

Ludlow Heritage News

No. 12 September 1989

Published twice a year by Ludlow Civic Society



River Teme from the Bread Walk

This year, as a contribution to the nationally organised Environment Week, the Society made a donation to the work of the Whitcliffe Commoners. The Commoners can only carry out maintenance work to the limit of the funds they have available.

Representatives from the Plymouth Estates and Mr R. J. Rogers, District Forester, Private Woodlands Section of the Forestry Commission, (who spoke to the Society last year on Conservation and Management of Trees) have assisted in the working out of a management plan to which they have been working. Permission was received from the Plymouth Estate and the Committee has now received felling licenses. Trees which need to be felled either because they are unsafe, or to enable better specimens to develop their full potential, have been marked, and it is hoped clearing will begin in the autumn.

Some valuable assistance has been received recently from F. W. McConnel, grass has been cut on the top of the hill at no cost to the Commoners. However, payment had to be made for scything of grass encroaching on to the Bread Walk. We understand that the Commoners have received a complaint about this work, the removal of nettles being injurious to the butterfly population. Prior to the clearing of this path – confined to the verges only – it was very dangerous for small children to walk – their eyes were in danger from overhanging grasses, brambles and nettles – perhaps butterflies are more important, we don't think so.

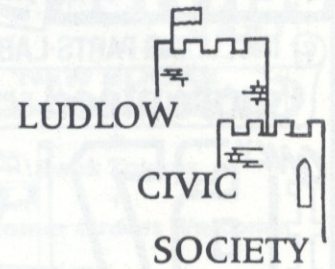
With further concern for members of the public, three 'Danger' notices are to be erected near the edge of the cliff between the top of the Ludford end of the Bread Walk, and the dingle.

Members of the general public who would like to become Friends of Whitcliffe, and so make a practical contribution to the work of the Commoners, should get in touch with the Treasurer, Mr R. Poyner, 8 Broad Street, Ludlow.

Members of the Society are rightly concerned about sporting facilities in Ludlow. Twenty members exercised their right to require the Society to circularise all its 400 members in order to call an Extraordinary General Meeting (the second in its history).

Fourteen of the signatories actually attended along with 43 other members, and a lively debate was enjoyed after presentation of the case for the proposal by the College Principal Mr R. S. Burns, and for the opposition, by Mr Stephen Dornan. Subject to reservations with regard to the unbroken roofline, suitability of materials, and tree planting, the meeting voted 30 in favour of the proposal and 22 against (5 abstentions) thereby endorsing the committee's earlier unopposed decision to support the proposal.

One of the main arguments against the siting of the hall in Lower Mill Street was that the site is in 'full view of Whitcliffe'. Members who have walked Whitcliffe recently will know that the classic view of the town from the Bowling Green, is unaffected by the proposal, the site is not visible from that point. Those



who have anxiously viewed the site from the footpath above Ludford, (and have worn a bare patch in the earth from so doing) realise it is only visible from the edge of the cliff through a dense screen of trees.

There is also a surprising number of long pitched roofed buildings lying along the hillside contours of the town, and the new building is to adopt precisely the same characteristics. Being so near the lowest contours the eye will be easily carried over it when viewing the structure of the town rising beyond it.

The young people of the area – some travel nearly 20 miles to Ludlow daily to continue their education – need improved sporting facilities. The Education Act requires that provision is made for sporting activities for all students at the College. The proposed hall is not 'instead of the complex at Ludlow School, it is not in 'competition with' the Community Association – a hall at High Hall was only considered to assist community facilities in the town – it is no longer required as the Community Association is flourishing. The summer of 1989 has been unusual, students have been able to take advantage, and pursue outdoor sporting activities, where are they to carry out these activities from September to March, and during the summer in a normal year?

As anticipated, (the District Council being minded to approve the planning application) the Secretary of State for the Environment has 'called in' the application and we all await his decision with interest.

