

# THE LEDBURY LETTER

Number 103    Spring 2017



*Butcher Row House*

Ledbury & District Civic Society

“Looking After Ledbury...”



*Butcher Row House  
Folk Museum*

THE LEDBURY & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY  
Burgage Hall  
Church Lane  
Ledbury  
HEREFORDSHIRE HR8 1DW

### **Objectives of the Society...**

To stimulate public interest; promote high standards of planning and architecture; and secure the preservation, protection and improvement of features of historic, natural and public interest in Ledbury and the surrounding district.

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This newsletter has been produced by members of the Society. Any comments or contributions should be addressed to The Editor at Burgage Hall, to [newsletter@ledburycivicsociety.org](mailto:newsletter@ledburycivicsociety.org)

The Ledbury and District Society Trust Ltd  
Company No: 1340233      Registered Charity No: 507391

## DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY 2016 / 17

President	Joe Hillaby	
Vice President	Veslemøy Lunt	
Chairman	Allen Conway	
Vice Chairman		
Booking Secretary Butcher Row Museum & Archives	Chris Johnson	635 069
Treasurer and Membership Secretary	Graham Every	631 174
Planning & Conservation	Anthony Peake	636 312
Speakers Education Link	Mary Winfield	632 247
Butcher Row Volunteer Rota	Prue Yorke	633 655
Ledbury Places	Alex Clive	635 545
Ledbury Places	Mary Cooper	635 169
Planning & Conservation	Andy Tector	

### CO-OPTED DIRECTORS

Secretary	Patricia Wilkin MBE	633 853
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Notice is hereby given that membership records of the Ledbury & District Trust are held on a database system. Those requiring access to the data held concerning themselves should contact the Membership Secretary. These are for administration purposes only, and an individual's details can be removed on receipt of a written request.

## Spring 2017

### Chairman's Report...

Allen Conway

The last word?

Hello everybody,

Here we are again with our newsletter compiled by the "Team". This is the last time I will have any input into "our" newsletter as I have decided to stand down as a Director/Trustee of Ledbury and District Civic Society. You will see I have emphasised the "and District" because I am sure we/you have many friends, acquaintances, new neighbours who would enjoy coming to our speaker meetings, with all the fantastic speakers, so well thought out and arranged by Mary Winfield,- bring them along.

When my time comes to hand over the mantle of Chair to Chris, (in April) I shall sit back and think of all that has happened over the past ten years as a member/Trustee/Director. I shall have fond memories of all the speakers and "characters" I have met through the Civic Society.

I would like to sneak in a "thank you" to all my fellow trustees for all their help and support.

When you think of the changes in our town over the past twelve years it's a lot, such as the opening of our fabulous new Library in the Master's House, which had a Royal visit in February, not only HRH the Duke of Gloucester but our Lord Lieutenant, The Countess of Darnley and our High Sheriff, Bill Jackson, not forgetting The Chairman of Hereford Council, Councillor Brian Wilcox.

We LDCS have had a great input into the Masters House going back over ten years with the likes of Alan Meikle, Humphrey Britton-Johnson and Mary Winfield, not forgetting all the past Chairmen, who have been on the Masters House committee. We should all be proud of their/our achievements.

We still have a lot to do to keep Hereford Council and the various "committees" from trying to make decisions on our town, but with our new directors and trustees I am confident we will achieve.

Thank you once again for the honour of being your Chairman.

### **Burgage Hall...**

Chris Johnson

There have been some changes to our regular bookings in the Burgage Hall and while we are sad to see Slimming World move to the Community Centre, where we wish them well, we are delighted to welcome the Friday Country Market to the Hall, commencing 7th April. Other bookings continue to be very satisfactory. The gas boiler should have been replaced by the time you read this and we are investigating some low-key CCTV coverage of the entrance.

As always, running the Burgage Hall takes a lot of work behind the scenes by many volunteers, sometimes for the regular, less-glamorous tasks of opening up and showing people around and sometimes for one-off jobs. Without a great team we would not be able to provide this valuable facility for Ledbury. Very many thanks to everyone who has helped in so many ways over the last year.

