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A.E. HOUSMAN'S *LAST POEMS* (1922)

A CENTENARY EVALUATION AND CELEBRATION

Housman's ashes lie beneath a memorial plaque near the north door of St. Laurence's Church, where he is referred to as a professor of Latin and the author of *A Shropshire Lad* (Figure 1). He also wrote another volume of verse published a hundred years ago this year entitled *Last Poems*. To coincide with the centenary publication of *Last Poems* by the Housman Society, this article examines the poignant story behind the publication of this book, a story that reveals one of the main reasons why Housman wrote poetry at all.

For the love of Moses

In the closing months of 1922 Moses John Jackson lay dying in a hospital bed in Vancouver. He was suffering from stomach cancer and had only a few months to live. He had accomplished much in his life. In 1875, aged seventeen, he attended University College, London, where he was awarded the Arnott Medal in Experimental Physics. In 1877 he was successful in winning the Holmes Scholarship in Science offered by St John's College, Oxford. Here he secured a first-class honours degree in Natural Science (see Figure 2). Over the years 1881-1887 he worked at the Patent Office in London, during which time he also did research at UCL and was awarded a doctorate in 1883. After this he moved to India to take up a post as the Principal of the Sind College in Karachi. Later, he became acting Principal of the Baroda School from 1908-1910. In 1911 he then bought land and property for farming near New Westminster, British Columbia, and so moved with his family to Canada.

While Jackson fought his illness, on the other side of the Atlantic, from his rooms in Trinity College, Cambridge, the classicist and poet, A. E. Housman (Figure 3), aware of Jackson's plight, was busy writing and assembling a set of poems for what he intended to be his last volume of poetry. It was a race against time, but on 19th October 1922 the collection, *Last Poems*, was published. On the same day Housman took up his pen and wrote a letter that he packaged with the book and sent to Moses as a final tribute.

Moses Jackson and Housman had met many years before at Oxford where, between 1877 and

1881, they studied as undergraduates. For a while they shared rooms with another scholar, A. W. Pollard. We may recall with some gratitude that it was Pollard who later in 1895 suggested Housman should change the title of his first volume of verse (that had been rejected by Macmillan), from *Poems of Terence Hearsay* to *A Shropshire Lad*. It was at Oxford that Housman fell in love with Moses Jackson. It was a love that was unrequited, and Moses later married the widow Rosa Chambers in 1889. Sometime around 1885 there seems to have been a falling out between Housman and Jackson – an episode often interpreted as following Housman's declaration of his feelings towards his friend. But by 1889 they were reconciled and settled on a friendship that lasted the rest of their lives.

The package containing *Last Poems* and Housman's letter reached Jackson in November 1922. The letter begins in a jocular, faux cheerful and familiar tone resembling banter between two close friends. To appreciate its impact, we need to recall that this is A. E. Housman at the height of his fame as a Latinist and poet of international renown. He begins:

'The cheerful and exhilarating tone of my verse is so notorious that I feel sure it will do you more good than the doctors; though you do not know and there is no means of driving the knowledge into your thick head what a bloody good poet I am.'

He goes on to say that the '1st edition of my other immortal work (*A Shropshire Lad*) which I gave you is now worth £8 or more...' Then comes a sentence with an emotional punch almost guaranteed to choke even the most hard-hearted of readers today:

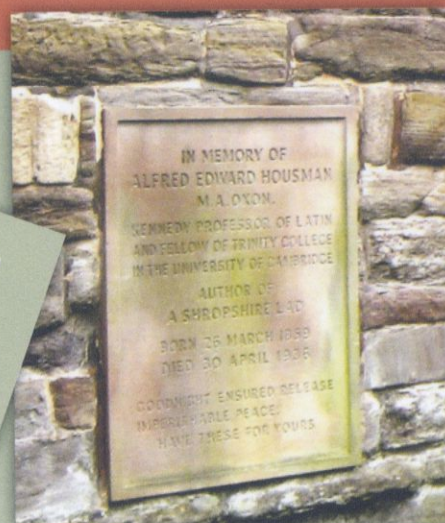
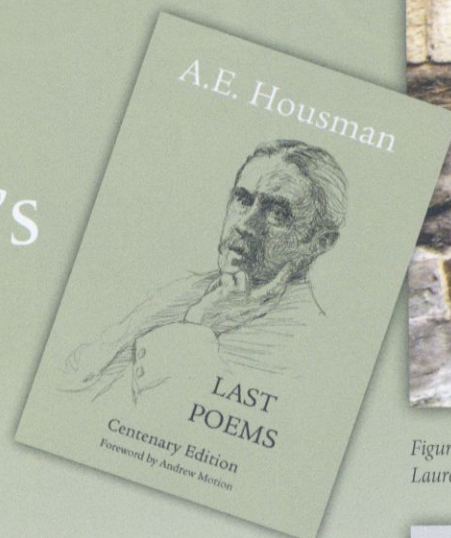


Figure 1 Housman's memorial plaque on the wall of St Laurence's.



Figure 2 Moses John Jackson DSc, MA. (1858-1923). Photo c.1880 as an undergraduate.

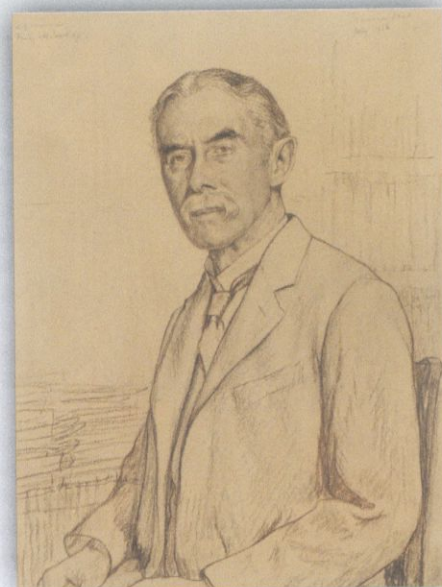


Figure 3 Charcoal portrait of A E Housman made in 1926 by F. E. Dodd. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery.

