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LUDLOW

HERITAGE NEWS



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A LUDLOW
PHOTOGRAPHER.
THE RISE AND FALL
OF JOSIAH SMITH

LEAD...BUT NOT
FORGOTTEN.
FRENCH WARS,
INDIAN WARS,
LUDLOW AND
COOKING...



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COMMITTEE NEWS

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Welcome to the second Heritage News of 2025. Inside you will find some information on what the Society has been up to in recent months and two longer articles exploring new facets of our ever-fascinating town. The first of these looks at the life and work of Josiah Smith (1824-1884), a remarkable and colourful character who lived in Ludlow for 14 years and combined careers as a schoolmaster, science lecturer, photographer, journalist and publisher. The second article concerns the family history of Abel Johnson Ketelbey (1726-1756) a barrister whose name appears on a lead plaque in the parvis room above the porch of St Laurence's Church.

Over the last year we were happy to see the Walls Trust revitalised and motivated to seek repair solutions for the collapsed section of the Town Walls and so we handed over funds we had previously inherited from this group, together with proceeds from the sale of the Walls Leaflet we produced two years ago. We wish this group well and remain in close contact with it. With a new set of Town Councillors in place we

sincerely hope progress can be made on this issue and the Society is committed to help where possible.

Following last year's general election and the retirement of Philip Dunne (our then local MP) it seemed timely to appoint a new Vice President, and I'm delighted to say that The Countess of Plymouth has accepted our invitation.

Since this is the last Heritage News of

this year and as we look forward to another exciting season of talks and events let me say that the Society is appreciative of the continued support of its members and allow me to add a gentle reminder to all members not subscribing by a standing order to please renew their membership (details on the last page of this issue).

John Cartwright

MEMBERSHIP AND EVENTS

Membership

The most important asset of the Society is the membership. After a successful year of talks and visits, plans are now firmly focussed on the new talks, visits being organised, a publication, and reviewing planning applications. In the coming months we are looking how to engage with our membership more effectively.

This will involve revamping our twice monthly email, and building a website better suited to the needs of our membership. In order to do this a short survey has been emailed to all members. It is quick and easy to complete and is one way of ensuring we can better meet the needs of our membership. If email is not your "thing" please talk to one of the team and we will try to ensure you can be involved. We have lots of ideas and want to ensure that your Civic Society represents your ideas as well as those of other members.

A meeting has been arranged with the Art Society to ensure we avoid clashes of both talks and visits. Plans are in place to be able to offer refreshments at talks. With your input we can ensure the Civic Society represents its membership.

We look forward to welcoming you to future talks and to our exciting new programme. Please remember to renew your membership as, we hope you agree, it is very good value for money.

Wendy McCracken

Recent Visits

Thank you to all those who responded to our survey on future coach trips. We will be looking closely at your suggestions and preferences to shape our future programme.

We have recently returned from our June day trip to Shelsley Watermill and Great Witley parish church and Court. We were blessed with ideal weather, an enjoyable journey and wonderful lunch in the gardens of Great Witley Tea Rooms. Highly recommended!

Of course, our interest was in the history of the buildings we visited, and our tour guides did not disappoint. At Shelsley we were told of the skilled restoration work done by the local volunteers and were privileged to see the watermill power up into action. The intricate carvings of the ancient St Andrew's church were a delight too.

After a tasty lunch we explored Witley parish church. Its warden, Angela, gave us a talk on the history and art in this unique baroque church and then took us down into the crypt to see the coffins and mort stone used to deter grave robbers. Many



Inspecting the restored watermill at Shelsley Walsh (June 2025)

were fascinated by the original tower clock workings there that had been refurbished by another group of knowledgeable volunteers. Afterwards, some entered the Court to enjoy the ruins, grounds and famous fountain while others were tempted by good conversations and cake in the sunshine.

Many thanks to all who joined us and to the many enthusiastic volunteers who made our day so special.

Susan Ashman

Your Committee needs you

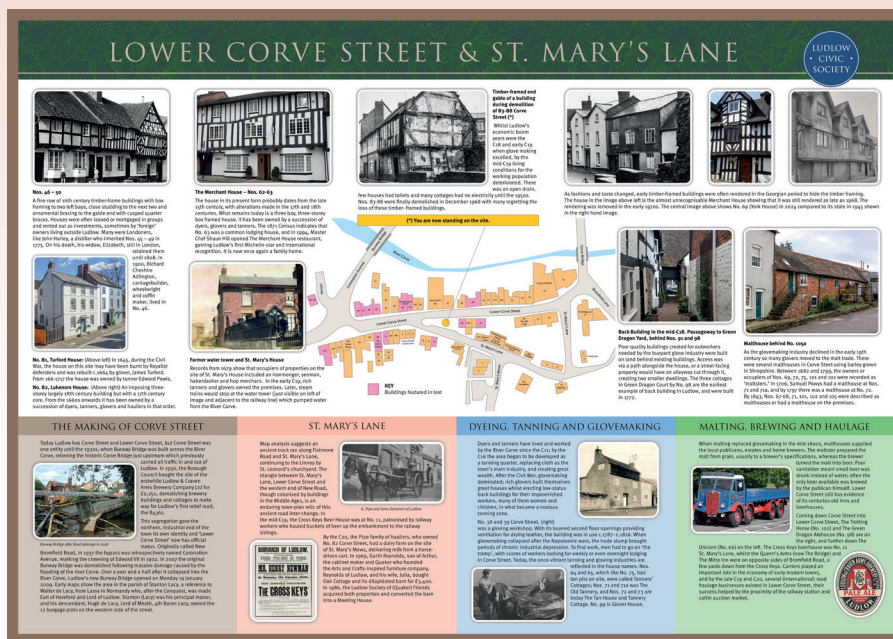
The Committee of the Civic Society is hoping to recruit new members.

So if you are interested in monitoring planning applications, helping organise talks and visits or any other aspect of our work please get in touch with our Membership Secretary (Wendy McCracken: wendymccracken@manchester.ac.uk) or our Chair (John Cartwright: j.cartwright@chester.ac.uk).

NEW INFORMATION BOARD INSTALLED IN LOWER CORVE STREET

The Society completed its recent phase of information boards with a final board erected in Lower Corve Street. The site is the small plot of land already housing the old animal drinking water trough and owned by the Town Council.