We would like to congratulate John and Anne Clegg on the improvements carried out to their premises, it is also good to see the bracket of the old Golden Lion Inn sign restored to its rightful place. Further down Old Street, there have been other improvements. In our September 1987 issue, various Ludlow properties were highlighted as being in need of repairs. Of those singled out, the houses on the corner of Brand Lane and Old Street have since been sold, Listed Grade II as being of importance to the street scene, and restored to become houses

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which are a credit to both the developers and the new owners. One property on this corner is still awaiting restoration, however, as all these properties were subject to closure orders before restoration, this work has been of particular value in that it has restored town centre houses and is thereby helping to keep the street alive.

Lower Broad Street and Mill Street have not fared so well. Three Lower Broad Street properties have however, been very well restored to form one substantial house, and although the three were sub-standard, their conversion into two would have been preferable. Our members are naturally concerned that other properties, in particular the former Barley Mow, are still standing empty. We understand the District Council is keeping a watchful eye, while some repairs have been carried out, much more needs to be done to bring them up to standard.



12 Old Street as it appears now and below, before restoration.

Another problem raised two years ago is still with us, the closed footpath at Ludford is still closed. The Society has recently made further representations to the new Leisure Services Officer for the County, Dr Michael Blanch, in the hope that the matter will soon be resolved.

A more recent problem over footpaths has arisen over the Castle Walks. The Society was recently alerted over plans to close the Castle Walk, during the hours of darkness, from the archway near to the top of Dinham, the southern end of the Castle gardens, and the archway adjacent to St Peter's Chapel, from which one has such a marvellous view of Whitcliffe. We sympathise with the Powis Estate and English Heritage as we understand there have been problems with regard to theft and vandalism within the castle at night, however, we hope that this drastic action will not be necessary.

In addition to the major works which have been carried out over the last few years we understand that it is hoped to develop the castle further as a tourist attraction with plans for a castle museum (to cover the role of the castle as one of the border strongholds) and 'improved' signs to assist the visitor to discover the relationship and use of the various apartments. We shall be watching these proposals with interest.

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Restored houses on the corner of Brand Lane and Old Street



Ludlow from Whitcliffe

With reference to the 'development' of the castle, members generally like to let their imagination have full reign when considering this ruin. We are pleased to publish a poem in which one of our readers did just that –

The Ludlow Civic Society was formed in 1954 with the declared object of protecting the unique character of Ludlow.

Membership is open to all who are in sympathy with the aims of the Society, and is in no way confined to Ludlovians; indeed it has members world-wide, as well as nation-wide. The membership year begins on 1 April of each year.

Annual membership £5 per person per year

The Society has an active life. Its Committee keeps a watchful eye on local developments, and there are frequent meetings as a whole. A programme of lectures of interest to members takes place during the winter, and there are excursions and other events in the summer months.

LUDLOW CASTLE

*The sun now sinks in spreading gold,
As the town settles down below its blanket,
Swifts race through the tangled sky-line;
One dog's bark alerts its neighbours.*

*Above the river the sentinel sits
Quietly brooding the hills of Wales,
Up hollow towers jackdaws chatter
Safe to wild abandoned rooms.*

*Can you see the brazier burning?
The glinting helmets above the walls?
The pennants' snaking shadows gliding?
In fire filled windows to ancient songs?*

*Laughter echoes across the valley,
From forbidden chambers where rumours spread;
Water clatters from high latrines,
Long washing flaps like flags of nations.*

*But it's cold now staring at this sleeping Titan,
Dark on a rock from another age,
The quiet streets call with their modern lighting,
Small tidy houses with central heating.*

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Louisa Powell Alms Houses Photograph by Howard Cheese

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For centuries the spirit of charity has found expression in the founding of almshouses for the sick and poor.

Ludlow has four such foundations endowed between 1486 and 1939 and still performing their function.

