

Ludlow *Heritage*

Ludlow
Civic
Society

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N E W S

FREE

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Romania

Nearest Earthly
Place to Paradise

7 Mill Street

 **Lanyon Bowdler**
SOLICITORS



7 MILL STREET:

Tom and Pat Evans

There is evidence for the existence of two buildings on the site in the 17th century prior to the existing site. For example, in 1657 John Ricards, a town clerk, is listed as the leaseholder for 'tenement and garden on the east side of Mill Street next above the great stone house'. In 1697 the property was held in trust for Magdalene Hill who later married Richard Baldwin (Baldwyn). He is thought to have been a leaseholder of (Old) Willey Furnace near Broseley, which was known for the high quality of pig iron it produced. He also had coppicing rights. It was Richard Baldwin who built the current Georgian house in 1721, and whose first initial together with Magdalene's appears on the cast iron rainwater heads on the front of the building.

The next owners were Mary Baldwin and then Tobias Eyesham. In the latter's will in 1767, his Mill Street property was left to James Graham Snr, a tobacconist from Hereford. The house seems to have passed down through the Graham family to James Graham of The Sheet, Ludford, and then to his son. We understand that it was in the 1850s that it first housed a lawyer's office.

During restoration some traces of the pre-existing building were found in the southern half of the site. Fragments of a timber-framed wall were uncovered in the hall and there is an earlier timber structure above the current brick barrel-vault ceiling of the cellar. The chimney stacks in this part of the house were possibly reused from an earlier building.

The major architectural feature of the house is the oak dog-leg

staircase which required major restoration after the removal of the fire-proofing required for office buildings. It is possible that the inner wall of the stairs above the first and second landings is a later addition, so the staircase may originally have been more open than at present.

The rear service extensions shown on the OS map of 1885 were no longer in existence when we bought the house in 2008. The one to the south side had been replaced by a large strong-room some time in the late 1960s we believe. The strong-room itself was demolished in 2009. Internally, we believe the room plan to be very similar to that which Richard Baldwin built in 1721, and during the restoration we attempted to return the large hall to something like what it might have looked like at that time.



THE LEGAL YEARS:

Roger Taylor



I came to Ludlow in June 1971 to join the solicitor's practice then known as G.H.Morgan & Sons at 7 Mill Street. The wall to the right of the front door sported a number of brass plates with the name of the current firm at the top and a number of its predecessors below, of which the most important, historically, was Weyman Weyman and Estyn Jones.

The Weymans could trace their time in Ludlow through several centuries and had been solicitors to the Grove Estate at Craven Arms. Apparently, Mrs Greene of The Grove was the only client Mr Henry Weyman would greet downstairs in the hall – everyone

else would have to meet the great man in his room on the first floor, reinstated post 2008 as the drawing room. The firm's records suggest that the Weymans were practising from 7 Mill Street since at least the 1850s, but I have not been able to ascertain

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when the house was first occupied by lawyers. My understanding is that it was 'built' as a town house for the Downton Estate but was that Castle or Hall? I have put the 'built' in inverted commas because, in true Ludlow tradition, the Georgian front graces a much older house, or possibly two as there are two hipped roofs hiding behind the pediment which are completely undisguised at the rear.

By 1946 Weyman Weyman and Estyn Jones had run out of steam. The Weymans had gone, 'old man' Estyn Jones was considered by the Law Society to be too old and dodderly to continue to practise, as was 'young' Estyn Jones on account of a medical condition. At that point G.H.Morgan & Sons, a Shrewsbury firm (originally established in Newton in the 1880s), took over the practice. They also took over the practice of Marstons (but not the office at 9 Corve Street) which had run into trouble which involved some financial wrong doing and a suicide, and, in 1954, that of Stanley Lloyd & Co. when Ian (Jock) Slater joined from 10 Castle Square. As a result, all the 'old' firms of Ludlow coalesced into the expanded practice which shortened its name to Morgans in the earlier 1980s.

