

Ludlow Heritage News

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FREE

PUB TO SNUB



THE RAVEN

From community hub to community snub

- The Raven was a popular pub with many local customers who valued it as a friendly social centre.
- In April 2003 a London firm, Hyperhold Ltd, applied for planning permission to destroy The Raven and develop the site into a convenience store and five flats.
- This plan met the opposition of almost everyone in Ludlow. The Civic Society offered its support, including financial support, to the local leaders of the protest.
- In August 2003, the South Shropshire District Council rejected the planning application, in accordance with its own judgement and the wishes of local residents.
- However, Hyperhold appealed against the refusal and a government appointed inspector from Bristol made a brief visit to Ludlow on 19th May 2004.
- Amazingly, the inspector from Bristol found in favour of the firm from London - ignoring or overruling all local opinion, the District Council, local residents and others.
- The promised jobs and improved shopping that were used as justifications for allowing the appeal have not materialised; local residents were robbed of their comfortable pub to no purpose whatever.
- Since The Raven closed, three years ago, the site has been neglected and it is now a terrible eyesore, steadily rotting away at an important junction on the way in to Ludlow.
- The Raven cannot be restored but the present owners (whoever they may be) should feel obliged to tidy up the site. Or they should be compelled to do so.

DOVECOTES

The second in a series of occasional essays on architectural design around Ludlow.

While Ludlow itself is not rich in dovecotes, the two counties south and west of the town, Herefordshire and Worcestershire contain good examples of several types from different periods.

A dovecote (Pigeon House, Columbarium, Culverhouse, Colomendey among others) is a building intended to house pigeons or doves, which were an important food source throughout history. To the lesser extent birds were used for medicine and for sport. The descendants of these birds inhabit the squares and parks of today's towns and cities. In earlier days the keeping of birds was a privilege granted to barons, abbots and lords. Over time this right was extended so much that a visitor to England in the 17th century commented that "no kingdom in the world has so many dovehouses". The location of dovecotes was very random, some being situated away from domestic accommodation near to fresh water, while others, with security in mind, were sited closer to human habitation.



Fig 1. Dovecote Interior

The interior design of the dovecote is one of the "hidden" surprises of architecture, as the spacious interiors are usually arranged with row upon row of nest holes, sometimes as many as 1000 (Fig 1). Most dovecotes contained ladders of some form called a potence, to access the nest holes, although survival of these is rare. Also some form of trap door or louver arrangement was needed to confine the birds when required.

The keeping of birds has its roots in the ancient world and it is thought that traces of Roman columbaria can be discerned in the ruins of Roman villas (pigeon holes exist at Caerwent Gwent 'Venta Silures'). The Normans put the art of keeping birds on a sounder footing and provision for birds is still found in some castles as at Rochester in Kent and Coinsborough in Yorkshire, but not in Ludlow. The Normans also introduced free-standing dovecotes as appendages to their castles and certain Norman churches included integral nests for birds as at the thirteenth century St Mary's Sarnesfield near Weobley, Herefordshire, with 100 nesting holes in the west tower.

Monasteries and religious houses maintained dovecotes; for example the Evesham Chronicle records that dovecotes; belonged to the abbey farms. As did the two orders of military monks, the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitallers. The dovecote at Garway (8.5 miles sw of Ross on Wye) near to the church of St Michael (but on private land) built by the latter is one of the earliest and best extant examples, inscribed in Latin "in the year 1326 this dovecote was built by brother Richard" (Fig 2). Originally a circular domed building rising to a height of 16 feet with 666 nesting holes surrounded by a 'defensive' stringcourse to repel marauding rodents, its appearance being more military than domestic, it is said to have set the precedent for centuries to come.

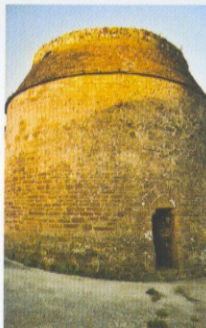


Fig 2. Dovecote at Garway 1326



Fig 3. Kings Pyon

An unusual feature no doubt placed by Brother Richard is a bathing basin for the birds!