Please to realise therefore, with fear and respect, that I am an eminent bloke; though I would much rather have followed you around the world and blacked your boots.' (Burnett, 2007, Vol. 1, p. 516)

Jackson wrote back in late November that he had read very favourable reviews of *Last Poems*, expressed affectionate bemusement at the blackening of boots comment and sadness at his own failed business adventure (farming) in Canada and his deteriorating health. Housman wrote again on 4th January 1923, once more giving vent to his so often concealed feelings and making a remarkable confession about the motivation behind his poetry. Knowing that Moses' farming venture was not a financial success, he asked Moses to 'relieve' him of his royalties since he had no need of money.

'Why not rise superior to the natural disagreeableness of your character and behave nicely for once in a way to a fellow who thinks more of you than anything in the world. You are largely responsible for my writing poetry and ought to take the consequences.' (Quoted in Vincent, 2018, p. 273)

Jackson died before the letter reached him on 14th January 1923.

Critical Reception

The response to the new volume was overwhelmingly favourable and the original print run of four thousand copies sold out immediately. Most reviewers saw in it the same ingredients as were found in *A Shropshire Lad* – hardly surprising since many of the poems were conceived and partially written during the same period of feverish creativity that led to this earlier volume in 1896 – but they were sentiments that the public loved. As the *Times Literary Supplement* noted: 'Again the road beckons us into a land of radiance and sorrow, loveliness and briefness.' (Quoted in Gardner, 1992, p. 112). J. S. Squire, reviewing *Last Poems* in the *Observer* (22/10/1922), summed up Housman's achievement as follows:

So there he leaves us: with a hundred lyrics (in his two volumes). It is a peculiar phenomenon in the history of poetry: a hundred lyrics, of which the majority are, humanly speaking, perfect; no failures, no padding, none of the crude attempts of youth... Young men and lovers will find all their secret thoughts in him, and finding them will be comforted; and to poets he will be a standard. Whatever his limitations may be, he has written scarcely a line which is not perfectly musical, scarcely a word which is not accurate and necessary.

Moses Jackson's own copy of the *Observer* in which he read this review a few days before his death was recently (2021) handed to the Housman Society by his descendants and now resides in the Wren Library, Trinity College, Cambridge.

Themes

Many of the poems in *Last Poems* exploit again those same death-haunted melancholy themes explored in *A Shropshire Lad*: the transience of life; the disappointments of love and friendship; the life, death and loves of soldiers; the beauty of the natural world and its (partial) consolations; the self-torture of his sexual identity; suicides and hangings; the urgency of grasping fleeting pleasures and affection before we are consigned to oblivion; and, more generally, how to cope with life's trials in a universe devoid of ultimate meaning and any hope of redemption.

But whilst *A Shropshire Lad* contains some of his greatest verse, I think a close inspection of *Last Poems* reveals a volume of comparable if not greater intellectual coherence, containing poetry of at least equal merit, and revealing a poet more confident of his powers and unafraid to robustly confront and justify his sexual identity.

Coherence in *Last Poems* is lent by a prefatory poem (and a Preface) that signals that this is the last volume of verse readers should expect:

*'We'll to the woods no more:
The laurels all are cut,
The bowers are bare of bay
That once the Muses wore...'*

The last three poems of *Last Poems* complete this valediction to his art (and indeed life). In the justly famous LP XL ('Tell me not here, it needs no saying') he hands over his love of the beauties of the natural world to others, knowing full well that:

*'...nature, heartless, witless nature
Will neither care nor know
What stranger's feet may find the meadow
And trespass there and go,
Nor ask amid the dews of morning
If they are mine or no.'*

The final poem of the series (LP XLI 'Fancy's Knell') completes the farewell in a deeply symbolic manner (see below).

Housman's struggles with his sexuality are evident in *A Shropshire Lad* but never explicit. In ASL XXX he (or more strictly the narrator of the poem since we should not always assume the voice of the poem is that of Housman) finds little comfort in the knowledge that his torment will end one day:

*'But from my grave across my brow
Blows no wind of healing now,
And fire and ice within me fight
Beneath the suffocating night.'*

In ASL XLIV ('Shot? So quick, so clean an ending') he relates the suicide of a cadet who shot himself and left a note saying he could not live with his (presumed homosexual) desires. The tone is bitter, sardonic and yet fundamentally understanding and empathetic.

*'Oh that was right lad, that was brave
Yours was not an ill for mending,
'Twas best to take it to the grave.'*

Just as heartfelt is ASL LI ('Loitering with a vacant eye') where the speaker of the poem imagines a conversation with the statues in the Grecian gallery of the British Museum. He admits to an affinity with these statues far away from their native home in Greece (from a culture where same-sex love was tolerated), and imagines a statue confessing that he too spends time among 'men whose thoughts are not as mine' and then offering advice to Housman that 'Courage, lad, 'tis not for long:/ stand, quit you like a stone, be strong.' Housman walks out with the thought that '...light on me my trouble lay/ and I stepped out in flesh and bone/ Manful like a man of stone.' The last line is full of pathos and suggests a bitter resolve to suppress his discomfort by denying his feelings.

But in LPXII there is a more reasoned, even angry, response to the social constriction that Housman felt:

*'The laws of God, the laws of man,
He may keep that will and can.
Not I; let God and man decree
Laws for themselves and not for me;
And if my ways are not as theirs
Let them mind their own affairs.
Their deeds I judge and much condemn,
Yet when did I make laws for them?'*

Last Poems and the Shropshire Landscape

As is well known and appreciated, the singular psychology and feel of Housman's poetry owes a good deal to its setting in the Shropshire landscape, and particularly the hill country of the southern half of the county. It is perhaps no accident that the very first poem in *A Shropshire Lad* opens with a view of the beacon lit on Brown Clee in 1887 ('From Clee to heaven the beacon burns'), and the final poem in *Last Poems* is set at Abdon Burf on the same hill.

