

Ludlow Heritage News

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No.48 SUMMER 2008

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THE READER'S HOUSE FOR SALE AGAIN!

This Grade 1 House is back on the market

It has been empty since 2002

How can it best be preserved?

Can it be purchased for the Town?

What is the best use for it?

What are the alternatives?

**MARIA RUNDELL –
LUDLOW'S DOMESTIC GODDESS**
Julia Ionides



Silhouette of Maria Rundell by John Field 1804

In 1806 John Murray published a book that became one of the first comprehensive household management and cookery books of the 19th century. Over fifty years before Isabella Beeton published articles she had written in the monumental book popularly known as *Mrs Beeton*, Maria Rundell wrote and published *A New System of Domestic Cookery, Formed upon Principles of Economy, and Adapted to the use of Private Families*. Maria also lived to the age of eighty-three, whereas poor Isabella died at twenty-eight after giving birth to her fourth child.

Maria Rundell, née Ketelby, was born in 1745 in Ludlow; her birthplace may have been the building that is now the High Hall of Ludlow College in Castle Square; it had been owned by the Ketelbys since 1682 and was not sold out of the family until 1722. The family also owned another property in Castle Street which they had bought from the Corporation, so this could also have been where Maria was born and lived.¹

Maria's father was Abel Johnson Ketelby. They were an extensive Shropshire family, variously spelt Kettelby, Ketelbey and Ketelby. The family's connection with the

county dated back to about the 14th century when they came from Lincolnshire. Over the centuries they married heiresses from many of the prominent Shropshire families such as the Actons and the Littletons of Henley Hall. Along the line they acquired the estate at Steple, near Cleobury Mortimer, which became their principal country residence.

after the 1715 uprising, he is best known for his appearance in William Hogarth's picture, *A Midnight Modern Conversation*, 1732/3. He is the character in the centre with the large, slightly askew periwig, and his appearance there bears out contemporary accounts of him.

Sir John Hawkins, fellow lawyer and musical scholar, described Ketelby as "a



Abel Ketelby by William Hogarth

Maria's great great grandfather, Edward Ketelby, was involved in a dramatic event in the 1690s: we know of this from *An account of the seducing of Ann, the daughter of Edward Ketelbey of Ludlow, Gent., to the popish religion with some very extraordinary passages relating thereto, particularly of the gross prevarications, and insolent boldness of the two popish bishops, Leyborn and Gifford ...*

Her great grandfather, Abel Ketelby, was a flamboyant personality – a barrister and politician – and son of Edward Ketelby of Bitterly.² Despite a varied and distinguished career as owner of five hundred acres in South Carolina, and defender of Jacobite prisoners

vociferous orator, remarkable though an utter barrister for wearing a full-bottomed wig, as also for a horrible squint"; this is borne out both in the picture and "up Kettleby (sic) starts with a horrible stare" in John Ireland's 1812 *Hogarth Illustrated*.³ Ketelby was Recorder of Ludlow in 1719-44 and MP 1722-27. The Ketelby line descended through Abels and wives called Mary down to Maria who inherited the residue of the Steple estates.

We know nothing about Maria's life in Ludlow. In 1766, at the age of twenty-one, she married Thomas Rundell, a surgeon with a practice in Bath, and she went to live

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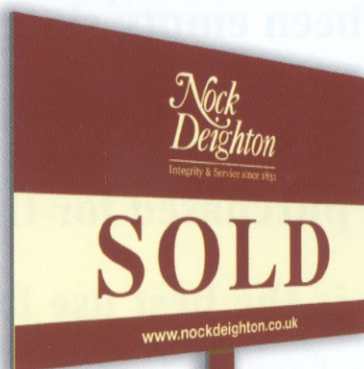
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there. Some sources state, incorrectly, that her husband was "a wealthy businessman...and partner in the well-known firm of jewellers and goldsmiths, Rundell and Bridges, Ludgate Hill".⁴ However, her husband was related to them, and their son, Edmund Walter Rundell, joined Phillip Rundell and became a partner in the company.

