

THE LEDBURY LETTER

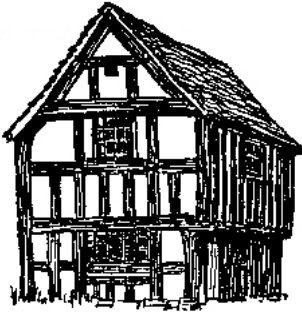
Number 114

Autumn 2022



Butcher Row House Museum

Ledbury & District Civic Society
“Looking After Ledbury...”



*Butcher Row House
Folk Museum*

THE LEDBURY & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY
Burgage Hall
Church Lane
Ledbury
Herefordshire HR8 1DW

Objectives of the Society...

To stimulate public interest; promote high standards of planning and architecture; and secure the preservation, protection and improvement of features of historic, natural and public interest

Chairman's Report	4
Butcher Row House Museum	5
The Society's Talks	6
The Burgage Hall	7
The John Masefield Commemorative Project	8
Planning News	9
A History of Bank Crescent	10
Can You Help?	12

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The Ledbury and District Society Trust Ltd
www.ledburycivicsociety.org

Company No: 1340233

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507391

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Notice is hereby given that membership records of the Ledbury & District Trust are held on a database system. Those requiring access to the data held concerning themselves should contact the Membership Secretary. These are for administration purposes only, and an individual's details can be removed on receipt of a written request.

Copy deadline for the next Ledbury Letter: Friday,10th February 2023

Chairman's Report

Andy Tector

Autumn 2022

The Board has been reviewing our progress against the Business Plan at our monthly meetings. It is clear that with increasing costs we need to become smarter about how we deliver services to our members. The Board has decided that the next newsletter will be sent out by email, with a copy on our website and hard copies available at our monthly talks. We accept that some people may not have the resource to get the newsletter "electronically", so for those that can't, please contact us and we can arrange to send out a paper copy.

We have also now installed broadband in the Burgage Hall and the Butcher Row House Museum. The new broadband enabled the Poetry Festival to live-stream events over the internet during the Festival, and it will also provide new opportunities for all hirers of the hall. If you know anyone looking for a community space for regular or "one off" events please let them know about what we offer. In addition the installation of broadband in the Butcher Row House Museum means we can now accept card payments for the first time.

The Society has this year supported Ledbury Town Council in giving grants to businesses in the town centre for the external redecoration of their premises. The Civic Society's contribution will be between £2,000 and £3,000 which supports a bigger contribution administered by the Town Council.

The Board continues to review planning issues in Ledbury and the surrounding area. It is clear that the County Council's revised Core Strategy will have a substantial impact on the town as Herefordshire Council seek to impose yet another 600 houses on the town. Whilst the initial consultation has now finished we would urge members of the Society to voice their opinions and concerns over any new proposed development. **It is important that you make your views known now as once the proposals are laid down in the revised Core Strategy it would be nigh on impossible to resist their approval once they reach the Planning Application stage.**

During the forthcoming months we are hoping to start to produce content for Facebook and Instagram – so for those of you who use social media please keep an eye out for posts on our pages.

As you will see from later in the newsletter we still desperately need new volunteers in all areas – if you, or someone you know, could spare a few hours to help in any aspect of our work please contact us.

Finally looking forward to 2023 we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Society so, many exciting things to come....!

Butcher Row House Museum

Ken Chapman

The Museum has been fully open for five days per week since the beginning of April and the visitors are back. Daily footfall, spending and donations are running at 2019 levels and with more volunteers allowing seven day opening, I'm certain our weekly totals will match pre-Covid levels.

So, as always, we are on the lookout for anyone interested in volunteering, two hours a fortnight, and if that's you, do contact Ken Chapman on 632988 or Carol Curren on 632773. It's a great opportunity to meet people, have a chat and tell them a little about our town.

At the last committee meeting, roles were decided for our new members. Carol Curren will manage the rota in place of Prue Yorke whom we thank sincerely for years of stalwart service. And Barry Sharples will manage our archives and collection in place of Jenny Silcock whom we also thank for years of service. Both Prue and Jenny will continue as volunteers for which we're very grateful.

And finally, if you've not visited the Museum for a while, do come and see us and bring your family & friends. We're halfway up the cobbles and open between 10am and 4pm, Tuesdays to Saturdays until the end of October.

Have a good Autumn.

The Society Talks

Patrick Goode

Autumn 2022-Spring 2023

Our talks for the 2022-2023 season cover a range of topics, both local and county, ancient and modern, including : architecture, local history and environmental issues, but all from a Ledbury/Herefordshire angle.

The season has already begun, the first talk on 30th September, was from Tim Keyes, Tower Captain, Ledbury Parish Church on the subject of *The History of Bells and Bell Ringing*.