The almshouses of John Hosier and of Charles Foxe are well known, but the almshouses of Louisa Powell receive little recognition. In a town whose buildings date from around 1090, small Victorian brick cottages do not attract attention. Corve Street, in which they stand, is a quite dramatic approach to the town; rising gently at first and then very steeply to its junction with the Bull Ring, it is dominated by the proud tower of St Laurence's church. The almshouses are integrated into a streetscape of architectural styles ranging from medieval to the modern. Three of the cottages form a neat terrace on a raised site close to the junction of St Mary's Lane and are fronted with iron railings which give them the appearance of unity. Two more cottages stand well to the rear and close to the railway line. All are well maintained by their trustees, the Dr Lang Trust. A recessed stone tablet, dated 1878, shows the Coat of Arms of Charles Powell but without its colours. These are included in the following description:

* The shield is helmeted and mantled and crested with a Talbot dog sable, langued gules, collar or, holding a boars head or, langued gules. The first and fourth quarters gules, a lion rampant regardant or. Second and third quarters argent, three boars heads coupé sable, langued gules. The widow's arms are superimposed in the shape of a lozenge, three lions passant guardant in pale. The inscription below reads 'Erected by Louisa, widow of Charles Powell of Sutton Court'.

On 18th December 1876, Louisa Powell purchased for £500 a plot of land of

approximately half an acre stretching from Corve Street on the west to the railway on the east. It had been known previously as 'The Bank Close' and had been burgaged early in the town's development. A deed of conveyance of the 12th May 1876 describes freehold hereditaments in Corve Street comprising a plot of land with stables at front, a yard, wainhouse and warehouse or drying house behind and garden to the railway.

Provision was made for the existing buildings to be removed and five almshouses created and established in the trusteeship of the vicar, churchwardens, and overseers of



Diddlebury. The tenants, to be elected by the trustees, were to be 'poor persons being agricultural labourers'. The following classes were eligible, married couples living in Diddlebury, the husband to be, or have been working as an agricultural labourer, or the widow of the same; a widower or bachelor agricultural labourer or a spinster who had worked as a domestic indoor farm servant.

In the case of no suitable applicants existing in Diddlebury then persons of Stanton Lacy Parish would be considered. The cottages were intended to be held free of rent, but the trustees were empowered to impose a rent of not more than 6d a week should it become necessary.

Louisa was born in 1802, the daughter of Mary and Captain William Coombe RN ('who fell gloriously in the service of his country on the 29th November 1808').

On the 4th April 1843 at the Church of Stoke St Milborough, Louisa Coombe, spinster of Bockleton Court, married Charles Powell, bachelor of Sutton. His profession was described as 'esquire, Justice of the Peace'. The marriage was without issue. At the time of their marriage Louisa was almost forty one and Charles more than twenty years her senior. It appears to have been a union of two mature people sharing the ideals of kindness and charity.

In her will, Louisa Powell made generous bequests to several charities and to her servants. The servants' portions being increased from time to time by codicils to the will. Her barouche, gig and one other vehicle, she left to a manservant. A sum of money was used to maintain the painted commemorative window to her mother in Diddlebury church. The residue of her personal estate and effects

In Charles Powell, Louisa had a husband of excellent reputation who was held in high esteem for his qualities of character. He was 'Justice of the Peace, and Deputy Lieutenant of the County for upwards of fifty years.'

To commemorate his long service as a magistrate, a dinner was held at the Feathers Hotel on the 13th December 1855 when a gift (by public subscription) was presented to him. This was a service of silver plate by Mr Hancock of Burton Road, London and cost approximately £180. The company was distinguished and composed of county gentry and professional and business men. Long were the speeches and many the compliments. The Rev. D. Bowles quoted freely –

*'Howe'er it be it seems to me
'Tis only noble to be good;
Kind hearts are more than coronets
And simple faith than Norman blood'.*

and referring to his judgement of every man –

*'Be it to their faults a little blind
And to their virtues very kind'.*

The manor of Little Sutton had been held by the Powell family for several hundred years and monuments to them can be seen in the parish church of Diddlebury. Charles Powell's handsome monument is in the north east corner of the chancel. A wall tablet pays tribute to Louisa's gift of a clock for the church tower.

Charles died on 2nd November 1868, 'A man without an enemy, as just as he was generous'. He was in his 88th year. Louisa survived him for almost thirty years, dying in her 96th year on 16th April 1898. They are buried in the family vault, together with Louisa's mother, Mary Coombe. The vault stands close by the porch door in Diddlebury churchyard.

The passage of time will bring distinction and interest to the Louisa Powell Almshouses and Louisa herself will be seen as a worthy successor to John Hosier and Charles Foxe by her gift of charity.