The Board was designed by our graphic designer Mark Ansell with input from Society Committee members and Rosemary and Jonathan Wood. We think the board a fitting reflection of this fascinating area of Ludlow and the work done by Rosemary and Jonathan Wood in their book "The People and History of Lower Corve Street and St Mary's Lane, Ludlow". The Society is grateful to the Town Council for permission to erect the Board and for the help they gave in securing planning permission from Shropshire Council.



The new information board in Lower Corve Street



Steve and Roxy from The Humble-Bee Gardeners admiring their handiwork

JUBILEE GARDEN MODIFIED FOR BETTER WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

The Jubilee Garden is one of the Civic Society's great success stories and is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

The original design incorporated a ramp for wheelchair access down to the garden, only for wheels to then get stuck in the gravel below impeding further movement. In response to this feedback the Society has made a modification to improve access using the Ludlow-based company The Humble-Bee Gardeners.



Figure 4. *The Family at Home*

A LUDLOW PHOTOGRAPHER THE RISE AND FALL OF JOSIAH SMITH

Although a resident in the town for barely 14 years, one of the more remarkable if enigmatic men to live in Ludlow during the 19th century was Josiah Smith. Clearly a man of considerable energy, ingenuity, and an excellent communicator, his very varied career as a merchant mariner, schoolmaster, science lecturer, photographer, bookseller, newspaper proprietor, journalist and publisher, will have left a lasting impression on those who knew him. Then at the end of all this, at the age of 60, came the very public and humiliating circumstances of his death in Worcester, widely appearing in the newspapers of the time, which certainly permeated back to Ludlow, despite being reported somewhat obliquely by the *Ludlow Advertiser*.

Josiah was born in Kidderminster on the 13 June 1824, the son of a carpet weaver Abraham Smith, and his wife Elizabeth née Mason, and baptised there in the following October in the Old Meeting House of the Independents. He was named after his mother's brother, later to become *Sir* Josiah Mason, the remarkable self-educated industrialist who, among other

philanthropic works, founded the Mason Science College, established in Birmingham in 1875, and subsequently incorporated into the new University in 1900. It's most likely that Sir Josiah will have been very influential in Josiah Smith's life, and two of Smith's brothers had indeed worked for him.¹

In 1838 at the age of fourteen young Josiah went to sea as an apprentice merchant

mariner. He became certificated as a seaman in October 1848, ticket number 437201, and at that time was based at Liverpool.² In 1851, Louisa Hendy Williams, the twenty-year-old daughter of a coachbuilder from Wavertree, Liverpool, was working in Kidderminster as a governess. How Josiah and Louisa came to meet is unknown, but the couple were married in Whitechapel,

1 J. T. Bunce, *Josiah Mason: A Biography* (Birmingham, 1882)

2 National Archives, at ref. BT114/19 & BT113/219-220.

London, in August 1853, when he was still a merchant seaman. Meeting Louisa clearly changed Josiah's life radically, for by 1855 he is said to have become a student at Battersea Training College, an institution for preparing teachers of disadvantaged children.³ By 1858 he was master at the Dawsmere School at Gedney, near Holbeach in Lincolnshire, and it was here that two of their children were born.⁴ Then, from the 1 January 1861, he became master of the Endowed Free or National School at Leintwardine, with Louisa as schoolmistress, and here the couple were to remain for six years.

What is very evident at this time is that Smith had already embarked on another

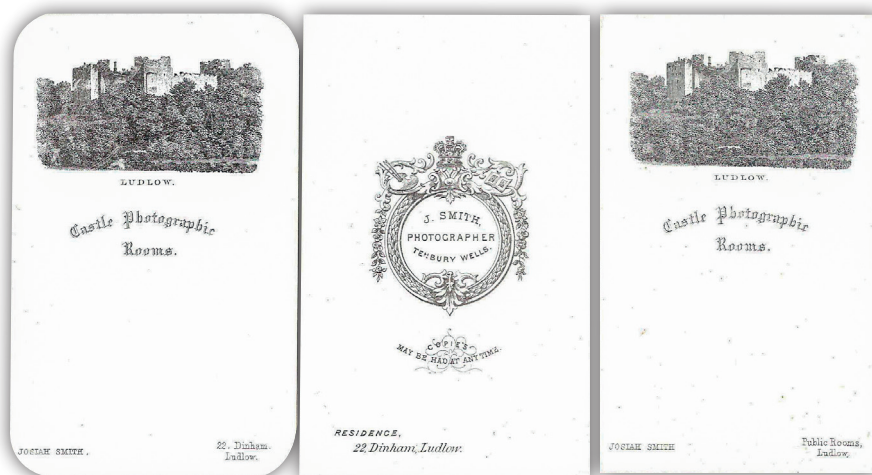


Figure 1. The three known carte-de-visite mounts



Figure 2. Meet the Family

major plank in his career; that of the scientific lecturer. By January 1859, while at Gedney, he appears to have constructed elaborate electrical apparatus to demonstrate cutting-edge science, and he had given two lectures, at Holbeach and Long Sutton, that had enthralled local provincial audiences for some two hours, and these reproduced and demonstrated experiments that were at the forefront of science at the time. Lecturing was to continue in parallel with his normal teaching commitments, for in January 1863 an alarm was raised that the upper room of the National School at Leintwardine was in flames but, although some of Smith's apparatus and books were destroyed, local efforts succeeded in putting the fire out. He was said to have been elsewhere at the time, and the cause was never established.