Talks are held on the last Friday of every month between September and June—put the dates in your diary! Here is the programme for the season:

28 October 2022, 7.30pm

The Future of Agriculture in Herefordshire—**Helen Hamilton**

Even within the last quarter century, Herefordshire agriculture has undergone some major changes : the spread of polytunnels; the building of intensive poultry units; and the demise of the traditional orchard. What next?

25 November 2022, 7.30pm

Victorian Churches in Herefordshire—**Tim Bridges**

A surprisingly high proportion of rural churches in England are not medieval at all, but date from the 19th century. Perhaps we are inclined to think that Victorian Gothic is a distinct third-best, but the truth is rather surprising.

27 January 2023, 7.30pm

The state of the River Wye - Can Herefordshire's rivers survive? - **Andrew Mc Robb (Herefordshire CPRE)**

Some of Herefordshire's main rivers, the Lugg and the Wye, are as polluted as Britain's beaches. What are the causes of our rivers' dire state – agricultural practices? Sewage overflows? How can they be restored to health?

24 February 2023, 7.30pm

The history of the Three Choirs Festival - **Clare Wichbold**

One of the oldest choral music festivals in the world is held in the three counties—what is its history?

31 March 2023, 7.30pm

The Leominster Canal—**Gerry Calderbank**

In Ledbury we are well aware of the Hereford to Gloucester Canal but did you know a canal also ran through Leominster?

28 April 2023, 7.30pm

The Biddulphs of Ledbury- **Mary Stewart**

Find out more about this powerful family so important in the shaping of the town.

26 May 2023, 7.30pm —To be confirmed

30 June, 2023, 7.30pm

First World War Belgian refugees in Ledbury—**Jennifer Harrison**

If you have any other subjects/speakers (which may include yourself) that you think would be a good subject for a Civic Society talk, please contact : Patrick Goode (averytutor@hotmail.com)

The Burgage Hall

Nicola Forde

Available for hire! bookings@ledburycivicsociety.org

The Civic Society programme of talks is just one of many activities in the Burgage Hall. After two quiet pandemic years Burgage Hall bookings are again lively with regular activity classes from Belly Dancing to Country Dancing. It is also used for private parties, talks, meetings, AGMs and study days as well as being the home of Ledbury Country Market and a venue for the Poetry Festival.

However there is availability so do get in touch if you are holding an event. Hire charges remain very reasonable at £14 per hour rising to £15 per hour in 2023. For that you get fantastic wi-fi, a comfortable heated room, and an equipped kitchen, and all in a beautiful listed building, a space full of character and history!

John Masefield Commemorative Project

A Ledbury Town Council initiative to advance the town's future through a shared celebration of its historic citizen – John Masefield (Poet Laureate 1930 – 1967).

In August 2022 Ledbury Town Council established a Working Party to progress a long-standing aspiration to pay tribute to John Masefield, a national poet who was born in Ledbury in 1878 and retained connections with the town until his death in 1967. The Civic Society is very supportive of this initiative which we hope will develop in such a way as to bring Ledbury's rich poetry heritage to a wide national audience.

A three-phased project is proposed. The first phase will engage the local community in an exploration of Masefield's poetry, in particular the influence of place on his work. These creative workshops will enable participants to create their own personal response to Masefield's work, in the form of a poem, prose or alternative artwork e.g. collage, sculpture. Individual creative responses will be curated into a local exhibition. This will provide an opportunity for education, and wider public engagement. Visitors will also be consulted on what a larger commemoration to John Masefield could be. Display boards providing information on the life and works of John Masefield will also be included. Associated PR activity around this first phase will help raise Ledbury's county and national profile, promoting its position as the UK's foremost poetry town, attracting further tourism and boosting the local economy.

Councillor Morris, Chair of the John Masefield Working Party commented, *"In over 400 years of poets laureate, John Masefield is the only one to have his roots in Herefordshire. It is clear that Ledbury - the town of his birth and early childhood - directly and emotionally influenced his poetic works. Ledbury Town Council is therefore pleased to facilitate a collaborative and celebratory arts-based project to commemorate one of our town's most important citizens. This innovative project will benefit local residents and provide a focal point for on-going widespread community engagement"*.

We hope the contributions in the first workshop focused phase of the project will have led us to deciding the form of the eventual permanent memorial.

If you would like to be kept informed as things progress, please contact Christine Tustin, Secretary of the Civic Society, who is a working party member, at secretary@ledburycivicsociety.org. Or if you would like to get involved in the John Masefield Commemorative Project contact Angela Price, Town Clerk Ledbury Town Council: clerk@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk

Planning News

Mark Lister

The Society continues to keep a watching brief on all planning applications that are submitted to Herefordshire Council, commenting where it is considered appropriate, and responding to consultations on larger planning issues such as Ledbury's Neighbourhood Plan.

