

THE LEDBURY LETTER

NUMBER 115

Spring 2023



Butcher Row House Museum

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.

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Technical Editor: Nicola Forde

The Ledbury and District Society Trust Ltd
www.ledburycivicsociety.org

Company No: 1340233 Registered Charity No: 507391

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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.

Copy deadline for the next Ledbury Letter: Friday, 18th August 2023

SPRING 2023

Acting Chairman's Report.....

Mark Lister

I am writing this report following the resignation of Andy Tector as Chairman of the Board of the Society for personal reasons. He had already indicated his intention to retire at the AGM in April but felt it appropriate to leave sooner. We shall miss his wise counsel and I would like to thank him personally for the support he gave me as a new trustee.

As we come out of what has been a difficult winter for many people the Board of the Civic Society has been working hard to make sure that we remain relevant in an increasingly competitive and complicated world. A draft Business and Marketing Plan is being prepared for the AGM. The intention is to build on the work of our predecessors and raise the profile of the society while working with other organisations in the town to achieve this.

To enable us to achieve what is an ambitious programme the current Board is looking to recruit new members with enthusiasm and relevant skills to help drive this forward. If you feel able to help please contact me or another member of the Board and we can discuss our vision with you. Or/and fill in the nomination form on page 10 of this newsletter and return to the Society's Secretary, nominations must be received by 7th April and will be dealt with at the AGM on 28th April.

The Butcher Row House Museum will re-open in April and the Board is grateful to Ken Chapman, his committee and the volunteers who keep the museum open throughout the Spring, Summer and Autumn.

I should also like to thank Patrick Goode who has worked tirelessly since the end of lockdown to arrange a programme of talks on the last Friday of each month which have been extremely well supported by members of the society and others at a level that is the envy of other civic societies.

The Society's 50th Anniversary....

Nick Morris

In 1973 Ledbury was a very different place. The Butcher Row House had yet to be moved to Church Lane, the Burgage Hall was near derelict, buildings at the top of Church Lane were under threat of demolition. The Society has achieved much over the past 50 years and we want to celebrate those achievements with you.

So, apart from our annual Christmas lunch [which has not been possible for the last three years], this year we want to have a bigger bash.

We would like to ask all our members for their thoughts. Some ideas that have already surfaced are: a bigger, perhaps three course lunch; a talk by a celebrity; a wine tasting event. If you have any thoughts or preferences please write to us with your suggestions. Whatever is decided we will make sure it will be an event worth remembering.

Looking forward to hearing from you - send your ideas to: chair@lefburycivicsociety.org; post them to: Burgage Hall, Church Lane, Ledbury, HR8 1DW; or bring them along to the AGM - 7pm, Friday 28th April at the Burgage Hall.

The Burgage Hall ...

Nicola Forde

Lettings in the Hall continue to pick up after Covid but there are still gaps - particularly on Saturdays and Sundays and some evenings.

So if you have an event you'd like to hold, or a regular activity you need a venue for, please consider us. The hire fee is a bargain at £15 an hour, £95 a day. We have kitchen facilities, tables and chairs. The Hall capacity is 100+ seated. Current users range from Belly Dancers and Scottish Country Dancing to the Ledbury Country Market and the Poetry Festival.

Get in touch: bookings@lefburycivicsociety.org/07977781826 (leave a message or text if there is no reply).

The Butcher Row House Museum...

Prue Yorke

Dear Members,

A New Year ! ! It hardly seems possible, does it ?

After two difficult years with lockdown and Covid, we managed to get back to near normality in 2022, though we were only able to open for five days each week. Visitors returned, however, and were warmly welcomed by our volunteers.

Carol Cullen (632 773) is hard at work now sorting the new rota, but could do with a few more people. - can you help out? Two hours once a fortnight or to go on the Reserve List. And the most important and rewarding thing you have to do is to 'Meet and Greet' our visitors, almost all of whom are lovely. Please think about it and get in touch with Carol for a chat.

We will be opening , as usual, on the First of April (and go on until the end of October). We have arranged our "Welcome" coffee morning for Tuesday, the 21st March at 11 am in the Burgage Hall. We hope to see you then !

