

Ludlow Heritage News

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Photo courtesy of Ludlow Museum.

THE RAILWAY IN LUDLOW

From its very earliest beginnings in 1825 it was less than twenty years before virtually every place of significance in England and Wales had plans for its own railway. This area was no exception.

The first meeting of the Shrewsbury and Hereford Railway Company took place on 24th April 1845 in London from where business was conducted for the first year. Surveying the route of the line began just over a month later, but it was another year before it became a fully fledged Railway Company, receiving the Royal Assent to the Parliamentary Bill on 3rd August 1846.

The 'Railway Mania' of the mid 1840's with its plethora of schemes for railways to go anywhere and everywhere brought with it financial problems for many, as there were not enough investors to fund every scheme. This nearly brought about the downfall of the Shrewsbury to Hereford Railway Company before one length of rail had been laid. It was only the persistence of its Chairman William Ormsby-Gore M.P. and its Scottish Engineer Henry Robertson that saw its survival. They persuaded Thomas Brassey, the contractor who was building the Shrewsbury and Chester Railway (completed 1848) to build the line from Shrewsbury to Hereford and run it at his own risk. Brassey, who wanted to keep his workforce together to be able to tender for other schemes agreed.

During the first year from its formation Sir William Rouse-Boughton of Downton Hall,

one of the original directors, tendered his resignation over the decision not to use the Great Western Railways' 7'0" broad gauge which he said 'was all the rage'. As Robert Stephenson (of London and Holyhead Railway fame) was the Consulting Engineer for the line it was not surprising that the Shrewsbury and Chester Company's standard gauge 4'8½" was used. He was Consultant on that too. The Company was later proved to have made the right decision when the Great Western Railway had to change from the 'broad' to the 'standard' gauge.

At a meeting of the directors of the S and H, again in London in 1847 the go-ahead was given to approach land owners to obtain the necessary land. The only Board members from Shropshire at that time were Ormsby-Gore M.P. of Oswestry and James Ackers of Heath House, near Ludlow. Later R. H. Clive of Oakly Park became a director. Building of the line commenced in 1850 and on the 20th April 1852 the line was opened for passenger traffic as far as Ludlow. The opening was accompanied by an elaborate celebration banquet with a ball later in the evening. Railway services commenced the next day with Brassey leasing the line to Ludlow at 3½% p.a. of the cost of the line which had reached £239,592.

By July 1852 goods traffic was able to reach Hereford but due to difficulties in Dinmore Tunnel it was not until December 1853 that passengers could travel the full journey between Shrewsbury and Hereford. The total cost was £629,810 for the single line track.

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Thomas Brassey with his brother-in-law William Field, a prominent Shrewsbury Merchant, eventually operated the line for ten years under the lease from the Shrewsbury and Hereford Railway Company during which time traffic, including mineral traffic from South Wales, grew sufficiently for the line to be doubled by 1862. The rental cost had also increased to 4% in October 1857 and he had to part with half the profits.

Elsewhere there had been a long running dispute between the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) and the Great Western Railway (GWR) over a route from London to the Mersey. Seeing an opportunity to play against the other, the Shrewsbury and Hereford Company offered to lease the line to the LNWR, who had opened a railway between their junction at Crewe and Shrewsbury in 1858. The LNWR seeing this as a way through to the rich pickings of the South Wales coalfields, jumped at the chance. In an effort to 'bury the hatchet' with the GWR, they magnanimously offered to share the line with them and, from 1st July 1862 until nationalisation in 1948, the line through Ludlow was operated jointly by both Companies.

In its heyday Ludlow was a busy station. The main station buildings, built of local brick with Ashlar facings to the main windows and doors, a slated roof and a timber canopy providing shelter on the Shrewsbury (West) side, where most of the activity took place. There were small waiting rooms on the Hereford (East) side (SEE PLAN).

Most people who remember those buildings would also recall the echoing footsteps on the bare timber floor of the booking hall and the warmth of the fire kept burning in the waiting room. Apart from signals at the ends of the platforms showing their approach, passenger trains were heralded by a bell sounding to summon passengers to the platform.