The town of Ludlow features in five poems in *A Shropshire Lad* but only one (LP XXIV) in *Last Poems*, with the title 'The First of May'. In the first stanza the speaker describes his visit to Ludlow:

*'The orchards half the way
From home to Ludlow fair
Flowered on the first of May
In Mays when I was there.'*

The third stanza switches from the past to the present. It is clear, however, that the lads today think the same thoughts as the narrator did in his youth, and the same patterns of friendship and laughter prevail even as the lads that came before lie buried in Ludlow churchyard. The fourth stanza drives home the essential point of the poem, that the foolishness and sorrows of youth are unchanging, so long as the sons we get are 'the sons of men':

*'Ay, yonder lads are yet
The fools that we were then;
For oh, the sons we get*

*Are still the sons of men.
The sumless tale of sorrow
Is all unrolled in vain:
May comes tomorrow
And Ludlow fair again.'*

As the poem suggests, Ludlow fair does indeed come round every year – the cancellations in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid pandemic were rare exceptions. In the poem, of course, the fair is also a metaphor for life: the world as a Vanity Fair of idle amusement and show in which generation after generation of lads repeat their follies.

In another poem (LP XIX) we can detect the location as Church Stretton although it is not mentioned by name. The clue is provided by the first stanza:

*'In midnights of November
When Dead Man's Fair is nigh,
And danger in the valley,
And anger in the sky.'*

The Dead Man's Fair is a reference to the last fair of the year held in the town of Church Stretton in the 19th century. It seems almost certain that the significance of the fair was suggested to Housman by his reading of *Murray's Handbook for Shropshire and Cheshire* (Murray, 1879). The crucial passage is in quotation marks (since the author is quoting from an earlier work by Thomas Wright called *Ludlow Sketches* (1867)):

'The last fair in the year held at Church Stretton is popularly distinguished by the rather significant name of 'Dead Man's Fair', on account, it is said, of the number of men who, after attending it, have perished in the attempt to return home over the hills in the dark nights of early winter'

(Murray, 1879, p. 15).

In 1988 the poet Robert Wells informed readers that he owned Housman's own copy of *Murray's Handbook* and noted that 'Housman has marked this passage and written 'last Thursday in Nov.' in the margin (Wells, 1988, p. 1001).

On the same page of the *Handbook* the area round Church Stretton is said to be 'dangerous' as a consequence of 'fogs and the precipitous nature of the passes' (*Handbook* p. 15). The passage continues to narrate the experience of the Rev. Dr Carr of Ratlinghope who nearly died when lost in the hills around Church Stretton. The fair is now discontinued but up to the early 20th century bells (the 'Dead Man's Peal') were rung at the church of Wentnor (a village near Church Stretton) on the night of Dead Man's Fair in memory of a local man who lost his life travelling home and in the hope that their sound would help other travellers avoid the same fate.

In the poem Housman seems to invoke beliefs about All Hallows Eve, the evening before All Hallows Day (or All Saints Day) on 1st November, and All Souls Day on 2nd November. These three days in the Christian calendar are called Allhallowtide and traditionally were days of



Figure 4 The Hotel in Church Stretton where Housman stayed in July 1899.

feasting and prayers for souls who have not yet reached heaven. It was thought that during this time spirits roamed the earth, and that the veil between this world and the next was at its thinnest. The line 'And cocks crow up the morn' reflects a common belief in folklore that depart as the day dawns and the cock crows:

*'Around the huddling homesteads
The leafless timber roars,
And the dead call the dying
And finger at the doors...*

*The night goes out and under
With all its train forlorn;
Hues in the east assemble
And cocks crow up the morn.'*

It seems likely that Housman visited Church Stretton in July 1899 (a few years after he started the poem) and stayed there for several weeks since his name appears on the guest list at 'the Hotel' (Figure 4, now the site of the Ragleth Gallery) in the town (Brisbourne, 2019).

One of Housman's strangest and most difficult poems is *Hell Gate* (LP XXXI). There are no Shropshire references in the body of the poem, but the title may have been suggested by that copy of *Murray's Handbook* noted above. On page 55 of the volume the author describes the ancient earthworks on the summit of the Wrekin, noting that 'the entrance gate was on the N., and known as Heaven Gate. The other, which is overgrown with plantation, was Hell Gate.' These two gates to the ancient hill fort are still there, and today walkers can pass happily through both.

The final poem to feature Shropshire is the very last in the volume, called appropriately enough 'Fancy's Knell' (LP XLI). It is a delightful and delicate poem with a simple surface appearance but rich in symbolism and significance. In the first three stanzas the narrator describes his role as a flute player for the revels of the villagers of Abdon under Clee. At the end of a day's labour, and as evening drew on, he would be called to play the flute for the village dances. As the light faded and the shadows lengthened, the young would dance, the elderly

would sit and listen, and relationships blossomed:

*'When lads were home from labour
At Abdon under Clee,
A man would call his neighbour
And both would send for me.
And where the light in lances
Across the mead was laid,
There to the dances
I fetched my flute and played.*

*Ours were idle pleasures
Yet oh, content we were,
The young to wind the measures,
The old to heed the air;
And I to lift with playing
From tree and tower and steep
The light delaying,
And flute the sun to sleep.*

*The youth towards his fancy
Would turn his brow of tan,
And Tom would pair with Nancy
And Dick step off with Fan;
The girl would lift her glances
To his, and both be mute.
Well went the dances
At evening to the flute.'*

The fourth stanza strikes a more sombre note with a sense that the dances ended as night-time spread across this part of Shropshire and indeed all over England.

