

LUDLOW

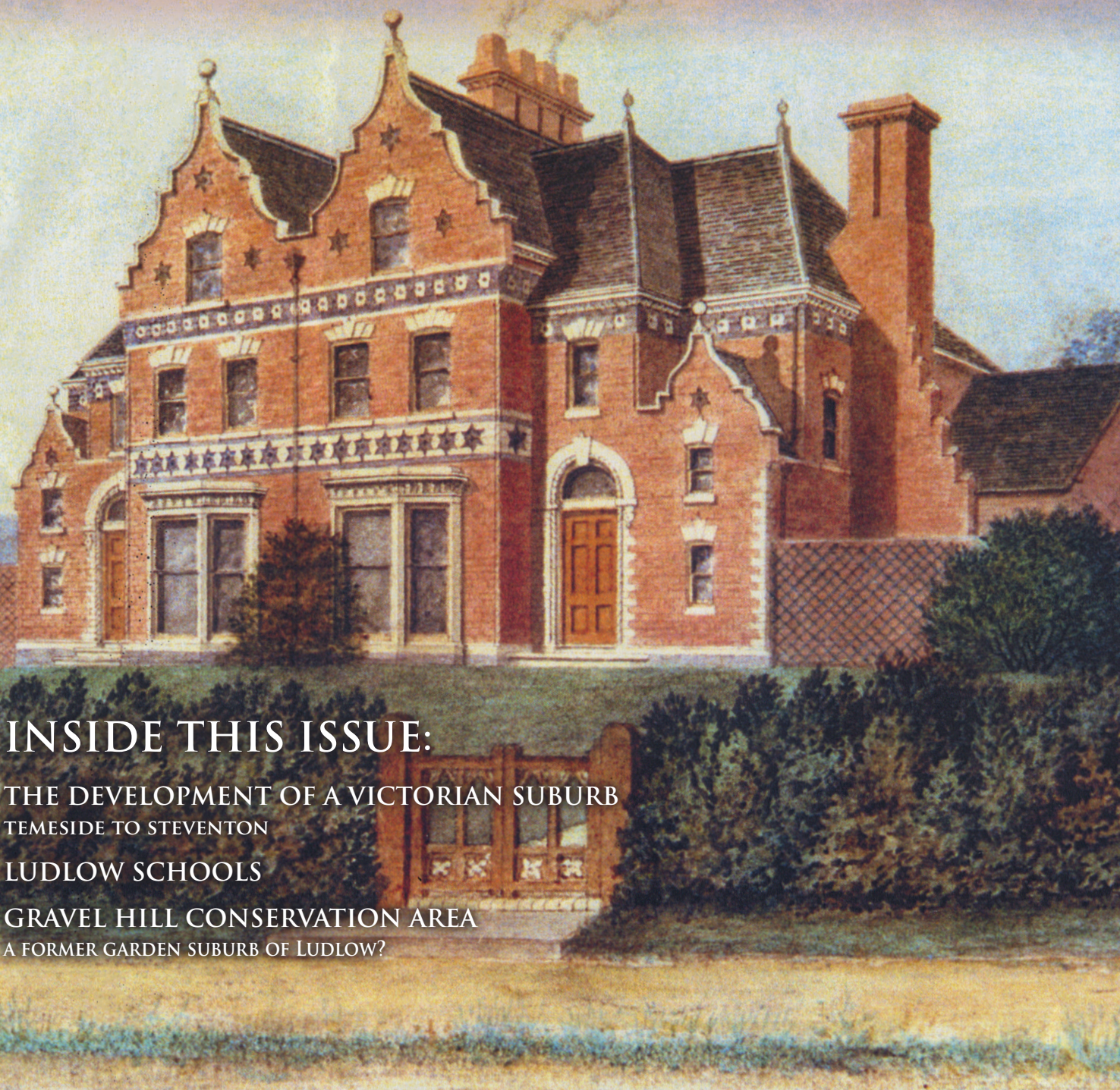
HERITAGE NEWS

LUDLOW
• CIVIC •
SOCIETY

Published twice a year by Ludlow Civic Society • www.ludlowcivicsociety.org

No 76 Summer / Autumn 2022

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Riverdale and Riversdale (71+73 Temeside), Circa 1873



Our first Victorian issue of Heritage News, as we suspected, received a warm welcome from both the membership and the general public. We have even sourced enough material to produce a third issue some time in the future. Interest in the Victorian period has certainly increased in the preceding half century. Many Victorian structures have been restored and re-fashioned as visitor attractions, or to fit other purposes, as with Marston's Mill in Ludlow, and the former railway shed next to the station, now the Ludlow Brewing Company. Associated with this has been an increase in Victorian studies in various universities. In the main, Victorian buildings are given the same protection as those from other historical eras, under the watchful eye of the Victorian Society and its many regional branches.

In this issue we look in detail at the development of two of Ludlow's nineteenth-century suburbs, Gravel Hill and Temeside and Steventon. We take a look at education in Victorian Ludlow and publish for the first time some of the recently rediscovered architectural drawings for a proposed new Grammar School near to Burway Lane. These have probably been the most exciting find in Ludlow's architectural history for many years.

Once again, we welcome any feedback about our issues. Please write to the editor via the Castle Bookshop. We ask for contributions to the newsletter in the form of articles of an erudite nature with footnotes, or of a rougher kind which we can 'knock into shape'. Ideas for 'themes' for whole issues are also welcomed. It has been suggested that an issue devoted to Old Street would be popular, so if anyone has been researching this street and is willing to produce an article, please let us know.

THE DEVELOPMENT TEMESIDE TO STEVENTON



Although Queen Victoria did not come to the throne until 1837, the passing of the 1832 Reform Bill is considered by some to be the beginning of the Victorian age. An 1832 map of Ludlow (see above) indicates that the area east of the centre and north from the river Teme was predominantly meadows and a fifty-acre orchard.¹ The road that ran alongside the river Teme from the bottom of Holdgate Fee to Steventon is named Temeside and was, and still is, in the Ludford parish, and this, at that time, was partly in Herefordshire and partly in Shropshire.

On that road a few buildings from that period still remain. Although it is not clearly identified, next to

the Weeping Cross² marked on the map, is an early 19th century toll house that was part of the Ludlow Second Turn Pike Trust, established in 1756.³ It shows elements of the octagonal plan and triangular-headed windows with stone lintels that were used by the trust on its other toll houses. This toll gate controlled the road from Ludlow to Steventon and the stand-alone Serpent Inn, on to Little Hereford and eventually to Worcester.⁴ It



The early 19th century Toll House on the junction between Weeping Cross Road and Temeside.

1 Beardmore, R. (2020), *Ludford House*, Ludlow; Eardisley, Logaston Press, p. vii.

2 Lloyd, D (1999) *The Concise History of Ludlow*, Merlin Unwin Books, Ludlow. There was a cross at each end of Weeping Cross Lane. The one at the north end, of St Kellem, marked the boundary between the parishes of Ludlow, Ludford and Stanton Lacy. The other, Weeping Cross, marked the junction of the river Teme, Temeside and Weeping Cross Lane. This would have been a place to express penance. Weyman, H.T. *Ludlow in Bye-gone Days*, (1913), Palmers Press, Ludlow, p. 38.

3 Parliamentary Papers, (HCCP); *The Second Turn Pike Trust, Ludlow*, parliamentary c t29 geo.11c59; 1756.

4 Ogilby, J, (1600-1675) *The Road Map from Ludlow to Montgomery*.

OF A VICTORIAN SUBURB



The Victorian house belonging to the manager of the gas works which relocated from Gravel Hill to Temeside in c1840s.

was probably established to deter long-distance travellers using it as an alternative to paying tolls on other more populous roads which provided more significant revenue for the trusts. This was de-turn-piked about half-way through the Victorian period, in 1873.⁵

Further along the road is Steventon Mill, which over the years has been referred to by several different names, including Ludford Mill, but more recently is referred to as the Case Mill. A mill at Steventon was in existence in 1250 which by 1484 was a corn mill. In 1718 the present building was being used to make printing and blue sugar paper. In line with the decline of manufacturing at this time in small towns in England, in 1841 this mill employed thirteen workers, in 1861 only three and in 1870 none.

In 1880 it became one of the few mills in Shropshire to use rollers for milling corn to flour.⁶

About a mile along the road, towards the river and near a ford, is Steventon Manor, an early-17th-century house built on an earlier site.⁷ The associated buildings include a cider house and a possible dower house that later probably became an inn on this toll road. At this time there were also a number of cottages and farms along Temeside and in Steventon, mostly unidentifiable but including Moss House, a significant, mainly Georgian house that has been developed and enhanced over several years.