We are justly proud of the wonderful facility the Hall provides at very low cost for so many voluntary groups, small enterprises and community groups in Ledbury, all entirely run by volunteers. Our own monthly talks in the Hall continue to attract a wide range of interesting speakers and good audiences so do come along if you are not a regular.

### **Butcher Row House Museum...**

Prue Yorke

Welcome to the Museum for 2017.

We had an excellent season last year and we hope everyone is looking forward to similar success this year!!

If all goes according to plan, there will be a new cabinet for all the musical instruments upstairs. The old one was ready to collapse and only opened at the back, so it was really difficult to arrange and care for the exhibits on display. The new one will be full-height to match the cabinets opposite with the dresses and will have a glass back as well as front so the building-beams can still be seen. It will also help to protect the instruments from rapid changes in humidity and temperature, not to mention grubby fingers! Do come and have a look. The Museum will be open as usual from **Saturday 1st April.**

This year the museum committee would like some feedback from all our volunteers and anyone else who visits the Museum. For example: Are there any ideas you have for improvements? Are there any alterations/additions you would like us to consider? Are you happy with the way the Museum is run and maintained? The committee's names and phone numbers are in the volunteer information and diary folder in the Museum, so give one of us a call, or drop a note into the Burgage Hall letter box. Any comments will be much appreciated.

The volunteer coffee morning this year is on **Thursday 23rd March 2017 at 10.30a.m.** in the Burgage Hall. If you read this in time, do please try to come along. We would like not just our dedicated team to attend, but also anyone else who would like a coffee and does not mind having an arm twisted to get involved!

Finally, a very heartfelt thanks to all who give their time and skills to making the Museum the wonderful place it is and the benefit it brings to Ledbury.

### **Heritage Centre...**

Sally Holliday

The Heritage Centre will be opening this year on Saturday 1st April. We will be open, as usual, between 10.30 and 4.30 every day until the 31st October.

There are changes ahead for us this year, since ownership has passed from Herefordshire Council to Ledbury Places, and we are waiting for the outcome of the Heritage Lottery bid, which, if successful, will result in some exciting changes for the building itself and our heritage offering.

We are most grateful for the support we have had over the last three years from the Civic Society. Without the foresight of the Civic Society in obtaining the licence to run the centre for the last three years, there would have been a real risk that the building could have been put on the market and 'lost' to Ledbury as an important heritage building for our town and its visitors.

2016 was a successful year for us, with visitor numbers exceeding 25,000. Our visitors came from all over the British Isles and from as far afield as the Far East, North, Central and South America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand and of course Europe. It is always heartening to read the comments that our visitors put in the Visitor's Book, including those on the atmosphere and age of the building, the many photographs we display of 'old Ledbury' and not least the comments about the friendliness and knowledge of our volunteers, without whom of course, we could not open our doors.

We currently have over 50 enthusiastic volunteers. Some have been with us for many years, but each season there are a number of new volunteers who join us. They always receive a warm welcome and soon feel 'one of the team'. If you are interested in joining us please ring 01531 633637.

#### **Artistree...**

Brian Richardson

The thriving creative arts and crafts scene in Ledbury has been enhanced further with the opening of a vibrant contemporary exhibition space through the kind auspices of Ledbury Civic Society, in particular Chris Johnson and now our new owners of the building, Ledbury Places. We would like also to thank all the Heritage Centre volunteers for their support and encouragement since we opened and mention, in particular, the help from Sally Holliday and Alan Pike.

The Gallery, which was opened in August 2016, is situated on the first floor of the Heritage Centre, The Old Grammar School in Church Lane and will be open again between Thursdays and Sundays throughout the year starting in early March 2017. The Gallery is the permanent exhibition space of Artistree, the local artistic co-operative, consisting of a talented group of painters, sculptors, ceramists, textile artists, photographers, illustrators and wood-designers all of whose work is of a high-quality contemporary nature.

## **Pictures...**

The first exhibition of 2017 features work by co-operative members themselves called 'New Works', with paintings ranging from colourful abstract images, stimulating seascape and landscape paintings, figurative semi-abstract works, photographic exploration of landscape and botanical subjects, a range of finely crafted ceramic works, wonderful paper creativity and lots more to interest and inspire creative appreciation.

