

Ludlow Heritage



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N E W S

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TO MARKET, TO MARKET – IN LUDLOW

*Julia Ionides and
Peter Howell*

Peter Howell and I are long-term Ludlow residents and strong supporters of local food, whether in shops, market or the Food and Drink Festival. We are fortunate to live in such a beautiful historic town, and so, when we visited Venice, we wanted to compare Ludlow and its markets with similar towns in Italy.

But first we need to take a step backwards. When we first came to Ludlow, farmers' and local produce markets were rare, although WI markets were held regularly. In 1997 I had a Churchill Fellowship to the USA; one of the other people awarded a fellowship that year also went to America to look at farmers' markets. Although there were many farmers' markets in the US then, not all conformed to what we expect a farmers' market to be today. The vendors in these huge outlets sold a wide range of goods much of which they had not produced. However, on our travels round the US we found some real farmers' markets selling delicious food: real cheese in New York made by Mennonites; an upmarket one in New York State selling delicacies such as smoked duck; and, best of all, in Eugene,

Oregon, were the apples straight off the trees. Eugene is known as the 'last outpost of the hippies', and there they were, grey-haired, long-bearded, straw-hatted, selling good honest food, which was such a contrast with the supermarkets. And we only found them because our train was four hours late, but that's another story.

At that time farmers' markets were just beginning in the UK. Although direct selling from farms had been around for centuries, true farmers' markets that allow local producers to sell only their own produce, had only recently started up. The first started in Heathfield in Sussex in 1997, closely followed by Bristol, Holmfirth, Lewes and Lostwithiel in the next year. By the start of 2000 there were over 200 farmers' markets up and running,

spread right across Britain.

Ludlow's Local Produce Market (Cover photo), started in 2000, is held twice monthly and sells a wide range of everyday and specialist food and drink produced within thirty miles of Ludlow. It is run by the Ludlow 21 Food and Farming Group on a non-profit-making basis. The group's primary aim is to support the growth of sustainable local food production, by enabling local producers to sell directly to consumers, thereby cutting down on 'food miles', unnecessary packaging and other environmental costs of modern food retailing.

Both the Local Produce Market on Thursday and the regular market on four days of the week are carrying on the long tradition of markets in Ludlow. It is thought that a market has taken place here for over 900 years and it grew up as Ludlow Castle gained importance in the area. By 1200 the town had reached the extent of its medieval plan and it became an important centre for cloth-making and trading. No early charters survive,

but by about 1269 markets and fairs were operated by a Community of Burgesses. A charter of 1461 records the grant of 'one market in the town or borough...'

With this fine tradition of markets in Ludlow and in the country generally, we took a look at the situation in the Veneto in Italy. When we were in Venice in the winter of 2011 we read in Metro about a farmers' market being held there. Our Italian friends knew nothing about it, so eventually we found it at Tre Ponti, tucked into a corner off Piazzale Roma near the buses and coaches. The locals were loading up their shopping trolleys with the wonderful vegetables on offer, but as our stay in Venice was nearly at an end we bought only salami and wine at very reasonable prices.

When we returned to Venice in 2012, again in the winter, the market had moved to a less accessible place. Had the main markets complained about it? Did the producers want more space? Venice is still a place of plotting and intrigue, just as it



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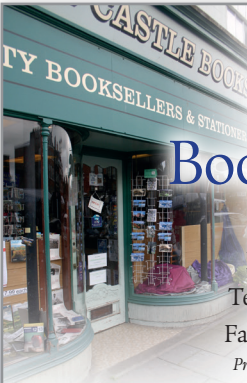
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always has been, and much is not straightforward. (Fig. 2)

That year we decided to visit other farmers' markets in the Veneto, all accessible by bus or train. Information about them was not easy to find: our Rough Guide was not up to date enough to include what were then quite new ventures. The Tourist Offices thought we were a bit strange wanting to visit farmers' markets when there were so many other wonderful sights on offer. But we were there for a month and could afford to take our time and be persistent with the Tourist Offices and surf the internet on our visits to Macdonalds for its free internet which our flat did not have.