Although most of the oldest surviving dovecotes are circular in plan, square and rectangular designs were also popular. One of the best groups of this type is the so called 'black and white' or 'magpie' variety of Herefordshire and Worcestershire (Fig 3). This includes the earliest extant example of a timber-framed/cruck-framed dovecote at Hill Croome east of Upton Upon Severn in a private garden removed to and restored at the Avoncroft Museum of Buildings, Bromsgrove in 1972 before being re-erected on its original site. Other examples include Hawford Grange, Ombersley (3 miles n of Worcester) and Wichenford Court (5 1/2 miles nw of Worcester) both cared for by the National Trust. The miniature dovecote at Luntley Court, Eardisland dated 1675 was built a year before the house, no doubt to ensure an immediate supply of food! Also in Herefordshire at King's Pyon is an attractive three-storey dovecote.

A large number of square and oblong dovecotes were built in brick from the seventeenth century of which the best known is that found on the River Arrow at Eardisland (Fig 4). It is a square brick tower of two stories with a four gabled roof topped by a lantern with a weathervane in the shape of a fish. The lower chamber was used for living accommodation. It is fitted with windows while the upper room is



Fig 4. Georgian dovecote, Eardisland

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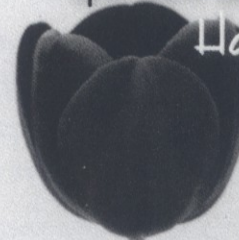
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for the birds. It is extensively restored in the late 1990s and is now a visitor attraction.

The decorative potential became more important as we move into the eighteenth century with dovecotes increasingly exploited as ornamental features as well as eye catchers in country estates. Indeed, the architect John Wood the elder was much influenced by the designs of Andrea Palladio. Dovecotes were even influenced by the Gothick with some examples including arrow slits and quatrefoil decoration. New, more ambitious plans and designs were attempted including octagonal and occasionally hexagonal forms sometimes somewhat disparagingly referred to as 'pretentious cotes'. A good late example of this is found at Shobdon Court dated 1824. Similarly, during the nineteenth century, the Arts and Crafts architects exploited the visual aspects of dovecotes; witness the work of Norman Shaw at Madresfield Court, Worcestershire 1867 (open by appointment) where he restored and embellished an existing dovecote.

Dovecotes increasingly became a feature of



Fig 5. 7, Dinham, Ludlow

farmhouses during the seventeenth century. But as the need for large quantities of birds became less vital, here too, the dovecotes became a more decorative feature found in farmyards either as a free standing structure, or surmounted on a farm structure as a building end or maybe an imposing feature above a farmyard archway. The only extant dovecote in Ludlow, unless you know otherwise, is located on an outbuilding at no 7 Dinham Ludlow (Fig 5).

As has already been alluded to, these birds were also used for sport, from falconry

in medieval times to pigeon shooting in the nineteenth century. Pigeon racing has always had its followers (in Belgium it is a national sport) and is still popular in Ludlow today (Fig 6).

In 1995 the total number of dovecotes was estimated to be in the region of 2000. This is



Fig 6. Mr. Gerald Price

far fewer than the 26,000 said to have existed in the seventeenth century. Today both the National Trust and English Heritage together with local authorities and local preservation trusts have seen the restoration and adaptation of these "lesser" buildings. By necessity I have included a select few guided in the main by public accessibility. Further suggestions and information are actively sought.

Stanton Stephens

**Photographs by permission of
Kathleen Freeman and Mr Gerald Price**
Books consulted include:

Sue Clifford & Angela King,

England in Particular, 2006

Peter & Jean Hansell, *Dovecotes, 2001*

Peter & Jean Hansell,

Doves and Dovecotes, 1988.