By the end of the 1860s, probably as a result of significant social changes both nationally and locally, a number of major developments

had taken place that affected the living conditions of the residents of the area and the town. In the 1840s the existing gas works were re-sited from Upper Galdeford, and established by a new company, led by William Richardson of Dudley, on Temeside along from the Weeping Cross.⁸ The manager's house and residual associated industrial buildings still exist. Just past the Mill are the remains of the cast iron sewerage pipes crossing the river Teme. These are evidence of early and ongoing attempts⁹ by the Local Boards of Health to provide services to improve the health of the population when, as a result of poor sanitation and hygiene, typhoid was a significant threat.¹⁰

However, at this time perhaps, the most noteworthy

undertaking in its relation to the development of the town in terms of communication and trade, was a major civil engineering project, the Shrewsbury to Hereford railway line. Financial difficulties delayed the start of the building of the line but it was eventually started in 1850. Initially, it was a single track, and the section to Ludlow officially opened on 21st April 1852. On the first journey, which took one hour and fifty minutes, there were 25 carriages with 300 passengers which possibly demonstrated the general excitement felt across the country by this advance in travel between widespread communities.¹¹ The line continued to Hereford, initially just for goods, but it opened for passengers on 6th December 1853.¹² The line ran along the eastern side of the main Shrewsbury to Hereford road, entering the existing town at the bottom of Lower Corve Street and on to the station. It then continued through a tunnel that ran under Gravel hill, crossed Rock Lane and continued parallel to Temeside, leaving large pieces of barely developed land on both sides. This helped to contribute to the development of the Victorian suburbs and the extensive growth of the town at this time.

The most substantial new housing development at this time was at East Hamlet where terraces of small houses were built and where a significant number of railway workers lived. North east of the town, in the parish of Stanton Lacy, the expansion had started before 1841. The sale of land by Ludlow Corporation in the 1850s enabled Gravel Hill and the surrounding area, by 1879, to become a desirable district.¹³ The growth of the

5 Trinder, B. (1998), *The Industrial Archaeology of Shropshire*, Chichester, Phillimore & Co.Ltd. p. 191.

6 Ludlow Historical Research Group, *Discover Ludlow's Mills*, (1999).

7 Moran, M. (2003), *Vernacular buildings of Shropshire*

8 Speight, M. (2004), *Victorian Ludlow*, Ludlow Historical Research Group, Scenesetters, Bucknell, Shropshire.

9 Beattie, D. (2016), *How the Other Half Lived*, Merlin Unwin Books Ltd., Ludlow pp. 34-35.

10 Beattie, D. (2016), pp. 85-86.

11 Church Stretton and District Railway Association, *A Railway through the Strettons*.

12 Ray, P.M. (1998), *Ashford Carbonell, a Peculiar Place*. Copyright P.M.Ray, Old Barn Print, Ludlow.

13 Lloyd, D.(1999, 2019), p. 152.

A present day photograph of nos 71 and 73. Compare this to the image on the cover of the Ludlow Heritage News.



Victorian suburb in Ludford parish was less ambitious or sustained and was perhaps hindered by the river and neighbouring landowners.¹⁴ In the 1860s a few cottages and more substantial houses were built in the area near the river. Those close to the gas works and before the Weeping Cross were known as The Folly (or Folley), and further along, near the mill, properties were known as Teme Terrace. Kelly's Directory of 1870 records two private addresses in Teme Terrace which is an indication that it may have begun to be considered as a more sought-after area in which to live. In 1871 there were six properties in The Folly and four in Teme Terrace.¹⁵

In 1872 plots of land south of the railway which had belonged to Sir Rowland Hill and called Coles Meadow or Folley Meadow, were sold by Arthur Markham. He was one of an increasing number of businessmen in the town at that time who recognised the opportunities to invest in newly available land to provide housing.

The land was divided into 26 plots for building and for the construction of a road through it, which was to become Steventon New Road. On the northern side of this road and backing on to the railway, three terraces of houses were built in the 1870s and named Patmos Place and Spring Cottages. The 1881 census recorded eight houses on the southern side of this new road and facing Temeside and the river.¹⁶ These were also built in the 1870s and were known as Teme Villas and included a terrace of four houses, a pair of semi-detached houses, and further along the road, a pair of larger houses. All are referred to in the updated Pevsner book on the buildings of Shropshire as being 'built in the over-stressed Gothic style'.¹⁷

71 and 73 Temeside are the largest of the houses and were built on an acre of orchards on Temeside as it joins Steventon New Road and the river turns south towards Ashford Carbonell. In 1873, Arthur Markham had sold the plot to the Evans sisters for £280 and

the houses were built in the next three years, and it is thought that the Evans sisters lived in number 73 Riversdale. The architect was probably Herbert Evans, one of their brothers, who is generally regarded as the designer of both No. 1 Dinham and also Kennet House which was built at this time on a largely undeveloped Sheet Road.¹⁸ Evans's training is unknown, but it is thought that he spent some time in London and may have learnt some of his trade in architectural practices there. This may help to explain why some of his buildings, especially those along Temeside, exhibit elements of the Queen Anne Revival style as well as the Gothic Revival mentioned in Pevsner. It has not been possible to find the plans of these houses, but the image shown on the cover of this edition was apparently produced by Evans before the houses were built and suggests that the finished buildings are similar in design.

The houses are semi-detached and are mirror-images of each other. They were built using unusually

large bricks mixed with Grimshill stone to provide a polychromatic effect. Pinnacles held up stone balls which are long since gone. Between the ground and first floor in a line of air vents in the shape of six-pointed stars, originally picked out in white paint as seen on the original painted image. Above these and along part of the roof line there are further rows of star-shaped vents and windows. The central core of each house is three storeys high with steeply pitched tiled roofs, shaped Dutch hip-style gables and a central chimney stack. At the centre of each house are two large rooms on each floor with additional living-rooms and smaller service areas beyond on the ground floor. There is access in the hall to a cellar. Interestingly the deeds of the houses include a caveat that forbids the making of bricks in the garden. This is a reminder of one of the important small trades that flourished in this part of the town, taking advantage of the local clay. No.73 remained with the Evans family until 1893 when it went to

14 Train, C. (2004), p.42.

15 Kelly's Directory, 1870.

16 Train, C. (2004), p.44.

17 Newman, J. & Pevsner, N. (2006) *The Buildings of England: Shropshire*, Newhaven and London, Yale University Press, p.386.

18 My thanks to Colin Sheward for sharing information with me about this area of Ludlow.

auction as part of nine lots and as Lot Three.¹⁹

The two semi-detached houses in Teme villas display a more restrained use of external ornamentation and, like Kennet House, were stone-faced with limited yellow brick decoration. Due to some deterioration the fronts were later refaced using different materials. They have slate roofs and may have been prototypes for the other villas.

The four terraced houses are of a similar style to the larger pair of houses, with tiled roofs and elaborate external decoration. This includes four projecting gabled bays each topped by a six-pointed star. Additional ornamental features include decorated fascia boards, and both quatrefoil and trefoil elements in the windows which are framed in white painted stone. They have two rooms on the ground floor and a small service area beyond. There are three rooms on the first floor with an interesting, curved landing wall, and there is additional attic space on the floor above. The remaining internal decorative features include Arts and Crafts style architraves around the unusually wide doors, and door furniture of the same style.²⁰

Two additional houses in this area are Mary's Meadow, a Victorian cottage on the junction of Temeside and Steventon New Road²¹ and, further along the road, a larger detached Victorian house, The Woodlands, near to the Elan Pipe Bridge in Steventon. In the early 20th century these houses were inhabited and enhanced by men who worked on the next major civil engineering project that, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, had an effect on this area.²²

This was the development of the Elan Aqueduct. Due to a lack of available clean water for the citizens of Birmingham in 1892, the

Birmingham Corporation Water Act was passed. This proposed the development of a 73 mile long water system from the Elan Valley in mid-Wales to Birmingham, and it was finally opened in 1904.²³ The building of the pipe line involved the construction of masonry aqueducts to carry the pipe over rivers and valleys, and they were built in the castellated style often used by the Victorians when constructing public water services.²⁴ One of the bridges crossed the river Teme at Steventon. Also built there, in the late 19th century, and still there, is a brick-built, late Victorian style house built by the Water Board as a 'walkman' cottage (also known as a 'walksman' cottage).

There were twelve of these buildings on the pipe line, built as homes for the walkmen who monitored specific parts of the line. As the name suggests, the walkman's role was to walk the pipe, in this case between the Deep Wood Well House at Bringewood and Knowberry, monitoring the valves and controls in the brick well houses and on the bridges. Another part of his role was to monitor the several control gauges on the wall in the main room of the cottage. Behind the cottage there remain the outhouses which were used for blacksmithing and welding.²⁵ They were all part of the maintenance function of this innovative project.

Since the turn of the 20th century there have been limited bursts of building in the area. These have included various examples of both rented and private accommodation.²⁶ Amongst these, at the bottom of Old Street, is Clifton Terrace, a row of very early 20th century houses which still retain Victorian style architectural features.

The next key construction scheme that will shape the area north of the railway line and may



The late Victorian Walkman Cottage – built to house the walkman who monitored and maintained this part of the Elan pipe line.

impinge on the neighbourhood encompassing Temeside and Steventon is the building of 150-200 properties off both sides of Foldgate Lane, and, at that point, covering the remaining fields between the railway and the bypass.

For various reasons I have not been able to thank individually, in print, all of the people who invited me into their homes and shared the information they had about the history of their houses and the local environment. I would like to take this opportunity here to express my gratitude to them all.