Venice's farmers' market was held every week, and we took full advantage of it, not only for its wonderful produce, but for the novelty of bringing back our

purchases on the canal on the Vaporetto. For the other markets we had to work out which days they were held. Padua (Fig. 3) was on a Friday in the Piazza di Gaspar, which did not appear on any map. The bus from Venice took us along the Brenta Canal, past some of the Palladian villas beside it. As we walked from the bus station towards the Piazza de L'herbe and its amazing daily market, we fortuitously passed a group of stalls in a side street which turned out to be Piazza di Gaspar. Here we bought cheese, sausages and mushrooms directly from the producers.

We had been to the main Treviso market in 2011 and were amazed at the size of it, strung out along the old walls. A farmers' market takes place twice a week in the centre of the town and we revisited it.

Next on our list was Udine, a two-hour train ride north from Venice. This was well worth the journey as the town is old and attractive with some splendid buildings, including the Archbishop's Palace with its many paintings by Tiepolo. We eventually found the market where we bought, of course, cheeses and sausages. The pleasure of these markets was trying and buying cheese from different areas that all had their own character. We also bought organic polenta, which was well worth the thirty minutes cooking and stirring time. We asked in the market where they recommended for lunch and were directed to an Osteria which was very busy. After the excellent but simple meal, I queued for the ladies and a woman behind me asked what I was doing



in Udine. As it is not on the tourist trail it was obviously unusual to see British visitors. Peter's great joy was seeing a Classic Berkel bacon slicer in a shop window for sale for 3,000 euros; he has a similar one at home!

Our final market was Mestre, (Fig.4) the commercial and industrial part of the Venetian lagoon. Here there was an enormous market spread over several streets with a wide range of imported fruit and vegetables to cater for the many immigrants there. By contrast, tucked away was the Mercato del Contadini, the Farmers' Market, with a wide range of cheese, sausages and vegetables. This was a very popular market despite its larger and cheaper neighbour, which indicated that the locals knew that the produce was of a very high quality. We had to queue up at each stall.

Our impression overall was that these Mercati del Contadini were a successful addition to the regular markets in the towns that we visited. By making a point of visiting them we not only bought interesting regional food but saw parts of towns and cities that we

would not have seen otherwise.

Word is spreading. On a recent visit to London we came across a farmers' market in the open space by Guy's Hospital. It started in September and had an interesting range of quality produce. Workers from the nearby offices were making good use of it for their lunches, and we sat in the January sun eating sausages and mash and vegetable soup.

But we also found that the Ludlow Local Produce Market (Fig. 5) sold food and drink of a comparable range and quality to anything we saw in Italy, and we should be very proud of it.



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FOUNTAINS

Fig.3 Perseus and Andromeda Fountain
Witley Court worcestershire.



It is some time since we have included an article in our series on aspects of buildings in and around Ludlow. In previous issues we have covered gazebos, dovecotes and stables; we shall now look at fountains. Although Ludlow itself does not have many, there are some fine examples within a forty-mile radius of the town which are of national if not international importance, and are certainly worth a visit. Nevertheless, many gardens in Ludlow contain an impressive variety of fountains, or, as they are now more commonly called, 'water features', some of which can be seen during the annual Secret Gardens Sunday, organized by the Friends of Ludlow Assembly Rooms. The next event will take place on 15th June.

The word 'fountain' derives from the Latin fons meaning a water source or spring. The word nowadays usually refers to an architectural or mechanical device which either pours water into a basin or jets it into the air, either to supply water for drinking or for a decorative effect. Although the Assyrians and Egyptians used decorative basins to collect water, it was the Ancient Greeks who

first developed aqueducts and gravity-powered fountains. In the sixth century BC the Athenian ruler Peisistratos built the Ennakrounos fountain in the agora which had nine spouts to supply drinking water for the local population. The Romans improved the technology of the Greeks by building an extensive network of aqueducts and fountains throughout their empire. They also established the aesthetics of

fountain design, as at Hadrian's Villa near Tivoli which featured large decorative pools with jets of water.