A Very Happy New Year to you all.

A Note to Members...

Christine Tustin

We have a number of members for whom we have no contact details (but who very kindly pay us a membership fee!). Do get in touch, we are particularly keen to have member's email addresses as in the future (to save the resources of the planet and the Society), we will communicate as much as possible by email. But if you don't use email please make sure we have your address so we can send you the newsletter and other important messages.

Reluctantly we have decided to raise the membership fee to £15 per person/£25 for two people as of this Spring. The Society is not immune from cost of living rises so we do hope members will understand the need for this. Send alterations/details to: membership@ledburycivicsociety.org

Talks 2023.....

Patrick Goode

It is very good to see so many of our members at our talks every month (we average 60) but the Burgage Hall has capacity for 100+!! So please think about joining us for the rest of the season's talks. Topics are wide ranging, albeit with a Lebury/Herefordshire flavour.

YOU HAVE MISSED.....

A history of bell ringing, a peculiarly English art and surprisingly complicated - we now listen to the bells of Ledbury parish church much more attentively.

The future of Herefordshire farming. In 1973 Herefordshire was a land of hops, cider, and world-beating cattle. Today there are intensive poultry units, polytunnels and solar farms. 50 years hence it is hoped farming and nature will survive alongside each other, boosting biodiversity and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

The Victorian Churches of Herefordshire. The lecturer showed us a County with an unexpectedly high number of Victorian churches, many of which are beautiful and architecturally notable.

Can Herefordshire's Rivers Survive? Twenty years ago this would have seemed an odd question, but today rivers are struggling, particularly the beautiful River Wye. We learnt what local environmental organisations and citizen scientists are doing to save the rivers.

The history of the Three Choirs Festival - the oldest choral festival in the world with an intriguing and eventful history.

STILL TO COME

31 March - The Chris Johnson Memorial Talk: The Leominster Canal (Gerry Calderbank).

28 April - The Biddulphs of Ledbury (Mary Stewart). **This talk will start at 7.45** after the LDCS AGM which is at 7pm.

26 May - The Victoria County History : Coddington (Hannah Ingram)

23 June - note the change of date First World War Belgian refugees in Ledbury (Jennifer Harrison).

Talks are held in the Burgage Hall at 7.30 pm (except the April talk which starts at 7.45).

If there's nothing here that interests you please give us ideas for future talks you'd like to hear - contact me at: averytutor@hotmail.com / 01531 632 235

Planning News

A proposal for development behind the Knapp on the Homend next to Tescos, **application number P223248/F, developer McCarthy Stone**, is currently being considered by Herefordshire Council planners. This is for 53 one and two bed apartments for retired people for rent, sale and shared ownership. A number of objections have been raised: that the 4-storey, single block building is not in keeping in terms of scale, mass or design, with the local character; that the existing site is a valuable green space for biodiversity and shouldn't be developed to this density; that access off the Homend and almost opposite Knapp Lane is unsafe for the expected traffic flow; that 40% of the units should be affordable. At the time of going to press it was still possible to comment on this application.

The Viaduct Housing site, developer Bloor Homes, (P171532/O). The Town Council has asked Bloor homes to explain why infrastructure to handle buses, including turning circles and wider roads has not been integrated into the design of the Viaduct site.

Land south of Leadon Way, (140 homes) developer Vistry Homes (P192482/O). There are concerns about the noise impacts of the proposed new roundabout on Leadon Way to the residents of Deer Park. This roundabout will be between the Gloucester Roundabout and the recently constructed roundabout at the entrance to Hawk Rise. Currently a bund protects residents from by-pass noise, but it will be removed when the roundabout is constructed. It is likely that noise levels will also increase as vehicles slow and accelerate on approaching the reoundabout. The developer has met with residents to listen to their concerns.

The Full Pitcher affordable housing site (93 Homes) developer Connexus Housing (P164078). New builders are taking this development forward and it is likely to be completed by March 2024.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan has (at last!) reached its final stages and is currently being examined for compliance with national and local planning policy. Subject to any changes made by the Examiner it is hoped a referendum will be held in the Town in late spring to officially 'adopt' the plan.