*'Wenlock Edge was umbered,
And bright was Abdon Burf,
And warm between them slumbered
The smooth green miles of turf;
Until from grass and clover
The upshot beam would fade,
And England over
Advanced the lofty shade.'*

In the final stanza the narrator speaks in the present tense, and this is crucial. The 'lofty shade' that advanced over the land when he used to play for the villagers is now advancing. In an urgent tone, as if time is running out, the flautist-narrator calls to the lads to listen again

since tomorrow both the tune and the player must hasten away ('hie'); the music will disperse into the air and the flautist to the earth. The shortening of lines as the poem ends suggests a fading away of the poem, the music and the life of the narrator.

*'The lofty shade advances
I fetch my flute and play;
Come, lads, and learn the dances
And praise the tune to-day.
Tomorrow, more's the pity,
Away we both must hie,
To air the ditty,
And to earth I.'*

Abdon is a village that is indeed 'under Clee' in the sense that it stands on the western slopes of Brown Clee Hill. Anyone standing on these slopes looking westwards in the evening would undeniably see Wenlock Edge 'umbered' (i.e. in shadow) as the sun sets. Abdon Burf would also remain bright for a time since this is the highest point in Shropshire and would catch the last rays of the declining sun.

The village today comprises just over twenty households and a small church in a circular churchyard. It faces west and lies just below Abdon Burf (the highest peak of Brown Clee Hill at 540 metres and the highest point in Shropshire) mentioned in the fourth stanza. Abdon Burf was once quarried for a hard igneous rock called 'dhustone', and the labourers were known to walk from Ludlow to work there. The Abdon quarry closed in 1936. There is now a toposcope on the hill featuring an extract from this poem (Figure 5).

The poem is Housman's fitting farewell to his craft: night is closing in over Shropshire, in the fading light the piper plays his last tune, the

Shropshire lads and lasses finish their revels, and the poet, like a pastoral Prospero, takes leave of his art and contemplates his own mortality.

In the hundred years since its first publication in 1922 *Last Poems* has appealed to generations of readers. Given that it deals with themes of universal importance that still resonate with readers today as much as they did in 1922, this is likely to remain the case for a long time to come.

John Cartwright

A centenary edition of *Last Poems* with a foreword by Andrew Motion, an introductory essay by Edgar Vincent, illustrations by Mark Ansell, and commentaries on each poem by John Cartwright is published by the Housman Society and is available at Castle Square Bookshop, Ludlow.

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Figure 5. Toposcope at summit of Abdon Burf with extract of Housman's *Fancy's Knell*. Photo by Jeremy Bolwell.

Chronology of significant events in the life and reputation of A.E. Housman

1859	A.E. Housman born into a high Anglican family in Fockbury, near Bromsgrove. Father a local solicitor.
1871	Housman's mother dies on his twelfth birthday
1870-1877	Housman taken on as a Foundation Scholar at Bromsgrove School.
1877	He wins an open scholarship to St John's College, Oxford
1881	Whilst his friends Moses Jackson and Alfred Pollard secure first-class degrees, Housman fails the Literae Humaniores Final exam.
1882	Housman returns to Oxford to re-take examinations and qualifies for a pass degree
1882	Both Housman and Moses Jackson secure positions at the Patent Office in London
1887	Moses Jackson accepts post as Principal of Sindh College, Karachi and in December sails for India.
1889	On 9 December Moses Jackson marries Rosa Chambers in London and shortly afterwards returns to India.
1892-1911	In April 1892 Housman is appointed Professor of Latin at University College, London, a position he holds until 1911.
1895	Trial of Oscar Wilde. On 25 May, Wilde is sentenced to two years hard labour for gross indecency.
1896	In March, Housman publishes <i>A Shropshire Lad</i>
1911	Housman appointed Kennedy Professor of Latin and a Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge.
1922	<i>Last Poems</i> published on 19 October
1922	Housman sends a copy of <i>Last Poems</i> and an accompanying letter to Moses Jackson, then seriously ill in a hospital in Vancouver, Canada.
1923	On 14 January Moses Jackson dies of stomach cancer
1936	He dies at Cambridge on 30 April. He is cremated and his ashes laid in the churchyard of St Laurence's Ludlow.
1936	On 26 October Laurence Housman publishes <i>More Poems</i> containing poems extracted from his brother's notebooks
1937	Laurence Housman publishes <i>A.E.H.: Some Poems, Some Letters and a Personal memoir</i> — containing what became Additional Poems I to XVIII.
1939	Collected Poems published edited by John Carter with new Additional Poems XIX to XXIII. In the 1953 edition XI is split into XI and XIa.
1973	Housman Society Founded.
1985	In March, a bronze statue of Housman erected and unveiled in Bromsgrove High Street.
1996	Memorial lozenge window dedicated to Housman in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey.
2022	The Housman Society publishes a centenary edition of <i>Last Poems</i>

LUDLOW HOCKEY CLUB:

INTERNATIONAL TRENDSETTER

Ludlow is a small medieval market town in Shropshire close to the Welsh border, with a population during the first fifty years of the 20th century of something over 5,000. However, on two occasions the local hockey club was a leader in the establishment of international sporting links.

In 1903 in what, as far as we know, one of the first visits of a European hockey team to the United Kingdom, the five times Champion Club of France, Club Athletic International, based in Paris, travelled to play Ludlow on the first weekend of November. This was organised in the spirit of the new Edwardian king who was making great efforts to improve Anglo-French relations, an attitude contrary to much popular feeling in the country at the time. In torrential rain Ludlow won the match by five goals to nil in front of a large crowd who gained shelter in a temporary covered stand. Not quite champions of Europe but definitely winners of the bragging rights. The French team had only nine of their own players; exams and a family bereavement had reduced their numbers at the last minute, but the team was completed with two local players. Travel weariness, the absence of two key players and the appalling weather were not in the visitors' favour.

Photo 1 shows the two teams in front of the still-existing pavilion at the Burway ground in Ludlow.