In the Middle Ages Roman fountains and aqueducts fell into disuse, but fountains existed extensively in medieval art and literature as in the illuminated manuscripts such as the 'Tres Riches Heures' of the Duc du Berry, 1411-1416. Fountains were also found in religious buildings including

cloisters, which were supposed to represent a Garden of Eden. The most innovative fountains of this era can be found in the Islamic world. The Arabs developed so-called 'Paradise' gardens in which water features were an integral part of the design. With the spread of Islam these gardens appeared all over the known world, their greatest manifestation being the Islamic gardens of medieval Spain.

The Renaissance period saw the rebirth of an interest in the classical world. In Rome, the old aqueducts were restored and new ones were built. Pope Nicholas V oversaw the construction of new aqueducts to bring water to the expanding city. Under this pope, the Roman tradition of creating decorative 'mostra' or mouthpieces



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Fig.1 Water conduit Church Street Ludlow.

was revived as in Leon Battista Alberti's original design for the Trevi fountain. By the middle of the Renaissance fountain design and construction had become a form of theatre, if not propaganda, as with the Medici family in Florence. With the arrival of Catherine de Medici in France, the ideas and designs of the Italian Renaissance began to spread over the whole of the European continent. The French took fountain design to new heights in the fountains designed for the gardens in Versailles. The fashion even spread as far as Russia, with many fountains forming centrepieces of Peter the Great's 'window on the west', St. Petersburg.

With the population explosions of the 19th century and the overcrowding of major cities, the issue of clean drinking water came to the fore once again. This resulted in a vogue for public drinking fountains in London, Paris and other cities. The 19th century also

saw the introduction of new materials including cast iron, and many fountains were produced in Shropshire at the Coalbrookdale iron works. They were exported all over the world, for instance the Peacock the Fountain in Christchurch, New Zealand. New technologies were also introduced, including steam pumps which, in the end, led to the decline of fountains as a source of drinking water, as

it was now possible to pump water directly into people's homes, and saw the rise of fountains as purely a form of art and urban decoration.

Here is an introduction to some of the fountains found in the local area and beyond. If you know of any others with interesting stories, please let us know. Photographs are always welcome.

We know of two ancient water conduits in Ludlow itself. There may have been others. Do let us know if you have further information. One was located in the Tolsey in the Bull Ring, and was said to run with water from St. Julian's well. This is no longer in existence. The second can still be seen, and is now located midway along Church Street (Fig. 1). This was constructed as part of the Sir Henry Sidney's improvements to the town in the sixteenth century. It was originally lead lined and brought water to the town from a reservoir on Whitcliffe. The two decorative

heads are not original but were put there in the 1950s by a well-known local antiques dealer!

One of the most interesting fountains in the town was located in the inner bailey of the castle and represents another of the improvements that Sir Henry Sidney brought to the town. Elisabeth 1 had appointed Henry Sidney as President of the Marches in Ludlow Castle in 1560. Sir Henry extended the castle by building new lodgings and the modernisation of the inner bailey. It even included the introduction of running water and a lead fountain was placed in front of the Norman Chapel, the remains of which were located by an excavation in 1903-4.

Ludlow's most famous fountain is the drinking fountain located outside the Castle entrance (Fig.2). This was erected in 1908 by Mayor George Woodhouse. It is a 'Hygienic Fountain' made out of cast iron, fabricated by Glenfield and Kennedy Ltd. In Kilmarnock. It is decorated with four lion head panels and is surmounted by two dolphins entwined

around a trident. It is now very much in need of repair. One of the most familiar fountains to cinema-goers of recent times can be found near Ludlow. It is at Stokesay Court and was featured in a scene in the 2007 film 'Atonement'.

Perhaps the most famous fountains in our area are found at Witley Court in Worcestershire (Fig.3). The house had been acquired by the Dudley family in 1837, and was remodelled in the Italian style by Samuel Whitfield Dawkes. The gardens were designed in a formal style by William Andrews Nesfield in the 1850s. In the centre of the gardens are the two large Portland stone fountains. The larger depicts the legend of Perseus and Andromeda, a suitable nautical theme with Britain being at the height of her maritime influence.

The whole fountain was enclosed by a balustrade with shelters containing seats for people to view the fountain. It is a monumental composition situated on a podium of stylised shells.



Fig.2 'Hygienic drinking fountain' Castle Gardens Ludlow.

