, over the years, been meticulously monitored by the Society and it is gratifying when we find one of our recommendations being put forward years later. I think it should be mentioned that our Appraisal Committee Chairman and members are a particularly strong team and have a fine record for consistency and fairness.

In all our work we appreciate that we have to strike a balance between what might seem to be historical idealism and what is necessary if a project is to be viable. Tewkesbury has had its ups and downs like anywhere else and there is a limit to how much can be funded by public subsidy.

The Civic Society is very concerned about various contemporary trends which could



New development - Mill Avon

have, and indeed are having, a deleterious influence in an area which is still, to a significant extent, residential. There are many people who enjoy living in the centre of the town or near to it, and it will be very serious if they should stop wanting to do so. However, the town is becoming increasingly affected by bad behaviour and noisiness at night, and sometimes until late into the night. Many people think this problem is being exacerbated by the extending of licensing hours for clubs and pubs. The Tewkesbury Civic Society has responded to the lead given by some other similar societies and to the thinking of the Civic Trust. We have accordingly made some adjustments to our Constitution, with the approval of the Charity Commission, to enable us to be concerned not only in preserving the architectural features of our town but also the quality of life in broader terms - with due regard to noise nuisance and other environmental matters. We shall be treading a cautious path but will hope to encourage the powers that be to develop a holistic view of what is best for the town. We must therefore keep a very close eye on the Government's indicators and hope that the Borough Council will ensure that such problems are effectively handled.

Tewkesbury contains over 360 buildings with List Two Starred status. This is a wonderful heritage and in many cases the

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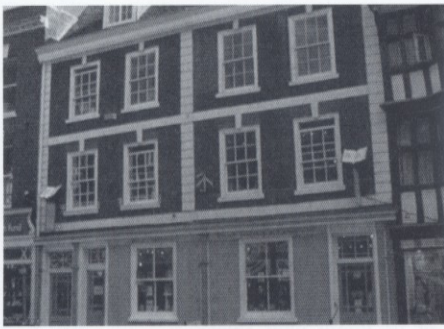
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Mill Bank during floods

interiors are perhaps of even greater interest than the exteriors. Sadly, we are in no doubt that over the years, while the exterior of buildings may not have suffered too much, a multitude of sins has been committed to many interiors, and this is probably still happening to a certain extent. How can one prevent occupants from changing this or doing away with that? Much of interest has survived because, in the past, people did not see the need or could not afford to upgrade their properties.

I have not yet referred to Tewkesbury's most famous building. Clifton-Taylor devoted ten pages out of twenty-five to the Abbey. He thought that the 'grandly ceremonial wrought-iron gates to the churchyard' of 1734 were untypical of Tewkesbury. I wonder what he would think today. They have been magnificently restored and make a great impact. That is not all that has been spruced up at the Abbey. As a result of a successful appeal launched in 1993, the Abbey's fabric has already benefited from having the tiling renewed over the east end chapels and ambulatory, and the old church offices and hall have been splendidly upgraded to house a Visitor Centre and a Refectory. The historic Milton organ has been rebuilt and the PCC looks forward with confidence to restoring the great west window and in due course to doing work on the tower. The Abbey is in fact playing a

very significant part in Tewkesbury's efforts to attract tourists to the town. (We prefer to call them visitors or pilgrims at the Abbey!)

Tewkesbury has received a lot of publicity because it looks so spectacular from the air during the floods. In point of fact, a very small proportion of properties get flooded, apart from their cellars. Last year a terrace of houses built around 1800 was flooded at ground floor level for only the first time since the comparable floods of 1960. And it is the risk of floods that has saved the town from unlimited expansion. There is widespread concern nonetheless at the long term effects of so much new building just above flood level which traditionally is deemed to be 12 feet above the highest likely high tide. Our modern house, which complies with that requirement, was about seven feet above the floods last December.

Our membership numbers have more than recovered from a modest decrease a few years ago, and it is perhaps not irrelevant to mention our decision two years ago to institute a Tewkesbury Civic Society 2000 Award. There was nothing original in this as Cheltenham has run such a scheme (on much more ambitious lines) for many years. We got splendid support from both Borough and Town Councils and our MP presented the awards. The decision to include an 'Eyesore' category proved to be very popular with the Press and the

townsfolk, even if one or two of our members were rather disapproving. Several eyesores of long standing got a face-lift in the nick of time!