In the 1860's it took one hour twenty two minutes to reach Shrewsbury with eight

stations en route and one hour eight minutes to Hereford with six stops. With the opening of the Severn Tunnel in 1886 and the development of seaside resorts as the result of the coming of the railway, it was possible for people from Ludlow to travel to Weston Super Mare and Penzance. In the other direction trains ran through to Scotland even as far as Inverness, giving rise to the lines soubriquet 'The Old North and West'.

In 1861 a branch from Woofferton to Tenbury opened and three years later it extended to Bewdley. A regular service ran from Ludlow to Tenbury until its closure exactly one hundred years later in 1961. This became affectionately known as 'The Bomber'.

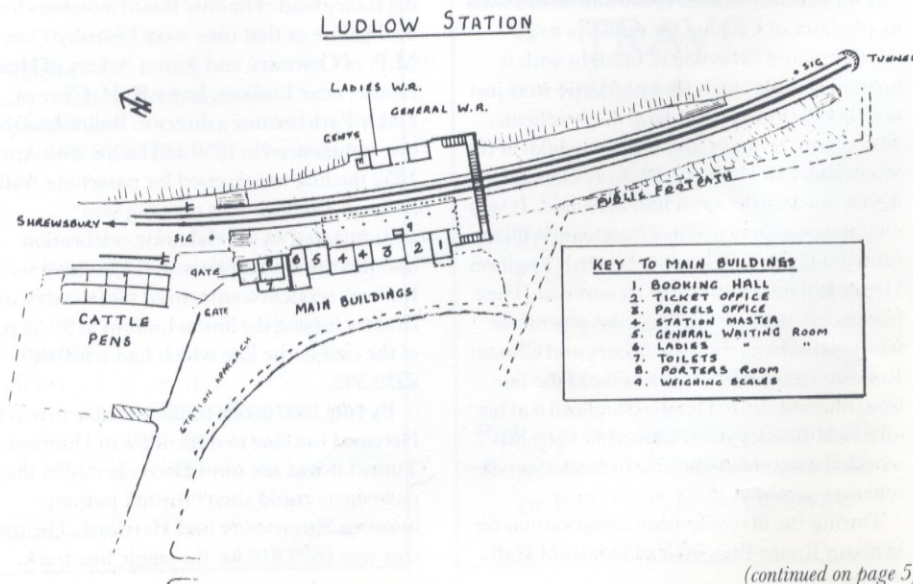
Activities regularly seen at the station were the coming and going of the Royal Mail, an important daily business for the railway from October 1852. The railway also operated a very efficient parcels service with local deliveries being made in the early days by horse drawn vehicles and later vans and small lorries. The stables with their stalls are still in existence adjacent to Station Drive. They stabled up to seven horses with a loft above and are now used for storage by Burgess' and Austin Bros.

Baskets of pigeons were often transported by train and, as Ludlow was a release point; they could be seen being opened at an agreed time on summer weekends.

Apart from its passenger traffic, Ludlow became an important goods station. In fact in its early days it was goods traffic that the Railway Company, particularly the Joint Company, sought to provide the majority of its income. Coal arrived on regular coal or 'local' goods trains to be offloaded in the coalyard being served by three sidings and much more extensive than the present Austin Bros. yard. Their office was originally railway property.

There was a large goods shed (now owned by Lloyds of Ludlow) which had a through line for offloading trucks, together with a weighbridge and six small ancillary buildings

Ludlow Station



(continued on page 5)

To the Citizens of Ludlow – THE FOREST OF THE MORTIMERS

One could describe Mortimer Forest as 'The Lungs of Ludlow'; that wonderful expanse of wooded country which stretches away westwards to the Welsh border. A public forest managed by the Forestry Commission on behalf of the Crown, containing miles of walkways and abounding in wildlife. The story of how this land twice came back into crown ownership, its importance to the inhabitants of Ludlow and the part played by the Mortimers, from whom it takes its name, is an intriguing one going back to the Conquest.