When I arrived in 1971 the office would have been immediately recognisable to all its predecessors. We had a live-in housekeeper (Mrs Hughes, her husband and young daughter), open fires in the solicitors' rooms (note, they were never called 'offices!'), and IT was limited to well-worn Remington

typewriters and a rather erratic duplicating machine. The first change happened fairly swiftly when the room I occupied suffered a fire six months after I arrived, which took hold around 7.30 a.m. but was mercifully put out quickly, and the only permanent loss was of a very pretty Georgian fire surround. The cause was an electrical fault but this spelt the end of the open fires, followed shortly afterwards by the departure of Mrs Hughes and her family, since maintaining the many fire places was the main reason for their living in. In addition, the firm was expanding and we needed the space. The Remingtons gave way to IBM Golf Ball typewriters, followed by the first word processor in Ludlow and, after that, the first fax machine. The ten years to 2007 probably brought the biggest technological changes and problems in terms of accommodating IT equipment in an old building, and this, coupled with further expansion following the merger with Lanyon Bowdler in 2007, resulted in an inevitable physical change when we moved in 2008 to the Eco Park.

All of us who worked at Number 7 held the house in great affection, and its elegance remained largely undiminished despite partitioning, necessary fire-proofing and, (following the IT revolution) trailing wires everywhere.

Perhaps the most memorable episode in my time was when the BBC chose Roy Spanner's room as the setting for Mr Ganglion's office in the TV series 'Blott on the Landscape'. Roy was an able and

well-respected lawyer but it has to be admitted that his room was less than tidy, to say the least, with piles of files and law books, a couple of abandoned broken-down chairs, an ancient letter-press in one corner and a selection of mouldy court gowns (as well as Roy's current one) hanging on the inside of the door. Roy was pleased that his room had been selected and started to tidy it up. Fortunately the producer appeared before the work got very far.

He was horrified; the attraction of the room was that it required no modification to portray an old-fashioned lawyer's office. Roy and his secretary had to put all the mullock back. Not only is Roy's room (now an elegant kitchen/dining-room) recorded for posterity, but there are magnificent shots of Lady Maude's Rolls Royce being driven slowly up Mill Street on a glorious June evening, with Number 7 as the backdrop and David Suchet as Blott sitting at a fully laid table in the middle of Mill Street waiting for Lady M. to finish her appointment with Mr Ganglion.

The office had to go quiet during filming and so the girls switched off the typewriters and made tea and coffee for the actors and crew whilst the solicitors and other fee earners mumbled quietly into their dictating machines. At the end of filming and as a thank you to the girls for their hospitality and all of us for our tolerance of interruptions, the producer arranged a party for the office and the crew at Number 7 – we

organised everything and the Beeb picked up the bill. The wonderful summer weather continued so pre-party preparations included a massive tidy up of the garden. The event established something of a party tradition at Number 7 which became increasingly exuberant, one involving a client (he knows who he is!) chatting to the male Morgan lawyers and surreptitiously cutting off half their ties – by the time the victims noticed what he was doing it was too late! The parties did not survive the recession of the early 1990s and the onset of political correctness, which is probably just as well.

The house helped to foster a family atmosphere which we have endeavoured to carry over to the Eco Park, but the fabric of a modern office does not speak like that of an old building. However, change is inevitable and the generations of lawyers were merely custodians. It is wonderful that the present owners, Tom and Pat Evans, who purchased the house in 2008, have not only reinstated and restored it but have enhanced it in the process. Their work has been more than skin deep and should ensure that its timeless elegance is preserved and enjoyed for many years to come.

N.B. I am indebted to my colleague and friend David Woodroffe for much of the ancient history of the firm which is taken from a draft of his Reminiscences which, sadly, he did not live to complete in his retirement.