Many of Smith's talks were given in association with the Young Men's Literary Institutes, including two at Denbigh on electricity in January 1865 when they were given in aid of raising funds for a new Free Reading Room there.⁵ There is never mention of any conflict between his teaching and lecturing activities, but by 1867 Smith was clearly feeling that he could do better elsewhere, and after six years he tendered his resignation to the school's trustees, as from the 31st December 1867, citing "the absence of pupil teachers, and the withdrawal of the Certificated Allowance." The Trustees appear, perhaps, to have considered this something of a step down in Smith's social status, hoping somewhat condescendingly that "his expectations may be realized in the new line of life to which, they understand,

³ Ancestry reference without citation

⁴ *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 16 December 1859

⁵ *North Wales Chronicle*, 14 Jan. 1865, 2



Figure 3. *Dressed for Work*

he intends to limit his exertions”!⁶

These exertions now went in several directions. His lecturing continued, and in March 1868, by now living in Ludlow, he gave a talk on “Electricity and Spectrum Analysis” in the Corn Exchange at Gloucester, which was impressive and was described in great detail in the local paper.⁷ In March 1869 there came two more on the same subject, at Worcester and Malvern, advertised as “experimental scientific entertainment”, and perhaps we get here a hint of Smith cultivating a role as a showman in this regard as well. It also demonstrates that Smith was following closely the discoveries of the great Robert Bunsen and Gustav Kirchhoff at Heidelberg, quite possibly through the work of Sir William Crookes and his magazine *Chemical News*, first published in December 1859. Smith must also have gone to some expense to construct his elaborate equipment, demonstrating phenomena with great effect to audiences, and all this was transported around to the various venues, presumably by train, including a 50-cell Bunsen coal zinc battery which, connected in series, would have generated about 95 volts.

It was shortly after this that Smith

now launched himself into professional photography, at the end of August 1869 announcing that his photographic rooms at 22 Dinham were “now open for the season. Photography in all its branches carefully attended to.”⁸ For how long he had been contemplating photography is not known, as there had never been mention of it up until then, nor whether he had any previous experience. While living in Dinham Smith also operated from a studio in Tenbury Wells, and so two designs for his mount imprints date from this earlier period. At the time of the 1871 Census however his wife and family, by then of seven children, had moved into the Public Rooms in Castle Street, the studio moving with them, and here Smith now also set up in business as a bookseller, stationer and printer.

Figure 1 shows the three types of Josiah Smith’s *carte-de-visite* mounts. The early mounts from 22 Dinham, seen on the left, have their corners rounded, presumably to make insertion into photograph albums easier. These seem to have been unique to Smith, but perhaps the style wasn’t popular as he abandoned it within a year or so.

While many of Smith’s portraits are conventional, there is a noticeable bias towards photographing working folk in their occupational clothes, and one family in particular returned several times for their portraits. In the group picture (Figure 2) the five menfolk don’t just pose for the camera, they confront it; and in Figure 3 one of their number stands tall in his working clothes, complete with bowler hat and watch chain. This is a side of Victorian Ludlow seldom seen.

Who they were is currently a mystery, but they evidently owned or occupied land nearby on which they kept at least one horse, two pigs and a rather handsome lurcher dog. Smith took his camera out there (Figure 4), but with the exception of one small girl, the women in the family are conspicuous by their absence.

Figure 5 shows another interesting group portrait of four gentlemen who have all the nonchalance of being associates from a Ludlow office out on their lunch break. In contrast, Figure 6 is an unusual portrait of a character made up for a theatrical performance, possibly in the Assembly Rooms during the early 1870s, although the Ludlow Theatre Royal in Mill Street was still

in operation at this time.

Trying to judge the success of Smith’s studio is difficult, because so few of his portraits and views have survived. His studio props were spartan, and it seems unlikely to have been in operation for more than about five years. Late examples of his *cartes* have a thin gilt line around the image. His *carte-de-visite* views taken within Ludlow are relatively uncommon, but an unusual one (Figure 7) shows St Leonard’s chapel and burial ground in Corve Street, taken from the south-west. Although dated August 1882 it was perhaps photographed a few years earlier.

Smith also took his camera to surrounding villages, probably on commission, and Figure 8 shows a rather pleasing and unusual view of Hopton Wafers, with the parish church in the background and the manor house on the right. It was taken from the junction close to the old school. Other views include one of Munslow village; also of Ferney Hall at Onibury, possibly following the fire and its



Figure 5. *Four Gentlemen at Leisure*

rebuilding in 1875. Some were taken on the Yatton Court estate at Aymestrey, and these were attached to his early Tenbury studio mounts and so date from about 1869. Figure 9 is of the recently-built Yatton estate gamekeeper’s lodge erected next to the corn mill on the river Lugg.

6 *Minutes of the Trustees of the Leintwardine Endowed Free School*, 19 August 1867

7 *Gloucester Journal*, 21 March 1868, 5

8 *Ludlow Advertiser*, 28 August 1869, 1

By the early 1870s Smith was well involved with the social life of Ludlow, such as in his collaboration with fellow photographer Thomas Jones in April 1870 to put on an entertainment in the Market Hall for the Ludlow Winter Evening Club. Jones provided vocal and instrumental music, with Smith performing some of his more spectacular demonstrations, and the evening was declared “a complete success.”⁹ He probably also helped establish the Ludlow Literary and Scientific Institute, founded for the “mental, moral and religious improvement” of its members, and in October 1875 courses were in preparation in “elocution, local music, French, and the Art of Memory”, with Smith printing copies of its rules and constitution.¹⁰ Throughout all this, and alongside his bookselling business, Smith’s lectures continued, and during the early 1870s he visited venues as far afield as Rotherham, Lancaster, Chester and Gosport. At the Whitworth School of Science in Cheltenham in December 1869 he was described as that “well-known lecturer on



Figure 6. A Sad Character

physical science” with his “magnificent collection of scientific apparatus”, and in 1874 at Chester it was remarked: “Mr. Smith’s apparatus is unparalleled, and as an experimental manipulator he has no rival”.