It seems to have been a happy married life which produced two sons and three daughters. The only probable information about Thomas is in the Administrative Records of the Royal Society of Arts: "Thomas Rundell and Peter Muilman on bleached surgeon's tow, 1769-70".⁵ Thomas died in September 1797 after what is described as "a long and painful illness". No doubt he was ably nursed by his wife as her book contains a section on Cookery for the Sick, including "a very supporting Broth against any Kind of Weakness", and Asses' Milk which "far surpasses any imitation of it that can be made". It has the somewhat awkward instructions that "it should be milked into a glass that is kept warm by being in a basin of hot water".

After her husband's death, Maria went to live in Swansea, presumably with a married daughter, leaving "her two younger daughters in the care of their aunt and uncle in London";⁶ these relations may well have been of the goldsmith family. There is a volume entitled *Letters addressed to two absent daughters* by M.A. Rundell, 1814, which is attributed to Maria.

In her widowhood Maria started compiling, for the benefit of her daughters and perhaps daughters-in-law, the recipes and household information that she had collected over the years. Maria never intended to publish the work that she had compiled, and was planning to have it copied out and a volume given to each daughter. But the family friendship with the London publisher John Murray changed all that.

The advertisement, included in the front of my 1842 edition, explains what happened:

As the following directions were intended for the conduct of the families of the Authoress's own daughters, and for the

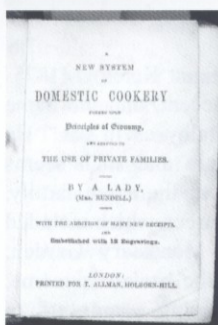
arrangement of their table, so as to unite a good figure with proper economy, she has avoided all excessive luxury ...

This little work would have been a treasure to herself when she first set out in life, and she therefore hopes it may prove useful to others.

The advertisement goes on to say that the author is receiving no "emolument" from it, so she hopes "it will escape without censure". As she implies ladies did not earn money – or publish books – at that time. The title page in my edition says it is "By a Lady" with Mrs Rundell in brackets underneath; as she had died in 1828 it was then safe to reveal her name.⁷



Book front, frontispiece and title page of the 1842 edition



The book proved very popular, with its sixty-fifth English edition appearing in 1841. It was a great achievement: the Dictionary of National Biography calls it "the earliest manual of household management with any pretensions to completeness".

John Murray had inherited his publishing business from his father, John MacMurray, who dropped the Mac after setting up the business in London.⁸ The firm had a distinguished list of authors already, but the potential of Maria's book was recognised and it was so successful that 5,000-10,000 copies were printed annually. As one of Murray's

best sellers, in 1812 it enabled him to buy 50 Albermarle Street, London, for just under £4,000 with the copyright of Maria's book as security.⁹

In 1808 Murray gave Maria £150 and she wrote: "I never had the smallest idea of any return for what I considered a free gift to one whom I had long regarded as my friend." Unfortunately, by 1814 relations with Murray began to sour. She said he was not doing enough to sell the book (all authors seem to think that!) and through the courts she managed to stop him from republishing it when the rights expired, and in 1821 offered a new version to Longman's. Murray fought back to prevent her from doing this and after much legal wrangling, Maria accepted an offer of £2,000 (a good sum at that time) to discharge her claims. Bearing in mind that Maria was sixty-nine at the time and came from a legal background, it seems likely that members of her family were pushing for the additional money and for the settlement. Routledge published, in 1861, what they called "a revised edition", but do not say whom it was revised by, and they continued to produce editions up to at least 1886. However, Routledge were not the only ones: the internet book site, Abe, lists many publishers who are not well known today such as J.J.Chidley of London in 1843, and Milner in 1861. There was obviously money to be made out of Maria, even long after her death, and at least two facsimile editions were published in the latter half of the 20th century. The American publishers were quick off the mark, probably illegally: Benjamin C.Buzby of Philadelphia published a copy in 1807.