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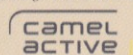
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ROMANIA

Dan Lloyd

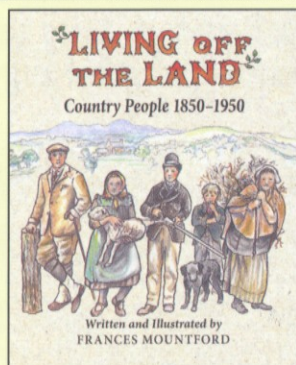
Fortified church in need of restoration at Alma Vii

Ludlow Civic Society has sponsored part of the building costs for a brick-making facility in the village of Viscri in Romania. This project forms part of the many ventures in the Transylvania region of Romania undertaken by a volunteer force of specialist building tradespeople, mostly based in South Shropshire. Transylvania is considered the best preserved area in Europe for a way of life typical of the medieval era. Life is still based on the Saxon tradition of farming and rural life.



Colin Richards helping the local team at the brick kiln

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'The Saxons' appear in most European History studies. Indeed, the English are defined as 'AngloSaxons' – but there was no such kingdom known as Saxony. They were a race inhabiting an area spreading from Holland to Luxemburg across the Rhine-lands to Saxony, Lower Saxony and to Franconia Germany. The Saxons were defined by their spoken German dialect. The Ostsiedlung nach Siebenbürger Sachsen (Eastern Migration to the Seven Saxon States) was an important part of European migration history and is well documented. It started in the 12th century and centred around the cities now known as Sibiu, Sighisoara, TirguMures, Brasov, Alba Julia and Cluj. The area is known as Transylvania – meaning forest lands – which borders the Carpathian Mountains in what is now Romania.

The Saxons took with them culture, architecture and religion from their homeland. They built over 300 villages, complete with

stone-built churches, which were later fortified during the 13th century as defence against the invasions of the Mongols, as well as other plundering tribes. Over the centuries the population increased to reach 200,000 by 1880. Further growth continued to 750,000 by 1930. War and attrition reduced this figure to 400,000 by 1950. Following the German Foreign Minister Genscher's 'repatriation scheme' in 1989, this number dropped sharply and is now only about 30,000. This has had a dramatic effect on the life and culture of the area, including a serious threat to the preservation of the stone-built villages and fortified churches.

Fortunately, the destruction of historic townships by the despot dictator Ceausescu had not fully reached this fragile region by 1989. By the beginning of the 21st century several initiatives were started to preserve and maintain the buildings and lifestyle of the region. Work was begun to restore and salvage as much of the infrastructure as possible. International teams, sponsored by international and local charities, started to restore a number of the fortified churches and more important buildings in the main towns and villages.

One such initiative from the Ludlow area works alongside a Romanian/Saxon charity striving to train up local people and provide facilities for traditional production of basic building materials such as bricks, tiles and lime mortar. This initiative is operated by the MihaiEminescu Trust, based in



Visitors from Ludlow inspect the brickmaking facility

Sighisoara. This is a charitable trust and its sponsors are mostly English with strong connections to Shropshire and particularly to Ludlow.

Each year a number of volunteers travels from the Ludlow area to work with local artisans and to educate them in essential traditional skills necessary to restore the buildings and infrastructure. These volunteers come from all walks of life and give freely of their time and knowledge to provide the basis for the restoration of such fine churches as Viscri and Alma Vii – see illustrations. The hands-on leader of these groups is Colin Richards from South Shropshire who can be seen in the photograph instructing fellow volunteers on the programme of work required to modify the brick-making facility to produce lime mortar. The village lifestyle is hard for the locals but very restful for visitors. Such sights as the cows, sheep and goats being led up to pasture in the early morning to the chimes of the bells around their

necks and returning, each to their own farmhouse in the evening, is a delight to witness.

As a sponsor of the MihaiEminescu Trust's work, the Ludlow Civic Society encourages tourist visits to Transylvania to see and enjoy the spectacular beauty of the region and see some of the work which volunteers from Ludlow are undertaking. Anyone interested in making a visit can email the Civic Society for further information. ludlowcivicsociety@gmail.com



Entrance to the restored fortified church at Viscri

CORRECTION

In the article on 'Ludlow's German Trophy Cannon' in LHN No. 58, the first photograph, showing the German gun outside the Girls' High School ca. 1919, should have been credited to the Ludlow Museum Resource Centre.