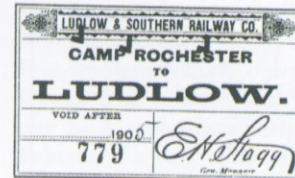
Nikolas Pevsner, *Herefordshire, 1963.*

Kathleen Freeman, *Herefordshire: The Spirit of England's Most Rural County, 2000.*

LUDLOW CALIFORNIA

The second of our articles on namesake towns in the United States gave a brief mention to Ludlow, California as a railroad town

(Heritage News: Summer 2006). There exists a superficial resemblance between the Ludlows of California and Shropshire in that they both possessed short mineral lines branching off from the main railway line. But any close resemblance quickly ends as the Shropshire Cleve Hill Branch carried granite and coal only while the Californian Ludlow and Southern Railroad carried gold! Also it is seen below that the history of Ludlow, California is further linked to transportation growth, not only to the railroads but also to pioneering road systems.



Ludlow & Southern railway ticket

The Railroads 1882-1933

Ludlow, California was born at an exciting period of US railroad history when the transcontinental railroads were being built. The first rail-link to the west coast was completed in Utah in 1869. The battle for a second route was fought between the pioneers of this first link, in the guise of the Southern Pacific Railroad, and an upstart competitor who first built a short link between two Kansas towns, then decided to extend the line to Santa Fe in New Mexico and in doing so thought a further extension of some 900 miles to the Pacific was warranted. So came into being one of America's iconic railroads, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, the Santa Fe for short. The rivals built from east and west respectively and met at the town of Needles on California-Arizona border in 1883. The depots on the Californian side of the meeting place were therefore built by the Southern Pacific and one of these, located about 100 miles to the west of Needles, was named after Southern Pacific's master car-repairer, William B Ludlow. But the eventual control of this second trans-continental route was won by the Santa Fe and the Ludlow depot became, and still is, a Santa Fe property.

There was a major problem with the location of Ludlow. Set in the heart of the

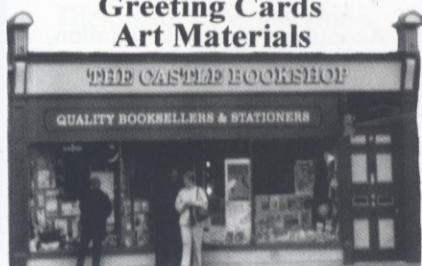
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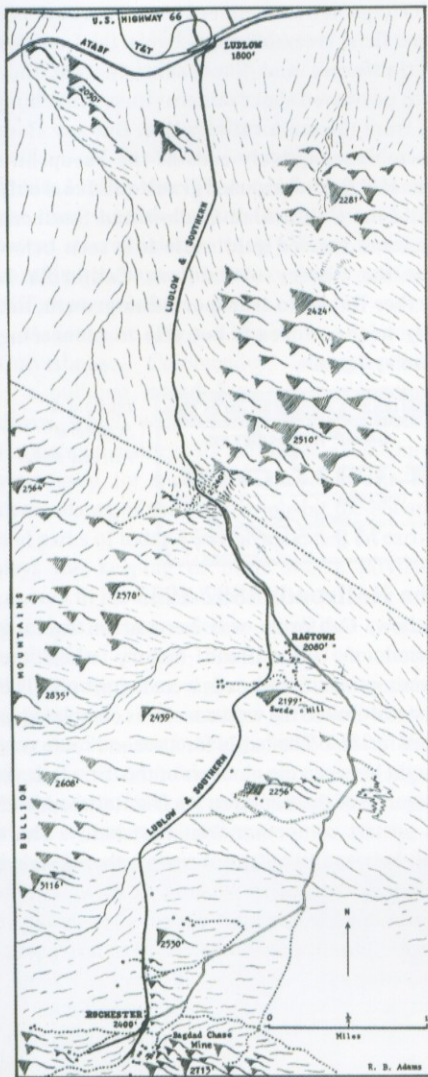
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Map of branch line to Rochester