At that time Wigmore Castle and the old Saxon forests of Bringewood, Mocktree and Deerfold were held by Edric, Earl of Shresbury. He was defeated by Ralph de Mortimer on behalf of William I, his cousin, who rewarded him with Edric's lands together with the Manors of Caynham and Cleobury. The Mortimers, with their ups and downs, held them for nearly four centuries until Richard Duke of York, grandson of Anne Mortimer, became Edward IV in 1461 and the forests became royal property. Bringewood seemed to have retained its title of 'Chase', which was a privately owned hunting area, whereas a Forest in those days was a hunting area reserved for the Monarch and subject to Forest Law. A Forest Court ('instituted for the government of the King's forests .. and for the punishment of all injuries done to the King's deer [etc]' Blackstone) was retained for almost a further two hundred years until Charles I granted the three forest to the Earl of Lindsey in 1633.

Very roughly, Bringewood lay on the high land west of Ludlow, south of the river Teme and included Burrington, Aston, Elton and Leinthall Starks. The boundaries of Mocktree ran from Bromfield along the Teme to Leintwardine, up Watling Street to the hill above Stokesay (View Edge) then back down the river Onny. Deerfold or 'Davold' was bounded by the way from Adforton to Aymestry, up the river Lugg and the Limebrook to Lingen, thence to the northern boundary of Wigmore parish.

With our modern technology, coal and oil, it is difficult to conceive how important these woods were to the inhabitants of the townships of the area, including Ludlow, not that these 'forests' were heavily wooded. It is generally considered that by the Iron Age much of England had been cleared of forest until only about 30% remained woodland and by the Conquest only 15%. A rough estimate is that by the beginning of the seventeenth century Bringewood was 50%, Mocktree only 15% and Deerfold 30%. These woods had to supply all local needs for house building, fencing, agricultural implements, household utensils and furniture and above all, firewood. 'Her Majesty's House' in Ludlow (the Castle) required, in the reign of Elizabeth I, 600 cords

of firewood and 4,000 faggots annually. A 'Cord' was a stack 8 feet long by 4 feet wide by 4 feet high and contained approximately two tons of green wood. By custom the inhabitants would have had rights to such wood for their needs. For some timber though they would be 'amerced' i.e., had to pay for it. They were also allowed to 'common' their animals, often in wood pasture and turn their pigs into the forest during the 'pannage month', September 24th to November 11th, to eat the acorns.

The woods around Ludlow contained all the species of the natural 'mixed oak forest' which stretched across much of Europe and most of Britain; alder, ash, aspen, birch, cherry, crab apple, field maple, holly, rowan, service tree, sessile oak, small-leaved lime, wych elm and yew and the shrubs such as alder, buckthorn, blackthorn, guelder rose, hawthorn, hazel, juniper, spindle and wild plum. The wood from each would have had one or more specific use according to their properties e.g. oak for box-frame houses, with hazel for the wattle of 'wattle and daub', thatching spars and hurdles; elms for wheel hubs and chair seats; ash for the wheel rims; poplar for tool handles and floor boards and maple for utensils.

All the while the woods were gradually being cleared, 'assarted', for agriculture so any additional demand was considered a threat to supplies. Such a one was the iron forge on the Teme at Bringewood. It was certainly up and running in the sixteenth century for the Earl of Essex had a hand in it until his treason when it was leased to Henry Wallop with 2,000 cords of wood for £250 a year. It did not close until 1815.

Iron smelting required a lot of cordwood to make charcoal which, was usually done on site in the woods on flat charcoal 'hearths' and then taken in waggon loads to the forge. This demand for cordwood dictated the method of silviculture over large areas of Herefordshire and Shropshire, that of pure coppice on 18-20 year rotations.

According to D. G. Bayliss it took four waggon loads of charcoal to smelt one ton of pig iron from 4½ tons of iron ore and it took 3½ cords of wood to make one load of charcoal, i.e. 14 cords per ton of iron. It took a further 10 cords to refine the pig iron to cast iron. If we knew how much iron was produced at Bringewood in a year we would know how many acres of forest was required to sustain production there. However, we do know that in 1637 Francis Walker, whose cast iron gravestones can be seen in Burrington churchyard, was allowed to purchase 3,000 cords within a radius of six miles of his forge at 3s 8d a cord. This would have required 150 acres of 20 year old coppice a year and over 3,000 acres to sustain this quantity annually. No wonder that Ludlow Corporation petitioned the Crown and the Earl of Essex in 1596 regarding the destruction of the woods. As Beale wrote of Herefordshire in the following century: 'But of late the iron mills

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LUDLOW'S OWN 'GLASS' HOUSE!