During the year Artistree will be putting on a number of different exhibitions based on their own works, as well as the possibility of guest artists appearing on occasion. Artistree has recently expanded its membership and the permanent space is likely to encourage other talented creative practitioners to add to the high quality work on offer. We welcome new members.

Current members have successfully exhibited widely, throughout the region, and sometimes internationally, as a group or as individuals, in a variety of galleries, art weeks and competitions and are committed to further enhancing the enjoyment of the Ledbury experience for locals and visitors alike. The Gallery will be staffed by members themselves, so there will always be an opportunity to discuss their own and others' work in a friendly and sociable manner. Artistree is also enthusiastic about contributing to the spirit of the community and to events in Ledbury.

Our mission is:

To advance knowledge of, and interest in art and craft;

To create a spirit of co-operation and fellowship among artists and the community;

To provide members with a permanent, quality exhibition and selling space at a relatively low cost;

Profits will go to education and other projects.

Artistree is a constituted not-for-profit contemporary artist co-operative working with the values of participation, trust and common vision. All visitors will be warmly welcomed to enjoy the

creative and stimulating ambiance set in the Gallery's serene and historic setting.

Anyone contemplating membership of Artistree, please contact Paddy Hannigan: e-mail: paddyhanigan12@gmail.com

### **Report from Planning Sub-Committee....**

Anthony Peake

The major "Planning Events" are familiar friends:

A. The Neighbourhood Plan rumbles forward slowly. There has hardly been a year since the late '90s when someone hasn't prepared a plan for the future of Ledbury and District - naturally, with which others have disagreed. Perhaps it's just too easy to put together a glossy report containing a lot of statements of good intentions, diagrams and statistics which subsequently rot away under the turgid weight of "consultations". No plan has the power to prevent the ambitions of astute developers, it seems.

This Society prepared an excellent Ledbury Town Plan in 2007, a huge effort by a devoted committee; it is full of deep and affectionate local knowledge about the story of the town's development and sensible proposals for future change based on the needs of the community. Having been discussed and approved by Herefordshire Council all the way, it was subsequently ignored.

I cannot understand why this Plan has not been used as a basis for updates. Everyone since has busied themselves with 'reinventing the wheel'. The community's efforts to produce a "Neighbourhood Plan" foundered under its own weight of data and last year consultants FTP were appointed to prepare a plan for us. There have been a few 'Progress reports' and a discussable Draft Plan is apparently going to be available for consultation later in the spring.

The elephant in the room is the government and Herefordshire Council dictat that Ledbury must have a minimum 800 homes extra by 2020. Consequently, the 321 houses applied for by Gladman Associates outside the by-pass and approved on appeal, are additional to those approved in the Herefordshire Council core strategy, so we now have the prospect of over 1000 new houses in Ledbury, something both the

Civic Society and the Town Council, together with many concerned residents, have vociferously opposed for many years. There is no advice or funding from government about additional infrastructure, school places, medical services, sports facilities, traffic measures and parking etc. for the additional 3,000 souls and their vehicles. Many of us feel that Ledbury is at a tipping point, and there is a real danger that the special, relatively peaceful qualities of our town could be lost as the population rises towards 14,000 and everything 'tightens up'.

**B.** New Housing Schemes for Leadon Way (Ring Road) and the "Viaduct Site" are under way. Barratt Homes has bought the site and are seeking Detailed Planning Consent for the 321 houses on the Ring Road. Bloor Homes are working on their proposals for 625 houses North of the Viaduct. These sites, one North and one South of the town centre are both major developments and will increase pressure on the town's resources.

**C.** Aldi's new store near Galebreakers and Homebase is now commencing construction. While we are concerned about out-of-town retailing in principle – because it draws life away from the shops and the centre – this is quite a small shop which will compete more directly with the Tesco and Co-op supermarkets than with the independents. Aldi have paid a handsome sum into the Town coffers for the privilege of coming to Ledbury, money which will go a long way towards completing the landscape and improving the parking areas around The Master's House.

**D.** The projected supermarket site off Bye Street has gone quiet with the potential developer withdrawing all interest. Until there is a significant upward turn in the fortunes of supermarkets there seems little likelihood of this becoming a live project. The redevelopment of the swimming pool site is nearing completion and the investment in this project will be an impediment to any large development of the whole site.