Smith also acted as “collector” of

subscriptions for Ludlow Museum, resigning from this in August 1875 “owing to pressure of business”, and it’s also during the mid 1870s that his photographic activities appear to have been suspended. Even accounts of his lecturing become rare, because during the summer of 1874 he seems to have thrown himself into the publication and printing of a new local weekly newspaper, *The Ludlow & Leominster Herald*. The inaugural issue was probably printed in early June 1874, because number 65 was dated August 27, 1875. In May of 1875 Smith had set up a company, *The Ludlow and Leominster Herald General Printing and Publishing Company Ltd.*, with a capital of £1000 in £5 shares but, despite his best efforts, within a year the paper was failing to thrive and in difficulties, presumably due to limited circulation, and he was obliged to negotiate with creditors.¹¹ The paper limped on, but the final issue was number 129, dated the 17 November 1876, and the printing plant was put up for auction on the following day.¹² The company’s



Figure 7. St Leonard's Chapel and burial ground

9 *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, 29 April 1870

10 *Ludlow & Leominster Herald*, 8 October 1875, 1. Applicants’ enquiries were directed to “the Hall in Brand Lane”

11 *The Morning Post*, 3 May 1875, 3; *London Gazette*, 28 April 1876, 2700

12 Shropshire Archives, at ref. 4924/5/8/2



Figure 8. Hopton Wafers, church and Manor House

voluntary liquidation was announced in early January 1877, although Smith's involvement with newspapers was to continue as local reporter for the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* and the *Wenlock & Ludlow Express*.¹³ His bookselling and stationery enterprise survived, and in 1879 he placed a large advertisement in Kelly's Directory. In addition he wrote and published *The Tourists' Guide to Ludlow*, the inside front cover also advertising his business (Figure 10), but neither advertisement made mention of any photographic studio.

By March 1877 Smith's lecturing activities were once again being revived with a talk at Newbury on spectrum analysis, and this was followed by visits to Cheltenham, Deal, Gloucester, Kidderminster, Matlock, Redruth and Weymouth amongst others, often with repeat invitations to speak, and with enthusiastic reviews. In 1881 the family were still living in Castle Street, with two of the children at colleges at Stapleton, Gloucestershire, near Bristol: Josiah junior was at Colston's Hospital, set up to educate and apprentice boys, while daughter Ellen was at Oldbury Court Training College

for teachers.¹⁴ Louisa Smith had acted as "keeper" at Ludlow Museum, receiving a fee for this until 1881, but shortly after this the family moved away to Gloucester, and Arthur Lacey, previously a bookseller in Yorkshire, took over the business in Ludlow, printing an updated edition of Smith's Tourist Guide in around 1891.

Curiously, Smith's activities now seem to have been divided between two bases, for by October of 1882 he was also described as "of Nottingham (late of Ludlow)" when he gave a lecture on electricity at Knighton, and a calling card he was carrying in 1884 described him as a "manufacturing electrician, Stapleford, Notts.", although he was also mentioned elsewhere as residing at Gloucester. Stapleford had probably become a second base because his second daughter, Hannah Maria, was the mistress at the Board School there at this time, and a talk was given there in December 1883.

This eventful life however was to end in the bizarre and sadly ignominious circumstances of his death, on the 29th of November 1884, in the basement of a lodging house in Worcester belonging to

one Thomas Link; it may be that habits acquired during his younger seafaring days had proved a little difficult to shake off. In the *Ludlow Advertiser* for the 6th December an account of an incident appeared, noteworthy not only for being about a seemingly irrelevant and minor occurrence in a faraway town, but for the way in which the writer tiptoed around the story with such palpable delicacy. The piece read as follows:¹⁵

WORCESTER. SAD DEATH. - On Saturday morning, Police-constable Pugh was summoned to a house of ill-repute in Merrivale, where he found a man on the floor of a bed room apparently dead. He summoned surgical aid, but all life was pronounced to be extinct. Deceased was about sixty-five years of age, with grey hair and whiskers, with no moustache, £3 8s. 11d. was found in his pockets and a silver watch; also a card with the address "Josiah Smith, manufacturing electrician, Stapleford, Notts." From the little information that could be gathered it appeared that deceased was a stranger

13 *Morning Post*, 8 January 1877, 8

14 It may not be coincidental that Louisa Smith's mother, née Jemima Hendy, had been born in Staunton, Gloucestershire, in 1794

15 *Ludlow Advertiser*, 6 December 1884, 4. See also *Worcester Daily News* 29 November 1884, 3; *Ibid.*, 1 December 1884, 3; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 2 December 1884, 8; *Gloucester Journal*, 6 December 1884, 5

to Worcester, and only arrived there on the previous day. He engaged a bed at a coffee tavern but did not go there, and went instead to the house where he died with a female companion. He was dressing shortly after eight o'clock on Saturday morning, when he exclaimed "Oh my arm," and called to his companion, a young girl, said to come from Cradley, Herefordshire, to catch hold of him. Before she could reach him he fell upon the bed room floor and expired in her presence. The facts were reported to the coroner, Mr. Rea, who, on Monday, held an inquest at the Guildhall. Deceased was sixty-three years of age. Mr A. St. Halford watched the proceedings on behalf of the relatives of the deceased. It was stated that the deceased resided at Gloucester. He came to Worcester on Friday, and the same night he saw a female in the street, and passed the night at her house in Merrivale. Next morning while dressing, he fell down suddenly and expired, life being extinct when Dr. Hill was fetched to him. The Medical testimony was to the effect that the cause of death was apoplexy, and a verdict in accordance therewith was returned.¹⁶

He was in fact aged 60, but there can be little doubt that the paper knew exactly who this Josiah Smith was: a former fellow journalist and townsman, and was leaving it to its more astute or well-informed readers to spot the clues and draw their own conclusions. There's no mention of Ludlow

– clearly, no respectable Ludlovian would ever get involved in such an escapade with a sixteen-year-old – but what you read in the papers depended upon where you lived. The *Wellington Journal* reported the "Sad Death of an Old Ludlow Tradesman" but made no mention of any house of ill repute.¹⁷ On the other hand, at Gloucester and Worcester the facts were reported in very much greater detail, but despite the whole case being published so fully in the Gloucester papers, Louisa and her daughters continued to live there until her death in August 1921 at the age of 92.