Le Corbusier (1887-1965) saw the history of architecture as *'an unrelenting battle of light against the obstacles imposed by the laws of gravity'*. Architects have always been seduced by the qualities of glass but the grail of releasing buildings from the shackles of structure has always been limited by the available technology. Although the making of glass from sand and ashes has been understood from remotest pre-history, it was not until the first Century B.C. that the technique of blowing glass was discovered. By the second Century A.D. glazed windows were commonplace, though expensive, throughout the Roman Empire. From the tenth Century onwards great skill was shown in the production of coloured glasses, albeit in small pieces, and their assembly in lead 'came' to form mosaics of rich colours to glaze ecclesiastic buildings which by the high Gothic had become little more than filigreed stone lanterns for sumptuous windows, typified by the Cathedrals of Chartres (rebuilt 1194-1260) and Bourges (1192-1275).

The making of clear panes of glass was not possible until the development of crown glass. A disc of molten glass was spun on a rod in the mouth of an open furnace. With great dexterity a circular piece of glass of constant thickness and reasonable clarity could be produced, fine polished by the heat of the furnace. From this disc a number of rectangular panes could be cut, leaving the familiar bull's eye at the centre. Although the pane size was necessarily limited they could be assembled into large windows in elegant softwood frames which were to become the essential feature of eighteenth Century domestic architecture.

The windows of the Merchants' houses, which line the canals of Amsterdam, however, are so large that they anticipate the aesthetic of the framed buildings of the twentieth Century. The development of sheet glass made by cutting a cylinder of blown glass and leaving it to unwind onto a flat iron bed in the annealing furnace and the production of plate glass from rolling molten glass on a flat bed made the production of large sheets of glass possible. This technical advance coincided with the nineteenth Century passion for collecting exotic plants. Structures of great beauty and sophistication, in cast iron and sheet glass, sprang up all over Europe to house these collections. By the 1850's the principles developed by Decimus Burton (1800-81) and Richard Turner for the great Palm House at Kew, (1845-7) and Paxton (1806-65) at Chatsworth (1836-40) were applied to the problems of covering large public spaces such as Railway Stations and Exhibition spaces. Sadly these iron structures were vulnerable to fire; heavy encasements of masonry were necessary to protect the metal structures, with a corresponding loss of elegance.

The improvements in glass technology were used by the architects of the Chicago School to

develop the skyscrapers of the late nineteenth Century. Structure was gradually reduced in favour of window; culminating in the archetype glass boxes of the mid twentieth Century such as Mies Van der Rohe's (b.1886) Lake Shore Drive flats (1949-51) in Chicago and the Seagram Building (1956-8) in New York.

To achieve complete freedom from the discipline imposed by the structural frame the window walls were cantilevered from the structure rather than coplanar with it. The manipulation of the lattice mullions and transoms has become synonymous with modern architecture. At best the results are austere and refined, at worst, crudely scaled and repetitive. The dominant feature tends to be the pattern of the fenestration rather than the ephemeral properties of the glass. The building becomes a glazed cage.

On a more domestic scale Mies Van der Rohe's pavillion at the Barcelona Exhibition of 1929 – was seminal in demonstrating the ability of glass to eliminate the visual division between inside and out. Space could be defined without recourse to obtrusive structures; the landscape could be brought into the building. The development in the 1950's of Pilkington's float glass by casting glass on a bed of molten tin eliminated the need for laborious polishing. It produced glass sheets of great clarity and perfect surface, and in sizes limited only by the restraints of handling. More recently the invention of clear silicon glazing compounds allowed sheets of glass to be joined almost invisibly.

The development of glass with improved thermal qualities and tempering to improve strength, uninterrupted glass walls of great size became possible. The chameleonic qualities of glass can now be exploited on a monumental scale, shifting colour with the reflected movement of the sky, obsidian in shadow under strong light, invisible when lit from within at night. The peculiar ability of glass to enclose space without visible definition, a paradox in terms of traditional architecture make it particularly applicable where the integrity of existing buildings have to be maintained. Glass wall structures have great potential where the retention of negative spaces are paramount or where protection from the elements is essential without interrupting the continuity of landscape or townscape. (The Coutts Building [1973-9] in the Strand is a good example).