Dorothy Arrowsmith

Acknowledgements to Joan Ryder and Stephen Dornan

* Heraldic Colours: Gules – red
Sable – black
Or – gold
Argent – silver

Langued – tongued
Dexter – right hand side
Passant – walking towards right hand side
Regardant – looking backwards
Rampant – standing in profile on left hind-leg
Pale – a verticle band

We hope you have enjoyed this edition of the newsletter – made possible by the generosity of those who have advertised on these pages. We hope you will support them as they have supported us.

Antique Corner

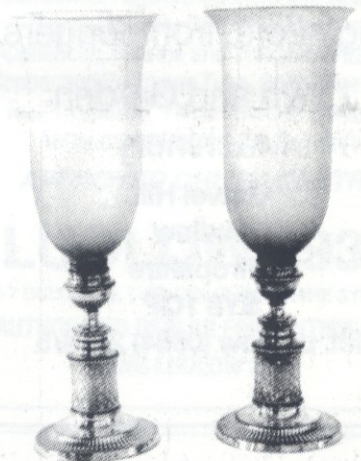
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Ludlow Civic Society Winter Programme 1989 - 1990

All meetings held at High Hall, Castle Square, Ludlow commencing at 7.30 pm

Admission free to members, Visitors welcome on payment of £1 per visitor.

Wednesday 13th September 1989

Michael Holmes
Heraldry, The Colour of History

Michael Holmes, whom some members met on their visit to Shrewsbury Abbey, is a retired teacher of Art, History, and Classics. He is a member of the Heraldry Society and is at present much involved in the Shrewsbury Abbey Restoration Appeal.

Wednesday 18th October 1989

Adrian Barlow MA FRSA
The Stained Glass of Charles Eamer Kempe

Adrian Barlow is Head of English at Monmouth School, a reviewer for the Times Educational Supplement, writer, and lecturer on a wide range of subjects. This will be his third visit to speak to the Society, on previous occasions he has spoken on the work of the Victorian architect G. F. Bodley, and in complete contrast, Punting.

Wednesday 15th November 1989

Dr P. J. Larkham
Aspects of the Work of Civic Societies

Dr Larkham's most interesting and entertaining paper on Local Amenity Societies contains many quotations, some of the most memorable being with regard to criticisms of membership of these Societies - we quote: - 'The ever present ancient establishment, the landed aristocracy, the products of Oxford and Cambridge, the landowners, the officer class, and, behind them, their hangers-on: the trendy academics with less pretensions to gentility who prove their club-worthiness by espousing these elitist views.'

New Statesman - 1973

a section of the middle class ... 'whose interests and values diverge markedly from other groups in industrial societies ... whose class position in the non-productive sector locates them at the periphery of the institutions and processes of industrial capitalist societies. Hence their concern to win greater participation and influence ... protest against alienation from the process of decision making.'

Cotgrove and Duff - Environmentalism, Middle Class Radicalism and Politics, Sociological Review Vol 28 No. 2 1980

'In the second half of the twentieth century, what seems to be happening is that the middle class is adding to its traditional concern for others a lively concern for its own welfare ... It is developing organisations that are designed both to provide some kind of service and to appraise critically what the ordinary consumer gets ...'

D. Eversley - Conservation for the Minority? The Built Environment Vol 13 No. 1

Are we really like that? Dr Larkham's talk on 'Aspects of the Work of Civic Societies should prove very entertaining.

No stranger to Ludlow, this is Peter Larkham's second visit to the Society. Awarded a PhD in Conservation and planning in the West Midlands (Birmingham 1986), on his previous visit he spoke on that subject, with special reference to Historic Towns. He is a Research Fellow in the School of Geography at the University of Birmingham, funded by a British Academy Fellowship to work on historical town centres, work on Ludlow town centre is currently being written up. His main hobby is the care and maintenance of an AGED Morris Minor.

Wednesday 6th December 1989

The Fred Reeves Memorial Lecture
Dr Peter Toghill
Recent Advances in the Understanding of Shropshire's Geology.