Other matters include monitoring Planning Applications and Listed Building Applications, not only for Ledbury, but also for an approximately 10-mile radius around. We can report that 95% of

*Continued on Page 15.*

## **REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2016**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2016. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in March 2005.

### **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

Registered Company number 01340233 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number 507391

Registered office Burgage Hall, Church Lane, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 1DW

#### **Directors**

A Clive

A Conway

M Cooper

G Every

C Johnson

A Peake

A Tector

M Winfield

P Yorke

#### **Company Secretary**

P Wilkin MBE

#### **Co-opted Director**

P Wilkin MBE

#### **Independent Examiner**

Luke Keegan, Chartered Management Accountant

1A The Homend, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 1BN

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Governing document**

The charity is controlled by its Memorandum and Articles of Association and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006. The liability of each member is limited to £1.

**Recruitment and appointment of new directors**

Directors are elected at the Annual General Meeting for a period of three years. One third of the directors retire each year and are eligible for re-election. The directors may appoint any member of the Trust to fill a casual vacancy. Any director so appointed shall serve until the next Annual General Meeting and shall be eligible for re-election.

**Risk management**

The directors have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

**OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES—Objectives and aims**

The Trust must confirm that it has complied with the requirement that its activities further its charitable purposes for the public benefit. This is achieved by the Trust continuing to pursue its objects which remain as set out in the Memorandum of Association:

To stimulate public interest in the area of benefit.

To promote high standards of planning and architecture in the area of benefit.

To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic, natural or public interest in the area of benefit.

**Volunteers**

The directors acknowledge that the Trust's activities are sustained by the voluntary efforts of many members.

**ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE—Charitable activities**

The main activities in the year continued to be the operation of the Burgage Hall, the Butcher Row House museum and the management of Ledbury Heritage Centre and expressing their views on planning and other local issues. The feasibility study of a Material Asset Transfer of historic buildings in Ledbury continued during the year. The Project, known as "Ledbury Places" is funded by the Community Ownership and Management of Assets Fund from the Social Investment Business Group

**FINANCIAL REVIEW—Reserves policy**

The reserves of the Trust at 31 December 2016 are considered to be satisfactory, with £30,000 of net current assets notionally reserved for long term maintenance of the Trust's Heritage Assets and the remaining funds available for future projects.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:

P Wilkin MBE - Secretary

6th March 2017

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES  
(INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE  
ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2016**

		2016	2015		
	Unrestricted fund	Restricted funds	Total funds		
Notes	£	£	£		
<b>INCOME</b>					
<b>Income from generated funds</b>					
Donations and legacies	2	4,832	-	4,832	3,961
Other trading activities	3	23,310	-	23,310	25,514
Income from Investments	4	656	-	656	655
<b>Income from charitable activities</b>					
Grant Income		-	-	-	-
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		28,797	-	28,797	30,130
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<b>Expenditure on Raising funds</b>					
Fundraising trading: cost of goods sold and other costs	5	12,983	-	12,983	15,682
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Membership activities	6	6,008	-	6,008	3,274
Ledbury Places		-	1,228	1,228	13,958
Upper Hall Research		-	-	-	-
Other costs	9	540	-	540	540
<b>Total expenditure</b>		19,531	1,228	20,759	33,454
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>		9,266	(1,228)	8,039	(3,324)
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		132,111	6,878	138,988	142,312
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>		141,378	5,650	147,026	138,988

Balance Sheet at December 2016

		Unrestricted fund	Restricted funds	2016 Total funds	2015 Total funds
	Note s	£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible assets	14	2,047	-	2,047	2,358
Heritage assets	15	58,432	-	58,432	58,432
		60,479	-	60,479	60,790
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Stocks		1,543	-	1,543	1,751
Debtors	16	2,098	-	2,098	2,038
Cash at bank		77,797	5,650	83,447	75,486
		81,437	5,650	87,087	79,275
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Amounts falling due within one year	17	(540)	-	(540)	(1,076)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		80,897	5,650	86,547	78,199
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		141,376	5,650	147,026	138,988
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		141,376	5,650	147,026	138,988
<b>FUNDS</b>					
Unrestricted funds	18			141,376	132,111
Restricted funds				5,650	6,878
<b>TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS</b>				147,026	138,988

**BALANCE SHEET—AT 31 DECEMBER 2016**

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 December 2016. The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2016 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

(a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 of the Companies Act 2006 and (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 396 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small charitable companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard FRS102 (adopted January 2016).