The fixture was almost certainly the brainchild of Monsieur R. Guerra, a French teacher at Ludlow Grammar School. This is another reflection of attempts to develop better relations with France and to move on from the teaching of dead languages. M. R. Guerra did not stay in Ludlow long, moving to teaching posts in South Wales and then Lichfield, where he played a significant role in encouraging the playing of hockey. I had been under the impression that despite the great enthusiasm expressed by both clubs at the evening's celebration dinner for a return visit, it appears that Ludlow did not cross the Channel. Recent research, however, has enriched the story with a 1904 report in the Ludlow Advertiser of a return visit to Paris; it makes fascinating reading.

Saturday February 13th: 11 Ludlow Hockey Club players and a referee took the 1.14 p.m. train bound for Paris. After what some described as a very rough crossing, they arrived in Paris at 6 a.m. Sunday February 14th: In the afternoon they played at the Velodrome Municipal de Vincennes which was the main venue for the 1900 Olympic Games, to play the Club Athletic International (CAI) team whom they had defeated 5-0 the previous November in Ludlow. CAI were the French Club champions on five occasions during the first decade of the 20th century. Ludlow were rapturously welcomed by a crowd of over a thousand, and, despite going behind, they eventually won 3-1.

Monday February 15th: The team travelled by boat down the Seine to the multi-sport venue

in the Bois de Boulogne, home of Racing Club France, where they played and lost 0-2 to a Paris select XI.

Tuesday February 16th: They attended the Mardi Gras carnival and watched Swansea Rugby Club defeat France 21-0 before returning to England. Some adventure! The touring party appeared to include only three of the players who appeared in the earlier match in Ludlow, which suggests that the side was strengthened with players from other clubs in the Ludlow area.

We have to await the return of Emmanuel Lovekin to Shropshire from the First World War before Ludlow again returned to European action. Emmanuel Lovekin was born in 1890 in Dudley, but in 1911 was living in Hanley where his father worked in the pottery industry. Emmanuel was a dental machinist, and his brother John was an apprentice dental mechanic. This was when dentistry was only gradually moving from being a trade to a profession, and neither brother appears to have had a dental qualification from a university medical school. Emmanuel married on Christmas Eve 1912 and moved to Shrewsbury and, shortly afterwards, to Bishop's Castle where there was no resident dentist. Photo 2 is his visiting card. Living deep in rural Shropshire, he became friendly with the local writer Mary Webb, who based the characters Isaiah Lovekin and Gillian Lovekin in *Seven for a Secret* on her fascination with his surname.

We are first aware of his hockey involvement in a photo of a Bishop's Castle mixed gender team (Photo 3), probably taken before or, with the scarcity of men, possibly during the First World War. Eventually, in 1917 he signed up for the Royal Flying Corps with the intention of becoming a pilot, but a propeller-inflicted shoulder injury restricted his duties to the ground. Photo 4 is a postcard of his Flying Corps group which he sent to his brother John saying, 'Still alive'.

Meanwhile John was with the 6th King's Shropshire Light Infantry in the British Expeditionary Force. As a prisoner of war John led a relatively charmed life, sending his brother a letter describing his special treatment as the camp dentist.

Lovekin's son Kenneth was killed in action in May 1940 in the Second World War, while his father was officer commanding the Church Stretton Home Guard.

The enthusiasm for post-war life witnessed the relatively rapid start for many hockey clubs including Ludlow's. Lovekin had now moved his dental practice to Church Stretton, and was soon involved with other professionals

and business people in the Ludlow area, with a restart for hockey in South Shropshire. He was the goal-keeper, known as No. 1, and held various club offices during the inter-war period, including Captain. A press report from the first match of the season in October 1927 describes him: 'Lovekin in goal was as usual the Lovekin of old; he has lost none of his skill and retains his marvellous footwork unimpaired by six months of summer rest.'

He was also a regular in goal for the Shropshire County team. However, it was his inspirational role as organiser of an invitation side, known as the Nik-e-Vols (his name spelt backwards) that gained him recognition throughout English hockey and brings us to Ludlow's second attempt to develop European links. He may have first used the Nik-e-Vols name (Figure 2) for a mixed team based in Bishop's Castle, but it appears that the men's team was initially put together to attend the Folkestone Easter Hockey Festival in 1928 (Figure 1). Easter Festivals were a hockey tradition and continue to this day. Folkestone was the most prestigious and attracted international teams from Germany, Spain, Switzerland and France. Little Ludlow could not compete with these quality national teams without outside support. Lovekin therefore gathered together a number of guest players from other clubs including several of Irish descent, to add to the stronger Ludlow-based players. They played in green and black; the green was to reflect the influential Irish presence in the team, and the black the fact that their chances of victory were not good. Photo 5 is the 1929 Folkestone team with Lovekin in the middle row.

The Nik-e-vols played hard and partied hard. They reflected the inter-world of the middle and upper classes, influenced by the public and grammar school traditions of male loyalty to each other. Living less pressurised lives than today's counterparts, they had time for team games and socialising rituals, with team songs and chants.

Following the Folkestone Festival, Lovekin organised a tour to Barcelona over Christmas and the New Year, travelling by coach from Market Drayton, stopping for a night each way in Paris. They played a Swiss XI, Royal Polo Jockey Club, and Tarassa Hockey Club, losing all three games (Figure 3). This must have been a memorable expedition, the links with European clubs and players sadly occurring only a few years before the continent plunged again into chaos. How many of the players involved at Folkestone and Barcelona would subsequently take up arms on behalf of their country or their politics? This was a brief but hopeful interlude.

It is interesting but not surprising how the life of Ludlow Hockey Club reflects the politics and social life of the country. Starting with the enthusiasm for team games in the early years of the 20th century when, in the spirit of female

emancipation, Ludlow also played a key role in developing ladies' hockey in Shropshire as well as the local area. The attempts to improve Anglo-French relations in the spirit of the Entente Cordiale were followed after the First World War with the determination to look forward and make the best of life for those who had survived. Then as life returned to normal, further attempts were again made to improve Anglo-European relations with the trip to Barcelona. The visionary pioneers of Ludlow Hockey club deserve congratulations.