This year the Fred Reeves Lecture is a double celebration. As well as being a revered master of Ludlow Grammar School, founder member of the Civic Society and the second Chairman in its history. He was also founder member, and enthusiastic supporter of the Friends of Ludlow Museum. For many years he campaigned for improved premises for the display of the mass of geological and natural history material held in Ludlow.

The celebrated geologist Sir Roderick Murchison first drew the attention of the world to the Ludlow Bone Bed when he published his book - The Silurian System - just 150 years ago. Geological experts from around the world have visited Ludlow to mark this event.

We, somewhat belatedly in this Museums Year, have invited a speaker to bring us up to date in our understanding of Shropshire's Geology.

Peter Toghill is well known in Shropshire as the organiser of the Birmingham University Adult Courses within the County and his own courses on all aspects of Geology. He read Geology at Birmingham University and was awarded his Doctorate in 1965. Before coming to Shropshire, where he has lived since 1971, Peter Toghill worked for the British Geological Survey and the Natural History Museum in London. He is a Fellow of the Geological Society of London a founder member of the Shropshire Geological Society, and is now its Vice-President.

Wednesday 10th January 1990

Dr Richard Morriss
History Behind the Facade

Richard Morriss is the Assistant Director of Hereford City Archeology Unit, and the writer of the enlightening article in the April '89 issue

of Heritage News – Behind the Facade – Numbers 3/4 Broad Street (Valentines). He is also the author of Rail Centres at Shrewsbury – a short history of the Shropshire Railways. A man of very wide interests.

Wednesday 14th February 1990

J. N. Myers BSc CEng MIChemE
Water Services in Ludlow

District Manager for the East Shropshire District of the Severn Trent Water Authority, he has been in his current post since April 1989. Mr Myers entered the water industry direct from Manchester University in 1971, initially in new works engineering design, and more recently in water supply operations.

Wednesday 14th March 1990

Charles Hopkinson

The Knights of St John and the Knights of the Temple

Charles Hopkinson, a Herefordshire farmer, member of Bromyard Local History Group and founder member of the Friends of Hereford Record Office is paying his second visit to the Society. Previously speaking on the Herefordshire Militia, a subject on which he has published a most interesting book, this time he will be giving members the benefit of his researches into the Knights of St John and the Knights of the Temple. This may well be an opportunity to learn more of the supposedly Templar origins of the round chapel in the castle.

WAR ON WASTE

The Society is pleased to note that SSDC now has a waste paper collection point as well as a bottle bank in Ludlow – the Smithfield car park – this is excellent news. The Friends of St Laurence have for some time been collecting waste paper on a regular basis – Friday mornings at St Mary's Mews – and have raised a considerable amount of money by so doing.

We understand Friends of the Earth recommend one bottle bank per 2,000 inhabitants – which would entail four in Ludlow. Glass can be economically recycled – 30 gallons of furnace fuel is saved for every tonne of waste glass – it is easier to melt waste than to heat up raw materials. The average household is quoted as throwing away one quarter tonne of waste paper each year, in Ludlow there are nearly 4,000 'average' households – thus producing roughly 1,000 tonnes of waste paper. Each tonne of recycled waste paper saves 17 trees – thus Ludlow could 'save' 17,000 trees out of the 90 million used in paper production annually by this country alone.

It is unfortunate that as yet it has not proved economical to recycle plastic waste. Perhaps we should start a campaign not to buy goods

Wednesday 4th April 1990

Nicholas Kingsley

The Celebrated Architect – Mr Anthony Keck

Nicholas Kingsley is regional organiser for the Gloucestershire Georgian Group and has recently been appointed Principal Archivist to the City of Birmingham. He has just completed Volume I of his definitive work on the Country Houses of Gloucestershire (1500–1660) and is working on Volume II (1660–1830). His contributions to Country Life have included articles on the architecture and career of Anthony Keck, one of the more interesting provincial architects of the eighteenth century.

Sunday 9th April 1990

Visit to Cirencester and other places of interest in Gloucestershire. Details available from the Secretary – January 1990.

Cirencester, a Roman foundation, and very wealthy Cotswold wool town, has an active Civic Society with which we shall be liaising in the arrangements for our visit. As well as a tour of the town, there will be an opportunity to visit one of the larger houses in the area.