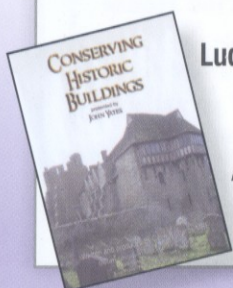
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LUDLOW JUBILEE GARDEN:

John Nash

Whilst work on creating the garden has not yet started, a number of important agreements have been achieved which will provide for improved access and control of the garden.

Entry to the garden will now be via the proposed Almshouse development, which should result in improved security in the garden and will avoid breaching the stone wall. It has been agreed with the Church that any necessary works to the stone wall can be carried out as part of the garden development.

It was always the plan to enable the Almshouse building works to use part of the garden land during construction. A number of alternative ways to access the site are being reviewed, which may mean that more of the garden land will be tied up until the construction is complete. The advantage of the project will mean less disruption to Church Walk and the Buttercross and neighbouring properties, and a more direct route to bring in foundation concrete and heavy goods. However, this does mean that it will not be possible to begin work on the garden until the Almshouses are constructed and therefore we are totally dependent on that programme.

The Almshouses' start date has slipped somewhat and it is now unlikely to be before the year's end. There have been some delays in obtaining service provision and diversion, particularly telephone cables which run across the site. Emphasis has been on advance planning to minimise the time and cost on site.

The Civic Society has taken the view that we should be as helpful as possible to the overall project comprising both the Almshouses and the Jubilee Garden, and that, although this will take longer, it will lead to the best long term solution for all parties.

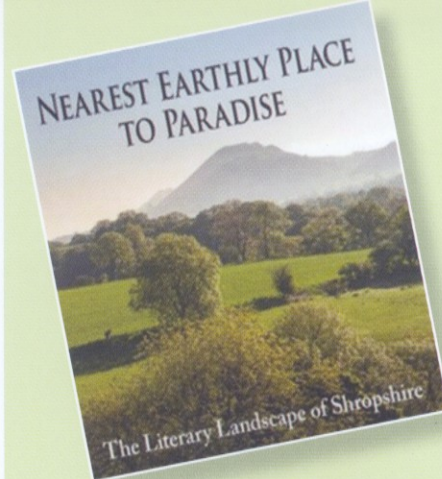
The next step is for us to secure planning consent for a change of use for the 'communal garden', and to obtain grant aid to fund the necessary works.

DONATION TO THE LUDLOW AMATEUR BOXING CLUB

Richard Mangnall, LCS Treasurer, recently handed a cheque for £4,000 to James Hepworth who has been heading up a fund-raising appeal on behalf of the Ludlow Amateur Boxing Club.

The Club is in the final stages of completing a new building in Whitebread Road in the Sandpits area of the town and is still short of its final target of £40,000, although recent donations have closed the gap. In deciding to make this donation, Ludlow Civic Society

was mindful of the need to support all aspects of life in the town, this being entirely in accordance with its stated aims and objectives. Whilst primarily concerned with heritage and conservation matters, the LCS also wishes to demonstrate its interest in the younger members of the community and in the improvement of Ludlow's amenities.



NEAREST EARTHLY PLACE TO PARADISE

This is the most delightful book about Shropshire, with superb photography and a wonderful cross section of stories by a wide range of individuals with differing literary backgrounds.

Ludlow itself gets five double page spreads and each article is so different that it's worth having the book for these alone.

I particularly like the contributions from Bill Bryson, Roger Evans and Julian Critchley but there is something for everyone.

One of my favourite photographs is with the piece by Pete Posthethwaite. How the photographer found such a stretch of land and created such a composition is amazing and shows what an art form it is.