Of the aftermath of all this very little is known; the minutes of the *Gloucester Literary and Scientific Association*, where he had been booked to give an "experimental lecture" about flame storms and thunder storms on the 26 March 1885, are merely annotated in pencil: "Died Nov. 1884". Smith's will was proved in February 1885, where he was described as "late of Parkend Road in the city of Gloucester, Electrician", leaving 131 pounds and fifteen shillings – at that time enough to buy a small house. Smith's real legacy, though, lay in what he devoted his life to: the education of ordinary working people. This doubtless not only had its roots in his family connections with Sir Josiah Mason but almost certainly in his marriage to Louisa Hendy Williams in 1853, and then his subsequent education at Battersea Training College. But in the days long before television, up and down the

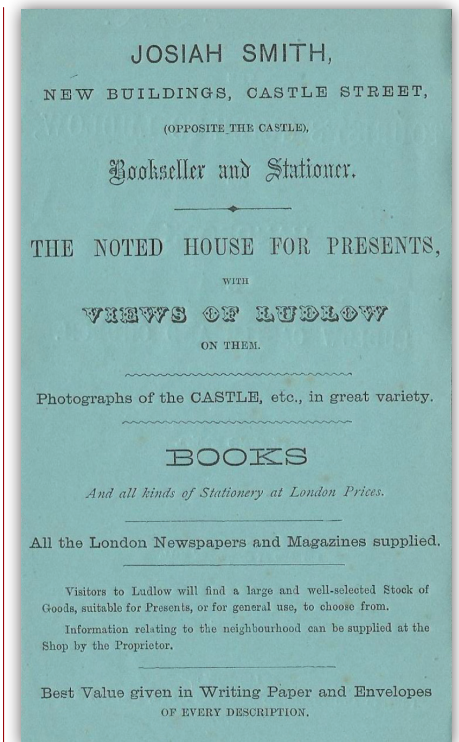


Figure 10. Smith's Advertisement in 1879

country Smith gave hundreds, quite possibly thousands, direct exposure to the excitement and wonder of practical science, vivid and memorable experiences they would never otherwise have had, and it is for this that he will have been remembered by many.

© Peter Klein

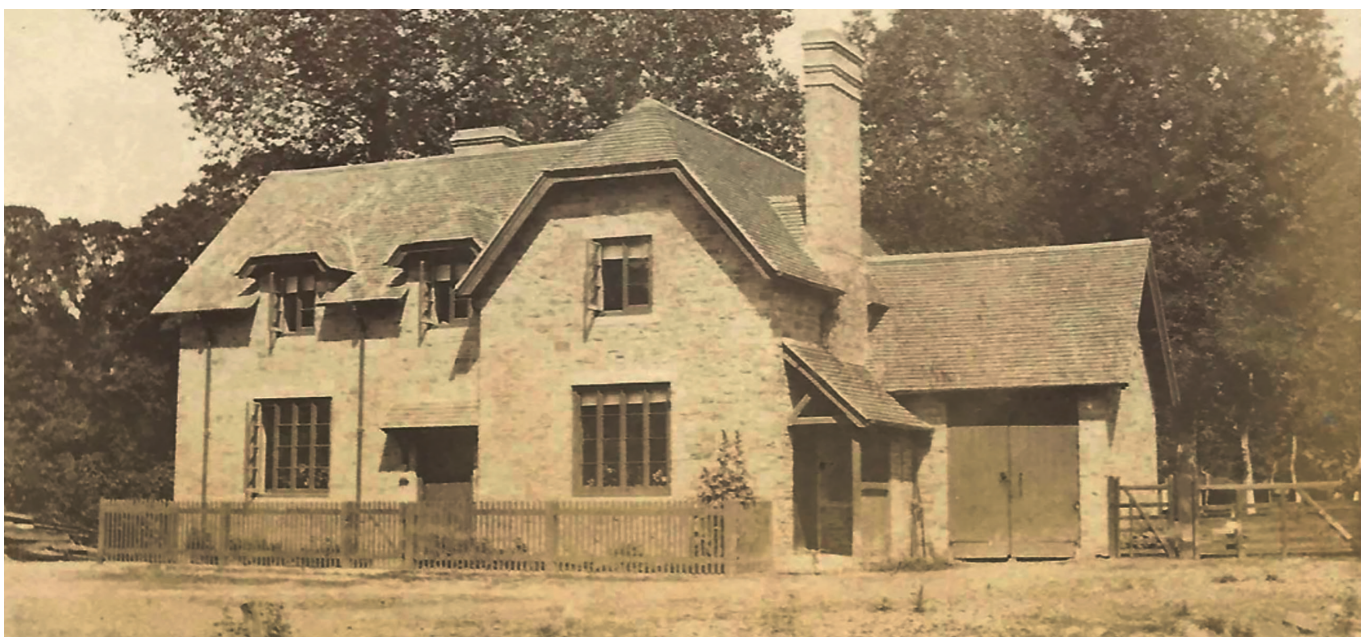


Figure 9. Yatton Court Gamekeeper's Lodge, Aymestrey

¹⁶ His companion, Jane Badham, was no more than sixteen years or age

¹⁷ *Wellington Journal*, 6 December 1884



Figure 2. The Ketelbey plaque

LEAD... BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

FRENCH WARS, INDIAN WARS, LUDLOW AND COOKING...

Two lead plaques hang from the walls in the *parvis room*, above the porch entrance to St Laurence's church in Ludlow. These plaques, dating from 1752, were apparently removed from the roof during repairs in 2017/18 and brought into the parvis room for safekeeping (*Wall Tablets – Research by Alan Latchford Church Guide*). Weathered by the elements for more than 260 years, they now hang in the shadows, covered with dust, in a part of the church seldom visited. These obscure plaques provide a *window* to a religious, military and domestic history that spans the world.

Although not verified by churchwarden records, it is assumed they were originally made and placed outside on or about 5th May 1752, to mark some significant restoration work and commemorate the names of those involved. The names include:

- William Gardner the Sexton;
- John Powys the Clerk, who was born at Brimfield in 1701 and died at Ludlow in 1782;
- Brian Cole the *Rector* ^[sic], who had served the people of Ludlow in that calling since 1741. He was born in 1678 at Wistanstow (near Craven Arms) and educated at Oxford University (1697) and later at Clare College Cambridge from 1699. Originally, he was the vicar at Stottesdon

(1706), then Bishop's Castle (1714) and finally Ludlow. He was married to Mary (nee Cotterel) and together they had four children.