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 6 March 2017 and were signed on its behalf by:

A Conway - Director

G Every - Director

applications are for single householder proposals or works to trees.

We only comment on the application if there is a public interest or perceivable adverse impact on public space. We look carefully at the larger schemes, such as for housing estates at Ashperton and Colwall (around the Thai Restaurant) and comment as required.

We are very pleased to report that Ledbury Places, a local charity, is now the owner of the freehold of the Burgage Hall (the Civic Society still has the long lease and will run the Hall as before), the Heritage Centre and the Barrett Browning Institute (the old library). We very much hope that in the near future, the Heritage Lottery Fund will make a grant to Ledbury Places to enable the Barrett Browning Institute to be repaired and converted for a sustainable future use and for the Heritage Centre to be updated. This keeps these very significant Listed Buildings in the control of our community, following Herefordshire Council's desire to give up responsibility for them.

### **Ledbury Places...**

The first phase of asset transfers was completed in January 2017 and therefore Ledbury Places is now the owner of the Heritage Centre, removing any risk of a political change of heart by Herefordshire Council leading to a sale to the highest bidder. It is somewhat of a relief that this building is now owned by a Ledbury-based charity with an expanding membership of Ledbury residents.

The freehold of the Burgage Hall was transferred from Herefordshire Council to Ledbury Places at the same time. This will make very little difference to the running of the Hall as the Civic Society's long lease on the property is unaffected. We just have to pay rent, the princely sum of £1 a year, to a new Landlord!

The freehold of the Barrett Browning Institute was transferred to Ledbury Places as well and this is the immediate focus of attention to prevent further deterioration of this empty building. There is a very successful youth drop-in evening on Wednesdays, providing in a small way some replacement for the closed Youth Centre. It also is entirely volunteer-run.

The latest application for a grant to carry out repair and conversion work on the Heritage Centre and the Barret Browning Institute is with the Heritage Lottery Fund at the moment and a decision is expected from them at the end of March or early April.

### **Diana Merry...**

Veslemøy Lunt

Diana Merry passed away in 2016 and you will have read the tribute by Chris Johnson in the last Newsletter.

However, Veslemøy Lunt was a great friend of Diana's and together they were founder members of the LDSC.

This is Veslemøy's tribute to Diana.

Returning to my weekly "sit" in the Butcher Row Museum after five weeks in Norway, I find that Diana Merry has died, well over ninety years old. She did more for the Ledbury and District Society than most of us. Being a founder-member and a hard-working Secretary of the Society, she worked hard during the removal of this building (Butcher Row House) from its former site behind 14 High Street (on a burgage plot) to its present site. She was, for a number of years, the Editor of the newsletter and, with two other members, wrote the little book about the history of the LDST. I recollect her weekly "sitting" in the museum, never idle, always knitting some exciting garment and always full of fun. She was a keen fundraiser for the Society, being one of the Eastnor "tea-ladies", who raised considerable sums for many years on Wednesdays and Thursdays during the summer months, as well as having floats in the Ledbury Carnival, and more. Without her enthusiasm and enormous work, the LDST would have been a less vigorous and important organisation for the benefit of Ledbury and its surroundings. Thank you, Diana.

### **Car Share Club...**

Dilys Merry has asked us to mention to Civic Society members that the Malvern Hills Car Club, "the car-share scheme", which has a strong presence in Colwall, now provides a car available to group

members in Ledbury, as well as the other twelve dotted about the area. The Club is seeking to spread the word that Ledbury now 'hosts' a smart 2012 Peugeot 107, to let local people know how the community car share works and to increase membership in the Ledbury area. If you are interested in a community car-share please contact the club on 01684 540284 or through their website [malvern hills-carclubs.org.uk](http://malvern hills-carclubs.org.uk)

### **Preparing the Ledbury Letter...**

Mary Every

For many years Mary Winfield and Graham Every have been preparing and printing the Ledbury Letter. This is printed twice a year, but it doesn't appear like magic.