The Editor Margaret Wilson says in the preface that Shropshire is a well kept secret. I slightly fear that the superb photography by Geoff Taylor will go a long way to inform and inspire people to come and find this glorious unspoilt county and discover it for themselves.

Merlin Unwin Books should be congratulated on having the publishing nous for getting together with Margaret Wilson and Geoff Taylor to produce a book that is a real gem and deserves to be a best seller.

Gerald Acton (Old Ludlovian).

Nicki Lewis-Smith
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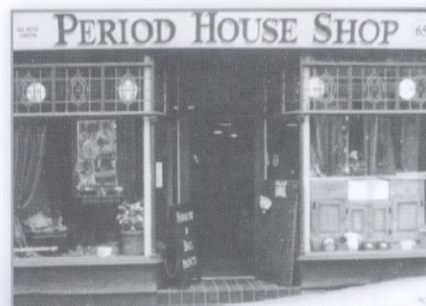
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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I hope you like the new look *Heritage News*. Your Committee has spent much time in researching layouts and styles to update the appearance of the News to a more contemporary style. We have also updated the logo and letterheads as part of the drive for improved identity and effective communication with our members and friends.

We thank Lanyon Bowdler who are sponsoring this issue of the magazine and have contributed to the article on 7 Mill Street which was their office until its reversion to a private house. Lanyon Bowdler are now based at the Eco Park. Don't forget that we are always on the

look-out for interesting subjects to feature in *Heritage News*. We hope to be able to place back issues on the website.

While mentioning the website, we are finally getting to the stage of launching the updated website which we hope will give you more

information about the Civic Society activities. Such important features as the well-known Ludlow Blue Plaques will be fully illustrated and detailed on the website. Committee member Mary Hayter, who sadly died in June of this year, was very keen that the Blue Plaques should be used to get younger generations involved in the buildings and history of Ludlow.

Much has been seen in the press recently about the government's drive to build more houses nationally. This has led to arbitrary and largely fictitious notions for

'demand lead' and 'community aspirations' housing in rural towns such as Ludlow. From an existing and well-housed 9,900 inhabitants, apparently Ludlow needs 750 new homes – although what all our new neighbours will be doing here is not covered at all in the initial reports. The initiative is called SamDev and the Civic Society continues to attempt to make sense of the document, which is likely to form the housing policy for all Shropshire areas for the next 13 years.

Dan Lloyd

TALKS AND EVENTS

Being responsible for finding speakers and subjects for Ludlow Civic Society meetings is tremendously rewarding. It satisfies my natural curiosity about the inhabitants of Ludlow and what makes them 'tick'. When I'm chatting to someone in town I find it doesn't take long to tease out of our conversation what their interests are and whether they feel they might like to share these with members of the Civic Society.

When I was involved with NADFAS in Birmingham for 20 years, I soon realised that a really accomplished speaker has the gift of engaging their audience on almost any topic. Even the most seemingly dreary subjects would be covered with enthusiasm, energy and a humour which made for a most enjoyable lecture. We are fortunate to have many people in Ludlow with the same gifts.

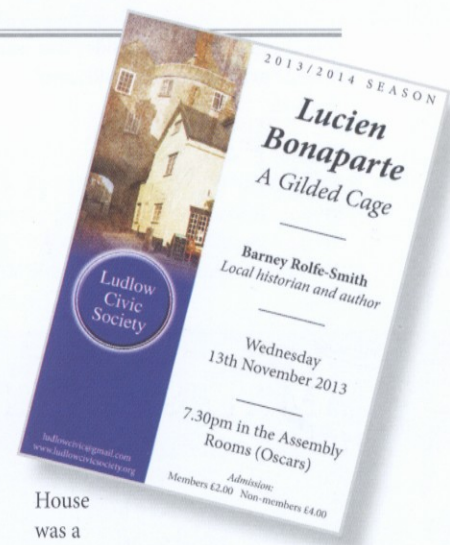
This all leads me to welcoming you to our new season of illustrated talks, some of which are obviously

going to delight and some of which may appear, at first glance, to be a strange choice on my part. But whatever the subject, there will be something in each lecture to interest and to be enjoyed.