In Ludlow, just such an opportunity exists in linking No.1 Mill Street to the Old Assembly Room. Both the Assembly Room and the Old Museum Room building are monumental in scale though very different in appearance, the integrity of both has to be respected. Both have strong three dimensional qualities, and, viewed from Mill Street, each sits on its own site with essential negative space between; rather than forming a two dimensional frontage to Mill Street. A glass wall conserves the integrity of both buildings since the returns of both frontages will be clearly visible through

the glass. The glass is set back from the street frontage lest it should be intrusive in the totality of the street scene. It is faceted to break up the reflections of the buildings opposite and passing traffic and also to prevent reflections becoming too distracting. At night the life of the building will be apparent, almost on display, with no physiological barrier between the people inside and those outside in the street. The Assembly Room will not be symbolically exclusive but a part of the life of the town which paid for its building in 1840 and for its revitalising in 1992.

C. A. F. Bean

THE RAILWAY IN LUDLOW

(continued from page 2)

for storage and use by staff.

Large numbers of cattle were handled at Ludlow being loaded from cattle pens into purpose built cattle trucks and moved either in cattle trains or attached, usually to the rear, of other trains. The pens were located alongside the present station car park just across from the cattle market.

The other major product handled was stone. The Cleve Hill Mineral Railway opened in August 1864 and became part of the S and H Joint Company in 1893. It was freight only and left the main line north of New Road Bridge running alongside and then crossing Fishmore Road just before the present by-pass bridge. It continued via Middleton, with its sidings, to Bitterley where a special inclined plane carried trucks to and from the quarry. Trucks of the Cleve Hill Granite and Dhustone Quarry (later the British Quarrying Company) were marshalled in sidings between New Road and the station. The line finally closed in December 1962. A warehouse now used by Shropshire Building Supplies (ex Shukers) was previously an engine shed for locomotives used on the Cleve Hill line.

April 20th 1992 marks the 140th anniversary of the opening of the station and although Ludlow now has just two shelters for passengers' comfort and a temporary booking office, the station seems to be going through a revival with more people using the trains. Work is being done on a voluntary basis to try and improve the station gardens although it is unlikely that they will match the ones tended by the staff when it was a fully manned station; for many years it held the regional award for the best kept station.

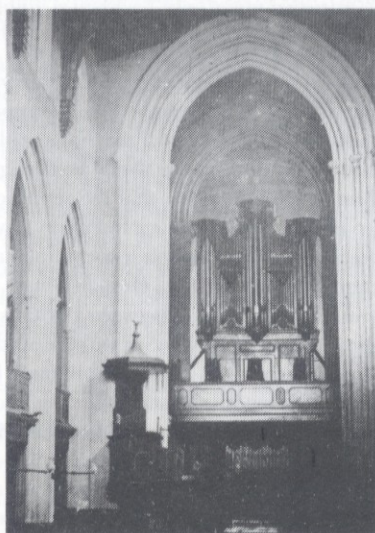
The station is now served by the new 158 Class trains with virtually an hourly service through the day mainly to Manchester and Cardiff, connecting with other services at Shrewsbury, Crewe, Hereford and Newport.

Although there is no goods service to the station, coal, mail and steel trains can regularly be seen passing through, sometimes at the newly-raised limit of 75mph!

N. L. Warburton. © Copyright reserved

'RESTORATION' AT LUDLOW?

Just over one hundred and thirty years ago a major local event dominated conversation in polite Ludlow society. This was the first 'restoration' of St. Laurence's parish church, an upheaval which was to disrupt local worship for eighteen months, between early February 1859 and the grand formal re-opening on the 3rd of August 1860. The nearest to a general description of this work was published in 1860 by John Evans, a local bookseller, who printed an account written by the Clerk of the Restoration Works, James Thomas Irvine. Irvine worked on a number of famous churches, including Chester Cathedral, and wrote booklets and articles on many of them. His comments about Ludlow church are not simply limited to a description of its features and history. They are of all the greater value because they include his observations of objects and foundations revealed during the work and subsequently covered over or removed. To find more of the background to this enterprise, one must look at a variety of sources such as local newspapers, guidebooks, the Restoration Committee minutes, and local prints and views.