In each Letter there is a final date for copy to be received by Mary for the next Letter, ready for the two of them to assemble the magazine. Usually it takes many reminders for the management members to come up with their items, but eventually everything arrives – even if it is with just 5 minutes to go before the deadline!! Mary then reads each piece, checks for punctuation, grammar and spelling. She sends the articles to Graham who places them into position, using a computer. Then comes the hardest job of all – reading and re-reading the content to check for mistakes. Mary reads, then I read and then we read again and we always find more mistakes! I find that the easiest way to check is to read it aloud, because then you know when you need a comma to indicate taking a breath. Eventually, we agree that enough is enough and Graham starts printing. It takes approximately 24 hours to print 350 copies of the Letter, printing day and night. Each Letter takes over 2 minutes to print, staple and fold. Fortunately, Graham has a duplex printer, so can print both sides without having to reload. He is always in the office for part of the night, so is able to reload the paper tray, staple the printed sheets and prepare them for the next step in the journey to your door.

Prue Yorke attaches address labels to each Letter, or puts them in envelopes, together with any enclosures. They get sorted into delivery areas and then it is off to the very loyal delivery team. The vast majority of the Ledbury Letters get hand-delivered. Some go by post and a very few are sent by email.

We hope that you enjoy reading each copy of the Ledbury Letter, but you could see your own name in print. We are always looking for interesting articles and we know that we have some extremely interesting members. Please do consider writing a piece for us. It may be about Ledbury, how you decided to live here (M & G are very nose), an area of the town that you think needs to be highlighted. Maybe a quiz or word search would be interesting, to be done whilst enjoying a cup of coffee. Someone else's input will be a wonderful relief to the regular contributors. Your article can be in any format – handwritten, electronic etc. and sent to [newsletter@ledburycivicsociety.org](mailto:newsletter@ledburycivicsociety.org), or left in the post-box at Burgage Hall.

### **Ashperton Castle...**

Andrew Tector

The Ledbury and District Civic Society has recently provided a grant to Ashperton Parochial Church Council to assist in the production of a Heritage Trail around the village.

One of the hidden secrets of Ashperton is the site of Ashperton Castle. The most obvious remainder is the castle moat. The moat and site of Ashperton Castle are close to the Parish Church. All that now remains of the castle is the tree-covered mound and the moat, which, until recently, was used by anglers. However, the moat is now overgrown and its shape is not entirely obvious.

The lands of Stretton and Ashperton had been part of the lordship of Monmouth and when the last Lord, John of Monmouth, incurred large debts, he made his estate over to Henry III in 1256.

In 1292 William Grandison was granted a licence to fortify and crenellate his house on this 'island'. William Grandison was from a family of Savoyard Knights who were closely connected to Edward I. The lands of Ashperton and Stretton were granted to him as a tenant. It was likely to have been in the nature of a strong-house, rather than the full-blown castles that he had been constructing in Wales. William no doubt benefited from his family's relationship with Edward I and through playing a major part in the subjugation of Wales. In 1287 he was constable of the newly completed castle at Harlech and the

following year took his place as acting justicia of North Wales.

William married Sybil, daughter and co-heir of Sir John Tregoz, Lord of Ewyas Harold, a nephew of Thomas Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford. Both William and Sybil were buried in Abbey Dore. Their children included John de Grandison, Bishop of Exeter (1327–1369), who was baptised in Ashperton, and Katherine, Lady Montacute, wife of the first Earl of Salisbury. Her name has been linked with the founding of the Order of the Garter in 1344 by Edward III. Legend has it that her garter is said to have slipped from her leg while she was dancing at a court ball at Calais. When the surrounding courtiers sniggered, the king picked it up and returned it to her, exclaiming, “Honi soit qui mal y pense” (“Shame on him who thinks evil of it.”), the phrase that has become the motto of the Order. Both John and Katherine were born in the castle.

The site was probably previously a motte, with the bailey incorporating the church, its position being chosen for having a spring-fed moat. At the end of the eighteenth century, it was reported that the foundation stones were all stacked up and the site planted with trees.

The Heritage Trail will include information on the Church and the Hereford and Gloucester Canal, as well as more detail on the history of the Castle and is due to be launched during the summer.