By the time you read this edition of *Heritage News*, you will already have had the opportunity of hearing Helen McCabe give her beautifully illustrated talk on the Chateaux and gardens of Normandy. I heard Helen giving this presentation to Birmingham Decorative and Fine Arts Society last year, and she told

me that she had never been to Ludlow and would love to come and what the fuss is about! Simon Buteaux's exposé of the rather dark business of funeral furnishings over the last hundred years in the Jewellery Quarter of Birmingham was enthralling as will be Barney Rolfe-Smith's meticulously researched history of the time Lucien Bonaparte spent in Ludlow in the 19th century. Consult your lecture programme to make sure you don't miss something of particular personal interest!

Only 20 members of the Civic Society will be able to join a group invited to visit Brampton Bryan in March next year, so make sure you don't miss the opportunity of registering your interest at the November meeting. Incidentally, our visit last March to the Birmingham Gun Barrel Proof



House was a tremendous success which could be repeated should any members be interested.

Do, please, feel free to suggest either topics or speakers for next season. It gives me an excuse for a chat!

Penny Wake

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Michael Chinery's article 'The Death Watch Beetle' made a timely appearance in the Summer edition of Heritage News.

Had it not been for this little perisher, we should all have missed a great deal of pleasure. There would have been NO Ludlow Festival Society, and, perforce, NO successor such as that which gave us this year's programme.

In the 1950s Ludlow's Parish Church was so badly ravaged by the beetle that urgent fund-raising projects included the staging of plays inside the Church and Castle. Productions such as 'Everyman' with Sebastian Shaw and 'Murder in the Cathedral' with John Westbrook were so well received that men of imagination – most notably, the late Arthur Reynolds – decided that the theatrical productions in Ludlow should become an annual fixture. The rest, as they say, is history.

In these days of constant fund-raising it may well be useful to produce a brooch, stick-pin or a 'something' bearing a beetle design and to sell it (with appropriate note of explanation) alongside other wares.

A salute to *Xestobium rufovillosum*!

Yours etc.

David Edwards

Responses to articles are always welcome.

Please address your letters to:

The Editor, Heritage News, 5 Castle Street, Ludlow SY8 1AS

MEMBERSHIP

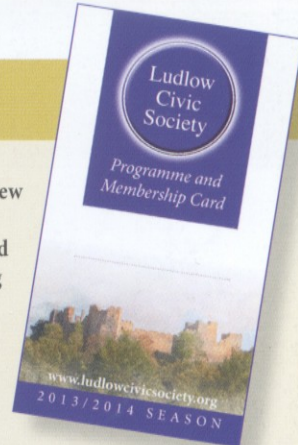
The Committee has welcomed many new members to the Society over the past year. It is hoped that new members and existing members will consider paying their annual subscription by standing order in future years as it greatly reduces administration time and cost. Those members who would like to change to payment by standing order should make contact as detailed below.

Members will have received the new programme with its colourful design and modern appearance.

The fee payable for admission to the monthly meeting has risen slightly to £4 for non-members and £2 for members. These fees go some way to covering the costs of the evening. The Committee feels that this still provides good value for the talks given by excellent speakers. The membership fee has remained unchanged this year.

I would again like to thank those members who have made donations to the Society which are greatly appreciated. I shall take the opportunity of writing our thanks to each individually in due course.

Jane Hunt



Ludlow Civic Society 2013-2014 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

President: Sir Keith Thomas

Vice-Presidents: Dr Martin Speight, Philip Dunne M.P.

Chairman: Dan Lloyd

Hon. Secretary: Valerie Thomas

Hon. Treasurer: Richard Mangnall

Committee Members: Gerald Acton, Bill Eastwell, Jane Hunt, John Nash, Stanton Stephens, Hanny Varley, Penny Wake

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To: The Membership Secretary, Ludlow Civic Society,
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