18th-century clutter in St Laurence's, with the dark brooding galleries, three-decker pulpit, and all-dominating organ. The photograph was probably taken in 1858, just before work began.

Ludlow was even by local standards hardly the forefront of the 'restoration' movement; for instance, by 1849 even the relatively little known church of Stanton Lacy had endured the attentions of 'one of the dullest of Victorian architects', Thomas Henry Wyatt. What is apparent however at Ludlow is an early growing appreciation of the medieval shell of what, on the inside and from the nave, appeared to be a typical 18th-century church. Between 1828 and 1832, David Evans of Shrewsbury reconstructed in new glass the remarkable great St. Laurence East window, and during the 1850s restored the remaining windows in the chancel. The achievement was much admired and must have newly focussed attention beyond the Snetzler organ which, being at that time placed over the rood-screen,

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not only dominated the interior but also completely blocked any view through the tower-arch into the chancel. The historical importance of the high chancel can therefore have only been given an even greater boost by the removal, in 1848 of the 'altogether incongruous' 18th-century oak altarpiece, 'in Grecian style', which had obscured the mutilated remains of the medieval reredos. This was shortly afterwards restored to some semblance of its former glory by Richard Kyrke Penson during the early 1850s.

A man who may have been influential in re-awakening local interest was Richard Jones, the Ludlow publisher and printer, who not only referred to the reredos in print **before** the removal of the altar piece, but also in about 1852 published a view of the chancel which is the only one to show the reredos before Kyrke Penson worked on it. A companion print then shows a hypothetical view suggesting what the church would look like if the rood-screen and organ were to be swept away to leave a clear view through to the East end. This does appear to have been an attempt to influence local opinion, and may very well have succeeded because within five years moves were well under way to set up a restoration fund.

However, as with recent changes, the project did not meet with unqualified approval. It is clear from correspondence to the Shrewsbury Chronicle, in 1858, that there were complaints about the taking down of the 'noble galleries', that the new open seats would be draughtier than the old box-pews, that the alterations would encourage a return to Popery, and that the money would be better spent upon a new cattle-market, etc., etc.. Despite being presented as a debate between Puritans and Ritualists, or 'Puseyites', it was the aesthetic argument that won in the end, although Jones' vision was modified in that the magnificent rood-screen was fortunately retained despite opinion in favour of its removal. Glimpses of the restoration in progress are hard to come by. We do know that the contractors moved in during the first week in February, for there was great activity down at the railway station from which large quantities

of scaffolding poles, planks, and tools were brought up to the church. The scaffolding was soon erected, the organ dismantled and put out of harms way, followed by the removal of all the 17th- and 18th-century fittings: the north and south aisle galleries, the organ loft, the three-decker pulpit, and the box-pews. During the summer of what must have been 1859 Walter White, author of *All Round the Wrekin*, ventured into the church to be confronted by '... confusion, the scaffoldings round some of the columns, and the entire removal of the floor ...'.

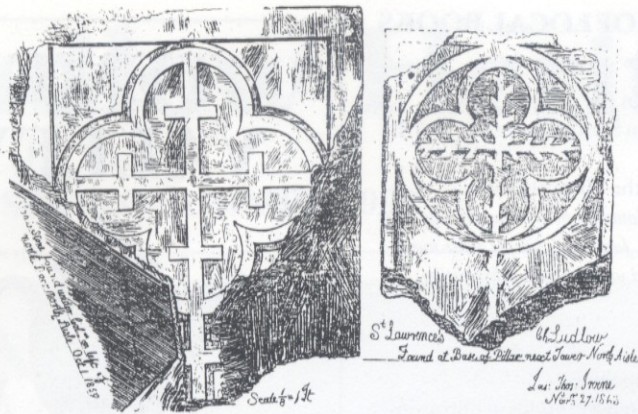
It was during these excavations that Irvine could discern the foundations and extent of the 1199 church; and much, including monuments then found, still lies beneath the Victorian tiles.