We like to think that this project has raised the general public's awareness of the importance of caring for Tewkesbury.

TALKING POINT: THE SLOW CITIES MOVEMENT

How can we best preserve what is valuable in the character of Ludlow and at the same time create vitality and prosperity in the town? How can we protect and pass on to future generations what we have inherited from the past and also embrace the best the present offers? How can we keep the delightful, old-fashioned feel of the town and still take advantage of the latest advances in technology? How we help shops and businesses to remain viable and at the same time remove unwanted traffic and heavy lorries from the streets? How can we make sure that our food is fresh and wholesome and that we support our local producers, and also educate our children away from junk food? How can we create employment and housing for our young people without destroying the green fields that surround us? How can we attract visitors and not turn Ludlow into a theme park in a car park?

And from a wider, less selfish viewpoint, how can we manage the diminishing resources of the planet so as to give everyone a decent, fulfilling life? Are some of these objectives incompatible? The Slow Cities Movement does not think so.

In 1986 the journalist, Carlo Petrini, was appalled at the opening of Macdonald's in Rome. He started a movement to question the effect that globalisation and fast-food outlets had on characteristic regional cuisine, and to explore the social significance of the way we choose and consume our food. The movement now has 70,000



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members in 45 countries. Soon there emerged from this a wider concern with the effects of noise, pollution, haste and exploitation on our lives as a whole. It was felt that there was a general need to slow down.

At the start, four Italian cities, Orvieto, Greve, Bra and Positano adopted the principles of what was called the 'Slow Cities' movement. Now there are another 40 cities and towns in Italy involved, and one, Brtonigla, in Croatia. Communities in Germany, Brazil, even Australia have applied to join. In this country many individuals are interested, but local authorities and planners need to be involved as well. In the Italian cities it is the local mayors who have initiated ideas and implemented them. In Orvieto, for instance, restaurants are encouraged to use local products and support local farmers, GM food is prohibited, noise pollution is reduced and pedestrianisation increased, with Park-and-Ride schemes and shuttle buses. Communal allotments have been created, and organic food introduced into school menus. Measures have been adopted to preserve green spaces and to maintain local styles of architecture.

In Greve, too, the distinctive appearance of the town is of paramount importance, and mistakes of the past have been recognised. The Mayor, Paolo Saturnini, has said, 'There was a phase when everything had to be new, but that has now stopped. We offer incentives for restoring and reusing old structures to keep the integrity of the town.'

'Slow' is perhaps an unfortunate adjective to use, but it does not mean stagnation, rather a change to a quieter, gentler, kinder way of life in which we have more time to appreciate the good things that surround us and to help our children to appreciate them, and as our Chairman wrote in a recent letter to the local press, 'Slow does not mean backward, it means life on our terms - not someone else's!'

Naturally, at first, the changes provoked concern from businessmen and opposition from those who believe we must move with the times, but most people have been won over and the peaceful, civilised character of the towns and cities has attracted both tourists and new residents with much to offer. Technology is positively promoted to enhance people's lives and to encourage them to share ideas. Unusually for Italy, one fifth of families in Orvieto are on the internet.

As we see from the Six Towns series, other towns similar to Ludlow share our concerns and are faced with the same threats from over-development, noise, traffic and other pressures, but it is clear that Ludlow is already adopting many of the Slow City ideas and is very well placed to spearhead the movement in this country. We have already experimented successfully with a Park-and-Ride scheme; we have secured two green spaces at Gallows bank and Dinham Green; our famous restaurants use local produce from specialist shops and the market stalls; we have a regular Farmers' Market and farm shops on the outskirts of the town; new organic allotments have just been opened at Wigley's Field. There is constant vigilance over the introduction of alien styles of architecture in the town, but already local planners are considering appropriate solar panels to save energy.