At the beginning of the book are *Miscellaneous Observations for the Mistress of a Family*, and they contain good sense rules which could apply to today's uncertain financial state:

The Mistress of a family should always remember that the welfare and good management of the house depends on the eye of the superior and consequently that nothing is too trifling for her notice, whereby waste may be avoided; and this

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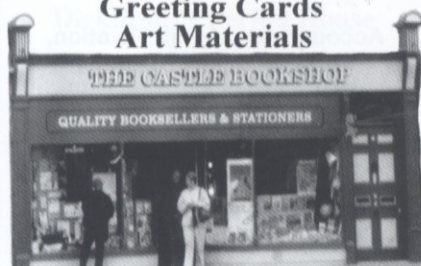
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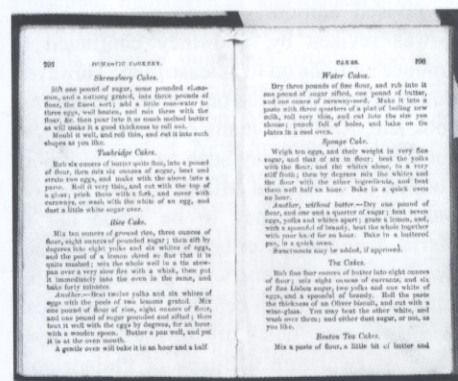
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attention is of more importance now that the price of every necessary of life is increased to an enormous degree.

The book also contains what is thought to be the first printed recipe for Scotch Eggs. I checked in the other early cookery books that I have and could find only Scotch Collops, which are made of veal and are completely different. Maria also includes a recipe for them which is a simpler and easier version than others I have. Her recipe for Scotch Eggs is: Boil five pullets eggs, and without removing the white, cover completely with a fine relishing forcemeat, in which let scraped ham or chopped anchovy bear a due proportion. Fry of a beautiful yellow brown and serve with a good gravy in a dish.

Relevant to our county, Maria also includes a recipe, or receipt as it is called on the title page of her book, for Shrewsbury Biscuits, also known as Shrewsbury Cakes. These delicious short-bread type biscuits with variations of flavourings are included in many early cookery books.¹⁰



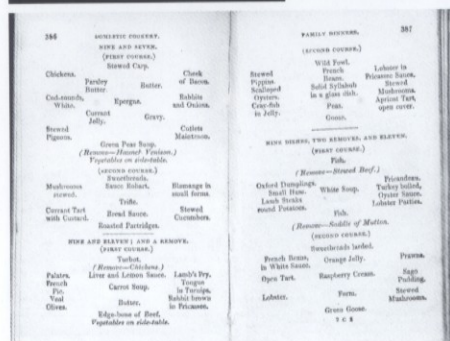
Page with a recipe for Shrewsbury Biscuits by Mrs Rundell

Maria died in Lausanne, Switzerland, on 16th December 1828; she had inherited money from the goldsmith Rundells and travelled there when she was aged eighty-two. Considering the difficulties involved with travel then, this implies that she was a very resilient lady.

As an afterword, perhaps the best known person today who bears the name is the



Illustration from Domestic Cookery



Examples of Menus

composer, Albert William Ketelby (1875-1959). He added the accent, and the name is now pronounced Catalby as in cat. He was born in Birmingham and so it seems likely that he came from the same family. During his composing career, which included the well known In a Monastery Garden, he was nominated, on the basis of income, as "Britain's greatest living composer" in 1929.¹¹ He then slipped into obscurity but today is coming back into fashion.

¹ I am grateful to Dr David Lloyd for this and other information.

² It is spelt this way in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

³ Information from *The Ketelbys of Steple* by the Rev. Ralph C. Purton, in the TSAS 4th Series, Vol II, 1912, p.117-8.