P.S. A group of Ludlow hockey players who during the 1980s and 1990s had developed their hockey through Ludlow Hockey Club and Ludlow College, but had left the area, arranged to meet once a year over the late August bank holiday weekend to recreate something of the Nik-e-Vols life-style, playing in green and black and partying with the opposition before and after matches. Starting in 2000 they continued to play each year until 2014. Photo 6 is the 2008 team.

Roger Furniss, with thanks for their help to Robbie Burns, Jim Ormandy, Janet Preshouse and Sidney Chilton. Roger would be pleased to receive any further information. (furniss@phonecoop.coop).



Photo 4. World War Flying Corps, 1917. Lovekin fourth left.

FOLKSTONE TOURNAMENT, 1928.						
Date and Time	Opponents	Goals For	Goals Against	Time and Time	Comments	Top Scorer
April 6 4-30	Sports Club (Frankfurt)	0	6			
April 7 2-0	Golfers' Club (France)	6	0			
April 9 2-0	Deutscher (Germany)	1	6			
April 10	(To be arranged)	2	2			

Toast: "Once a Nik-e-vol, always a Nik-e-vol."

Figure 1. Folkestone Hockey Festival scorecard, 1928.

MACAYA LEADS NIKEVOL INTO SPAIN.

SPANISH TOUR.

Date	Opponents	For	Goals Against
Dec. 26-28	London, Paris, Barcelona	10	2
" 29	A Swiss XI.	10	3
" 30	Royal Polo Jockey Club	10	3
Jan. 1	The Tarras H.C.	10	3
" 24	Barcelona, Paris, London	10	3

WON 10
LOST 3

Figure 3. Spanish Tour scorcard.



Photo 2. Emmanuel Lovekin's visiting card.

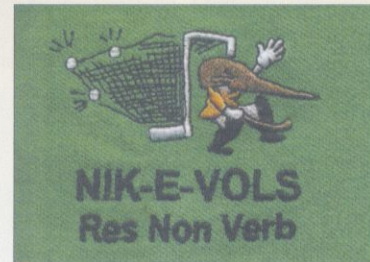


Figure 2. Nik-e-Vols logo. Lovekin in goal.



Photo 5. Nik-e-Vols @ Folkestone, 1929. (Lovekin middle row).



Photo 6. Nik-e-Vols 2008.



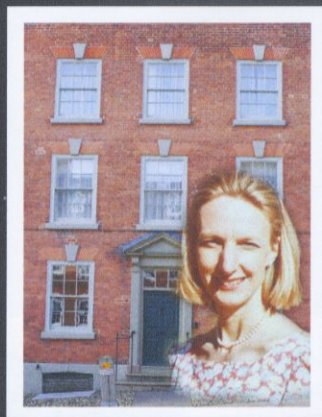
Photo 1. Ludlow v Club Athletic. International, 1903.



Photo 3. Bishops Castle mixed hockey team, 1917? (Lovekin back row left).

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. She was an enthusiastic supporter of the Georgian Group and arranged for them to visit the town.



Rosanna was born in 1944 in Hampshire, but, as her father was in the navy, she and her family moved constantly. After the war they lived for five years in a flat at West Wycombe Park, which may have informed her love of all things Georgian. At eighteen she went to a finishing school and then to a secretarial college in Oxford before moving to London where she met her husband, Ian. He was a solicitor who had come originally from Bitterley, where his father was Rector. They led a very full life, entertaining, travelling and enjoying the cultural life of London, but Rosanna was also a governor of the local comprehensive school, which was failing when she joined it, but where she made a real difference.

When Ian retired in 2002, they decided to return to Shropshire, and bought 44 Mill Street, Ludlow, which they renovated with enormous pleasure and attention to detail. Sadly, Ian died in 2011.

Rosanna was a perfectionist. 44 Mill Street is a fine example of how to get things right in a Georgian house. To begin with, she and Ian were much influenced by John Cornforth, the architectural historian, who was a friend and frequent visitor, but when he and Ian were no longer there, Rosanna did her own rigorous research into every aspect of Georgian domestic architecture. She managed to replace the 20th century sash windows in an exemplary way so as to achieve the maximum insulation without destroying the essential character of the house. Our readers may remember the article she wrote in the first Georgian issue of *Heritage News*. She recently added elegant railings to the front door - a practical as well as an aesthetic improvement - and she was planning an orangery at the back of the house.

Rosanna applied the same perfectionism to everything she did, whether it was learning Italian, keeping up with technology or playing bridge. Although her formal education ended early, she was cultivated and, indeed, gifted. She was intensely musical and a fine piano and harpsichord player. When she thought she could not maintain her high standard, she sold her harpsichord. She was also extremely clever with her hands and made some of her own clothes and exquisite curtains for the house. Her garden was immaculate, and she was, in the words of Anna Del Conte, the cookery writer, who was a friend, a 'seriously good cook'. She liked nothing better than entertaining her friends and family.

She and Ian had no children, but she took great pleasure in the lives of her young relatives and the children of her friends. She also kept an eye on her father-in-law's old parishioners and anyone else who needed help and advice. She supported the church at Ludford and also our local MP. With her warm and generous spirit, her courage and her gaiety, she will be very much missed by all her many friends.

Valerie Thomas

A BUILDING LAID

Bodenhams is one of the most photographed, iconic buildings in Ludlow. The present unified appearance is somewhat deceptive and seems to be the result of a serious restoration in 1913.

This work incorporated studs and part of an inner bressummer, salvaged from another building. These re-used timbers have unusual external chamfers and indications of former window openings; they are not re-erected in the same order as on their original site (Figure 1).

The western half of Bodenhams is a three storey jettied cross-over wing of the late 14th early 15th century. The impressive crown post roof (Figure 2) is probably the earliest of the small number of such roofs still remaining in Shropshire. Roofs of this kind are usually associated with the south east of England, where they long remained popular. However, this particular roof is not the work of a south east carpenter, but one nearer home.