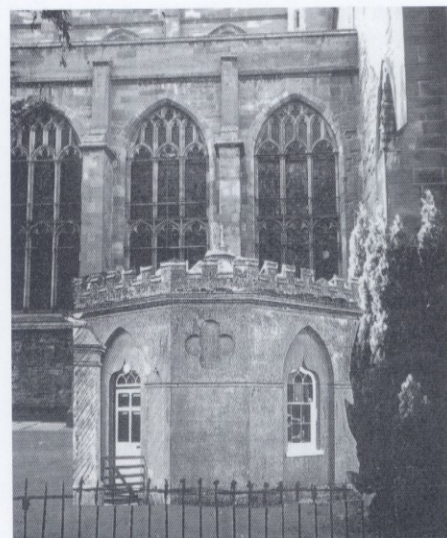
The Civic Society is involved in discussions on traffic and parking policies, and the Local Plan. It supports the Shropshire Preservation Trust which rescues neglected buildings of interest, and has encouraged the Ludlow District Chamber of Trade's Leader+ scheme to revive badly-needed traditional skills and provide employment for young people so that they can stay in the area.

The most attractive aspect of the Slow Cities Movement is that its philosophy embraces so many of the separate issues that we are all concerned about: food,

energy, transport, employment, housing, the protection of green spaces and wild life, and the aesthetic appearance of towns which gives them their unique identity. As the writer of the previous article says we need 'a holistic view of what is best' for every town. The Slow Cities Movement proposes a way of allowing us all to live fuller and more civilised lives. In fact, another name for the Slow Cities is Citta del Buon Vivere.

Let us know your views.

And on a lighter note...

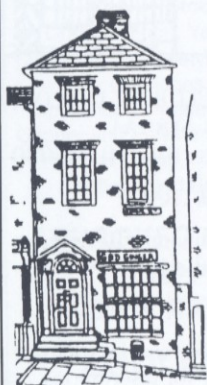


How about a Regency Gothic Lavatory block outside St. Laurence's?

READERS' LETTERS

We had a large response from readers to the last edition's Talking Point. 31 members expressed their views on what should replace the demolished building at 18 Castle Street. Of these, one was in favour of a modern glass building - with reservations- and thirty preferred reinstatement or a traditional design.

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As we go to press we hear that the site has changed hands and that the new owners favour a design in traditional style and materials. As there were so many letters, we present a representative selection of the views expressed.

...The new building and its elevation should be both consistent and a modern concept throughout. We should not appear to mock our predecessors by adopting pastiche or fancy dress. It is right to benefit from modern technology and materials, but this can be done in a way that is well-mannered. We should support a design which is restrained and understated and in essence does not stand out like the overdressed guest at a party. I do not believe that this necessarily makes the inclusion of a lot of glass in the solution unacceptable, but a repeat of the glass infill at the Assembly Rooms would, I think, not be appropriate in this location...

...the chances of its turning out to be a good modern building are so remote, and the consequences for Ludlow would be so dire, that we cannot take the risk...

...Non un mille fois to the glass monstrosity.

18 was an impoverished, undistinguished edifice.

Thus I support strongly a design to match the contiguous houses...

...[My option] would be an exact copy of the building which was demolished. I am not opposed to modern or experimental building as such, but this is the wrong location. Such a huge exception in Castle Street would compromise and jeopardise the whole Conservation Area.

I am particularly concerned that the façade be restored, both from photographs and from details taken (surely?) by the Local Authority before it was demolished...

...Are there precedents for the replacement of a listed building with anything but a replica?

There is enough evidence already in Ludlow that 'modern' façades are an intrusive interruption e.g. the Pearl Assurance Building in King Street.

In the interesting article from Totnes, there appeared to have been no obvious urge to introduce 'exciting' modern architecture, just a very careful desire to accommodate changing needs into a historic setting. We were there last year and it works!...

...[We] give our support for the development of 18 Castle Street in the style of a Georgian building similar to its neighbours. Any other design would be inappropriate and a blot on the townscape...

...The proposed design...will subtract attention from the main foci in the Square - the Castle, the Tudor house and the narrows. I do not wish to criticise the intrinsic design architecture of the proposed new building, only its relation with its environment with which it would, in my view, be stylistically at odds.

It should be remembered that whether or not a good solution to an architectural problem has been found cannot properly be judged without considering the visual interplay between the proposed design and the context into which that design is set. Much expense has been devoted to refurbishing Castle Square, and the result is, I believe, broadly sympathetic to the buildings surrounding the Square. It would, in my view, conflict with the success of this sympathetic approach if the proposed replacement for 18 Castle Street were built...