⁴ They are referred to as Rundell, Bridge and Rundell, Royal Goldsmiths, and pieces by them are in the V&A and royal collections.

⁵ Royal Society of Arts, Guard Book Correspondence, G.B.12. However, Rundell does appear to be a surprisingly common name so it may not be the same Thomas. Tow is a fibre with

many uses including surgical dressings.

⁶ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

⁷ My copy is published by T. Allman, Holburn Hill. Early editions of the book fetch over £300 today.

⁸ The Burney family, who have Shrewsbury connections, started out as McBurney.

⁹ The firm remained at this address and was independent until 2002 when it was sold to Hodder Headline. Later in the 19th century Murray published the work of another Salopian, Charles Darwin.

¹⁰ A plaque can be seen near Shrewsbury Castle which commemorates Mr Palin who, it reads, "first made the unique Shrewsbury cakes to his original recipe in the year 1760". However, they do seem to have been around since at least 1700.

¹¹ Performing Rights Gazette, October 1929.

LUDLOW, MAINE

Jim Gosling

One of the most isolated Ludlows in the United States, Ludlow Maine, lies adjacent to the Canadian/US boundary in Aroostook County to the extreme north of the state. As ever, the US Ludlows focus one's mind on the history of the expansion of the United States. In particular, Aroostook County is the location of two events affecting US/British relations. After the War of Independence and the "1812" War, a third conflict threatened in 1840. This was a boundary dispute known as the "Aroostook War" when British and American armies faced off across the border. Fortunately, sensible diplomacy won the day and a conflict was avoided, thus robbing future Civil War generals of battle experience. Some two hundred years later relations had improved to the extent that US aircraft were landed at Houlton, the county town adjacent to Ludlow, and were then towed across the border into Canada to be safely ferried to England. This action allowed Roosevelt to combat Congress and claim that



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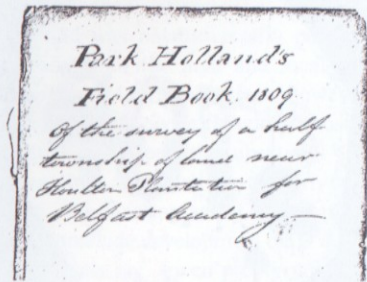
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the US was not directly providing military hardware to Britain.

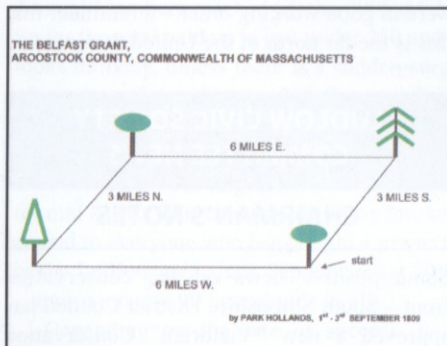
Ludlow itself came into being on February 29th 1808 as a gifting to the Belfast Academy, a school located in the more southerly coastal town of Belfast in what was then Massachusetts. The aim was that receipts from future settlers would accrue to the Academy.



The first page of Park Holland's Survey book

Then known as the Belfast Academy Grant, this "half-township", six miles by three, was surveyed by Park Holland in September 1809. Some idea of the task of surveying this virgin land on horseback by compass and surveyor's chain can be gained from reading his original notebook now to be found in the Augusta archives. The original deed describes the land as:

...beginning at the southwesterly corner of a township granted to Williamstown College (later part of Houlton) at a hard maple tree, thence west, thirteen degrees north six miles to an ash tree, thence north, thirteen degrees east to a maple tree, thence east, thirteen



The "Setting Out" of the Belfast Grant

degrees south six miles to a cedar tree, thence to Williamstown College westerly line south, thirteen degrees west, three miles to the first bounds...

The town was first settled by General John Comings on the 8th day of October 1825 at a cost of \$1 per acre, this somewhat later than the original conditions of the lease desired. Land was cleared and the General, the principal man of the new settlement, lived there until his death in 1849. A son, Bradford Comings, platted the half-township and all subsequent plots refer to his plan and survey.