Mojave Desert it had no water – water for the engines had to be shipped into Ludlow from Newberry Springs some 50 miles to the west. A Southern Pacific roadmaster, John Suter, was therefore asked to prospect for water in the mountains to the south of Ludlow. He failed to find water but did find gold – he then promptly staked a claim, sold it on and disappears from our story. The



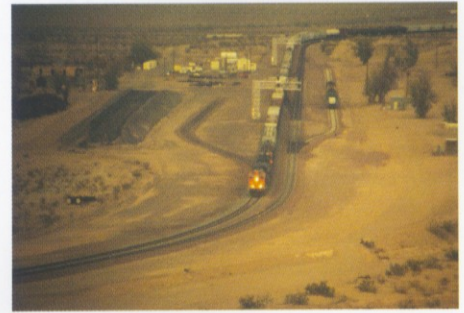
Borax Smith

new owners from the East Coast developed the gold mine, to be known as the Bagdad Chase Mine, and built the somewhat flimsy Ludlow & Southern Railroad in 1903 designed to carry the ore from Camp Rochester to a junction with the Santa Fe and on to the smelters at Barstow. This relatively minor addition to Ludlow's railroad importance was soon overshadowed by the actions of 'Borax' Smith. Smith had acquired rights to rich borax deposits in Death Valley some 170 miles to the north of Ludlow. He fell out with the owner of the shortest railroad link to the west coast and therefore built the much longer link southwards over mountains and salt flats to Ludlow giving that small town its third railroad. Smith named his railroad the Tidewater and Tonopah, the T&T, which incidentally reached neither tidewater nor Tonopah.

The T&T was a more substantial enterprise than the Ludlow & Southern and built its headquarters, housing, its own station and a full repair and maintenance facility at Ludlow. It expanded its reach to take in gold-bearing ore from Nevada and even transferred passengers from Los Angeles to a resort hotel in Death Valley itself. Ludlow thrived along Main Street laid out parallel to the Santa Fe tracks with saloons and stores including the substantial concrete-built Murphy's Store.



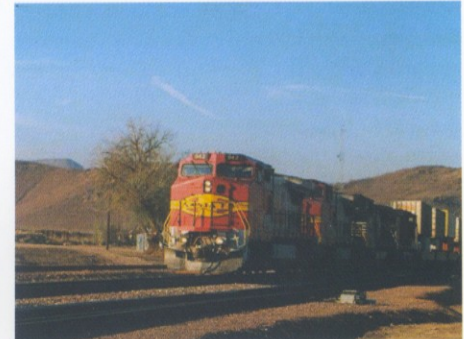
Turn of last century TTR locomotive



The Balloon track then and now.

The 'character' of Ludlow at that time was Ma Preston, 'a lady of French origin', who certainly ran the saloons for the goldminer's drinking and perhaps more. The layout of the town was characterised by a 'Balloon Track' a circle of railway line which cut right through the heart of the town thus allowing locomotives and trains to turn, seen clearly today from satellite photographs.

But such enterprises have a limited life and the mines were soon exhausted. The Ludlow & Southern closed in 1916. The T&T closed down the southern end of its route in 1933 and its rails were finally lifted during the Second World War thus ending Ludlow's spell as a



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railroad junction. The Santa Fe route survives and is extremely busy, but in railroad terms, Ludlow today exists only as a maintenance compound.

Route 66 1926-1969

Fortunately for Ludlow there was an alternative economic spur in the shape of its first road link, the famous Route 66. This road, built in the 1920s, was the route taken by farmers displaced by the dust storms in Kansas as described in Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* – the roadside carvings of the travellers are still in situ on what is now left of Route 66 – a 'listed' road. Ludlow passed through its period of peak prosperity at this time as a waterhole and eating stop – by



Desert Inn Bath!



Ludlow CA. Building still standing

traffic. A 1960s motel and diner and a modern filling station are located just to the north of the original town. A trailer park, hidden behind the embankment of the balloon track, forms the only residential area. All the railroad ephemera – depots, yards, repair and maintenance buildings and T&T housing – has disappeared apart from the embankments, the locomotive repair pits and some sun-bleached wooden ties. The small

town set along Main Street has been ravaged by earthquake, fire and vandalism. Murphy's store after many years finally succumbed to yet another earthquake and has collapsed.