...Those of us who live within the walls almost all live in houses that are listed. This is not because all the houses are of

any particular architectural distinction, but because any interruption in the street scene would spoil the general harmony of the streets. This is why there are the most stringent rules for what we are allowed to do both inside and outside our houses.

The proposed new building in Castle Square, admirable though it may be in itself, it seems to me would introduce a strident and jarring note which would spoil the harmony of the principal square in the town...

...It has been Ludlow's good luck that during the Victorian era, the town suffered an economic decline sufficient to protect it from the more outrageous rebuilding schemes imposed on other more prosperous areas. It would be a tragic irony if now, when Ludlow is justly celebrated and appreciated for its distinguished buildings and unspoilt character, this type of incongruous development should be permitted to spoil one of the central areas in the town...

...I deplore the modern glass building; an exact copy of the original tends to be bogus; a Georgian design similar to its neighbours is the best solution...

...Our view is that a Georgian design similar to its neighbours would be the best solution. An exact copy of the demolished building would be acceptable. A modern glass building should not be contemplated...

Any queries, suggestions or responses to letters or articles will be gratefully received. Please address your letters to:

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LUDLOW - JULY TO DECEMBER 1901:

Derek Williams

This continues the series of articles about public life in Ludlow 100 years ago.

1. The Council

The bill to extend Ludlow's boundaries to include East Hamlet and parts of Ludford received the Royal Assent in August 1901. This cleared the way for the first elections to the new Council in November. The Advertiser saw this as an opportunity to improve the quality of councillors' decision-making, and to escape the bungling and procrastination of recent years. 'Men of business acumen and administrative ability' were urged to stand for the Council, but there was little enthusiasm in the town for participating in local politics. In October, an attempt to start a Ratepayers' Association drew less than a dozen people to the inaugural meeting in the British School, and the idea was dropped.

The biggest issue in Ludlow politics at this time was electric lighting. There were two questions to be addressed. Should the town adopt electric lighting in the place of gas? If so, should the Council itself manage the provision of electricity or should it engage a private supplier? These questions had apparently been dealt with in March, when the Council decided in favour of a directly managed scheme and invited tenders to carry out the work. But some councillors had subsequently had second thoughts, and in August a sub-committee was appointed to visit and report on the lighting recently installed in Llandrindod Wells and Colwyn Bay.

Nothing was heard from this sub-committee for some time, and in October the Advertiser ran an editorial headed 'Lost! A Corporation Committee!' A possible explanation for the time being spent 'travelling from place to place in search of light' said the editorial, was that the committee members knew that it had taken

the Sanitary Committee nine years to decide what to do about sewerage, and the Electric Lighting Committee was out to beat this record.



Laying the electricity cable at Gravel Hill, with the workhouse in the background (1908)

On 19th October, the sub-committee recommended postponing a decision until after the elections. Consequently the election campaign was fought largely on the electricity issue, with some candidates - particularly in the Old Street and East Hamlet wards - strongly opposed to electric lighting, mainly on the grounds of cost. They were defeated, however, and the new Council had a majority of members known to be in favour of the move to electricity and the public rather than private ownership of supply. Nothing was settled before the end of the year, as the Council turned back to the sewerage problems on which it had spent so much time in previous years (see earlier articles in this series). The installation of a new sewerage scheme costing nearly £9,000 had begun in the autumn of 1900, but the contractors were behind schedule. In December, despite a favourable report on the technical and financial aspects of the project from their engineering consultants, the Council decided to begin legal proceedings to enforce on the contractors a penalty of £1,244 for non-completion of the work.

2. Transport

It is unlikely, but possible, that the Ludlow councillors who went to

Llandrindod Wells and Colwyn Bay 'in search of light' did so by motor car. Cars were appearing on the roads of Shropshire, and there was growing concern about how their use should be regulated. In July, the Shropshire County Council decided not to place any restriction on the speed at which motor cars might be driven in the county, a decision strongly supported by the Advertiser. 'Motorists do not travel country roads for the purpose of seeing how much havoc and destruction they can accomplish in a given number of miles,' said the Advertiser. 'How can a speed of (even) 12 miles an hour be deemed dangerous?'