- Francis Higgins the churchwarden, born and bred in Ludlow (1701-1767);
- Samuel Corne, a Master Plumber of Ludlow, who on 12th March 1750, took on Richard Stephens as his apprentice (*UK Register of Duties Paid for Apprentice Indentures*). It seems reasonable to assume that Mr Corne made the lead plaques with the assistance of his apprentice Richard;
- A. I. Kettelby Esqr ^[sic]. In mediaeval England the letter 'i' was not always differentiated from the letter 'j' (*Britannica.com*). The process of

determining which letter was a consonant and which a vowel, took more than 300 years and was still not complete in the 1700's. Historically, the term 'Esquire' referred to a Knight's personal attendant and shield bearer. However, the eventual use of the word 'gentleman' to denote social status, led to the classification of such assumed titles. Thus, *Esquire* referred to a man ranked above a *Gentleman* but below a *Knight*. By 1848, John Bernard Burke Esquire (author of *The Peerage*), determined that one group, amongst his twelve categories of person permitted to use the term *Esquire*, were Barristers-at-Law (*Nobiliary Law* [*wordpress.com*]). Thus, taking into account the style of



Figure 1. Lead plaques in Parvis

phonetic spelling common in those times and the varied spelling of the name, even within the family, there can be no doubt that the 'Esquire' named on the lead plaque in St Laurence's church is Abel Johnston Ketelbey, Barrister-at-Law. As a barrister, from a family of lawyers, perhaps he was destined to support some restoration to the parvis in Ludlow, knowing lawyers had used such spaces for decades to meet their clients, most notably at Old St Paul's in London. It was in his heritage and his heritage is fascinating.

The French Coincidence

In 1598, after years of war, the Edict of Nantes offered a semblance of peace between French Catholics and their protestant countrymen, the Huguenots. In some regions however, Catholics continued grievous resentments. On 13th May 1610, 'Good King Henry' (the Huguenot turned Catholic) was assassinated by the failed novice monk, Francois Ravallac. Henceforth, the peace achieved under the Edict began to unravel as Catholicism dominated under the Regent, Mary de Medici and the 'boy' king, Louis XIII. In 1621, persecution of Huguenots in the region of Bearn led to a protestant uprising and the Catholic siege of the Huguenot port of La Rochelle. This ended in stalemate in 1622 but the Catholic regime continued its intimidation of La Rochelle into the coming years.

Concerned at the rising power of the French navy, in 1626 the English government of Charles I saw the situation at La Rochelle as an opportunity to organise

rebellion in France and thus weaken it. They sent 100 ships to offer support to La Rochelle which, to their surprise, was rejected. In 1627, the English attempted an abortive landing and, after engaging the royal forces, ultimately left with heavy losses. Among the ships engaged in the initial English expedition was an early version of HMS Victory. Launched in 1620, she was a 42 gun 'Great Ship' under the command of Captain Thomas Kettilyby.

Thomas Kettilyby (1588-1655) married Anne Lyttleton (1587-1657) at Ludlow on 15th September 1613. As a Royal Navy captain, other than HMS Victory, he also commanded HMS Swallow in 1642. In a King's letter dated 27th July 1634, he was ordered, by name, to deliver one Thomas Brice to America. Mr Brice had been sentenced to transportation to Virginia (crime unspecified) and, it was ordered, if he tried to return to England without permission "...he will be executed according to the judgement already given against him..." (Virginia PRO SP16/272).

Thomas and Anne had at least one son, Edward born around 1613, who was later deemed a 'Gentleman'. He married Anne Steventon and they had at least six children, one of whom they named Edward (1653-1718) after his father.

Edward (jnr) attended Queen's College Oxford (1668) and joined the Inner Temple in 1670. He married Ann Gower in 1675 at Worcester St John and eventually lived at Steple Hall near Bitterley, just outside Ludlow. Edward and Ann had two sons: Timothy, who became Rector of Pipe Aston in 1701 and Abel Ketelbey (*Spellings were often phonetically 'achieved'*), who became a Barrister-at-Law.

The French Connection

The persecution of the Huguenots continued in France under the reign of Louis XIV who, when not building his palace at Versailles, was slothful and easily manipulated by forces intent on exterminating Huguenot 'heretics'. Soldiers (*Dragonnades*) were forcibly quartered in Huguenot homes for the purpose of making their lives a misery, unless they proselytised their faith. The Edict of Nantes was formally revoked in 1685 leaving Huguenots a choice of converting to Catholicism, life imprisonment or flee the country, even though borders were closed.

Cesar de Beaulieu was a pastor, well connected with Huguenot aristocracy and shared their faith. In 1682, a warrant for his arrest was issued for proselytising Catholics and he fled to England with his family, including daughter Henrietta de Beaulieu, then about eight years of age. Cesar became minister of the French church in Ipswich and in 1684, was appointed Chaplain to the Royal Household (*pastellists.com*).

In March 1694, then living in the parish of St Martin-in-the-Fields (London), Henrietta married Robert Dering, the son of Sir Edward Dering. The newlyweds first lived in Salisbury and later moved with their children to Ireland, where Robert Dering died in January 1703. Thereafter, for reasons unknown, Henrietta took up art and improved her talent over time, producing portraits of members of the English aristocracy with whom she was now linked.

In 1705, Henrietta married the Reverend Gideon Johnston (born 1668) in Dublin. Gideon was a widower with two sons, James and Robert.



Figure 3: French King Henry IV assassinated



Figure 4: A work by Henrietta Johnston. Possibly her likeness

The New World

Not long after their marriage, Gideon took his family to London in search of better prospects. In 1707, he was appointed the Bishop of London's Commissary in South Carolina by the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, a private organisation set up by Royal Charter in 1701, which remains in existence to this day. Its original purpose was to bring the Anglican faith to the colonists and convert the Native American tribes (*Letters from the Clergy of South Carolina 1696-1775: G. W. Williams*). Gideon and Henrietta left Robert and James to study at Chigwell Grammar school in Essex, paid for by the Society (*Denise Bossy - Univ. North Florida 2014*), before they set sail for the Americas.

In Charles Town, South Carolina (named after Charles II in 1680; renamed 'Charleston' upon incorporation as a city in 1783), Gideon was to be based in the parish of St Philip but upon arrival, found an interloper had moved in before him and had become accepted as the community pastor. This created significant difficulties for Gideon in both his duties and his income, as set out in his voluminous letters back to his sponsors in England which, together with letters from his colonial colleagues, remain a fascinating insight into American colonial life (*Letters*

from the Clergy of the Anglican Church in South Carolina 1696-1775: College of Charleston).

Other trials and tribulations included the horrors of the slave trade and war with the Yamasee Indians, which saw several hundred settlers killed and the ultimate demise of that First Nation people. There was perpetual disease, hunger and a shortage of money reported by Gideon, as the price of food and goods in the colony was at least three times more expensive than in England. In his letters he described suffering repeated bouts of fever, suggesting malaria which was prolific in South

Carolina. To help supplement their meagre income, Henrietta continued with her art and gained a small income from it.

"I never repent so much of anything...as my coming to this place...the people here are of the vilest race of men upon the Earth... were it not for the assistance my wife gives me by drawing of pictures (which can last but a little time in a place so ill peopled) I should not be able to live..."

(*Letters of Gideon Johnston 1708 & 1709*)

In 1711, Henrietta returned to London to plead her husband's case for more money, narrowly avoiding pirates on the voyage. She was successful and returned to Charles Town one year later.

In 1713, Gideon returned to London bringing with him a young 'prince' of the Euhaw clan of the Yamasee tribe. This young man was aged 17 years and joined Gideon's sons at Chigwell. Known as 'Prince George' by the British, his true name has been lost in time. He was an example of the 'spiritual diplomacy' exercised by some tribes in efforts to gain favour and influence with the British but he was clearly regarded with some affection by Johnston.

As part of *his* mission, the prince desired to meet the King of England. In the process, he needed better clothing but the Society refused to fund it despite Johnston's

entreaties. At this point an eminent barrister associated with the colonies, Abel Ketelbey (1674-1744), agreed with Johnston that 'Prince George' needed support and purchased him a "*handsome Cloacke and a Gun...*". This is clear evidence of a link between Johnston and Abel Ketelbey. The 'prince' was baptised in 1715 and met the king the same day; without fanfare. He and Johnston returned to America that year, only to find their peoples were at war. The prince disappeared from history like most of his people, who were oppressed by the colonists (*Denise Bossy - University of North Florida - 2014*). Gideon was drowned in a boating incident in 1716.

Henrietta remained in Charles Town and eventually gained renown and became recognised as the first female artist of the American continent. Meanwhile, Robert Johnston was to complete his English education and Abel Ketelbey continued his career as an accomplished and respected barrister and public figure.

The Colonies, Ludlow and Cooking

In 1663, by Royal Charter, Charles II appointed eight men as *Lords Proprietors* to plan the settlement of South Carolina. Part of the process was to create a *nobility* for the colony but any titles bestowed were not permitted to replicate those of the British establishment. Thus, among others, the Lords Proprietors decided to use the German aristocratic title of *Landgrave*



Figure 5: Yamasee Warrior

(*South Carolina Encyclopaedia*).

Abel Ketelbey had attended Balliol College Oxford until 1693, when he was admitted to Middle Temple. He was called to the Bar in 1699. He married Mary Williams in 1704 and was appointed *Landgrave* in 1709. He went on to act as Attorney General for South Carolina from 1712, representing the interests of the colony at a distance, in London. In 1715 he defended Jacobite rebels at trials in Carlisle and later, in 1722, a conspirator in the Atterbury Plot. In 1717, he found time to present two silver patens to St Laurence's church (*Lloyd, Clark, Potter – St Laurence's Church 1199-2009*), which are catalogued and in use to this day. Between 1719 and 1743 he acted as Recorder for Ludlow (*History of Parliament. UK Govt*). He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1720 and was Member of Parliament for Ludlow from 1722 until 1727, with the *original* 'High Hall' being one of his residences. The house stood in what is now the grounds of Ludlow College

(*Not the present High Hall, which was built around 1775-Lloyd & Klein Historical Anthology*).

In 1716, the year of Gideon Johnston's death, Abel Ketelbey resigned from his colonial responsibilities but retained his titles. At some point during, or soon after 1716 and for reasons not presently clear other than perhaps philanthropy, Abel Ketelbey took responsibility for Gideon Johnston's son, Robert.

In his letters to England, Gideon Johnston had expressed concerns as to whether his sons, of Irish birth, would be accepted into the English system. Whether or not his apprehension was justified now, with the sponsorship of Abel Ketelbey, Robert had the opportunity to excel.

In 1717, aged about twenty, Robert was admitted to Middle Temple. His relationship with the Ketelbey family flourished and in 1725 he married Abel's daughter, Mary (named after her mother). On 12th May 1726 he too was elected a member of the Royal Society, under the name Robert Johnston Ketelbey. The same year, he and Mary were blessed with the birth of a son, whom they named Abel Johnston Ketelbey.

By 1736, Robert had achieved the high office of Sergeant-at-Law and kept a family home at Steple Hall, Neen Savage. Sadly, aged only 46 years, he died in June 1743 and was buried on 8th July at St Mary's church, Bitterley.

On 23rd May 1744 Abel Ketelbey signed his last Will and Testament in which he referred to Robert posthumously, as "my

dear and affectionate son-in-law, Robert Ketelbey..." He asked to be buried at Bitterley as near as possible to his father Edward and bequeathed any honours and titles as remained in South Carolina to his grandson, Abel Johnston Ketelbey. Abel Ketelbey died later that year at Steple Hall and was buried at Bitterley on 15th December.

Abel Johnston Ketelbey had been baptised in London on 20th September 1726. In 1742 he was admitted to Balliol College, Oxford. His father, Robert died the following year and his grandfather, Abel, the year after that.

The same year as his grandfather's passing (1744), Abel Johnston Ketelbey was called to the Bar at Middle Temple and became a barrister. He inherited a good deal of property, including his grandfather's titles in South Carolina. In 1745, he married Margaretta Farquharson in London and their child, Maria Statira Elizabeth Farquharson Ketelby, was born in 1747.

Aged only 26 years in 1752, Abel wrote his Last Will and Testament in which he described himself as "...constitutionally weak but sound in mind and memory...". He bequeathed his interests in South Carolina to his 'kinsman' Walter Kettilby^[sic] and made generous provision for his employees, friends and the nurses who had helped him through "...several recent fits of illness..."

Abel Johnston Ketelbey died in 1756 at Wayshill Hall, his home in Worcestershire. In his Will he requested a frugal funeral service but insisted his coffin should be made of lead, which would have been expensive:

"First my will and desire is, that my body be buried in a Leaden coffin in the parish church of Bitterley in the county of Salop within the Chancel of the said church as near the remains of my late honoured father and grandfather there lying buried as near conveniently be, in as frugal as a manner (the leaden coffin excepted) as may reasonably and deferentially be..."

The rest of his estate, including several properties in and around Ludlow, he left in Trust to his daughter, Maria. Some years later, when Walter Kettilby (Abel's cousin) died, he also left all remaining interests in Ludlow to Maria, who by then had married. Abel's widow, Margaretta, went on to marry one Thomas Hodge in 1758. She died in Staffordshire in 1772. There are no memorials to the Ketelbeys now evident at Bitterley church, in the chancel or elsewhere. Consultation with the church authorities suggest they may have been lost, or concealed by re-ordering of the church premises over time.



Figure 6: Paten engraved Abel Ketelbey (Church inventory)

Maria had married Thomas Rundell at Bath Abbey on 30th December 1766. They continued to live in Bath, where Thomas was a surgeon and later served as Sheriff of Bath and Chief Constable. Nothing has been found by the writer to suggest she continued any association with Ludlow.

In 1806, then aged 59, a book Maria had originally written for her daughters was accepted for publication by publisher, John Murray. The earliest book of its type and pre-dating *Mrs Beeton* by more than fifty years, *A New System of Domestic Cookery*, advising on cookery and household management, was a huge success selling nearly a quarter of a million copies worldwide by the 1880s, when publication ceased (*Ludlow Heritage News No.48*).

Already a wealthy woman, this success brought more riches and renown. However, a dispute over royalties led to court action, which was not resolved in Maria's favour until the 1840s. She never witnessed that outcome because she died on 16th December 1828 in Lausanne, Switzerland.

In her Will, dated 13th November 1827, she addressed her only surviving son, Edmond:



Figure 6: Print taken from Hogarth's 'A Midnight Modern Conversation'. Abel Ketelbey (centre) identified in National Trust versions (Petworth House, West Sussex)

"...I have always much respected my family name, the Ketelbeys having for several centuries supported it with high credit and I regret that there are none to perpetuate it. Should my only son choose to take it up, it would give me satisfaction but I will not request it. If he should ever revive the name, I am confident that he would do justice to it..."

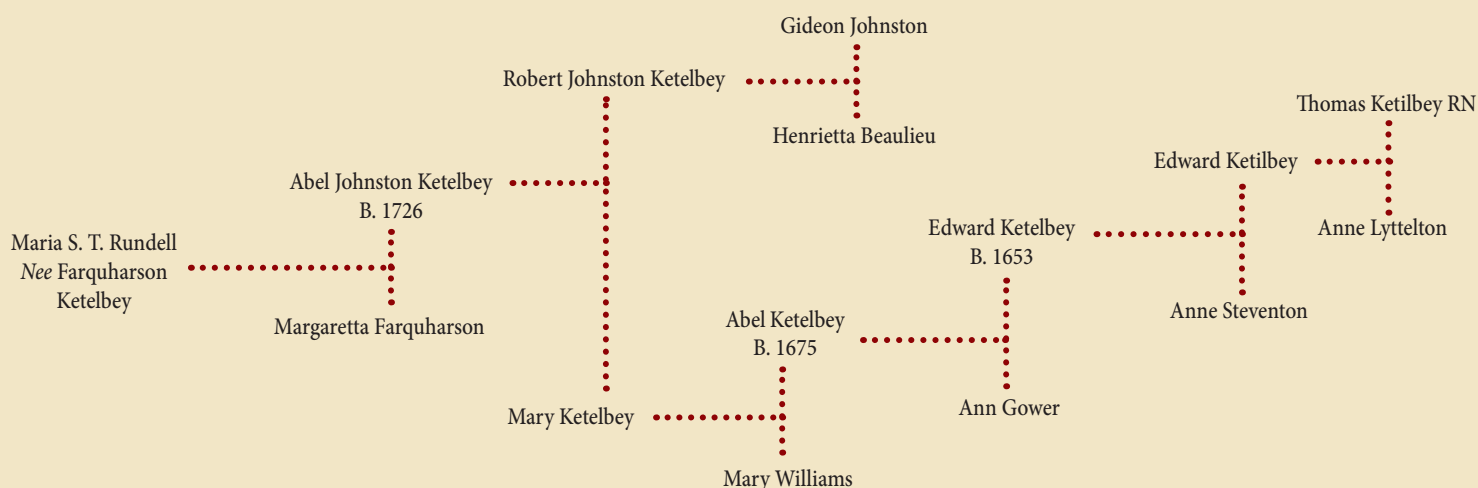
(J. Cutmore Auth.- John Murray's Quarterly Review: Letters 1807-1843 [L'pool Univer. Press 2019])

Edmond did not adopt the name and thus, it faded from memory and prominence in this area with little more than a weathered lead plaque, tucked away in St Laurence's church as a reminder.

It may have been coincidence that Abel

Johnston Ketelbey wrote his Will at such a young age in 1752, the very same year his name was commemorated on the lead plaque. Perhaps his health was such, that he foresaw his own early demise. However much obscured by dust and time, the simple plaque in the parvis room leaves a reminder, in lead, of a saga that no longer need be forgotten.

Eric Griffiths



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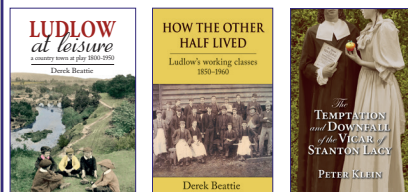
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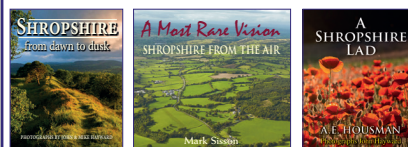
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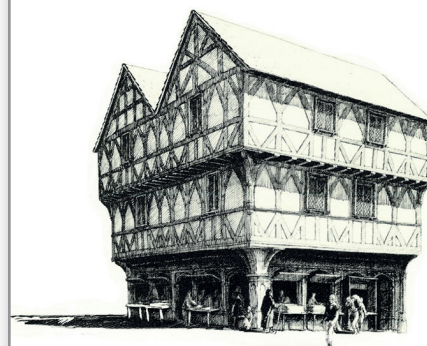
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