The extensive cross-wing seems to derive from south east tradition, as does the 'over-shot' cross passage. (This cross passage runs under the wing rather than through the hall to achieve a narrower frontage width in a congested urban area), more common in Kent and East Anglia. As first built, it would have had large wattle and daub panels with large simple braces.

It would appear that, originally, there was a one or two-bay open hall on the existing 'platform' over the eastern part of the site (Figure 3) at a slightly later date. This was replaced by a range of two-storey shops which, curiously, were also threaded under the cross wing (Figure 4). With the loss of the open hall, the rear bay of the cross wing was converted into a hall/kitchen. The roof here is heavily sooted, indicating this kind of use.

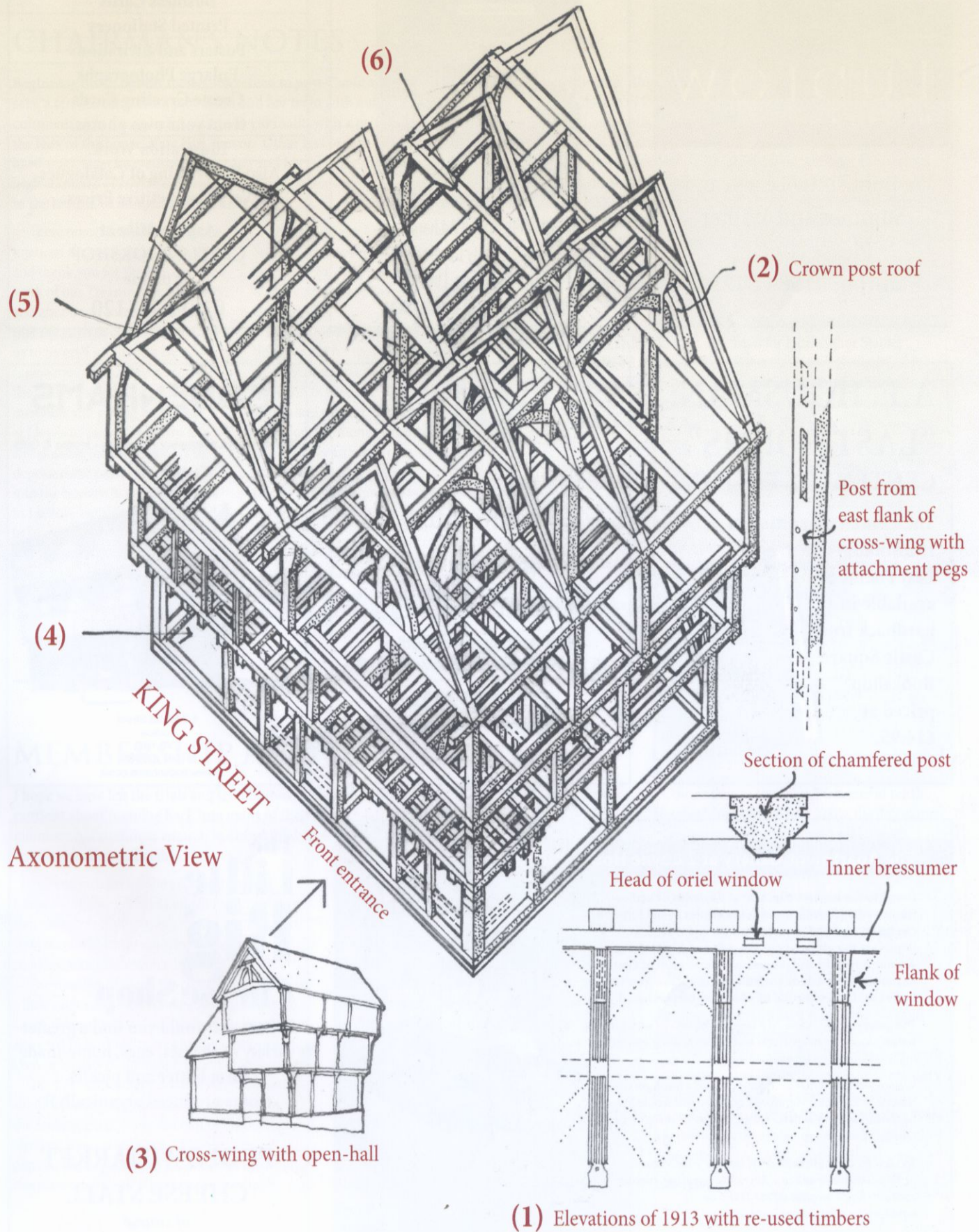
About 1600 a new roof, of typical Ludlow type, was erected, probably with a floor below to produce the current three-storey appearance (Figure 5). The rear of this part of the site (Figure 6) has a lower ground level and, later, a partially concealed timber frame with an extremely utilitarian appearance.

The structure thus has an extremely complicated history, reflecting the evolving history of the townscape.

David Stenning



BARE: 1-2 BROAD STREET

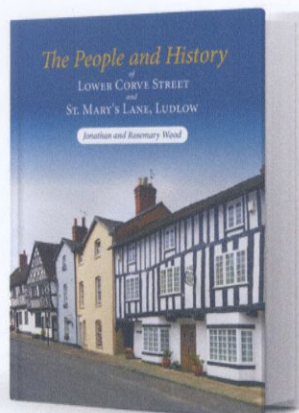


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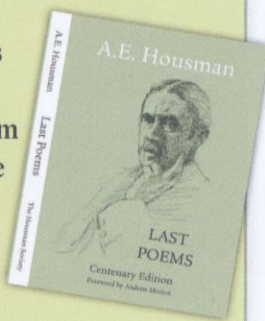
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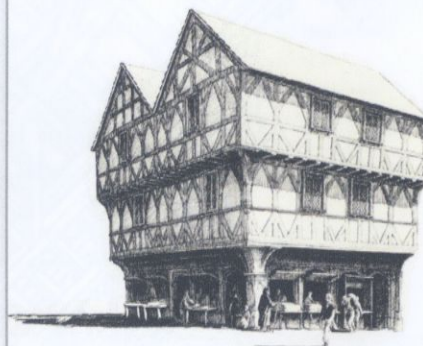
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The gallery is also home to a large collection of oil paintings, watercolours, etchings, maps and books relating to Ludlow, many of which are for sale.