The wreckage of an L&NWR express at Shrewsbury in 1907

It was, of course, easier and quicker to get around England by train in 1901 than it is today. There were no fewer than 28 trains each weekday between London and Shrewsbury - 14 in each direction - and passengers to London had a choice of arriving at Euston (L and NWR) or Paddington (GWR). The fastest trains took 3 hours and 35 minutes to complete the journey. There were 20 trains a day between Shrewsbury and Ludlow, the fastest taking 49 minutes. (The trains that stopped at all eight intervening stations took longer.)

In July the Board of Trade published the railway accident figures for 1900. 1,250 people had been killed on the railways and more than 7,000 injured. Nearly 300 people were killed whilst trespassing on railway premises, and there were more

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than 100 suicides. During the year there were 42 collisions between passenger trains and 72 collisions between passenger and goods trains. There were 317 track failures. This was part of the price the Edwardians paid for their superb railway services.

3.Beer

For more than 50 years the Ludlow Guardians had provided the inmates of the workhouse with a special Christmas Day dinner. The menu was invariably roast beef and plum pudding with beer. In 1901 this tradition was challenged by the Temperance Union, who asked all the local Boards of Guardians to refrain from serving beer to the inmates at any time, arguing - with very little justification - that most of them were in the workhouse through the effects of strong drink. The Guardians refused. The inmates got their beer.

Two gangers on the pipetrack being laid between the Elan Valley and Birmingham (see earlier article) spent Christmas in Shrewsbury gaol as a result of their liking for beer or, to be more precise, their making a lot of money from other people's liking for beer. After a police raid on the huts of the Birmingham Waterworks near Cleobury Mortimer, John Hickman and George Milner were charged with selling beer without a licence to the navvies and gangers of the camp. Hickman declared that he was unaware that this was illegal. The only rule posted in his hut, he said - and this was corroborated by the police - was against workmen going to bed with their boots on. Hickman was fined the huge sum of £70, with £2.16.5 costs. Milner was fined £50 and costs. Hickman produced £60 in gold sovereigns and asked for time to pay the rest. Perhaps irritated by what they might have seen as flippant and flamboyant behaviour, the magistrates refused and sent both men to Shrewsbury gaol. A later article in the Sunday Chronicle considered this to be an intolerably harsh decision. (To be continued)

BRIAN ATWOOD

The Society was saddened by the death of Brian Atwood OBE earlier this year. Brian was the Society's Treasurer for many years and stewarded the funds with thoroughness and care. Owing to his efforts, the society is in a very sound financial position. He was also the 'Father of the Committee' and when a new initiative or bright idea was suggested, he could provide wise advice as he had seen or heard most of the ideas before! Brian left the Society a very generous bequest - to be added to our fighting funds and to be used to oppose any development of the southern approaches to the town. This is a battle in which we continuously face skirmishes and which requires us to maintain vigilance and to be ready to act - which for Brian's sake, we shall. It was a cause very close to his heart.

He was Treasurer to many other societies in the town as well as helping with the Good Friends scheme, and took a keen interest in the history of the town itself, particularly that of more recent times. Brian loved travelling and when his wife was alive, they took their 'camper' all over the world. After her death he continued to travel as widely as possible, mostly by train. He will be greatly missed by all his friends in Ludlow and beyond. We send our sympathy to his son, Paul, who survives him.

LUDLOW MUSIC SOCIETY

Ludlow Music Society has embarked upon yet another season of concerts. These concerts feature professional musicians of the highest calibre and are held in the main hall of Moor Park School, near Ludlow. Already this season, a superb piano recital has been given by the young Greek pianist, George-Emmanuel

Lazaridis. The concert on Saturday, 27th October was given by the internationally famous clarinettist, David Campbell, with Kathryn Page, piano, featuring works by Brahms, Poulenc, Finzi, Paul Harvey and Joseph Horowitz. Future concerts include the Kungsbacka Trio from Sweden (9th February 2002) and the St Petersburg String Quartet (2nd March). A subscription ticket to these concerts provides a considerable advantage over single tickets (which can be had at the door - £8.50, Students £3.00). Further details from the Hon. Secretary, Mrs Rosalind Caird, Glebe House, Caynham, Ludlow SY8 3BN, tel. 01584 876141.