One remarkable relic of earlier times does still survive. Of its hotels, cafes and restaurants only the Desert Inn claimed 'Rooms and Bath'. The bath is still there, a poignant reminder of days past. But another and stronger reference to the past can be experienced from the now deserted Main Street as mile-long, two-container high trains transport Southern California produce and imports to the wider USA. But even here the

the 1930s deep borehole water having been found. Cafes, small hotels and two repair garages on Main Street and an Art Deco petrol station on Route 66 itself typified the new development in town.

Interstate I-40 1969 - 2007

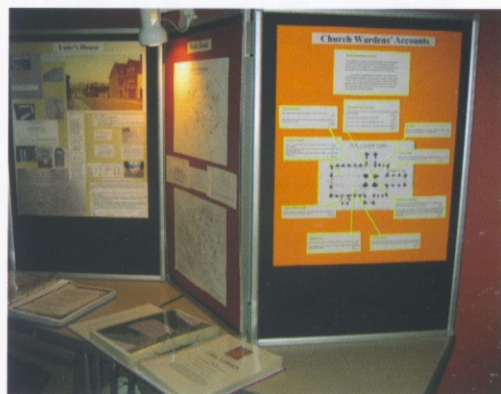
But again this prosperity was short-lived. Route 66 was taken over and in many places covered by the new interstate highway built to motorway standards. Ludlow declined and now exists only to serve the Interstate

Santa Fe has had to give up some of its past glory as it now partnered with one of its rivals as the Burlington-Santa Fe Railroad.

CELEBRATING HISTORY

Jean Brown

The Ludlow Historical Research Group was founded in 1976 to investigate Ludlow buildings and their histories. This had arisen out of Ludlow Civic Society when the initial research on a particular building had been undertaken by David Lloyd and Martin Speight. So it was appropriate that we should share our thirty years as a Group with a much wider audience than our own members. On Saturday 24th February a day conference was held at the Ludlow Assembly Rooms with four speakers sharing their particular areas of expertise. Over one hundred and thirty people attended the day. An important feature of the event was the display mounted at the back of the auditorium. In a series of panels the diverse research interests of the Group were illustrated, from medieval documents to work on World War One memorials. Many publications dealing with Ludlow history have been produced during those thirty years and copies of these were also on show, plus the current publications which were for sale.



Display of Research Group work.



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Talk in progress, Auditorium, Ludlow Assembly Rooms

David Lloyd introduced the day and talked briefly about the beginning of the Group and then used this to illustrate how the history of a building and its inhabitants could be researched. The example he used was the three houses that are now 54-56 Mill Street, showing that the site could be located in documents from 1292. From wills, Hearth Tax assessments and legal documents he traced this through to the building of the present houses as a 'speculative build' in the 1730's by Henry Carver.

Chris Train gave the audience an insight into the walls and gates of Ludlow with their construction apparently dating back to the thirteenth century. Exact documentary evidence is hard to establish but it seems likely that the walls and gates were in place by the 1270's or 1280's. In recent years excavations have shown the possible extent of the eleven metre ditch outside the walls, particularly

in St Johns Road, the Linney and behind Old Street.

Madge Moran shared her expertise on timber-framed buildings, focusing on those that have been subject to dendrochronological dating of timbers. These properties range in date from 1313 to 1621. The list includes many familiar landmarks such as The Rectory, Bodenham's, the Guildhall in Mill Street, the Reader's House and Lane's (Asylum) House. Madge hoped that further buildings would be 'dendro-dated' as the technology now gives much more precise information on the age of the timbers. It is also valuable in adding to our knowledge of the general development of the town in relation to known historical events and changes in Ludlow's economic wealth and social status.