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The group is some 26 feet high and 18 feet wide with a weight of 20 tons. It is said to be the largest block of sculpture in Europe! The water is pumped by a steam engine from a small reservoir, and forms a jet issuing from the sea monster's mouth which rises some 100 feet in the air. This is combined with other jets and sprays to make a very impressive sight. The other fountain to the east front, known as the Flora or Triton is equally striking. The fountains used to play twice a week when the family were in residence.

As already stated, cast iron fountains were an important part of the Coalbrookdale's commercial output. Such fountains can be found all over Britain and in the former empire and beyond. One of the fountains which brought Coalbrookdale international acclaim was exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, the Boy and the Swan. It was an

elaborate composition with a boy and a swan surmounting a circular upper basin on a round pedestal in the centre of a water-filled basin at ground level. It was cast by the Coalbrookdale company in 1851 to a design by John Bell. After the exhibition it was purchased by the Wolverhampton Corporation and displayed in the Market Hall until 1880, when it was moved to West Park. It was later dismantled and forgotten about until 1959 when it was restored and put on display next to the Derby Furnace in Coalbrookdale. The fountain was restored again in 1994 and repainted its original catalogue colour of 'bronzed' cast iron.

One of the best-known fountains in the West Midlands area is the River Goddess in Victoria Square in Birmingham, known locally as 'the floozie in the jacuzzi' (Fig.4). It was commissioned in 1992 as part of the regeneration of central

Birmingham. It was designed by Dhruva Mistry and is formed of a cascade of water from one basin to another. The fountain was inspired by a quotation from 'Burnt Norton', one of the 'Four Quartets' by T.S.Eliot. The fountain is composed of four sculptures, the central female representing the river, youth in the bottom basin by two figures and two sphinx-like guardians. The fountain won the Fountain of the Year Award in 1995. In 2010 it underwent a £300,000 repair and restoration.

As we have seen in the Ludlow example, many fountains are now in a sorry state. Much restoration has taken place in part thanks to the work of the very active Fountain Society which promotes the restoration of fountains. With its patron Prince Charles, it has a very strong membership and events programme.

Stanton Stephens



Jean Brown

Jean's sudden death in November 2013 was a shock to her many friends and colleagues. She had contributed much to life in Ludlow: she was Honorary Secretary of the committee which resulted in the formation of Ludlow Assembly Rooms; she had been Chairman of Ludlow Historical Research Group, life member of the Civic Society and the author of books ranging from 'Embroidery in Miniature' to the History of Rickards, and co-author of 'Victorian Ludlow'.

She was a regular speaker at local events, with a great knowledge of Victorian Ludlow and the development of non-conformist religion.

A great hobbyist, she was a highly-skilled embroiderer, a specialist in miniature carpets and dolls' houses, and she taught the skills to many others.

She leaves behind Tony, her husband for over fifty years, and two daughters and their families.

We will all miss her organising abilities and willingness to contribute to life in Ludlow.

John Nash



Fig.4 The River Fountain Victoria Square Birmingham.

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As I mentioned at the December forum, Shropshire Council are in the process of dismantling many of their departments, including reductions in Planning and Conservation staff. Ludlow has, in the past, been fortunate to have had considerable help and advice from both Planning and Conservation departments. From now on, such support is no longer freely available.

This situation does present an opportunity for local groups to become more involved in the planning and conservation processes.

There is a national move by Civic Voice (an association which represents many Civic Societies) to ensure that 'localism' is properly applied and structured. They quote such examples as the reduction in the number of banks in rural

towns leading to change-of-use applications, perhaps to a betting shop or restaurant, with all the external signage and differing opinions as to their suitability. Community views on such matters will need to be structured and properly communicated. Ludlow is fortunate to have a Conservation Area advisory committee (LCAAC) which represents various local interested parties. The LCAAC and the Civic Society need to become more directly involved in planning

issues, particularly as we are in a sensitive conservation area.

This does not mean that we should say 'no' to all planning applications. Rather, we need to be constructive and helpful to individuals and builders wishing to alter existing properties or build new houses in the Ludlow area. Exactly how this will work is a matter for the civic Society to consider and to make recommendations.