The Russell Family &.... their Schools

Celia G Kellett

The latest in a series of articles focusing on Bank House and the development of Bank Crescent.

The Russell sisters were four of the daughters of Thomas Russell, the miller. At the time of the 1841 census Thomas was only about eighteen years old and working at Paunceford Mill, near Bosbury. Thomas married in the Spring of 1843, his bride was Mary Symonds who like him had been born in Pauntley, near Newent in Gloucestershire. Mary gave birth to thirteen children over a period of 21 years, the first three, Edwin, Emma and Elizabeth, were born in Pauntley and the rest in Ledbury. By the time of the 1851 census the Russell family were living at New Mills, on the Hereford Road at Ledbury and there were now five children and ten a decade later.

By now Thomas was employing four men, business must have been booming, with the coming of the railway in 1861, but only Edwin, the eldest son was employed by his father as a miller. By 1871 Henry was employed as an ironmonger and Emma, the eldest daughter, had left home and gone to work as a governess at Thinghill Court, Withington, only a few stations down the line towards Hereford. She was employed by farmer William Taylor and his wife Mary Ann, to care for and educate their three youngest children, twins Robert and Albert, 7 and Frank, 6. This was a large farm of some 866 acres, employing 28 men and 6 boys.

Meanwhile Emma's sister Elizabeth, together with her much younger sister Edith as her assistant, had set up the Abbey School, at Abbey House, next door to the Horseshoe Inn in the Homend in 1875 and continued teaching there for almost thirty years, later also assisted by another younger sister Laura. By 1881 they had been joined by their brother Charles, now a solicitor's clerk, who had returned home to Ledbury, after years working away from home.

A decade later Emma, the eldest of the Russell sisters had switched occupation from governess to housekeeper in Albown, Wiltshire, and by the 1891 census had moved nearer home and was working as house

keeper in St Anne's Road in Malvern. In 1901 Emma had returned to Ledbury where the census now found her living in Newbury Park, Ledbury, now aged 55, as a boarder living with Olive Oakley, another spinster who was a retired milliner.

Abbey House and its school had changed hands before 1902 when John Edy Ballard the grocer and his family moved in. He had been living in Church Lane after retiring from his grocery at No. 1 High Street. John Edy Ballard junior was an art teacher. He and his sisters took up residence in Abbey House. Charlotte Emma Ballard took over the school, as principal and was assisted by her sister Elizabeth Anne.

Former headmistress Elizabeth Russell had moved to Aberystwyth, as a boarding house keeper, living at 16, Marine Terrace South, together with her brother Charles, Elizabeth lived there for more than twenty years, until her death on 10th May 1932, aged 85. Charles had died some five years earlier in 1927, aged 69.

Emma Russell had now started her own school for girls, a few doors further down the Homend, at Bank House, at the turn of the century. This school changed hands in 1910, when Emma retired. The School then became the Convent High School, run by nuns, before this school moved to the Southend in 1917. Bank House, now vacant, was snapped up and was converted into a cinema.

Meantime Emma having retired from teaching, had moved into one of St Katherine's Almshouses by 1911; none of her many brothers and sisters were living in the town any more. She lived in St Katherine's until her death on Christmas day 1932, aged 87. Following her death, probate was granted in Gloucester on 13th January 1933 to one of her brothers, Henry Russell, the ironmonger. Her effects totalled £368 9s 6d., which today would be worth about £21,000.

Annual General Meeting - Election of Directors

At the 37th AGM at 7.00pm on Friday 28th April 2023 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 7th April 2023.

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

**NOMINATION OF AN ELECTED DIRECTOR FOR ELECTION AT THE
37th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE LEDBURY & DISTRICT
CIVIC SOCIETY ON 28th APRIL 2023**

I wish to nominate: _____

Signed: _____ (Proposed)

I wish to second the above nomination:

Signed: _____ (Seconded)

I am prepared to serve as a Director if elected:

Signed _____ (Nominee)

The Society letter box is by the Church Lane entrance to the Burgage Hall.

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