### **Lavender...**

Mary Every

Most of our readers will know that in Butcher Row House Museum we sell a few souvenirs. Amongst these are lavender bags which are made by one of the members and filled with Ledbury lavender. The problem we have is getting hold of local lavender. Do you have a lavender bush which you are happy for us to pick the flowers from at the appropriate time? If so, please contact Mary on 01531 631174.

### **My Summer Affair...**

Jill Bell (jilldotbell@gmail.com)

Early in June, as I sat sipping coffee and dreaming my way into the day, I glimpsed a movement in the raised flowerbed and a little brown

face appeared. For a moment I thought it was a rat and I froze ... another move forward and a wet, inquisitive snout sniffing the air followed by a fuzzy face and prickles emerged. I was thrilled.

That night, I was woken by a spooky, wild sound which I couldn't identify and which went on for some time. The following night the same thing occurred. Having exhausted all the possibilities, I realised that the hedgehog was the only unusual recent visitor. I googled information on my I Pad and learned that the weird noise was the mating call of the male hedgehog. How exciting!

Over the next few weeks I journeyed to and fro to our caravan in Wales and thought no more of Mrs Tiggywinkle.

At the end of July there she was, sashaying alongside the garden shed, leaf in mouth, followed by the teeniest hedgehog imaginable. I rushed to get my camera, but they had vanished. Next day she emerged from under the shed with three babies in tow! My excitement knew no bounds .... I researched diligently to ensure that I did everything correctly to encourage the family to stay.

I sent away for a state of the art hutch and feeding station and eagerly awaited the delivery day. Meanwhile mother and babies continued to forage through the garden for their daily grubs and she taught them how to shake a plant to release the insects. Each time I saw a trembling plant I knew a baby was feeding there.

I put out food and water next to the shed for the next few days, then introduced the hutch at patio level with feeding bowls. Mother left her trio when weaned, secure in the knowledge that they were well fed. The little ones discovered how to run round the shed, down a slope and through the wrought iron gate to reach their food, after alarmingly teetering on the wall edge to seek a safe route.

Fuzzypeg, Twinkle and small runt Spike now had to fend for themselves. At first they just foraged around the garden but soon went further afield to search for insects, slugs and worms. I was concerned for Spike who kept appearing in the day and getting nudged by the others, so I put his supper right next to the door and sat with him whilst he fed. After a couple of weeks he didn't return. I like to think that he found another des. res.

Hedgehogs are solitary animals. Twinkle was next to leave ....

Fuzzypeg busied himself/herself (difficult to sex a hedgehog for obvious reasons) making a cosy nest in the hutch with soft hay gathered from Blenheim Palace gardens (only the best!).

Hopefully he will overwinter so I can keep an eye on him.

Lately Twinkle has sneaked into the garden, stealing food (now upgraded to 5 star with mealworms and banana), while Fuzzypeg is in the hutch. He then races off on his long funny legs before he is caught out.

It has been fascinating to witness the differing characteristics and physical attributes of this little family. Considering that hedgehog numbers have decreased by 64 percent in three years, I feel privileged to have these endearing creatures living with me. They are not bothered by the outside light so I have a precious two hours to watch their antics each evening.

Apparently, the last warm winter, followed by a cold snap, played havoc with hibernation and lots of late born hoglets were brought into rescue centres to be treated for dehydration and cold. I would like to be amongst the much-needed volunteers if such a situation arises this winter (good to have found my vocation late in life!)

If you are fortunate enough to have a "hedgie" visit you, please don't give it bread and milk as it makes them ill. Plentiful water and cat or dog food is best although mine turned their snouts up and wouldn't touch it. Originally, the mother was attracted by the bird feeders, but an unwelcome rat visitor meant those had to be removed. I don't leave food bowls out after feed time for the same reason.

My hedgehog love affair continues .... watch this space.

### **The Theft of George Sexty's Horse, December 1825... Celia Kellett, MA**

George Sexty was born in Ledbury in 1792, the son of Robert Sexty and Sarah his wife. George married Mary Ann Woodward on 3rd June 1819 and they had three sons and three daughters by 1832. Robert and his sons Robert jun. and George appeared in Pigot's Directory of

1822. Robert was still a maltster, Robert junior, a cider-merchant, and George was trading as a grocer and tallow-chandler in the Homend, where all six children were born. His shop is currently the bow-windowed TSB Bank.