Ann Hedges



The buildings behind the Walkman Cottage used for maintenance of the Elan pipeline bridge.

19 I am grateful to the residents of Number 73 Riversdale, Gareth and Gloria Thomas for sharing this information about their house. Much of this was originally researched by them on a history course led by David Lloyd.

20 I am grateful to Martin and Ruby Thomas and other residents of Teme Villas for sharing information about their houses with me.

21 Lloyd, D. & Thomas, G, (2000) *Ludlow*, 2nd edition, Tempus Printing Ltd. Stroud.

22 Thank you to Bernard North for providing the information about the former, mid 20th century residents of these houses.

23 Powis Digital History Project (retrieved 2022).

24 Green, K. *Walking the Pipe Line*, (2020, retrieved 2022).

25 I am grateful to the occupier of Steventon Cottage for sharing this information about the pipe line and the Walkman Cottage.

26 After WW2, in order to address the housing shortage, a number of prefabricated homes were built in this area. The last of these to remain in its original state is presently being dismantled and is to be replaced by a two-storey house.

LUDLOW SCHOOLS

At the time of Victoria's coronation, Ludlow's education system consisted of the ancient Grammar School, dating from around 1552, a National School occupying a room above the Butter Cross and around 'fifteen private schools of diverse character'. Attendance was sparse and seldom enforced.

The general tone of the private establishments can be gleaned from the following: 'Mrs Evans begs to inform her Friends and those of Miss Valentine, that she has made Arrangements with that Lady to take her ESTABLISHMENT immediately after the Christmas Vacation, which will be continued on the same Terms. Mrs Evans has engaged the Assistance of the best Masters in the several Branches of Polite Education, and assures her Friends and Parents of Young Ladies entrusted to her care, that every attention shall be paid to the Moral and Religious duties as well as the accomplishments, health and comfort of her pupils.'¹

At the turn of the 19th century, the power elite was considerably alarmed by the unsettling effects of the French Revolution, the spread of nonconformity and the 'pernicious tenets of the rights of man'. Some years before, Dr Johnson had already observed that deference had 'sadly broken down in this age'.

Vast conurbations were springing up to serve the needs of industrialisation, prolific in factory, mill and chapel, whilst deficient in church and school. At the start of the century (London excepted) no town in the UK had a population greater than 100,000. By 1837 there were to be six above this number.² The decline of Anglican supremacy and the heavy drinking of much of the population³ was serious enough to view certain areas as meriting 'missionary' work. Mindful of the old Jesuit maxim, hearts and minds were best won young.

Joseph Lancaster⁴, 1778-1838, had opened a non-denominational (Lancasterian) school in 1798 based on the 'Madras' system of recursive teaching. Offering a Christian but non-sectarian education, it appeared subversive to the established Church. By 1808 fellow Quakers had taken over his rather shaky financial control and founded the 'Society for Promoting the Lancasterian System for the Education of the Poor'. Lancaster was left to promote his theories until he clashed with the Society and was expelled. The Society then changed its name to the British and Foreign School Society. As such, it went on to provide nearly 4,000 schools before the Education Act of 1902, whilst Lancaster moved to America to promote his personal gospel.

The Church of England lagged behind until 1811 when they set up the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. Starting with 52 National Schools and 8,620 pupils, in their second year they had 230 buildings and 40,484 students. Both systems, the National Schools with the Anglican Church as a driving force, and the British Schools supported by the nonconformists, continued to expand with philanthropic and private support, but it was not until 1832-3 that they

started to receive government funding.

The threadbare state of education in Ludlow at the start of the Queen's reign was all the more surprising given that Viscount Clive was a prominent educationalist as President of the royal Cambrian Literary Institute and the Welsh School in Gray's Inn Road.

At the infamously corrupt 1839 election between Henry Clive, Esq., a distant kinsman of the Viscount, and Thomas Alcock, Clive addressed the electorate on the subject of national education: 'I call it national education; but, in my opinion, the term should be Protestant education, for Protestant education is, or ought to be, the foundation of instruction in this country. (Hear, hear). I am satisfied that in no sense could education, with the exclusion of education in this country, be called national education. (Hear,

hear). Are the people of England to seek their creeds from the Mahometans, the infidels, or the Pope? (Hear, hear). Are they to go to these or any other creeds for their faith and guidance in this world, and hope for the next?'⁵

At the start of the Queen's reign the only purpose-built establishment was the Grammar School in Mill Street, the 14th century Palmers' Hall, with alterations and additions about every century. The early foundation of the Blue Coats was subsumed into the National School in 1813 with a schoolroom in the Butter Cross for boys and one for girls in Brand Lane, whilst the private schools prospered where they could. They appeared in various small ads: it was announced in 1837 from 'THE COMMERCIAL ACADEMY, MILL STREET' that 'W. Tinson respectfully informs his friends and the public that his SCHOOL will reopen on MONDAY 24th inst.⁶ And later, ROCK HOUSE SCHOOL, ROCKS GREEN, this SCHOOL offers facilities for thorough English Education, and is Intended to prepare Boys for

ordinary life of business...there will be a few Vacancies for Boarders. Terms on application to Mr Reed, Head Master.'⁷

At the more prestigious Castle Lodge, 'the Misses Evans' SCHOOL, which is now transferred to Mrs Crawford Watson, will be reopened on Thursday, 28th January, 1875.'

From early on, the National or Church of England School appears to be the largest. In 1846 it celebrated the birthday of one benefactor when the Rev. John Phillipps, Rector of Ludlow, gave a substantial dinner of roast beef, plum pudding and beer! to between 120 and 130 children. As soon as the boys had said grace (which was done by all the children repeating each sentence after the monitors), the chairman proposed the healths of Her Majesty, the Queen Dowager, Prince Albert and the Royal Family. To each



Joseph Lancaster by J. Hazlitt.

1 *Hereford Journal*, Wednesday 1st January 1823.

2 *Victorian Churches*. A.S.Curl, p.15.

3 By the 1750s the poor were consuming 11,326,070 gallons of legally distilled gin on an annual basis in London alone. *Dr Johnson's London*, Liza Picard. Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

4 See Spear carriers???

5 *Hereford Journal*, Wednesday, 12th ? 1839.

6 *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 14th July 1837.

7 *Wellington Journal*, Saturday, 8th January 1876.



The Grammar School, Mill Street.

toast the boys responded with three cheers and clapping of hands. When Her Majesty's health had been drunk, the boys sang 'God Save the Queen'.⁸

One cannot help but marvel how the country ran an enormous empire and led the world in technology upon this bedrock of knowledge.

There is at least a visible legacy in bricks and mortar of buildings specifically designed as schools.

The Grammar School, Mill St

A 12th-century foundation since 1527, housed in the medieval hall in Mill Street with a fluctuating number of students, the school was declining at the start of the Queen's reign. Later in the century numbers and standards improved sufficiently to merit expansion. From around 1867, High Hall, Castle Square, served as the town rectory, and remained so until the death of the incumbent, Edward Clayton in early 1907. By then it had been acquired by the Council who determined that it should become the Ludlow Grammar School or High School for girls. This, by the way, caused problems in enticing a new incumbent to accept the post until 38 Broad Street was purchased as a replacement rectory.

By January 1909 the local Advisory Committee recommended that Hall House be purchased at a cost of £3,200, Mr Brakspear⁹ having recommended that the premises were admirably suited to being adapted for a girls' secondary school.¹⁰

In April the committee proposed the appointment of Brakspear and John Butters¹¹, joint architects for the conversion, with Brakspear drawing the plans and Butters supervising their carrying out.¹² Brakspear was also retained on the original boys' Grammar School in Mill Street around the same period, beginning in May 1906 when the desirability of obtaining an architect's opinion as to converting the disused part of Barnaby House

into a gymnasium, workshop and science room. In 1908, the outcome was described at a quarterly meeting of the Governors, under 'Alterations to School, Barnaby house and the cottage adjoining.' Mr B had made the very most of the space at his disposal and the Headmaster said he thought the general plan was 'simply excellent'.¹³

Some small improvements were carried out in 1908 by John Swainson¹⁴ whilst further enlargements planned by the end of Victoria's reign, were finally opened in 1929. These are the Tudor style buildings at the south end of Palmers' Hall, in a sort of Elizabethan Arts and Crafts style, three classrooms comprising workshop and two labs on the site of the old carpenters' workshop. The architect was the prolific school architect, George H. Widdows.¹⁵

The National Schools, Galdeford (The Mascal Centre)

These finally found a permanent home in 1855. The foundation stone was laid by Lady Clive in a ceremony that included a full service and sermon in St Laurence's followed by a procession to the site that included the architect and builder. 'The schools [for 500 children] will be in the decorated gothic style...this is the winning design from 22 entries and will cost about £2,800 including the site. £900 is being given by the Committee of Council Education. The builder is Mr James Coleman of Chaxhill Road, Westbury-on-Severn.'¹⁶

Dogged by money problems, completion dragged on until January 1857 when it was reported that the buildings 'have recently been completed, and a very picturesque structure they form. They are built of rubble masonry, pointed with blue mortar and dressed with Bath stone. Mr T. Nicholson¹⁷, architect to the Hereford Diocesan Church Building Board, is the author

⁸ *Hereford Journal*, Wednesday, 28th January 1846.