If you have ever wondered what became of the old furnishings, then the answer is that some readers could well be sitting on part of them. Messrs. Davies & Son, auctioneers of Dinham, proudly advertised an 'IMPORTANT SALE. To the Clergy, Gentry, Builders, makers (sic) of Antique Furniture, and the public generally ... TO SELL BY AUCTION, in the Market Hall, Ludlow, on Friday the 4th day of March 1859, the whole of the Wainscot Fittings, Gallery Staircases and Fronts, Pulpit, Floor Boardings, large Stoves and Piping, and a great variety of effects ... of first-class Wainscot Framing of the seventeenth century, and also some Canopies, together with a smaller portion of Framing of the previous century. The whole will be sold in suitable lots for the convenience of purchasers ...'. Today such asset stripping of a major historic building would be unthinkable (though sadly not impossible), but then it was simply the casting out of relatively recent junk, out of tune with the fashion and spirit of the times. Only a few years later, however, serious doubts and regrets were being voiced at the sheer scale at which our medieval churches were being denuded of later accretions.

It was in 1877 that William Morris, alarmed over the years at what he had seen at Ely cathedral, Burford in Oxfordshire, and at Tewkesbury Abbey, was moved to found the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. In the Society's manifesto he commented on '...



The Ritualist vision: a photograph taken in 1861. A few purists would still have been troubled by the presence of the rood-screen which somewhat blocks the effect they sought to achieve.



Two drawings of medieval grave-slab fragments by J. T. Irvine. That on the left shows a stone 'found under Column on left of North Door, North Aisle, October 1st 1859'. These were later published in 1876.

the strange idea of restoration which implies that it is possible to strip from a building this, that and the other part of its history – of its life that is – and then to stay the hand at some arbitrary point, and leave it still historical, living, and even as it once was.' Exactly that process happened at Ludlow, where the once prevalent Puritan arrangement, of a galleried preaching hall with a pulpit at its focus, was overturned in favour of the celebration of the Divine Mystery at the extreme East end of the church, the notional historical ideal of romantic churchmen. From a purely aesthetic standpoint it worked after a fashion; but the clutter of medieval parclose screens, the bright colours and images, the innumerable candles and lamps, and above all the experience of medieval ceremony, were gone for ever.

William Morris's point however is as relevant today as it was in 1877, except that now it is apparently unimportant minor vernacular buildings which suffer the depredations of the developer and improver. Here the current obsession with exposed

timbers, even where they were never intended to be so, threatens plaster and fittings which get in the way or can be sold off for profit. Old vernacular buildings are all too seldom respected for what they have, over many years, become because today 'gutting' has become standard practice, whereas in former times successive layers covered over what had gone before. Many it seems are concerned to make a home conform on the surface to an image. That is fair enough, but when a historic building is involved they might be better advised to live on a film set; at least the illusion would be complete and no harm would be done. While a home needs to be practical and comfortable, far too much of our heritage is still ending up in a skip out in the street. Perhaps one day, as we now bemoan the blind desecration of our medieval churches during the 19th century, so shall we regret current renovation practice in our humbler dwellings. In the meantime, as ever, he who pays the piper will call the tune.

Peter Klein

THE FOREST OF THE MORTIMERS

(continued from page 3)

have devoured our glory and deflowered our groves'.

In spite of all the complaints in the seventeenth century the iron masters still obtained their supplies, but worse for the villagers was that in 1633 the new owner, the Earl of Lindsey, set about felling the timber, destroying the deer ('... red and fallow deer two to three thousand at least') and laying out the land in farms from 60 - 140 acres in each. Certain woods however had to be left for the Commoners rights; 300 acres for example for the inhabitants of Burrington and 500 acres for Elton and Aston.

Ten potteries in Deerfold did not help the situation either and in the eighteenth century Shropshire was pretty well cleared out of ship building timber by the Navy.

By that time though the first landowners were beginning to plant conifers to produce the 'deals' which were being imported from the Baltic. This was a very necessary substitute for a resource continuing to decline until coal-fired iron forges and iron ships took the pressure off

the woods that remained. The Industrial Revolution also involved a revolution from a broadleaved (hardwood) economy to a coniferous (softwood) one. At first European larch, Scots pine and Norway spruce were planted, then Douglas fir and other American west coast species were introduced. All grow well west of Ludlow and have replaced much of the oak coppice which had lost its value.

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