The Belfast Grant was originally organised as a Plantation together with its "other half", the New Limerick Grant, but became independent of New Limerick in 1840. It was later incorporated as a Town by an Act of the State of Maine dated March 21st 1864, taking the name of Ludlow.

The inhabitants were required by a warrant posted in "two public and conspicuous places" to vote in town affairs for the purpose of organising the "said plantation into a town by the name of Ludlow" at the Red School House on Wednesday the 9th day of November A.D. 1864 at one o'clock in the afternoon. The requirement was to choose the following officials:

- A Moderator to preside at the said meeting
- A town clerk
- Three, five or seven select men
- An overseer of the poor
- Three or more assessors
- A town agent
- A town treasurer
- A superintending school committee
- A collector of taxes
- Constable surveyors of lumber, wool and bark and all other necessary town officers

This requirement was completed according to a response the next day, presumably done without wrangle, but with the addition of road surveyors, school agents, fence viewers and tithing men. The town remains administered by Selectmen.

Why Ludlow? No direct evidence exists. An examination of census lists from 1840

through to 1870 brings to light no-one of the name of Ludlow. The most likely explanation lies across the border and links directly back to the War of Independence. The American colony was sharply divided regarding independence and many "loyalists" suffered the loss of property and were forced to leave the Americas. Two such were the brothers George Duncan Ludlow and Gabriel Ludlow, eminent citizens of New York, who were forced to repatriate to England. They soon returned to the Americas and were established in New Brunswick, Canada, as the Chief Justice and Commander in Chief of the Militia respectively. New Brunswick lies adjacent to Aroostook County and contains a town named Ludlow, almost certainly linked to one of the two brothers. Many years later, loyalist families gradually returned to the United States. There was a notable influx of families into Ludlow from New Brunswick in the 1840s-60s, over one third of the 249 inhabitants recorded in the 1850 census were born in New Brunswick. These were not necessarily loyalist families, but it is likely that the incomers influenced the naming of the new town as a link to the Ludlows of New Brunswick.

What is Ludlow today? It has changed very little from the early days when a road was laid from the Houlton boundary due west for the full six miles ending up at the boundary with another settlement, Smyrna. Farmland predominates. The 1850 census notes 63



General Comings's house on the Houlton-Ludlow Road

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farmers, 1 surveyor, 2 carpenters, 1 shoemaker, 1 labourer and a botanical physician. Today there are perhaps fewer farmers in number, but agriculture (in potatoes) remains the chief occupation.

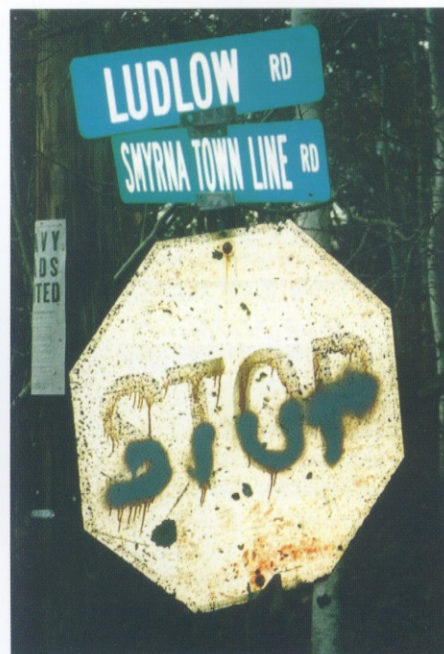


Ludlow Station, Bangor & Aroostook Railroad, Maine

The General's house still stands adjacent to the cemetery containing his grave and provides marvellous views to the south. An ancestor is now postmaster of Houlton. There was a period of expectation when the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad passed through



The entrance to Ludlow on Route 2



Six miles to the end of the Ludlow Road



Town Office Ludlow, Maine

Ludlow to Houlton. But the railroad recently went into bankruptcy, only to be saved by the immediately previous owner of our major British freight line, EWS. The railroad now runs cross-border freight only; Ludlow station is derelict.