Chris Potter was able to share his research into a newly found treasure of letters previously hidden in a wall of a shop in Tenbury Wells. The letters date from the seventeenth century, and detail personal and commercial transactions relating to the Hill family, whose home was at Court of Hill. On the commercial side, Leonard Hill was dealing in tobacco, which at the

time was a relatively new commodity. Most revealing have been the series of eleven love letters, written by an unknown member of the family to the woman with whom he had a relationship for seven years. Her letters are not extant but the final letter showing that he had been rejected still spoke to us across three centuries.

For the final session of the afternoon the speakers answered questions from the audience which dealt with the specific topics



Supper in Oscars, Ludlow Assembly Rooms

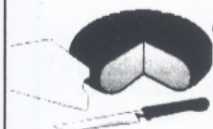
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but also raised the wider issue of local historical research. Ludlow is fortunate in having a wealth of historical archives which remain to be researched, to build on what is already known. It is hoped that the Group will continue to attract new members to share their interest in Ludlow history, to enrich our knowledge, both in its development as a market town and to bring to life the people who lived here and contributed to the community.

In the evening fifty two people, members of the Group, both past and present, with some specially invited guests, gathered for a buffet supper in Oscars. This was a happy celebratory occasion at which David Lloyd shared reminiscences of the thirty

years, aided by those present, including some of whom have been members since the beginning. Jean Brown was given honorary membership of the Group to mark the successful completion of the Local History Project, in conjunction with Shropshire Archives, and Ludlow Library and Museum service and supported by the Local Heritage Initiative. This has enabled the Group to widen the scope of historical records available in Ludlow and to offer the weekly Advice Service on local and family history to the public.

LUDLOW CIVIC SOCIETY COMMITTEE NEWS CHAIRMAN'S NOTES SUMMER 2007

Our last edition of Heritage News (November 2006) listed as points of concern: the new parking regime, the Market Square proposals and local government reform (the proposed unitary authority for Shropshire). Six months later, not much has changed: the hot air has got hotter, the facts more obscure.

On the parking issue, advocates for a return to a free-for-all have apparently forgotten why the original scheme was generally welcomed by residents and shopkeepers alike. Do residents and shoppers really wish to spend their time going round and round the town centre in a vain attempt to find a parking space? As to the detail, much of the necessary signage and line-making can be dispensed with if central government regulations can be varied to fit the needs of a historic town, a matter currently under investigation.

Your Committee has helped to persuade the Town council to abandon the proposal for a new building on the Market Square and to keep the area as open space. The debate has moved to considerations of traffic flow (likely to remain unchanged) the design of the market stalls and the use/ownership of different areas of the square.

This leads on to the 'unitary' debate. Bits of the square are owned separately by the Town Council, the District Council and the County Council. There are other bits where the ownership is uncertain. This is typical of a general pattern where split responsibility for ownership and delivery of services throughout the county is further complicated by the presence of unelected organisations, eg: health, police and fire authorities, housing associations, the West Midlands "Assembly" and the Highways Agency. In short, we are over governed in areas where we have only modest degrees of choice and unrepresented where the important decisions are taken.

LUDLOW MUSIC SOCIETY 2007-08 SEASON

Ludlow Music Society has just announced the programme for the season 2007-08, and an enterprising series of concerts is available with a wide range of music to be performed by artists of international calibre.

The season begins with a concert on the 6th October at Moor Park School by the Atrium String Quartet, a group of young Russian musicians playing a programme of all Russian music. The 1st String Quartet of Borodin is followed by the 7th by Shostakovich, a dramatic work written in 1960 and dedicated in memory of his wife Nina. The concert closes with the 2nd quartet in F major by Tchaikovsky.

On November 3rd the internationally famous pianist Llyr Williams opens his programme with one of the lesser known Beethoven sonatas (no.16 in g op.31 no 1) followed by three Burlesques (1908) by the Hungarian composer Bela Bartok. The attractive Children's Corner suite by Debussy concludes the first half, and after the interval there is a performance of Schumann's Kreisleriana Op.16, a suite of fantasy pieces related to the character Kreisler in E.T.A Hoffmann's novels. The concert ends with Liszt's fantasy on two themes from Mozart's Marriage of Figaro.