One Wednesday night, a week or so before Christmas 1825, James Cale, son of John Cale the butcher, being drunk at the time, became the foolish accomplice of another man called Nicholls. They stole some horses, including a chestnut mare belonging to George Sexty, the grocer, who lived and traded in the Homend. The other two mares and a colt were stolen from the stable of a farmer Mr Lawton, nearby. It was discovered that two men were involved in the theft and they quickly traced the colt, which was found abandoned at Malvern early next morning. Information about the loss of the other three horses was sent off to Worcester and a police officer immediately went to Birmingham.

At the Crown Bar at Hereford Assizes the following March 1826, James Cale stood indicted for stealing a chestnut mare, valued at £30, the property of Mr George Sexty of the Homend, Ledbury. Mr Sexty stated that he had turned out the mare to graze on the 14th December but the following morning, he found the mare had gone. He traced the mare by her hoofmarks, through two gardens and across a field into the turn-pike road leading from Ledbury to Hereford and from there through a lane into the Worcester Road. He then traced it to Worcester and went to see a police officer he knew called Orchard. Officer Orchard had already set off to Birmingham in search of the stolen horses.

The ostler, John Hill, of the Black Cross Inn at Bromsgrove, gave evidence at the trial that he had seen the prisoner, James Cale with another man on the morning of 15th December and that they had three mares with them, The prisoner rode one and led another, whilst the other man rode another. The ostler had cleaned all three horses, which were very dirty and rather distressed. After the horses were fed and the men had refreshments, they rode off on the Birmingham road.

*To be continued...*

### Officers of the Society

President	Joe Hillaby
Chairman	Allen Conway <a href="mailto:chairman@ledburycivicsociety.org">chairman@ledburycivicsociety.org</a>
Secretary	Pat Wilkin MBE Burgage Hall Church Lane Ledbury, HR8 1DW (01531 633 853) <a href="mailto:secretary@ledburycivicsociety.org">secretary@ledburycivicsociety.org</a>
Treasurer & Membership Secretary	Graham Every Burgage Hall Church Lane Ledbury, HR8 1DW (01531 631 174) <a href="mailto:treasurer@ledburycivicsociety.org">treasurer@ledburycivicsociety.org</a> <a href="mailto:membership@ledburycivicsociety.org">membership@ledburycivicsociety.org</a>
Burgage Hall Bookings	Chris Johnson (07977 781 826) <a href="mailto:bookings@ledburycivicsociety.org">bookings@ledburycivicsociety.org</a>
Webmaster	<a href="mailto:web@ledburycivicsociety.org">web@ledburycivicsociety.org</a>
Web Design	Pippin Consultancy Ltd.

The Directors retiring this year are: .

Tony Peake

Mary Winfield

**31st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - ELECTION OF DIRECTORS**

At the 31st AGM at 7.00pm on Friday 28th April 2017 at the Burgage Hall, Church Lane, Ledbury, an election is to be held to fill five of the nine places for Elected Directors.

Any paid-up member of the Society may seek nomination, by two other members, to stand in the election.

Nominations should be sent to the Secretary at the Registered address by Friday 14th April 2017.

Note: The constitution of the Society allows for nine Elected Directors. Each Director is elected for a period of three years; and, normally, three are elected each year,

Retiring Directors may, if they choose, seek nomination to stand again for election, on equal terms with any other candidates.

(Additionally, up to six co-opted Directors may be invited to serve on the committee to help in particular capacities.)

To: Secretary, Ledbury & District Civic Society,  
Burgage Hall, Church Lane, LEDBURY HR8 1DW

**NOMINATION OF AN ELECTED DIRECTOR FOR ELECTION AT 31st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE LEDBURY & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY ON 28th APRIL 2017**

I wish to nominate: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_(Proposed.)

I wish to second the above nomination

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_(Seconded.)

I am prepared to serve as a trustee if elected

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_(Nominee.)

There is a Society letter box by the main entrance to the Burgage Hall for your convenience.