The old school hall is the centre of Ludlow, being the office of the town clerk, but it is open only two days a week. The current population of 450 seemed to be most concerned, during a fall visit, in ensuring that their snowmobiles were in good working order – a reminder that this is the far north of the United States.

LUDLOW CIVIC SOCIETY COMMITTEE NEWS

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Some positive news on the conservation front – South Shropshire District Council has approved a new "Victorian" Conservation Area to take in, roughly, the area bounded

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by St. Julian's Avenue, Gravel Hill and Julian Road. This was a proposal driven by the Civic Society, and particular thanks should be given to Jim Gosling who did nearly all the work on our behalf. Thanks also to Andrew Byrne and Bill Eastwell, who represented the Society at the public consultation, and David Francis of the SSDC planning department who gave several excellent presentations.

The proposal attracted a good deal of debate and was not universally popular with the residents of the area and local property developers. Most people feel, however, that this area of Ludlow still retains most of the distinctive character of the substantial Victorian housing which continued into the early twentieth century. Designation as a Conservation Area does not preclude development but it does mean that proposals are given proper consideration by residents and the planning authorities. The Society felt it important to give some protection to the area while the District Council remained in existence.

For further background on the proposal I commend the excellent 2004 publication, "Victorian Ludlow" produced by the Ludlow Historical Research Group. There is a strong case for extending conservation area status to the "Benjamin Weale" development at East Hamlet.

Nick Holcombe

MEMBERSHIP

Last September I said the Society's membership should match the total of 265 Annual Members reached by the 2006 AGM. So far the total paid up is just under 250 and it looks unlikely, unless there is a sudden surge of new members, that the 265 figure will be reached.

We hope, however, that things may change once we launch our targeted mailshot planned for mid April. This consists of a fairly low key appeal to everyone who has bought a property in the Ludlow area since September 1st 2007 – approximately 90 households in all.

Depending on the rate of success, it is planned to repeat this exercise each April.

If you are already a member, please keep an eye out for anyone moving into your area who might like to become a member. There is an application form at the bottom of the last page.

Michael Coleman-Smith

EVENTS

The last lecture of the present series will be given by Simon Holloway, well-known local architectural historian and engineer. It is about the history of corrugated iron in building, and copies of the lecturer's book on the subject will be available at the lecture.

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday May 7th at Oscars. The first lecture of the next season will be about conservation and will be given by Tim Ratcliffe, a Shropshire architect. This will be followed by a talk on Chippendale by James Lomax from Temple Newsam in Yorkshire, and a lecture on Antarctic Exploration by Judy Skelton, whose father was an Antarctic explorer. In December there will be the usual Christmas party and discussion forum.

Prue Bellak

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A NEW WEBSITE FOR SHROPSHIRE HOUSEHOLDERS FROM ENERGY PRODUCTS PLUS

This new and exciting renewables website is due to be launched in late September. It is the first of its kind, allowing users to interact with it via the "Toolkit" option to acquire personalised information on how they can change the energy types used within their homes. The toolkit will tell you which renewables technologies such as wind, solar or various other devices will work best in your specific property and location.

This project has secured approximately £30,000 in funding from Leader+, a European Community Initiative. It is also supported by Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council, the Borough of Telford & Wrekin, Oswestry Council and both North Shropshire and South Shropshire District Councils.

Householders will be able to calculate and produce a report on the types of renewable energies that are suitable for and which could be installed in their home, reducing both bills and carbon emissions.

The website will also contain general information on the different types of renewable energy, climate change, tips for energy-saving and transport, a directory of suppliers and installers, "on your farm" information to help farmers and landowners with energy-saving and renewable energy, news and information on grants that are available.

This website will be user-friendly and uncomplicated to navigate through.

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