The Young Artists concert on 16th February 2008 features the young oboist Thomas Barber accompanied by James Southall. Their programme will include Edmund Rubbra's Sonata in C as well as Schumann Romances Op.94 and Saint-Saens in D Op.166. Debussy's "L'sile joyeuse" will feature as a piano solo.

A highly enterprising concert on March, 8th, 2008 The baritone singer Roderick Williams will be accompanied by Susie Allan (now a member of the LMS committee). Linking this song recital entitled "Kinderlieder", the distinguished narrator will be none other than Jenny Agutter, famous for her performances on stage, film ("The Railway Children"). The programme will include music by Schubert, Mahler, Schumann, Wolf, Finzi, Britten, Liza Lehmann and Victor Hely-Hutchinson. Tickets will be in high demand for this concert, so early application (as for all these concerts) is advisable.

Further details will be available soon on the Society's web-site: www.ludlowmusicsociety.org.uk or phone Hon Secretary; Imogen Liddle (01584) 872406.

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South Shropshire District Council has taken the entirely rational decision to abolish itself and remove one tier of local government. The decision was not supported by a minority of district councillors and a majority of local electors have voted against the decision. In my view, the latter are deluded in their view that the unitary Authority represents a bigger threat to local democracy than the present state of confusion. Some of my colleagues disagree, pointing out that 'The County' does not listen to the views of local citizens. Either way, this society needs to get its views across to those authorities prepared to listen.

On a less contentious note, this society was pleased to have some input to Ludlow's successful bid to win first prize in the Academy of Urbanism's 'Great Town' category. Ludlow is a great town and we need to keep it that way.

As always, I can be contacted at 41 Gravel Hill, Ludlow, SY8 1QR, telephone 01584 876955 or e-mail Holstan2@aol.com

Nick Holcombe

MEMBERSHIP

In my last report (September 2006) I estimated a total membership of between 260 and 270 for the current year. This has proved a remarkably accurate forecast in that the actual figure has turned out to be 265. Together with the 141 Life members this brings the total society membership to 406.

As also mentioned in September, total membership has been dropping steadily since 2002 when it was 448.

This may be part of an inevitable trend, but, as it seems that new members are mostly recruited from people moving into the area, all existing members are asked to keep an eye out for anyone new they come across who might be interested in joining.

Pass on to them your copy of this edition when finished with – there is an application form at the bottom of the page.

Michael Coleman-Smith

CIVIC SOCIETY LECTURES 2007

The last Civic Society lecture of the present season was a fascinating talk on J.M.W Turner. The lecturer, Richie Goodwin Self argued with some conviction, that he is Britain's greatest painter. The audience did not disagree.

The AGM will be on May 9th.

Next season begins in September with a talk by Professor Peter Dickinson composer, writer, and pianist, lately Emeritus Professor at Keele and London. He will be talking about Lord Berners, well-known polymath, and the basis of Lord Merlin in Nancy Milford's books.

This is followed in October by a talk by John Newman, well known for his part in the Pevsner Architectural Guides. He will be

talking about "Styles and materials - revolutions in Shropshire Architecture 1660 - 1860".

In November we welcome back David Lloyd, who will give a talk about Georgian Ludlow, and in December we shall have the usual Christmas party and discussion.

Prue Bellak

LUDLOW CIVIC SOCIETY

2006-2007 Officers & Committee Members

President:	Sir Keith Thomas
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Chairman:	Nick Holcombe
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Prue Bellak, John Bowles, Andrew Byrne, Michael Coleman-Smith, Jim Gosling, Paul Haslam Fox, Daniel McDowell, James Macfarlane, Stanton Stephens.

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/our application to join the society.

Annual membership subscription is £10 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 until further notice as GIFT AID.

I am currently a UK taxpayer.

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Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

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