LUDLOW CIVIC SOCIETY COMMITTEE NEWS

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR MAY-OCTOBER 2001

After the considerable change in the membership of the committee which took place after the AGM, our first task was to get to know each other and establish how we were going to work together as an effective team. I was, I have to admit, somewhat apprehensive about how things might turn out. I am pleased to say that the members of your new Committee have shown commitment and good will, and that we have already accomplished a great deal.

To start with, the outgoing Committee members provided much help and support and this eased the transition and prevented any issues from 'falling through the cracks'. The Society would particularly like to thank Megan Dawson for her contribution as Chairman during the past year, and Dennis Bryant for his work as Vice-Chairman. David Milner, too, deserves our thanks for the many years in which he has served on the Committee, and all the work he has done on the Local Plan.



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The Society has an extensive archive of very complete records which contain useful information on past intentions and actions. This archive is a very valuable resource and enables us to refer to past decisions (by ourselves and others) with authority and confidence. We want to make some of this information available through our web site: www.ludlowcivicsociety.org on the internet. The site is now working and contains such things as the list of events and electronic versions of Heritage News - we will be adding to it in due course.

One thing that the new Committee decided on at the outset was that we were not going to be just the '18 Castle Street Society'. Ludlow, and its surroundings, faces many challenges and the Committee felt that they should support any initiatives which would ensure the whole town's future as a vibrant and viable community. Within the Committee there is a broad range of interests and views (and so there will inevitably be debate), but collectively, we care for the town and this is what unites us.

An early success for the Committee was that our new MP, Matthew Green, agreed to become a Vice-President of the Society. I am very pleased that the Society has received this endorsement and we hope to be able to host Matthew at one of our social events soon.

Indeed, it is my intention (at the end of each social event) to inform the Members about the Committee's activities in the previous month. We'd like to hear from you as well and so the Committee Members will be wearing 'blue plaque' badges and will be available in the bar afterwards.

The Society sponsored students from Cardiff University who carried out a study of Ludlow (see last Spring's Heritage News). Their work was on show in the Assembly Rooms during July and I hope you had a chance to see it. During the Festival, we also sponsored the Architecture Lecture which was given by Professor Susan Roaf. Her talk on 'Green Architecture' was very well supported and very successful and raised many important

and interesting issues. One of the Committee's first tasks was to review two applications for solar panels - so her words were most apposite! I'd like to thank James Harris for his work in making the arrangements and for agreeing to continue with the task. We look forward to hearing what he has in mind for the 2002 lecture.

There have been record numbers of planning applications submitted to the South Shropshire District Council - including some that have been controversial. Plans for the redevelopment of Bell Lane and Raven Lane are being considered and the proposed extension to the Ludlow College car park at the bottom of Mill Street is causing concern. In addition, the appearance of signs for 'Lower Barns Business Park' on the Overton Road has set off activity to monitor and counter what appears to be an undesirable trend. Plans for a lavatory block on the north-east side of St. Laurence's church has caused some debate - and this issue is by no means settled.

Following comments from various quarters, the Society has decided to take the lead on a number of initiatives - this is to make clear that we do not just criticise other people's plans and that we do have ideas of our own. These initiatives will appear in the local press and may require follow-up action in collaboration with other groups in the town or the local area. We hope we can count on your support.

The Committee is also involved in reviewing the Society's activities. Amendments to the Constitution are under consideration and we have a sub-committee looking at the way the Society operates. The results of these deliberations will appear in due course.

Sadly, Sally Harvey has had to resign from the Committee for a number of personal reasons and we thank her for her hard work in arranging this year's programme of events. They got off to an excellent start with Anne Dyer's talk on Westhope and Alan Stoyel's talk on watermills. We hope you will support the lectures - including the Fred Reeves

Memorial Lecture - as much as you can. Finally, please accept my best wishes. I hope that you enjoy Christmas and that we have a happier New Year.

MEMBERSHIP

During the year to last May, 75 new annual members joined the Society. Allowing for resignations and non-renewals, this brings the Annual Membership up to 315 and the overall total including Life members to almost 500.

Much of this increase was no doubt due to the ready availability throughout this period of the leaflet published last year and of Heritage News, now free of charge to all at four key locations in the town i.e. the Assembly Rooms, the Tourist Information Centre, St Laurence's church and the Library.