We are working with Garth Reynolds on a book on the history of Reynolds Furniture Company and would love to hear from anyone with furniture, stories to share or the Quaker connections.

To view by appointment only, discuss your interests, or to purchase or sell any Reynolds furniture, please contact: Roy Thwaites 07967 134116 or email: inspiredbyludlow@gmail.com



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COMMITTEE NEWS

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Beginning on an upbeat theme, the return to post-Covid activities has seen a terrific effort from Jane Hunt and her team with outings and talks, culminating in a wonderful visit to Brynkinallt, with a private tour by the lady of the house, Kate Hill-Trevor. Other less prominent but equally hard work must be credited to Stanton and his team for the continuing high standard of *Heritage News* and to Juliet for her unflagging attention to the tedium of minutes and agendas.

These notes have something of a financial theme as we say goodbye and thank you for the much-valued work of our Treasurer, Sue Bleakley, and announce, somewhat belatedly, that the current climate has forced us to insert a small increase in membership fees. One reason for the cost is the large proportion of members still paying by cheque at Lloyds or cash. Currently, it is still possible for the Treasurer to deposit these payments physically into the Society Account at Lloyds in Ludlow, but if the present trend in bank closures continues, this will become a far more complicated procedure. To help, we are setting up a BACS system of bank transfer online.

Our details are: Ludlow Civic Society, Account No. 00957797, Sort code 30-95-27. In the usual way, please put your name on the transaction.

While this will ultimately make things easier for us, it does add an element of unease to the future direction of banking. Inflation strikes and the war in Ukraine. It is not just the money in our pocket that is under attack – or, more accurately, 'the pound in your pocket' etc., remember him? – but the changing streetscape as our banks close.

Landmark buildings are changing, reducing the footfall caused by financial necessity that once created a synergy of bank

visit and weekly shop. The quirky Tudor bank at the top of Corve Street, designed by Woolfall and Eccles of Liverpool and erected by Turford and Southward around 1907 for the North & South Wales Bank, later the HSBC, is now Spec Savers. Further down on the same side another Tudor offering of 1924, built as an 'homage' to the Feathers opposite, by Palmer and Holden, still trades as the Nat West, but for how long?

The rather severe redbrick Barclays bank of 1884/5 (possibly Henry Thomason & Cooper Whitwell) built for the Birmingham, Dudley & District Banking Co., in King Street, is being stripped out and advertising for a new tenant as I write, while, arguably the most imposing bank is Lloyds, in Broad Street, previously Rocke, Eyton & Co., lurking behind an imposing frontage of about 1889 by Lloyd Oswell, covering something older.

Financial storms have come

and gone, from the South Sea Bubble to the various crashes on the Stock Market. More locally, the collapse in 1825 of Proddgers' Ludlow Bank dragged several other local banks down with it. The Inspector in Bankruptcy discovered that 'On inspecting the bankrupt's cash-book, I was surprised and disappointed to find it had never been balanced, from his commencement to the bankruptcy!' Unsurprisingly, this became the basis for local author Stanley Weyman's novel, *Ovington's Bank*.

Not a lot of confidence in banking, then. And now the fear that by 2027 we shall be a cashless society, dependent briefly on plastic before we are all forced to buy an expensive phone to use instead. From cradle to grave, money becomes an abstract concept, so who 'promises to pay the bearer' what on demand any more?

Richard Hurlock

MEMBERSHIP AND EVENTS

I hope we have left the trials and tribulations of lockdown behind. Many people have felt a little cautious about jumping back into many of their former activities, but we have found that our members felt confident enough to attend talks from the beginning of this year and have loyally renewed their membership.

The enthusiasm for the excursions to the Laskett Garden and Brynkinallt earlier this year also proved that the pandemic had not dimmed your commitment to enjoying some of the amazing venues accessible by coach.

The number of members continues to increase a little each year. Newcomers coming to live in South Shropshire, and particularly Ludlow, are attracted to learning more about its history and keen to be part of the conservation of its heritage.

The Committee have debated long and hard about the emerging increase in costs of running the Society, particularly the cost of producing *Heritage News* twice a year. The magazine is popular but expensive to produce and distribute. It remains free to all recipients. Accordingly,

we have increased the annual membership fee for this year to £16 (£30 joint membership). The entrance cost to the talks is now £5 for members and £7 for non-members. The newly styled 'Membership Card', which all members received recently, publicises all the upcoming talks and events, but doubles as a leaflet which promotes the Civic Society to the public generally. Everyone is encouraged to look at our website with its substantial content, not least most of the past editions of *Heritage News*. www.ludlowcivicsociety.org

We hope members will attend and enjoy the line-up of talks which began in September and which will continue through to next May 2023. We look forward to Peter Reavill's talk

on the finding of the Viking treasure in north Herefordshire. As we now know, the detectorists who discovered the horde and sold it were prosecuted and went to prison. We have a talk next spring about all the famous people who have stayed at the Lion Hotel in Shrewsbury.

At the moment two excursions are in the planning, each of them long-awaited, having been originally arranged prior to the pandemic. Madresfield Court, with all its splendours and history, is to be visited. Then, later in the summer, we aim for a visit to the Flaxmill Maltings at Shrewsbury.

The Committee send to all members gratitude and appreciation for their support of the Society through 'the dead hand of the pandemic', emerging now, we trust, into a stronger position. My particular thanks go to two members of the Committee who jointly organise the events.

Jane Hunt

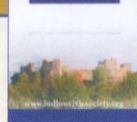
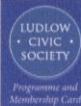
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