⁹ Sir Harold Brakspear FSA, ARIBA, 1870-1934, architect of Corsham, Wilts: born in Cheshire, son of architect W.H.Brakspear and trained in his Manchester office.

¹⁰ *Wellington Journal*, 30th January, 1909.

¹¹ John Butters, MSA, 1857/9-1921, architect of the Racecourse grandstand, social housing and alterations to the Workhouse.

¹² *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 23rd April 1909.

¹³ *The Advertiser*, February 9th, 1908.

¹⁴ John Henry Swainson, 1858-1937, practised from 1, Hill Street, Wrexham. Architect of Parris Bank, Wrexham, 1896; St Giles Home Rhosnesni Lane, 1912; Ludlow Grammar School 1908; church tower, Wrexham, 1924 etc.

¹⁵ George H Widdows, 1871-1946, born in Norwich where he trained at the office of the Diocesan Surveyor. He was a pioneer of school design to enhance the health of children, and chief architect of Derbyshire where he designed about 80 schools.

¹⁶ *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 2nd November 1855.

¹⁷ Thomas Nicholson, 1823-95.



Ludlow Girls School, High Hall.

one on the corner of Sandpits and Henley Road (opposite the later Catholic church). A red brick creation under slate, with a blue brick 'Gothic' relieving arch and roof vents remaining intact. Despite appearances, this is actually in the parish of Stanton Lacy, built at the urging of the Rev. E. Clayton at a cost of £1,498 and eight pence. The adjacent teacher's house followed in 1884 after additional funding was found.²⁰ It was closed and derelict by the 1950s, it was converted to housing. The modern fenestration has totally destroyed any original features. The surviving drawing would suggest Penson.²¹

A contemporary report stated that 'The new Schools, Gravel Hill, which have recently been built by voluntary subscription, for the use of the children of the Sandpits portion of Stanton Lacy parish, will shortly be opened.

The buildings comprise day-rooms, class-rooms, lavatories and master's residence, with a spacious exercise ground fronting the Bridgnorth road. It is built of brick in the Gothic style, with free-stone plinths and dressings, the interior woodwork being beautifully stained. on the architect and contractor, Mr James Hine, builder, of Corve Street. The building fund has materially increased second donations from Earl Powis, Lord Boyne, Sir C.H.R. Boughton, Rev. E. Clayton and various other influential residents.²²

In the following year the Ven. Bowles, vicar of Stanton Lacy, regaled 60 children with a plentiful dinner of roast beef and plum pudding.²³ The doctor had previously sent a winter supply of coal for use by the school.

of the design. The school will accommodate 600 children, that is to say 200 boys, 200 girls and 200 infants. The school-rooms are, of course, all separate, each with its own playground, and there are three distinct residences, for a master and two mistresses.¹⁸

HM Inspector's report on the Ludlow National Schools for the year ending June 1880 comments on the boys' school, 'A fairly good school. The discipline is not very effective. The results of examination were fairly good, or good in the third standard, fair in the fourth standard and upwards. In the upper standards reading and recitation were wanting in style, and the answering depended on too few individuals who are allowed to represent the class. The girls' school. A good school throughout. The reading of the fourth standard was particularly careful and accurate. Grammar was good as a rule, and needlework fairly good. The discipline is still a little wanting in firmness, and many of the big boys would be better dealt with in the girls school. Infants' School. This is an excellent school in organisation, discipline and attainments.'¹⁹

Stanton Lacy, East Hamlet or Gravel Hill National School

A 'pro bono' design by architect Richard Kirk Penson, 1815-86, of Dinham House. His obituary in *The Builder* makes a passing mention of designing the national School, Ludlow. However, at the time this was not really part of Ludlow. St Laurence's C. of E. school was proposed in 1870 and finally opened in 1876 at East Hamlet, an expanding suburb that had entered the Ludlow orbit. The site is a triangular



The National School, Galdeford.

¹⁸ *Illustrated Times*, 24th January, 1857.

¹⁹ *Ludlow Advertiser*, 6th September, 1890.

²⁰ Shropshire Archives. Proposed extension to Ludlow National School, Secretary to committee of council of education, 24th November, 1884. R.K.Penson, Dinham House, Ludlow. Ref. P176/R/1/1/21.

²¹ Lloyd, D. *Victorian Ludlow*, p.172.

²² *Wellington Journal*, 3rd June 1876

²³ *Wellington Journal*, 6th January 1877. Stanton Lacy.



East Hamlet School. You can still see a polychromatic relieving arch.

British School, Old Street

The erection of a new Wesleyan Methodist chapel in Broad Street in 1880 enabled the redundant building in Old Street to be used as a day school under the auspices of, and in connection with the Wesleyan Methodist Committee, employing a Mr Phillips as the headmaster. His stay was a brief one, and in 1881 he was succeeded by Mr Barker. In 1885 Miss Cox, now Mrs Barker, became mistress of the Infant School. During the subsequent 16 years over 1,203 children were taught.

The move from the old chapel was a project formulated over several years, beginning with the purchase of the Manse in Old Street as a site to include a master's house.²⁴ The builders were Messrs. Turford and Southward²⁵, with Mr Benjamin Weale as architect.²⁶

In April 1896 when the school opened, the number of pupils was 180. In 1972, St Laurence's C. of E. Primary School was merged with the British School, making it the principal primary school in town. One of the alumni was the author, P.D. James.

without any tangible result. The matter was kept prominently before the annual parish meetings, but the ratepayers did not take very kindly to the idea, and the question was kept in

abeyance until the advent of the present vicar, (Rev. B.D.Machin). Various descriptions as Parish Room or Parish School, the building was finally opened on April 21st 1906 by the Archdeacon of Ludlow.²⁷ Despite the inscription, 'Ludlow Parish School', it was built principally as a Sunday school. The contract had been agreed a year earlier in August with builder W.J.Herbert of Bishop's Frome, near Bromyard, to a design by John Spreckley.²⁸ The Archdeacon was presented with a silver key for his trouble.



Ludford Parish School

Victoria died in 1901, but the *Ludlow Advertiser* for 21st April 1906 revealed that 'for many years the need of a parish room has been much felt by the parishioners of Ludford, and several efforts were made in the direction of providing a suitable place for the holding of school classes, etc., but

.....
24 *Leominster News and North West Herefordshire & Radnorshire Advertiser*, 17th April, 1896.

25 Edward Turford and Enoch Southward. Much local building including the Masonic Hall. Wound up 1923.

26 Benjamin Weale, 1845-1920, 'the king of East Hamlet'. Builder of several chapels and much housing.

27 *The Advertiser*, April 1906.

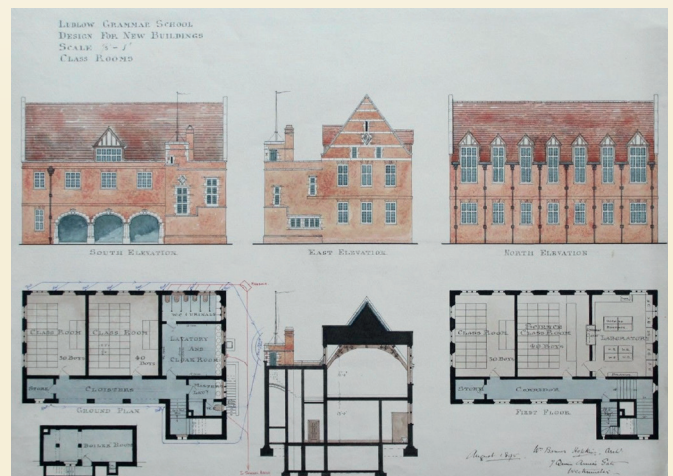
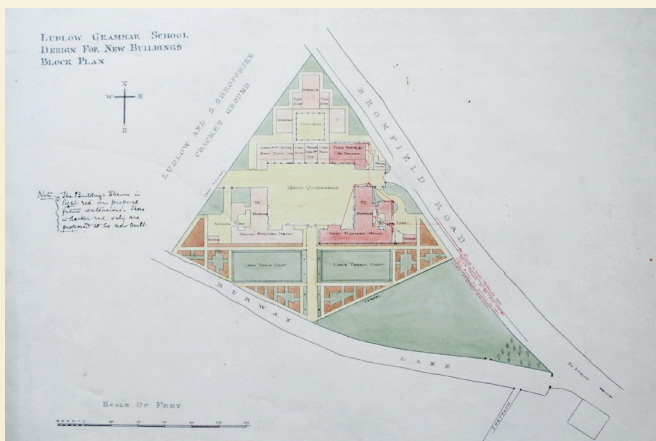
28 John Alfred Spreckley, AMEIC, 1876-1933, Borough Surveyor and architect of Ludford School Room, Temeside, 1906. He also dragged the town into the 20th century, setting out the electric, sewage and water system to be fit for modern life. Born in Middlesex, the son of James, an articulated solicitors' clerk, he lived at 12 Castle View.

*The British School, Old Street.
The central part under the two dormers is the original building.*





Ludlow Parish School.



The School that Never Was.

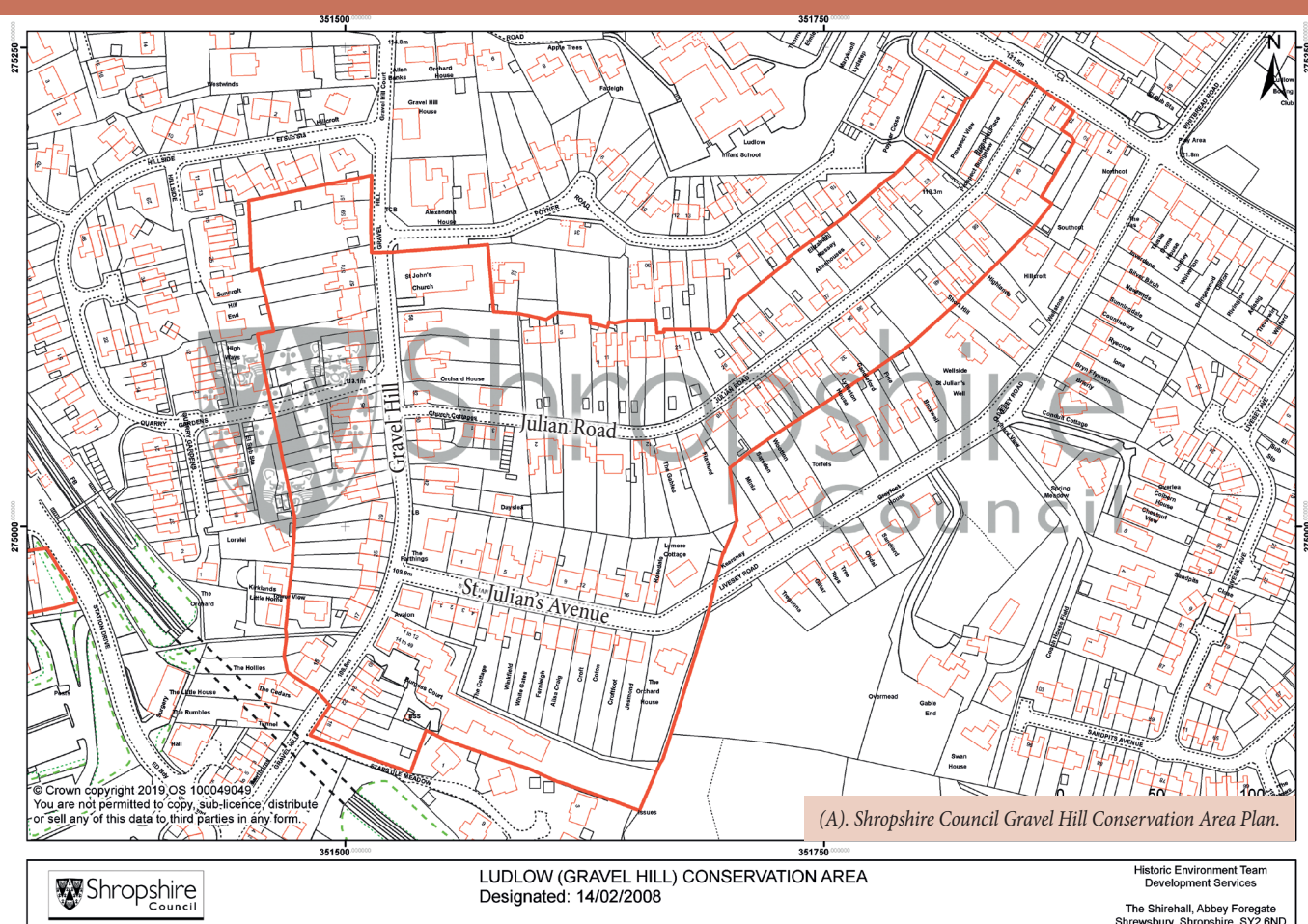
A public competition was held in 1897 for a new Grammar School to be built on the Bromfield Road. Despite this being won by the firm of Lanchester, Stewart and Rickards, the scheme was too expensive to build. The drawings are by a Scottish architect, William Bonner Hopkins, b. 1868, who studied under George Frederick Bodley. He also entered competitions for Inglis Memorial Hall and library, 1896, and Midlothian County Council Buildings, 1899, both rejected. He commenced practice in London from 1893. From 1900 to 1905 he worked in partnership with Ernest Walker, and in later years practised in Berkhamstead, Herts.

Then, as now, some things never change. In 1901, School Cases, Edward and Jane Housman of Corve Street, were fined 6d. and 6s. costs for not sending a child named Willie Watkins (7) regularly to school. The attendances numbered 13 out of a possible 48. On the application of Mr E. Blakemore Attendance Orders were made.²⁹

Richard Hurlock



²⁹ Ludlow Advertiser, 15th June 1901.



GRAVEL HILL CONSERVATION AREA

A former garden suburb of Ludlow?

'The façade of a building also belongs to the viewer.'

Victor Hugo.

The origin of the Gravel Hill Conservation Area stemmed from the research by the Ludlow Historical Research Group and its publication *Victorian Ludlow*¹ in 2004. Prior to that, the main focus had been on the medieval and Georgian centre of town, designated a Conservation Area in 1970, and the Steventon (Temeside) Conservation Area (1994). The Gravel Hill area lies on the hill north-east of the town centre and railway, in the parish of Stanton Lacy.

This conservation area was designated by South Shropshire District Council in 2008.² It includes Gravel Hill, Julian Road and St Julian's Avenue. 'This area covers a stage-wise development over the period 1850-1901, contains Ludlow's most imposing housing of the period and offers an interesting and varied streetscape.'³ The coming of the railway to Ludlow in 1852 was a major factor in the Victorian expansion.

Rationale

The combination of architectural and historic interest of the area and the need to conserve the (mostly) homogeneous nature of the townscape for future generations. This would help to preserve the uniformity of the terraces, detached and semi-detached villas. It would also prevent

the replacement of timber windows with plastic double-glazing, the loss of Victorian doors, iron railings and other period details. It would ensure safeguarding against inappropriate development and unsympathetic extensions.

Gravel Hill

Gravel Hill Conservation Area starts beyond Station Drive and proceeds uphill in the direction of the hospital. It encompasses houses on the west side, from a pair of Gothic Revival villas, 'The Firs' and 'The Laurels' to the semi-detached villas, 'Hillcrest' and 'The Mount'. On the eastern side it runs from No. 18, 'Sandown' to St John's

1 *Victorian Ludlow*, ed. Lloyd, D., Train, C., Williams, D. Scenesters, 2004.

2 SSDC. Conservation Area Appraisal, Ludlow (Gravel Hill). Designated 14th February 2008.

3 Ludlow Civic Society. A proposal for the establishment of a Victorian Conservation Area in Ludlow. LCS 2007.



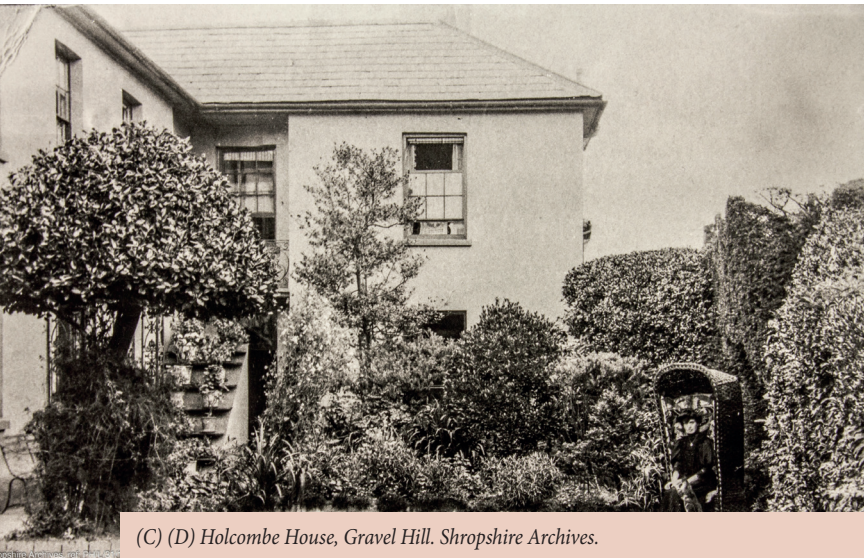
(B) Julian Road. Long front garden.

a reminder of this. This explains why the predominant housing material is red brick, usually with grey Welsh slate roofs.

Much of the housing was speculative. Many of the developers were tradesmen from the centre of town. The opportunities to move families from 'over the shop' or within the town to the spacious accommodation in the suburb was very appealing. The large gardens on the west side of Gravel Hill had splendid views towards the Castle, St Laurence's church and Whitcliffe. The gardens on the south side of Julian Road and the north side of St Julian's Avenue back onto each other with a good

expanse of green and plenty of trees. Some of the gardens have been sold off and built on by 20th century developments. This detracts from the feeling of spaciousness and countryside which would have characterised the Victorian dwellings. Originally, the area must have had a garden suburb atmosphere. (B, C, D)

The release of land from the Ludlow Corporation's sale of land in 1852 facilitated



(C) (D) Holcombe House, Gravel Hill. Shropshire Archives.



church. (See plan (A).) It excludes the hospital with its few remains of the Victorian workhouse and the Georgian residence, Gravel Hill House (Grade 2 listed) which are already protected.

The name Gravel Hill is taken from the deposits of gravel dating from the Ice Age. It used to be known as Sandpits Road. (T. Curley's map of 1862) or 'the road to the sandpits'. (The

present Sandpits Road was the location of the original sandpits.) 'Hillside', west of Gravel Hill, descends into the former brick pits. 'The brick clay was obtained from the Ragstone Mud formation.'⁴

The former quarrying can be seen in the steep back gardens of some of 'Quarry Gardens' and 'Hillside'. The name 'Quarry Gardens' is



(G) Church of St. John the Evangelist, 1881.



(E) Gravel Hill Terrace, Gravel Hill, 1853.

4 Royal Geographical Society. 'Shaping the landscape: discover the dramatic impact of glaciers in Ludlow'. Walk created by Michael Rosenbaum, 2014. Online reference, direction 14.



(F) Victoria Terrace, 1881.



(H) Postcard view of Gravel Hill, 1909.

the development of the early terrace, 'Gravel Hill Terrace' (Nos. 17-29) by a local cutler, Francis Bursnell of Old Street, in 1853. Two-storey, red brick with attractive porches, three of the seven have been rendered. (E). One has painted white brickwork. No. 17 has inappropriately been given an 'Art Deco' look with pebble dash render, new windows and porch. Francis Bursnell also developed a pair of three-storey semis, Nos. 31-33, further up the hill. This is followed by two grandiose three-storey terraces, William Putnam's terrace (Nos. 35-45) of six houses with dormer windows, and Victoria Terrace of four houses (Nos. 47-53).

Victoria Terrace (F) is built of red brick with bands of Staffordshire blue bricks and decorative corbel table. It has a slate roof and typical Victorian features: ground floor bay windows, cast iron railings and gates. The bay windows have decorative ironwork above (one missing). This terrace was developed by William Bodenham, the High Street draper, who lived opposite at 'Glenview' (No. 54) a large, detached villa. He bought the plot for Victoria Terrace in 1881 for £915 (some £47,000 in modern terms).⁵ The terrace was later lived in by several of his sons. In 1894 the glebe land between Gravel Hill Terrace and Victoria Terrace was sold in four lots. One lot was bought by Edmund Jones, grocer of 15 High Street, who lived in 'Bringewood', one of the two semis he built. The other three lots were acquired by William Putnam, a lessee of granite quarries, who built his terrace there.

The west side terminates in five large, detached and semi-detached villas, ending in 'Hillcrest' and 'The Mount'. These superior houses have elaborate and expensive detailing: decorative stonework round the windows and doors, polychromatic brickwork and, in the case of 'Hillcrest', a feature coloured glass window next to the front door. This was the home of Charles Marston, the miller and corn merchant, whose premises were not far away down the hill.

Opposite, on the east side of Gravel Hill, the Conservation Area finishes with the church of St

John the Evangelist (G), completed in 1881, by A.W. Blomfield, to serve the new congregation surrounding Gravel Hill. It is built of a sombre grey Pennant stone, with bell tower looking over Gravel Hill. It has a light, lofty interior with mostly plain glass windows and a few of stained glass. The stained glass east window depicts scenes from the life of St John. The reredos is 'opus sectile', a rare example of cut work by the Whitefriars firm James Powell and Sons.

Coming back towards the town, there are several grandiose detached houses and on the right-hand side of the entrance to Julian Road, a Georgian-style terrace and 'Arran House', a large, semi-detached house with polychromatic brickwork. A tall brick wall completes the run and partly obscures a modern bungalow at the beginning of St Julian's Avenue. Was this part of the old nursery wall? Finally, Glebe Terrace (Nos.24-30) of four Victorian houses, is shown in the OS 1885 map. The white rendered house, No. 18, 'Sandown', completes the conservation area.

Julian Road

The Julian Road Estate was also facilitated by the release of land to pay off debts by Ludlow Corporation in 1854. The entrepreneur who bought the land was Rodney Anderson, a solicitor of Mill Street. It consisted of two large fields to the east of Gravel Hill. Mr Harley Jones's plan of 1859 maps 41 plots (J). Many of them later changed hands several times. Here too, local entrepreneurs were jumping on the bandwagon to secure a stake in such a highly desirable enterprise. This explains the piecemeal development of the site. The subdivision of the 41 plots is clearly shown in the conservation area proposal document.⁶

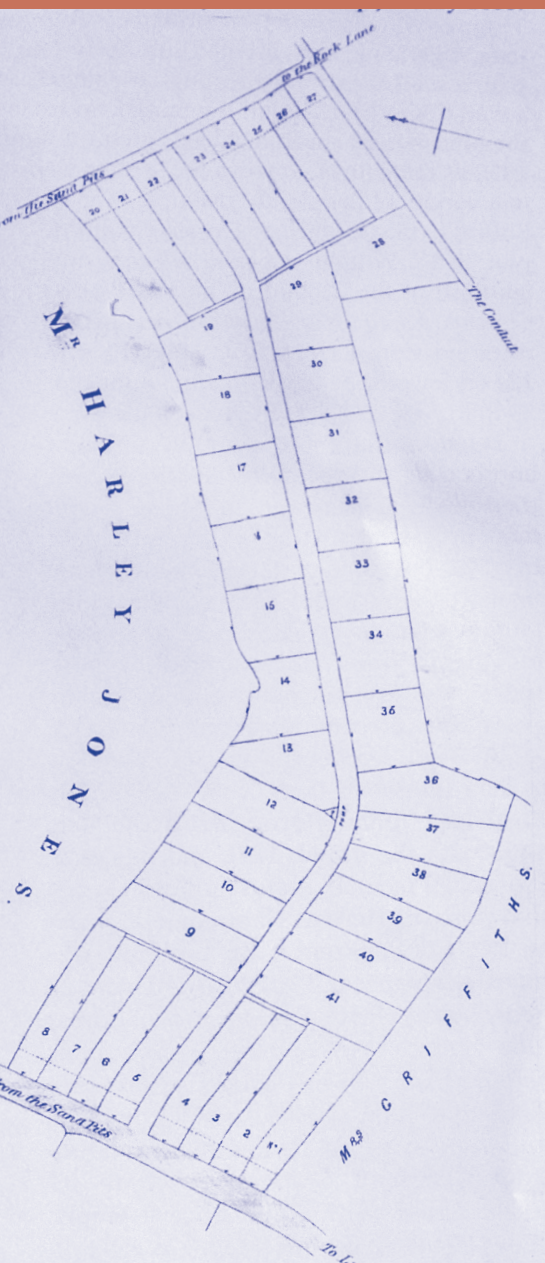
The houses are of varied design and date although, as in the case of Gravel Hill, local red brick and grey slate roofs predominate. On the north side of the road houses nos. 1, to 13 are set well back from the road with long front gardens (B) somewhat spoiled by an unsightly



(I) "Claremont", Julian Road.

⁵ Train, C. The Growth of Victorian Ludlow in *Victorian Ludlow* ch.2, p.32.

⁶ Ibid. 2 p. 22.



(J) Plan of Julian Road, 1859.

mixture of garages. James Hine, a builder of Corve Street, built nos. 1, 9, 12, and 13 in 1887-1888. In contrast nos. 25 and 27, small semi-detached cottages, and no. 31, are set right on the pavement. No. 31, a large detached house, has an unfortunate extension, unsympathetic in both scale and style. Further up the hill, no. 51, formerly "Lincoln Villa," is a semi-detached with an impressive façade and matching design to no. 53. A pattern around the door features an elongated arch of cream brickwork. There are matching cream quoins and window surrounds contrasting spectacularly with the red brickwork of the house. It is most likely to be by the same builder as no. 8, "Claremont" which has a very similar pattern. The south side of the road is characterised by detached and semi-detached houses mostly of the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Of particular note is "Trinity Cottages" a group of artisan cottages. Nearby nos. 22 and



(K) "Lincoln Villa", 51 Julian Road.

24 have very attractive porches. The narrow road is alien to today's traffic and the necessity for car parking detracts from the street scene.

St Julian's Avenue

In October 1893 St Julian's nursery was sold by Francis Calver, seedsman and florist of the Bull Ring. Norton's advertisement states: 'The plots were laid out to attract persons seeking to

build desirable houses, and on land sloping to the south on red sandstone formation with extensive views down the valley of the Teme, well sheltered from the north and east.⁷

The nursery was divided into 16 plots and St Julian's Avenue was constructed. Calver himself kept one of the plots on the south side of the road on the corner of Gravel Hill, and built the detached villa, 'Avalon' (1897). The remaining early development was on the north side with four houses shown on the 1902 OS map: No.



(L) 14 "Park Villa" and 16 "Grove Villa" St. Julian's Avenue.

7 Ibid. 2, p. 42.

4 'Mary Grove Villa' (1894); No. 8 'Lorenzo'⁸ (1895); and Nos. 14 and 16 'Park Villa' and 'Grove Villa' (1896). The last two are a pair of double bay semi-detached villas of symmetrical proportions. Built of red brick with slate roofs and pierced terracotta ridge tiles, they are typical of the period. The specification for the owner, Mr Samuel Peake of 21 Castle view Terrace ensures a high standard of building:

'All the walls of the houses and outbuildings to be built of good bricks, well made and well burnt and properly bonded and solidly put together with good mortar compounded of good lime and clean sharp sand with neatly struck joints... the front walls to be built in Flemish bond, the front wall to be built with pressed brick, also entrance to the front door...doors with embossed glass panels...the hall and passage and doorway to be laid with approved encaustic tiles at six shillings per yard...from Craven Dunill, Jackfield, Broseley.'

Their cast iron rare railings feature foxes' heads. Unfortunately, the specification does not give the manufacturer of these unusual railings. Three Edwardian houses, two cottages and a 20th-century house complete the north side of the road.

Most of the south side is Edwardian. Of particular note is the detached house, 'Croft' (M) (1908), with its gracious tiled porch and its front

door with stained glass. It has decorative pierced barge boards above a Venetian style window. This house was owned by Wilfrid Dodgson, brother of Charles Dodgson, alias Lewis Carroll of 'Alice in Wonderland' fame. These were houses built for large families. The next-door semis, 'Ailsa Craig' and 'Fernleigh' (O), are built with typical Edwardian grandeur, featuring imposing entrance porches with black and white work on the first floor level (N). Above this is moulded decoration reminiscent of the hand-crafted parquetry of the eastern counties. Red roof tiles are a popular choice for this period, replacing the Welsh slate of the Victorian era. Often semi-detached houses were built with front doors side by side to give the feel of a single house. All built to appeal and impress! (O).

Conclusion

How successful has the creation of the Conservation Area been? It has preserved 'Avalon' in its original form and refused planning permission when the developer wanted to add an out of scale extension in 2010. It has approved a very sympathetic extension to No. 64 Julian Road. Not so successful has been the modernisation of No.35 Julian Road, especially its ultra-modern front door. There has been some loss of trees from St Julian's Avenue, which

is a shame since the south side of the avenue is particularly denuded of trees. Originally the avenue was lined with trees on both sides, an impossibility to reinstate with today's traffic conditions.

Of considerable concern is the recent statement by Shropshire Council that it will no longer support the Conservation Area Advisory Committee, a group of locally based experts who meet monthly to monitor and advise on new planning applications. It is not clear how this will take effect, but the legal requirement at the time of designation was that 'the local authority is under a duty from time to time to publish and consult on proposals to preserve and enhance conservation areas... This means that there is a higher standard of design required in conservation areas than elsewhere.'

On a more specific level, one of the greatest threats today is the deterioration of many of the original cast iron railings and gates which make this area so special. The Civic Society has issued guidelines for repair.⁹ However, it is the task of owners to be willing and able to carry out the careful conservation required. The Society perhaps needs to do more to raise awareness of this.

Gaye Smith

8 Wedd, K. *The Victorian Society Book of the Victorian House* Aurum Press, 2002.

9 Ludlow Civic Society website. Renovating and maintaining historic buildings. VE5 Ironwork.



(M) "Croft", St. Julian's Avenue.



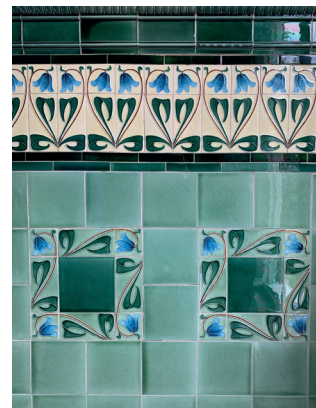
(N) "Ailsa Craig" and "Fernleigh". Detail of moulded decoration.



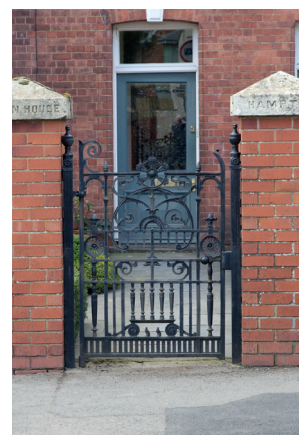
(O) "Ailsa Craig" and "Fernleigh". Double front doors.

Gravel Hill Conservation Area. Architectural details.

Tiles



Railings



Doors and Windows



Porches



ROSANNA LOCKHART

We were all very sad to learn of the sudden and unexpected death of Rosanna Lockhart last November. She was a member of the Civic Society for many years and a very active champion of the historic architecture of Ludlow, particularly that of the Georgian era.

A full obituary will appear in the next issue of Heritage News.



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His novel *Ovington's Bank* is considered his best and is set in a fictional Shrewsbury.

Re-issued by Ludlow publishers Merlin Unwin Books, it is now available from Castle Bookshop.

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The People and History of Lower Corve Street and St Mary's Lane, Ludlow

A hardback publication with contemporary and historic photographs.

Jonathan and Rosemary Wood moved to Ludlow from the village of Frensham, near Farnham, in Surrey in 2002. By 2006, and living in The Merchant House in Lower Corve Street, Jonathan, a motoring historian, journalist, author of over 40 books and one-time chairman of Ludlow Historical Research Group, began researching its history. Work intervened, and the manuscript was put on hold until Jonathan's retirement would allow him to complete it. A stroke in 2019, however, meant that no more books could be written.

When Jonathan and Rosemary Wood moved to The Merchant House in Lower Corve Street, Jonathan, author, motoring historian, and former Chairman of Ludlow Historical Research Group, began researching its history. In 2019, he suffered a stroke and writing ceased. Rosemary, acting as Jonathan's researcher, would complete the book, and include the history, people and houses of Lower Corve Street and St. Mary's Lane.

Costing £20, the A4 hardback publication of @ 100,00 words with numerous photographs will be ready for Christmas 2022. An indication of demand before printing is needed, so advance copies will be sold.

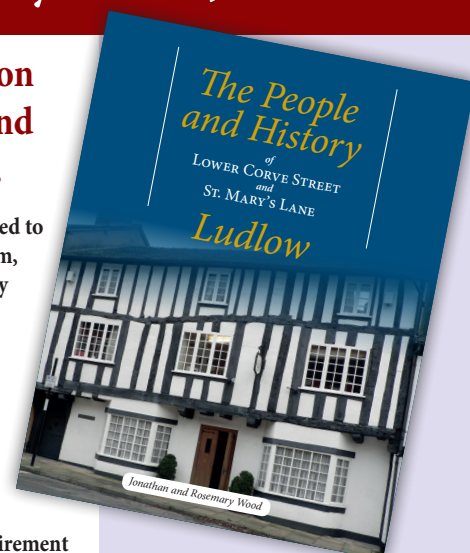
It is hoped that prospective readers will order a copy now. Books should be collected from **The Merchant House, Lower Corve Street, Ludlow, SY8 1DU**, when payment may be made. Or cheques for £20 a copy, payable to Rosemary Wood, could be sent to the above address.



The Lowe Family Photograph courtesy of Gareth Thomas.



Pipe and Sons, St. Mary's Lane Photograph courtesy of Joan Pipe.



The People and Houses of Lower Corve Street and St. Mary's Lane, Ludlow.

Until the C20, Corve Street was one entity; only with the creation of Coronation Avenue did 'Lower' Corve Street exist. In the C12, Knights Hospitaller received rents from burgages owned by the Lord of Ludlow; dyers lived and worked by the River Corve whilst trading with Florence and Flanders. Rich glovers erected back buildings for their impoverished workers in a noxious tanning zone, then moved uphill into houses reflecting their new social status.

Corporation officials invested in property; C19 entrepreneurs traded, exchanged, borrowed, or went bankrupt. Social distinctions were blurred; maltsters and brewers plied their trade; speculators amassed fortunes. Murder was committed. C20 hauliers transported livestock locally and goods globally. Some residents of Corve Street were splendidly creative or enduringly eccentric; others were involved in scandalous behaviour.

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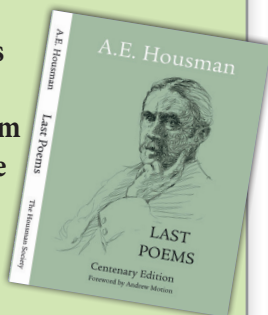
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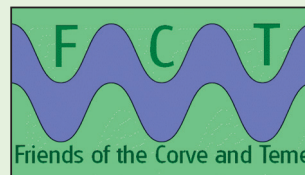


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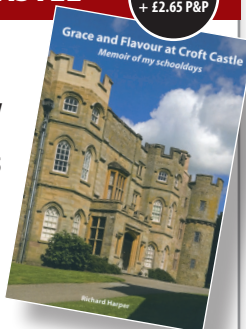
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COMMITTEE NEWS

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Several years of pestilence weathered and 'a return to normal' is announced – surely a rather depressing aspiration of mediocrity. And, amongst much else, the new normal continues with council cuts to services.