Further supplies of leaflets have now been distributed together with a separate programme sheet of the Society's public meetings for 2001/2002.

Both publications now contain a membership application form. When you have finished with your copy of either, please pass it on to anyone you think may be interested in joining the Society.

2001-2002 Officers & Committee Members

President:	Sir Keith Thomas
Vice-Presidents:	Dr Martin Speight Dick Stephens Matthew Green MP
Chairman:	Patrick Beauteament
Vice Chairman:	Prue Bellak
Hon. Treasurer:	Nick Holcombe
Hon. Secretary:	Valerie Thomas
Committee:	Michael Coleman-Smith, Bill Eastwell, Mike Evans, Stephen Evans, John Farley, Beatrice Hely-Hutchinson, Bill Lloyd-Kitchen, James McFarlane, Gareth Williams.

The publication of Heritage News is made possible by our advertisers. We hope that you will continue to support them as they have supported us over the years. Please do mention their advertisement in Heritage News when you next visit them. Thank you.

BECOME A MEMBER - JOIN NOW

If you care about Ludlow and its surroundings please complete the application form (or a copy) below and send it in now.

To: The Membership Secretary, Ludlow Civic Society, 75 Old Street, Ludlow SY8 1NS

Please accept my application to join the society as an annual member.

Annual membership subscription is £6 per person - normally due on September 1st. I enclose £..... to cover.

Cheques payable to 'Ludlow Civic Society' please.

Please treat all my subscriptions and/or donations to the Ludlow Civic Society from 6 April and until further notice as GIFT AID.

I am currently a UK taxpayer.

Signed:.....Date:.....

NAME: (MR/Mrs/Miss/Ms).....

ADDRESS.....

POSTCODE.....

SURVEY OF MEMBERS' VIEWS - 2001

Dear Member,

Your Committee has been considering the objectives of the Civic Society and the way in which it operates and has decided to carry out a survey of the Membership by issuing this questionnaire. This is your chance to express your opinions about how you think the Society should be run and how it should conduct its business - both internally and with the world at large. We would be grateful if you would complete the questionnaire and return it (**by December 12th at the latest**) to:

John Farley, Bouldon House, Bouldon, Craven Arms, SY7 9DP.

Thank you for giving this questionnaire your attention and we look forward to hearing from you.

1. Why did you join the Society?

2. What do you think the main purpose of the Society should be?

3. What do you consider to be the three major issues or threats to the area in the next five years? Why do you think they are important and what would be your approach / solution?

3.1

3.2

3.3

4. Is the Society sufficiently visible to the general public? YES / NO

4.1 If you said NO, what means should we use to raise our profile?

5. Do you think the Society has a 'good image' locally? YES / NO

5.1 If you said NO, what do you think we should do to improve our image - or doesn't it matter:

6. The Society is considering compiling a register of people with special craft, conservation or professional skills. Would you be prepared to be included on the register? YES / NO

6.1 If you said YES, would you agree to the information to be made available to other parties with common interests (eg: artisans, building restorers, civic societies)? YES / NO

6.2 Please list the skills you would be able to offer:

7. Would you like some meetings (say 2 per year) for "open forum" debate? YES / NO

7.1 If you said YES, should those meetings be open to the general public? YES / NO

7.2 Should the meetings be open to guests (eg: from other societies, councillors)? YES / NO

7.3 Which subjects would you suggest for the open forum debates?

8. In the past, the Society has organised day trips and longer outings. Would you like the Society to resume these kinds of social events? YES / NO

8.1 If you said YES, would you be prepared to assist with their organisation? YES / NO

8.2 Would you be prepared to assist with hosting visits to Ludlow by other societies? YES / NO

8.3 Where should we go and for how long?

9. The Society currently has reserve funds totalling some £40,000 which were accrued when the Society bought and repaired 'at risk' properties and which were used to fight legal battles. Should the Society maintain the funds at this sort of level? LESS / SAME / MORE

9.1 If you said LESS or MORE, please explain why we should make the change and how:

9.2 What do you feel is the single, most important use for the funds?

10. If you wish, please use this space (or separate sheets of paper) to express any other views that you have about the Society:

You may remain anonymous, but please fill in your details if you answered YES to Q6 or 8.1 Thank you:

Your Name(s):

Tel No:

Your Address: