

A Tour of Ledbury

Introduction	4
Ledbury's beginning.....	4
Medieval Ledbury.....	4
Nineteenth century Ledbury.....	5
Twentieth century Ledbury	5
Take a virtual tour around Ledbury	7
Bye Street	8
Cattle Market.....	8
Church Lane	9
Painted Room.....	9
Butcher Row House	10
Burgage Hall	10
Heritage Centre, former Grammar School.....	11
Abbotts Lodge.....	12
Rutherglen	12
St Michael and All Angels Church.....	12
High Street	14
Market House.....	14
1 High Street: Raft.....	15
2 High Street: Greggs	15
3 High Street: Ledbury News.....	16
4 High Street: HSBC	16
5 High Street: Handley Organics.....	17
6 High Street: Three Counties Bookshop	17
7 High Street: The Retreat	18

8 High Street: View and Tinsmiths	18
9 High Street: Boots.....	19
10 High Street: Spar	19
11 High Street: Hay Wines.....	20
12 High Street: Gurneys.....	20
13 High Street: Clarks.....	21
14 High Street: Shaw Trust.....	21
15 High Street: Elegance.....	22
16 and 17 High Street: Nice Things and In Stark Contrast.....	22
18 High Street: John Nash	23
19 High Street: Sitara.....	24
20 High Street: Ledbury Books and Maps	24
21 High Street: Ceci Paulo.....	25
22 High Street: Juice Jewellery.....	25
23 High Street: Blue Orchid.....	25
24 High Street: Lloyds Bank.....	26
25 High Street: The Feathers Hotel	26
26 High Street: Wyebridge Interiors	26
27 High Street: John & Diane Miller Optometrists	27
St Katherine’s Chapel.....	27
St Katherine’s Hospital.....	27
Master’s House	28
Barrett Browning Institute	28
New Street	29
1 The Southend: House on Stilts.....	29
14 New Street: The Talbot.....	29
The Homend.....	30

3 The Homend: CC.....	30
New Inn	30
11 The Homend: The Seven Stars	30
15 The Homend: Cameron & Swan.....	30
27 The Homend: former cinema	31
The Horseshoe.....	31
4 The Homend: Juno Boutique	31
The Southend.....	32
5 The Southend: The Royal Oak.....	32
Markets	33

Introduction

Ledbury's beginning

Ledbury first developed in the Anglo Saxon period. The town's location is no accident: it is at the crossroads of the Hereford to Worcester road (probably the modern Bye Street and Church Street) and the Bromyard to Gloucester road (the modern Homend and Southend).

As you might expect, the heart of this early settlement was the church. This was approached from the main road by crossing a triangular area, which may have been used as a market. This area was later filled in, creating the modern Church Lane and Church Street.

Medieval Ledbury

When the Domesday Book was compiled in 1086, Ledbury was a rural manor belonging to the Bishop of Hereford. In the 1120s or 1130s, the Bishop created a town or borough along the main roads and a new wedge-shaped market place was established on what is now the High Street.

The new town developed rapidly. Houses quickly extended along The Homend and then The Southend. Next to develop was Bye Street and then New Street, where we know there were houses by 1186.

In Elizabethan times, Ledbury was a small town of 600 to 650 people, and the market and religious centre for a further 880 rural parishioners, around 1,500 people in all.

Nineteenth century Ledbury

The shape of the town changed little between the late twelfth century and the early nineteenth century. Indeed, the shape of the medieval town is still clearly visible and the medieval main routes are the main routes today.

The arrivals of the canal and – to a greater extent – the railways had a significant effect on the development of Ledbury. The Gloucester – Ledbury section of the Hereford – Gloucester Canal opened in 1798 and the Ledbury to Hereford section opened in 1845. The Worcester to Hereford railway and Ledbury's station opened in 1861. The Gloucester to Ledbury railway, which was partly built along the line of the former canal, opened in 1885.

New streets were laid out on the western edges of the medieval town. Victoria and Albert Roads, named for the Queen and her consort, were built in the 1850s. The population of Ledbury declined between the 1850s and 1900, but nevertheless, streets including Newbury Park, Belle Orchard, Oatleys Road, Woodleigh Road and part of Bank Crescent had been built or laid out by the early twentieth century.

In 1851 the area around Lower Road was called New Town. Much of the nineteenth century development along Bridge Street was carried out by the Ledbury Benefit Building Society which was founded sometime before 1852 and was wound up in 1914. We know that in 1886, the area around modern Bridge Street was known as Happy Land, perhaps a marketing ploy to attract new residents.

Twentieth century Ledbury

The early twentieth century saw little change for Ledbury. Further streets were developed, but the population remained around the 3,500 mark.

The 1919 Housing Act led to council houses being built in Homend Crescent in 1921. Private houses were built on the Bank Crescent estate in the later 1920s and 1930s.

More council houses were built in the early 1950s in Long Acre, Margaret Road and Queensway, the last two streets named for Queen Elizabeth II and her sister Princess Margaret.

By 1966, streets including Horse Lane Orchard, Mabels Furlong, Lawnside Road, Oatleys Crescent and Terrace, the Langlands, Northmead, Audley Croft, and Plaisters End had all been laid out by private developers.

The town's first major expansion occurred in the late twentieth century. The New Mills (named after a water mill recorded in 1602 which stood north west of the new estate) and Deer Park (named after the medieval bishops' deer park, which lay at Dingwood on the road to Ledbury) estates were built between the town and its new by-pass. The population grew from 3,911 in 1971 to 4,549 in 1981 and 8,839 in 2001. In 2010, the population was just under 10,000.

The information in this brief history and in the following gazetteer has been taken from the following books:

- J. Hillaby, *Ledbury: A Medieval Borough* (1982; Ledbury and District Society Trust Ltd with Logaston Press, 2005)
- S. Pinches, *Ledbury: A Market Town and its Tudor Heritage* (Phillimore, 2009)
- S. Pinches and others, *Ledbury: Parish and People before the Reformation* (Phillimore, 2012)
- *Ledbury Street Names* (Logaston Press, 2007)

The last three books were the result of the [England's Past for Everyone](#) project in Ledbury, involving local people in the research. Many more short articles, photographs and transcripts of documents can be found on the accompanying [Explore England's Past website](#). This includes the introduction to [Ledbury Street Names](#).

Duncan James' 'An analysis of the historic fabric of late 16th and early 17th century buildings in Ledbury, Herefordshire', unpub. report for EPE, 2007 is also available on the Explore website.

Take a virtual tour around Ledbury

The rest of this document gives you information on the notable buildings on Ledbury's main streets as well as a brief history of Ledbury's markets.

- [Bye Street](#)
- [Church Lane](#)
- [High Street](#)
- [New Street](#)
- [The Homend](#)
- [The Southend](#)
- [Markets](#)

Bye Street

Bye Street was originally called Bishop's Street, after the bishop of Hereford, who probably owned property there. Later, it was mistakenly believed that numbers 28–32 Bye Street were the Bishop's Palace. Unfortunately, these fourteenth-century buildings have been demolished. 'By' or 'Bye' street may really have meant 'lesser' street, compared to the High Street. Both 'Bishop Street' and 'Bye Street' were in use until finally settling on Bye Street in the later nineteenth century.

Cattle Market

Market Street was opened in 1887 by the Ledbury Markets and Fairs Company. It served the new, purpose-built cattle market, which was accessed from both New Street and Bye Street. The Cattle Market closed and the site was sold for development in 1999. The Market Surgery and Ledbury Market Theatre are on the site of the old Cattle Market. Market Street is still a private, unadopted road.

Church Lane

Church Lane is probably the oldest street in Ledbury. It was originally the main street leading from the church into town. It is at the crossroads of the 'kings highway' and the east/west track from Hereford Cathedral to Ledbury Parish Church. It has been the site of continuous human activity for more than a thousand years.

Painted Room

The Painted Room is on the first floor of today's town council offices.



Below the Painted Room, in the Town Clerk's office is a panelled, carved and columned room (not open to the public). In this upper chamber the 'hangings' have been painted only to some three feet from the floor. Originally below that was a painted dado (the one remaining part of it can be seen in the far corner beyond the fireplace) intended to represent another panelled room, this time hung with fashionable wall cloths. The paintings have been done in imitation of the wall hangings and tapestries that would be found in the homes of the aristocracy so are likely to be the work of the occupants of the house trying to "keep up with the Jones's".

The designs in the main pattern are floral and based on Elizabethan knot gardens. Around the top part of the walls there is a valance effect which has boxes containing biblical text. These helped with the accurate dating of the paintings, which are thought to be from the 1560s or 1570s. There is evidence in one corner of the room that the lower part of the walls were painted to look as if they were covered with wood panelling.

Unfortunately, despite the Painted Room's prominent position in the town, we do not have any early records of it, so cannot be certain of its original purpose.

Butcher Row House

Butcher Row House is one of a row of fifteen houses and shops, many of them butchers, which ran down the middle of what is now High Street. They developed out of temporary stalls in the market place. They made the street very narrow and the houses were bought out by public subscription in 1830. Most were demolished but one or two were re-erected elsewhere: Butcher Row House used to be in the back garden of 14 High Street.

Ledbury and District Civic Society purchased the house in 1979 and re-erected it in its present location in Church Lane. It now houses the [Butcher Row House Museum](#).

Burgage Hall

Burgage Hall was built as a Congregational Church in 1852, on the site of an earlier chapel. By the 1950s it had fallen into disuse. The Society purchased and restored the chapel in 1985. It is available to hire and is used for meetings, parties, exhibitions and events.

Why is it called Burgage Hall?

The Burgage Hall got its name from the fact that it stands on one of the 'burgage plots' on which many of Ledbury's buildings stand.



A burgage plot was a strip of land in a medieval town. The land was owned by the lord of the manor and allocated to the town's freemen – men who were entitled to practise a trade and elect members of the town's ruling council. An owner of a burgage plot was called a burgess. He paid rent to the lord of the manor, usually in money, but sometimes in services.

Where a town was developed along a single main street or a long market (as in Ledbury), frontages were at a premium, so the plots were long and narrow. Ledbury has many alleyways off High Street and The Homend. The alleys were the ways to get from the street to the back of the plot.

Owning a burgage often gave you the right to vote. A burgage could be freely bought and sold. It could also be transferred for the period of an election to a nominee. It was therefore possible for a very few people (sometimes as few as one) to purchase the majority of the burgages in a town and therefore have the absolute power to nominate the members of Parliament. Most burgage boroughs became pocket (or rotten) boroughs in this way. The practice was abolished in the Reform Act of 1832.

Heritage Centre, former Grammar School

This building is one of the oldest in Ledbury, probably dating back to the late fifteenth or very early sixteenth century. Along the south side the upper storey projects over the street, in what is known as a jetty. The beam along the edge, known as a bressumer, has a moulded decoration running along it. The building, which was restored in 1977/8 near to its original form, clearly had some public function rather than being purely domestic. It has been suggested that it may have been built as a guild hall and only later used as a grammar school.

It had ceased to house the Grammar School by the middle of the nineteenth century. It was then turned into three dwellings. After its restoration in 1978 it became the Heritage Centre and houses displays about the history of Ledbury.

Abbotts Lodge

Tucked next to Church House, behind gates and a high wall, is the building now known as Abbotts Lodge, though there was never an abbey in Ledbury. From the outside not much can be seen, but it is one of the most important buildings in the town. It was for many years the vicarage, later rectory, and its origins go back into the middle ages. Timbers in the range nearest Church Lane have been dated to 1480; the wing to the south has timbers dating to 1519. A brick two-storeyed wing was added in the eighteenth century.

Rutherglen

Rutherglen (now known as the Old Magistrates House) is one of the few intact Georgian buildings in Ledbury. Dating from the early eighteenth century, it was restored in 1988 along with neighbouring buildings in Back Lane including the old police station (now known as the Sargeant's House), partly thanks to the efforts of Ledbury and District Civic Society.

St Michael and All Angels Church

The church of St Michael and All Angels was described by the architectural historian Niklaus Pevsner as the "premier parish church of Herefordshire". It is thought to date from the eleventh century.

The church is only one of seven in Herefordshire with a tower separate from the nave; there are only 15 in the whole country. The tower dates from about 1230 and the spire from 1733. The total height of tower and spire is 202 feet.

There are eight bells in the tower dating from 1690 to 1929. The earliest two date from 1690 and were made by Rudhalls. The Tenor dates from 1736. It has a diameter of 50.25", weighs 22cwt and is tuned to the key of E flat. The tower also has a carillon,

which plays one of seven well-known hymn tunes at the hours of 9.00am, 12.00pm, 3.00pm and 6.00pm every day.

High Street

Market House

There were originally three Market Houses in Ledbury. One was in The Southend, opposite The Park, the home of the Biddulph family and another was opposite St Katherine's Hospital Chapel. Neither had rooms above and both were demolished around 1820.



The only remaining Market House, originally known as Lower or Wheat Market, was restored to near its original form in 1977–1978. It is a five bay building built on 16 oak pillars and has a room above.

It was built in 1617, though probably altered c.1688. When the Market House was built, there was a shop under the external staircase which was let for about £2 a year. However, “in consequence of its situation rendering it a public nuisance, and that by serving as a wall for the playing at fives”, it encouraged the resort of idle and disorderly persons, particularly on Sundays it was removed by order of the Vestry on 16 August 1818.

An old deed directs “that the rent of the Market House shall be expended in providing yearly twelve coats or gowns for twelve poor persons of Ledbury, to be delivered every year at Christmas at the direction and appointment of the Rector and Churchwardens”.

1 High Street: Raft

Occupying a prominent position on the corner of the Market Place and Church Lane. Before Raft took over the premises in 2014, it had been occupied by gift or craft shops since the 1980s, including The Velvet Bean, a chocolatier, and Celebrations, a craft and gift shop. For perhaps the



20 years prior to that, the Fine Fare Grocery chain occupied the premises, with Burton's Grocers, under various managers, being there since at least 1931. The two previous censuses listed the India & China Tea Co on this site, again with different managers in each of those years. Prior to that, the shop had been owned and/or run by the Ballard and Edy families since at least 1789.

2 High Street: Greggs

Since at least the middle of the 1800s, this shop has always been occupied by and/or run as a bakery. Currently Greggs, it has been Coombes, The Baker's Oven, Bradfords and Palmers since as far back as at least 1971. For much of the mid-1900s it was run/owned by James Barnett & Sons and in 1931 by H Beckley. For at least 60 years from the mid-1800s the bakery was in the hands of the Roberts family, James Roberts, resident in 1861 and native-born son of the publican, Charles Roberts (The Horseshoe), had done his apprenticeship with Edmund Bowkett, a confectioner in the Homend. When James died, around 1900, his wife Emma carried on with the shop until the 1920s.



3 High Street: Ledbury News

This shop has been a newsagent and/or stationers shop since the 1920s, for many of those years run by Ernest Preece. Prior to that John Parr, and his wife after he died, were 'China, Glass and Seed' merchants. The 1851 and 1861 census returns listed Thomas Scattergood and his wife Mary here as dealers in china and toys.



4 High Street: HSBC

Now operated by the HSBC group, there has been a bank on this property since the early twentieth century, most of that time the Midland Bank. In earlier years, though, Charles Peddlingham ran a grocers shop here, and John Webb did likewise before him. Thomas Freeman was living here in the 1870s, and he and his predecessor, John Rogers, combined the trade of grocer with druggist and chemist, that being a slightly different profession in those days. Before they arrived, the premises were used by Thomas Brown for his ironmonger's shop.



5 High Street: Handley Organics

With the exception of the current occupants and the late 1990s, when it was occupied by a health shop and Fruity Fred's fruit and vegetable shop, there has been a clothing or draper's shop here since the late 1800s. James Walters and George Suter each ran their businesses here for many years. Previously it had been a grocers shop, run by Henry Symonds in the 1840s and his wife Elizabeth after his death.



6 High Street: Three Counties Bookshop

Established as Three Counties Bookshop in 1987, this shop was joined with number five (Sez and Café Français) by its previous proprietor, the draper James Walters. Before that there were two tobacconists here, but for a long period, from around 1860 until the 1930s, it was occupied by three pharmaceutical chemists – Arthur Stevens (during which time it was known as the Market Place Pharmacy), Ernest Freeman and his father Thomas Freeman before him. They had taken over the shop from the butcher Robert Webb whose father John had been there since Butcher's Row was cleared around 1840.



7 High Street: The Retreat

Since 1861, this property has been a licensed premises. Now named 'The Retreat', it has been called 'The Bull', 'The Hereford Bull Steak House' and 'No 7' at various times since around 1920. William Gabb ran it as a Wine Merchant for some 30 years, with the business carried on by his two sons and wife. Its use in the mid-1800s is less certain, but records list a plumber/glazier living there in 1851 and a skinner/maker of breeches in 1831 and 1841, possibly living above or behind the shop.



8 High Street: View and Tinsmiths

Though currently a dress shop, and a video shop before that, during the whole of the twentieth century and back to at least 1881, this was an ironmonger's shop, with only four proprietors. John Salmon was the most recent shopkeeper. Before him, Harry Wildman was listed on four census returns, Valentine Palmer for three and John Davies for the three before that. Before 1880, though, it was mainly the home of an 'independent' and unmarried lady, Hannah Mutlow. However, a number of others seem to have lived and/or worked on the premises, including a cooper, a grocer and a school mistress, along with a number of boarding pupils.



9 High Street: Boots

Boots the Chemist has been on this site since the 1990s, having moved from number 14 (Shaw Trust) where it had been since before World War II. Prior to that, as far as the 1841 census, it was a clothier's or draper's shop, operating under the name Foster Brothers from around 1970, and Bradley's for maybe ten years before that. From around 1891 until around 1951 George Spencer and his son ran it as a family business. Before them, the name changed frequently: 1881 – Frances Crew (whose husband, Henry, also ran his watchmaking business here); 1871 – Thomas Stephens; 1861 – William Cole; 1851 – Joseph Bird; 1841 – John Beddoe (other Beddoes also listed here in 1830 and 1825).



10 High Street: Spar

The Spar grocery store is the most current of a long line of grocery shops operated on this premises. It was called Wilks Grocery Stores until sometime in the 1970s, a continuation of the name from Roland Wilks who ran his shop here in the 1890s. Before that, though, it was an ironmonger's shop, for at least 40 years, run by Birmingham born John Buzaglo, who had married into the Skipp family.



11 High Street: Hay Wines

This shop has endured more changes of use than most in the High Street. A wine shop or off-licence since the 1970s, W G Hooper and his sons ran an electrical shop here, in 1941 specifically stating that they sold radios. Prior to that, Roland Wilks of number ten (Spar) also owned this shop for many years, selling 'china' (probably general household crockery and such). In the nineteenth century it was a draper's shop, run for many years by the Badcock family.



12 High Street: Gurneys

Since at least 1871, this shop has been a butcher's. Before Gurney's, it was Callwood's for over 10 years, and before that it was Harry Churchill's, going back to at least 1921. The 1911 census recorded T. Aston as the butcher, and before that Robert Mayo was a long serving butcher here from the 1860s until around the turn of the century. Prior to that, though, the building was occupied by at least three successive physicians / surgeons.



13 High Street: Clarks

A branch within the Clarks chain since the 1990s, there was a shoe and/or boot shop under the name Millward & Sons here throughout the rest of the twentieth century, though it was always a manager who lived on site. In the 1900s, William Taylor was a very long term resident, from at least 1830 until after 1871, running a grocer's shop and serving as the town's Postmaster.



14 High Street: Shaw Trust



Shaw Trust came here when Boots moved down the road in the early 1990s, ending the building's very long history as a chemist's shop. The chain Boots goes back to 1934, and prior to that W J Fortnam and W H Osborne were chemists here. They in turn followed a century of ownership by the Meacham family, going back to at least 1825 when James Meacham appeared on the Land Tax Register. James was succeeded by his son Edwin who ran the business until his sons James and Joseph took it over. Joseph died young, and his widow carried on with the shop, taking on George Bennett as manager. In due course they married and continued the business together. Joseph's son Victor worked with George and took the shop on until 1914 when he sold it to Osborne, who had been working for him.

15 High Street: Elegance

A small shop, quite possibly not a separate one before the twentieth century, what is now a hair salon has changed hands and uses three times since around 1990, David Christopher the jeweller and Fizz clothing shop being the earlier tenants. Since around 1900, the shop was used by butchers, carrying the name Eastman's for most of that time, with the name 'Webb' prominently showing above the shopfront in 1908. During the nineteenth century, however, its use and ownership is less clear. It may have been used by a stationer and a bookseller in the mid 1800s, but also may have been taken over by Luke Tilley's neighbouring businesses.



16 and 17 High Street: Nice Things and In Stark Contrast

To understand the history of these two shops, they need to be looked at together. Since the mid 1990s they have been entirely separate businesses – number 16 (Nice Things) being a home furnishings/gift shop and number 17 (In Stark Contrast) being a ladies' dress shop. But for 100 years before that, they were both owned and run by what was perhaps Ledbury's most entrepreneurial businessman, Luke Tilley. At that time Luke Tilley moved his printing and bookselling business from number 23 (Blue Orchid) across the road to number 16, which had been



John Clarke's draper's shop, and before him Richard Williams'. Within a few years, Luke had also taken over number 17 from a grocer/confectioner business, establishing his 'Bazaar', offering a wide variety of commodities and services, including a library, dressmaker, toy shop, tea room and printing business. One son, Peter, operated his printing business, and another, William, a cycle agency. The printing business remains today, in a building up the alley, run by Martin Clark, who started there in 1963, working for the daughter of one of Luke Tilley's brothers.



18 High Street: John Nash

Since at least 1841, a shop selling fabrics has operated here. Now selling home furnishings, it was listed as a draper's shop in every census year as far back as 1841. It operated under the names of Sherwoods, Keane & Co and William Horton during most of the twentieth century, with Harry Griffin and his sisters (one being married to a 'Bevan', whose surname appears above the shop in a contemporary photograph) there in 1901. For most of the nineteenth century it was run by the Burden family – Frederick in 1891 and 1881 and his father John before him, as far back as at least 1825.



19 High Street: Sitara

A restaurant or café has been at this location since the 1980s, with the Modern Homes furniture shop shown here in 1983. Prior to that it served briefly as Taylor's Freezer Centre, before which it was consistently a grocer's shop. Frederick Taylor and Son were listed from the 1901 census through to 1971; Samuel Merrick was here for a short time around 1890, and Charles Edwards from 1841 through to the 1880s. Mrs Addenbrook was the tenant in 1830, and Thomas Beale in 1825, but their occupations have not yet been determined.



20 High Street: Ledbury Books and Maps

The current bookshop has been operating here since the mid 1980s. From the 1950s, it was a radio and television sales and repair shop run by Wilfred Lacy, who also provided other electrical services for the town. Before that it had been a grocery shop, run by Albert Chadd (1910s–1940s), Miss Grace Proctor (1890s–1910s), and William Brown, his widowed mother Mary Ann and his father Richard who had purchased the property in 1836.



21 High Street: Ceci Paulo

A delicatessen and cookshop since the 1990s, and a collection of small shops going back to the 1980s, in earlier years this building housed what was arguably Ledbury's largest ironmonger shop, listed as Hobbs of Ledbury (1971 and 1981 censuses), John Hill (Hops) Ltd (1921–1961), Charles Stephens (1871–1911), Walter Pitt (1841–1861) and John (or Robert) Hollings as early as the 1825 Land Tax Register.



22 High Street: Juice Jewellery

This small shop, now selling jewellery, was a travel agency from the late 1990s, and on both the 1981 and 1991 censuses, the Heart of England Building Society operated from these premises. Before that, going back to the 1870s, it was joined to the ironmonger's shop at number 21 (Ceci Paulo), operating as one shop. The 1871 census listed William Williams there as a general dealer, and before that a series of saddlers and shoemakers.



23 High Street: Blue Orchid

A restaurant operating under a number of proprietors and trade names has been here since the 1990s. For around 100 years before that it was a tailor's shop, belonging to William Oakes and his son and Charles Bixley before him. For the previous 16 years it was Luke Tilley's first shop in town, his having come to Ledbury in 1869. Elizabeth Davis, a 'portress' or 'annuitant', was here in the 1851 and 1861 censuses, and Josiah Bagster, a bookseller and painter, in 1841.

24 High Street: Lloyds Bank

This prominent building has been a bank since at least 1891 – Lloyds from the 1920s to the current day, and Capital & Counties Bank before that. Previously, and very likely in a different building, it was a tailor/drafter/milliner shop, with Amos Jones there in 1881 and John Burden before him.



25 High Street: The Feathers Hotel

Since census records began in 1841, this has been The Feathers Hotel, run by a long line of managers and hotelkeepers.



26 High Street: Wyebridge Interiors

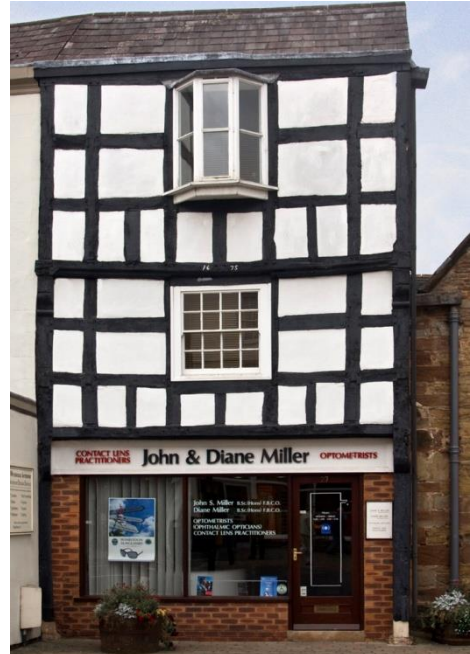
A gift shop since the 1990s, The Midshires Building Society had a branch here for less than 20 years. In 1971 the census recorded A & W Turner here, running a confectionary and tobacco business, but for many decades prior to that it was a fishmonger's shop. Lawrence Crossley ran it from



probably before 1911 until at least 1961. Previously it is thought to have been the Chequers Inn, with manageresses living on the premises, a probable development of the wine and spirit merchant business that operated here from at least 1830.

27 High Street: John & Diane Miller Optometrists

An optician's since the 1980s, Whittaker's and Winifred's lingerie shops were here since the 1950s. It served many years as Herbert Thacker's tailor's shop from around 1900, and before that a sewing machine agent and a shoemaker ran their businesses here. A long time occupier since at least 1841 was Henry Crewe the watchmaker and jeweller.



St Katherine's Chapel

This chapel was used by the inmates of the hospital. The clock on the front is one of the oldest working clocks in the country.



St Katherine's Hospital

The Hospital was founded by Hugh Foliot, bishop of Hereford c. 1230. The almshouses which are the home for the residents of St Katherine's hospital were rebuilt in the nineteenth century. The south wing, nearest the chapel, was built c. 1820, the wing to the north of the central tower some forty years later. Built of local stone, they have gables and applied timbers to blend in with the older buildings in the street.

Master's House

The Master's House is one of the oldest buildings in Ledbury. It was the home of the Master of St Katherine's Almshouses, which, with St Katherine's Hall and Chapel and a seventeenth century timber-framed barn, form part of the St Katherine's Hospital site. The whole site occupies about two acres on the west side of High Street. Originally, the hospital site occupied almost two-thirds of the western frontage of the market place (the modern High Street).

Those buildings and the surrounding brick and stone walls form a very rare surviving example of a hospital complex.



Barrett Browning Institute

The rear of the building was used by a tannery belonging to the Hankins family. It was demolished in 1892 and replaced by the Barrett Browning Memorial Institute, which was built between 1892 and 1896 and which housed the library until it moved to the Master's House in 2015. Ledbury's original library was a substantial timber-framed construction.



New Street

New Street is one of the oldest streets in Ledbury and was developed by the bishops of Hereford in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

By the nineteenth century there were brickyards at the western end of the street, near the canal, and some craft workshops nearer the High Street. Despite these, the street was not as built up as Bye Street. Indeed, until the early twentieth century there were a number of orchards along its length.

In 1851 New Street was a street of professionals: veterinary surgeons, general practitioners, chemists, accountants and clerks, as well as modest manufacturers such as a Hopkins' coach-builders (you can still see the archway leading to their premises today). Many other people made smaller items or provided other services. There were boot makers and basket makers, blacksmiths, tailors and a cooper. Around this time the police station, with its resident officer, was established.

1 The Southend: House on Stilts

The House on Stilts, at Upper Cross (also known as Top Cross) is at the junction of High Street / New Street / The Southend and Worcester Road. It is one of the oldest timber-framed buildings in Ledbury. The pavement in New Street is under the overhanging side of the building. It is thought that the ground floor was originally exposed to the street and was used as a market hall.

14 New Street: The Talbot

The Talbot is one of the oldest inns in Ledbury.

The building dates from the late sixteenth century. In the parlour a panel has the date 1596 and a date over the entrance door may be 1600.

The Homend

The Homend was originally marshland. It was reclaimed for use as an extension to High Street.

3 The Homend: CC

The earliest part of the building is fifteenth century, but the facade dates from the late nineteenth / early twentieth century.

New Inn

The New Inn was at 5–7 The Homend, a mid-seventeenth century building. It was one of most important coaching inns in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The outbuildings of the New Inn are today known as Homend Mews, a collection of small shops facing a paved inner courtyard

11 The Homend: The Seven Stars

The Seven Stars is one of the oldest inns in Ledbury and dates from the late sixteenth century. The timber-framed, two-storey building was seriously damaged by fire in 2001 and much of the original structure was lost. The framing on the front of the building survived, along with the door frame. The south-west room was reported to have a plaster ceiling with fleur-de-lys, rosettes and Tudor roses.

15 The Homend: Cameron & Swan

The previous building was an early seventeenth century timber framed house with late eighteenth century remodelling, which was demolished after 1930. During the late nineteenth / early twentieth century it was a newsagents and fancy goods shop run by

Lewis Jones and then by his daughter Edith. The building has also housed Brays of Malvern and, more recently, The Orangery.

27 The Homend: former cinema

The cinema was in The Homend, at the corner of Bank Crescent. The building is now occupied by Jenkins greengrocers and other shops.

The Horseshoe

Thought to date from the seventeenth century, this three-storey timber-framed building in The Homend is set on a high plinth. It appears to be two bays long and there is a passageway through the south end. The ceiling beams on the ground floor over the south bay have wide chamfers.

4 The Homend: Juno Boutique

This is an early seventeenth century timber-framed house that was re-fronted in the late eighteenth century. At the back of the property there is a seventeenth century timber-framed range which is visible from Bye Street.

The Southend

5 The Southend: The Royal Oak

As often on approach roads, there have been a number of public houses and inns on The Southend, although now only the Royal Oak remains.

A plaque on the wall inside the pub dates the plaster at 1520 AD.

Markets

The first recorded Ledbury market charter was issued by King Stephen to Bishop Robert de Bethune in 1138. The charter stated: 'Know that I grant Robert, bishop of Hereford, may have a market on Sunday of each week in his manor of Ledbury'.

Each Sunday, and on Easter, Whitsun and Christmas, the Lower Cross and the lane leading up to the church would be used by farmers, craftsmen and pedlars to sell cattle, sheep, poultry, farm produce and crafts. Church Holy Days became synonymous with market and fair days and holidays. Eventually, the church authorities discouraged trading on Sundays, and Monday became the market day in Ledbury.

Originally, market stalls would have been erected at the start of the day and taken down, under the close supervision of the bishop's bailiff, at the end of the day.

By 1288, more permanent structures were developing. We know this because rents for five shambles (slaughterhouses) and fourteen *seldae macetarie* (butchers' stalls) were paid to the Bishop. These structures represent the origins of the Butcher's Row: a narrow row of shops running north-south along the High Street. ([Butcher's Row House Museum](#) is an original Butcher Row House which was resited in Church Lane by Ledbury and District Civic Society.)

The town grew rapidly after 1120 and the High Street (then know as Middletown) was no longer big enough to meet the requirements of the markets and annual fairs and Bye Street became a secondary market area.

There is evidence to suggest that the market declined in the early sixteenth century, since a number of properties in the market place were vacant. However, in 1584, the outlook had clearly improved because Elizabeth I granted a new charter allowing a weekly market on Tuesdays and two fairs, on the feasts of St. Philip and James (1 May) and St. Barnabas (11 June).

In 1617 a group of local citizens bought some property 'at or near a place called the Corner End' and here built the new [Market House](#). By this time, the market, apart from the Market House, was once again in an open space, with no encroachment into Bye Street.

Badesdale and Toms' 1741 map of Herefordshire lists all the market towns and the days of their fairs and markets. Market day in Ledbury was on a Tuesday, with fairs on 1 May (St. Philip and St James' Day), 11 June (St. Barnabas' Day), 21 September (St. Matthew's Day), the Monday before St. Luke's Day (18 October) and the Monday before St Thomas' Day (21 December).

In the 1870s, a weekly market was held on Tuesday; a great market on the last Tuesday of every month; and fairs, on the Tuesday before Easter, the second Tuesday of May, the third Tuesday of June, the second Tuesday of August, the first Tuesday of October, and the Tuesday before 21 December. Trade at this time was chiefly connected with agriculture, including malting, tanning and trading of hops, cider and perry. The Easter and October fairs in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were renowned for their cheese, with the prices reached being recorded in the Bath Chronicle.

A purpose-built [cattle market](#) was built to the west of the High Street in 1887. Market Street opened off Bye Street, very close to the Ledbury Town Halt on the Gloucester to Hereford railway line. Although the sales now took place 'off street' many beasts were still driven through the town to market.