The LCAAC (Ludlow Conservation area Advisory Committee) has been a fairly unique guardian against poor development affecting the listed buildings of the town, with the assistance of Shropshire Planning. In February, the Senior Conservation Officer, Becky Jones, informed the LCAAC that it has been decided that Shropshire council is no longer able to give its support.

At the start of this year the Government announced a U-turn on its contentious new planning policy, moving away from blind zoning. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), now known as the department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, decided that the planning system will 'continue to require consultation on the details of development proposals as they come forward' with 'effective local engagement at its heart and community views central to its decisions.' What then is the basis of this announcement from Shirehall?

Which brings us rather neatly, in this second Victorian edition, to brief mention of the town's one-time most prominent reminder of Victoria Guelph. The Town Hall and Market building was designed by Henry Arthur Cheers (1853-1916) and replaced a rather pleasant and restrained Georgian structure. Cheers's creation served its purpose admirably for 98 years and shared the year of its creation with the Local government Act of 1888. This ended the self-serving paternalism and incompetence of the grand families that ran the counties and replaced them with the self-serving incompetence of the bureaucrat.

In March 1986, following a year of refurbishment, it was suddenly announced that this building had been declared unsafe by engineers, and, in the words of a long-time resident, the decision for demolition was 'one of the fastest the Council has ever managed'. It is, of course, a coincidence that in June of that year an official move was made nationwide to 'clean up town hall corruption'. This town, of course, now has no town hall or market hall.

The authors of this destruction included the Town Council, South Shropshire District Council and the County Council. The latter were already at the forefront of the brave new iconoclasm. Until 1965 Shropshire County Council were formerly housed in, yes, an attractively restrained Classical building erected by Sir Robert Smirke (1780-1867) in 1837 as law courts and used by the Council following their creation in 1888.

With the increase in bureaucracy and an ever-expanding remit, the Council decided on a larger building to be sited in Abbey Foregate. This was designed by their architect, Ralph Crowe, and opened by the Queen in 1967. The council, having completed their move, left the old shirehall vacant and deteriorating. It was then demolished in 1971 and replaced by the retail centre known as Princess House.

The Council were now ensconced in a building of stupefying ugliness on a prominent site, only restrained by the height of Lord Hill's monument. Ralph Crowe was County Architect from 1958-66 and became obsessed with modular construction (MCB). He was considered by some to be an

abrasive personality.

In 2020 the Council had already elected to seek a new home rather than spend £24 million trying to restore this gift to the ratepayer. The decision caused an unrealistic outcry to save it 'as a fine and important landmark building that was built for all Shropshire people to impress at the prestigious entry point into the town from London', and, indeed, this Society was approached by 'friends' of the execrable Shirehall to join in preserving this flagship of 60s brutalism, but we declined.

At this time of writing the Council struggle continues. Having spent £51 million buying the Pride Hill shopping centre in Shrewsbury, now valued at £12 million, their plan to convert this into new offices was shown to be impractical.

Instead, it is to be demolished and from the ashes a new Shirehall - sorry, Civic Centre – is to rise, funded entirely by the sale of the Shirehall site and a grant that the Council has already secured. The costs have been estimated as high as £77 million, recouped with a series of unproven schemes, and the architectural aesthetic is dull and damaging to the town's historic fabric.

The Council has a track record of poor financial foresight and failure to protect the county heritage. Witness the latest furore at the proposal to build 83 homes on a site just a few hundred metres from the base of Oswestry Iron Age hill fort. Will the Heritage Officer for that area intervene or have any effect?

We are not just on our own in this ongoing struggle, but actively undermined by officials set in office to protect our heritage. The recent success at Castle View Terrace was down to sustained and united protest. I hope that this roundabout history lesson has highlighted the ever-present neglect of the Council in their duty.

If we had any drawbridges left, I would suggest raising them. Welcome to a 'return to normal'.

Richard Hurlock

MEMBERSHIP AND EVENTS

Foremost in my thoughts as I write this report for the Spring 2022 edition is the loyalty and support of the members throughout 2020, 2021 and now into 2022. Despite being unable to have the Wednesday talks and excursions during the lockdowns, members have renewed their annual membership with only the enjoyment of the bi-annual Heritage magazine to compensate. Several new members have joined during the pandemic. Sadly, we have lost some of the Life Members, including a recently joined member aged 95 in Adelaide, Australia.

The Society sprang into life last October with a walking tour of historic Presteigne, expertly led by our Chair, Richard Hurlock. We followed on to Burton Court, a fine manor house, where we had a guided tour and met the Simpson family. The coach was full, our adventurous members forgetting the pandemic with their day out!

The Committee is particularly disappointed that Madresfield Court is not to be open to the public yet. So we must wait longer for our visit. Similarly, the Flaxmill Maltings at Shrewsbury are not quite ready for public visits this year. However, we are arranging a visit to the Laskett

Garden of Sir Roy Strong in May, then, later in the year, to Brynkinhalt near Wrexham.

We began our Wednesday Talks again in February with a talk by David de Haan who has been closely involved with the Iron Bridge at Telford over many decades. All members will have received the membership card and programme showing the talks, but you are all asked to read your emails for changes to the programme covering two local speakers. As you read this, the talk will have taken place by Andrew Watson, an art historian from Edinburgh, discussing the collection of the

Victorian Constantine Ionides. Some long-time residents of South Shropshire will remember Julia Ionides, whose family goes back to Constantine Ionides.

As regards the talks and excursions, it remains only to ask all members to watch out for emails giving publicity to all the talks and excursions which our Vice Chair, John Cartwright, efficiently sends with energetic frequency!

Finally, it is a pleasure to tell the membership about the archive the Society has created of the entire contents of the Heritage magazines as far back as 1985, which are now on our website www.ludlowcivicsociety.org. Click on the menu on the homepage (top right) to find these earlier editions of the magazine with absorbing articles about Ludlow, its history, buildings and people. You will also find a comprehensive index for easy reference.

Jane Hunt

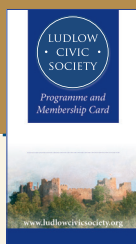
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BECOME A MEMBER - JOIN NOW

If you care about Ludlow and its surroundings and if you wish to join, please complete the form below.



To: The Membership Secretary, Ludlow Civic Society,
51 Julian Road, Ludlow SY8 1HD

Please accept my/our application to join the society.

Annual membership subscription is £13 per person. £24.50 per couple - normally due on September 1st. I enclose £ to cover.

Cheques payable to 'Ludlow Civic Society' please.

Please treat all my subscriptions and/or donations to the Ludlow Civic Society until further notice as GIFT AID. I am currently a UK taxpayer.

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

Heritage News, 5 Castle Street, Ludlow SY8 1AS

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A.E. HOUSMAN: "LAST POEMS". CENTENARY EDITION, THE HOUSMAN SOCIETY

Housman's "Last Poems" have, inevitably perhaps, been upstaged by "A Shropshire Lad".

The poetic quality is certainly more uneven, thematically more repetitive, but this superb Centenary Edition will go a long way towards redressing the balance between the two collections. It will surely establish itself as the definitive edition. This is due

in no small part to the wealth of scholarly insight which distinguishes the Introduction and Critical Commentaries. An added bonus is Andrew Motion's excellent Foreword, in which he traces Housman's relationship with the movement of literary Modernism, high-priested by Eliot, Pound and Joyce at the time "Last Poems" appeared. In many ways Housman was at odds with Modernism in form, in metrics, in romantic nostalgia and in his use of traditional stanzaics. However, as Motion perceptively points out, the darkening pessimism clouded undeniably by the Great War, the questioning of acceptable sexual mores, and his increasingly astringent, explicit atheism provided some affinity with the Modernists in these poignant poems.

Edgar Vincent's Introduction is first-rate. It is a fascinating, revealing account of the genesis and critical reception of "Last Poems". It examines the correspondence between poet and publisher; critical reactions of friends and colleagues; and the profound impact on Housman of his parting from Moses Jackson, who left for India, married and died tragically young in British Columbia. In these later poems Housman feels able to be more open and explicit about the depth of his devotion. The impact upon poet and poems of the persecution of Oscar Wilde is sensitively charted by Vincent. Housman's attitude to war, that beguiling blend of pathos and patriotism in his "red-coated lads..food for powder" is examined with sharp discernment. There is very little thematic development in LP from ASL, but the poet revisits familiar territory with often added intensity. This collection with its sharp variations in poetic quality contains nonetheless arguably Housman's two finest poems: "Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries", described by Kipling as the finest poem to emerge from the Great War (a grand claim!) and "Tell me not here" LPXL.

The Critical Commentaries by John Cartwright add immeasurably to one's understanding of the gestation, context, biographical relevance and literary influences of individual poems. They also offer some highly perceptive value judgements and stylistic analysis. My own favourite lyric, "Tell me not here" (surely his finest) is illuminated brilliantly by Cartwright's critical evaluation. Readers familiar with Housman will be enriched by this scholarly tour de force; newcomers should find insight stimulating appreciation. It is difficult to envisage this edition being superseded. The Housman Society is to be warmly congratulated on this Centenary triumph.

Ian Barge

The Centenary edition of Housman's Last Poems is available in hardback from Castle Square Bookshop priced at £14.95.