All photographs in this issue of Heritage News (unless otherwise stated) are by Peter Bartlett

in plastic containers (1.2 billion drinks bottles in one year alone) until there is a major improvement in the design of plastic packaging to enable economic recycling.

It is in everyone's interest to support the 'war on waste'. The bottle bank, which has been on site for several years, is well supported and provides evidence that people are interested in the recycling of waste produce. However, glass containers, even empty ones, and old papers, are heavy. Unless one has use of a car and can take a load at a time, many people must be discouraged from this very worthwhile saving. We hope the SSDC will provide other 'banks' – for bottles, papers and cans (which can also be successfully recycled) in strategic positions near the main housing estates so that more people can play their part in reducing 'waste'. It has been suggested that more, smaller, plastic 'banks' produce less congestion and are more acceptable to the average residential area than the large metal skips into which the bottles 'clang'.

National figures produced by Daily Telegraph/Friends of the Earth.

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The above notice was spotted by one of our readers in Richmond-upon-Thames and we thought it was worth reproducing because we think that most of our members would heartily agree with the sentiments expressed.

We do think that it could be extended to include 'spitters' and 'litter louts', of which we still appear to have a considerable number in our midst.

It is gratifying to note the appearance of more and more new litter bins in the town and the various organisations that have donated these are to be congratulated (we cannot resist emphasising the fact that the Civic Society was the first to donate two of these bins to the town), incidentally, what a pity the brass plaques were not fixed a bit higher – out of dog range.

Of course, provision of litter bins is only half the answer. Your confirmed 'litter lout' will not be deterred from dropping his empty carton, chip paper etc. in the gutter or shop doorway by the fact that he is leaning on a litter bin.

In our opinion, stronger measures are needed. If we are really serious about wishing to clear our streets of litter, including spit and dog excrement it has to be brought home very forcibly to the offenders that their conduct will not be tolerated. In other words there has to be a reasonable certainty that such offenders will firstly be caught in the act, and secondly be suitably punished.

Catching them in the act implies the employment of one or more full time wardens, and penalties need to be sufficiently punitive to make them think twice before repeating the offence.

The wardens would of course, need to be paid so we should all be prepared to contribute via the forthcoming poll tax.

Also, keeping the streets and roads clean is not only a matter of removal of litter. There is a continual deposition of dust etc. from the atmosphere, particularly where there is heavy

traffic, and anyone living near trees knows what a problem leaves can present.

The mechanical devices that are currently used for street cleaning do not impress by their efficiency, mainly because of their inability to manoeuvre round all the obstructions that are usually unavoidably present in our streets these days.

We need men (or women; lets not be discriminating) prepared to do a thorough job, but, like the wardens they would need to be paid and paid adequately.

Do we care sufficiently to pay, or are we content to just pay lip service to the idea of a cleaner town?

Virginia Bottomley of the Department of the Environment is quoted recently as saying 'Litter is one local issue that really vexes people.

'We are fed up with local authorities telling us about their nuclear-free zones – instead of such meaningless claptrap we want them to set up, and effectively monitor, litter-free zones.

'Clean streets should be the most basic local service that people are entitled to expect.

'Filth and debris should not be allowed to disfigure our communities, towns and countryside.'

It was hoped to include in this issue, an article on Ludford House by English Heritage. However, after lengthy discussions with David Heath, Historic Buildings Architect, it has been decided to hold this over until fuller information is available. As yet, recent work on the house has been confined to re-roofing.

In the course of this work it has become apparent that much of the 18th and 19th century stonework, which now contrasts so oddly with the upper half timbered work, was originally covered with haired lime render or limewash at which time there would have been a greater uniformity of appearance.

Very little research has been done on the house in the last forty years and we look forward to being able to publish a detailed article – which we believe will link the development of Ludford with other houses in the area – in the Spring issue of Heritage News.

LUDLOW CIVIC SOCIETY

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Vice Presidents Christopher Gill MP
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Members of the public wishing to join the Society should contact The Secretary, Mrs J. Rhodes, 1 Cliff Villas, Ludford, Ludlow. Telephone Ludlow 2006

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