Dan Lloyd

2013/2014 SEASON

The Great and the Good of Tudor Ludlow

Who they were and where they lived

Jonathan Wood
Writer and Member of Ludlow Historical Research Group

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7.30pm in the Assembly Rooms (Oscars)

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2013/2014 SEASON

Picturing the West

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Dr Matt Thompson
Senior Curator of the Ironbridge Gorge Trust

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TALKS AND EVENTS

The citizens of Ludlow are still a hardy lot and are to be thanked and praised for trudging through the sodden streets of our town this Autumn and Winter to attend the monthly meetings and listen to the programme of talks. The worse the weather, the larger the audience it has often seemed.

We can only hope and expect that the talks next season will be as well attended. The programme is almost complete and I have found a theme emerging. From the millennium of Magna Carta to the

hundredth anniversary of the First World War (and how it affected Ludlow) it seems that 2014/15 is a year of significant anniversaries – if you have a suggestion to make while there is still time, let me know!

In contrast, I have slipped into the programme an opportunity for those who have inherited jewellery, to bring it along for valuation by a Sotheby's expert and advice on its possible redesign. Wrist watches will be covered in the same way later in the season.

So I hope there will be something to interest everyone and, if necessary, to pull your mackintosh and wellies on for!

Penny Wake

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I read with great interest the article headed 'Ludlow's German Trophy Cannon' by Roger Bartlett and Roy Payne in the Summer 2013 edition of Ludlow Heritage News. As a child living in Ludlow during the Second World War, I can remember seeing the captured German field gun in Castle Gardens, Dinham, and indeed, like the children in the photograph, playing on and around it, pretending to be gallant British soldiers!

The writers also refer to a captured German machine gun, together with an ammunition box and belt, and go on to say, 'these items do not appear in any Council minutes, and it is unclear whether [the items] ever reached the town.' Perhaps I can shed a little light on this mystery. At some point during the war I visited the old Ludlow Museum, then situated in Mill Street adjoining the rear of the 'old' Picture House cinema (now the Assembly Rooms). I was accompanied by my dear lifelong friend Bill Watkins (who died in tragic circumstances in 2007) and his father, the late Vic Watkins, the popular proprietor of the Ludlow Motor Company garage in Corve Street. IB.Davies definitely recall seeing a German World War I machine gun as an exhibit in the museum during this visit.

It seems reasonable to assume that this was the self-same machine gun, and what became of it subsequently perhaps one or other of your older members could establish with reasonable certainty. Probably it was taken for scrap, but as a museum exhibit one might have expected that it should have been protected from being confiscated for such a purpose, even at the height of the war.

Yours faithfully,

G.B.Davies, 23 Pear Tree Avenue, Upper Poppleton, York YO26 6HH

Responses to articles are always welcome. Please address your letters to:

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MEMBERSHIP

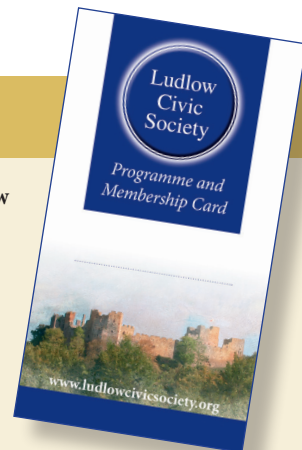
The Committee have welcomed many new members since 2013, and many lapsed members have rejoined. Members have diligently returned their Gift Aid Declarations which of course produce considerable financial benefit for both the Society and its members. All new members are encouraged to complete the Declarations which they receive on joining.

The Committee thank members who have made donations, and in due course I expect to have written to you all personally.

As mentioned in the previous issue of Heritage News, we encourage payment of the subscription by standing order as this cuts down on administration, and our appreciation goes out to those who do so already.

In the usual way members will receive a letter in August inviting renewal of their subscription. Some members, however, choose to renew part way through the membership year, for example in January. These late-comers will have received a flyer in August detailing the evening talks and be aware from posters in the town of up-coming talks, thus having full awareness of the talks, albeit as non-members.

Jane Hunt



Ludlow Civic Society 2013-2014 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

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