The Society has sent a detailed response to Herefordshire Council's 'Core Strategy Place Shaping Consultation' which seeks, among other things, to identify areas of land for future development for both domestic housing and industrial use within and on the outskirts of the main conurbations in Herefordshire. In particular the response identifies specific weaknesses in two of the areas proposed for development while supporting other proposals.

An application for approval of reserved matters for the Bloor Homes development of the land to the north of The Viaduct (P222107/RM - Approval of Reserved Matters) has been submitted and the Society will be making comments relating to the proposed materials to be used and the effect on the traffic flow from the proposed estate into Ledbury.

Planning Applications can be viewed online at https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search

These are interesting times for the future of Ledbury and its surrounding villages and the Society will continue to be vigilant on behalf of our members and the wider community. This is an interesting and sometimes controversial part of our remit. We would welcome additional Board members who have expertise and/or experience in this area.

The Origin of Bank Crescent

Celia G Kellett

Bank Crescent takes its name from Bank House in the Homend, which is now the home of Ledbury Hardware Ltd. The steeply rising land behind the east side of the Homend was used in the past for a series of orchards, with a number of owners and tenants. Until the end of the 19th century this included the Webb family who lived in Bank House.

The Webb family had lived in Bank House for many years, Thomas Webb Esq. born in 1775, the son of Thomas Webb and his wife Anne Knight, grew up to be a banker, like his father. He married Anne Thackwell on 3 October 1809 and they had eight children, born from 1810 to 1823. The bank, Thomas Webb & Son in the High Street, calling upon Cocks, Biddulph and Co. of London appeared in the trade directories from 1822 although Thomas Webb senior died in 1829, aged 82 and his namesake

NAME OF THE FIRM :		
WEBB, HOLBROOK, AND SPENCER.		
<i>Persons of whom the Company or Partnership consists :—</i>		
<i>Name.</i>	<i>Residence.</i>	<i>Occupation.</i>
John Cam Thackwell ..	Wilton Place	Gentleman
Joseph Webb	Ledbury	Surgeon
(Trustees of the late T. Webb)		
Thomas Holbrook.....	Putley Court.....	Commander in the Roy- al Navy
Timothy Spencer	Church House	Gentleman
<i>Names of Places where the Business is carried on :—</i>		
PLACE.	COUNTY.	
Ledbury	Hereford	
P. DEANS, Registrar of Bank Returns.		
Stamps and Taxes, 15 Feb. 1845.		

son died in May 1837, aged 61. By 1838 the bank, now a partnership. was renamed Webb, Holbrook and Spencer.

Edward John Webb, the sixth of the eight Webb children, had been signed up as an articled clerk for five years to attorney Joseph Allen Higgins in Ledbury in 1835 and so by the time of the 1841 census he was already a solicitor at the age of 20 and by the next census was also a

banker of Webb & Co. which began to be referred to as the *Old Bank*, as it still drew on the Cocks, Biddulph & Co. of London. Matriarch Anne Webb lived to the grand age of 102 years, 8 months and 10 days when she died on 4th August 1881. She was buried in a vault in the churchyard four days later.

Her son Edward John Webb, banker and solicitor, lived on in Bank House until death and burial on 28 May 1896 at the age of 77. He had never married and so the property was sold by auction on 7th July that year and purchased by James Banner of the Ledbury Building Society for £1,400 and the adjoining orchard for £420. The directors of the Building Society proposed to make a new street from the Homend leading up towards Dog Hill. Bank House was rented out, initially to a school, which ran for some years. They proposed designing the road and selling building plots along each side of the road, which could be purchased individually by those wishing to engage a builder to erect their new home.

On 30 November 1896 the Bank House estate was distributed by ballot to 26 allottees and the tender for constructing the new road, sewers &c. was secured by Mr. Davies of Hereford for the sum of £853 9s 3d. The work on the first few houses, on the left hand side of Bank Crescent began.

By 1911 the census showed a dozen properties were already occupied.

But it was not until 1914 that a committee appointed by the Ledbury Urban Council met to discuss the question of taking over Bank Crescent Road, as it was then referred to. The meeting was held on Thursday 26 February 1914 at 3.30pm in the Barrett Browning Institute and, after submitting various facts and figures, the representatives of Ledbury Building Society invited the favourable consideration of the Council regarding taking over both lower and upper lengths of the new road. The Surveyor judged that the lower section needed work to make it up to the required standard and the sum of £160 was agreed upon for the Council to formally assume control of the road and proceed with the work that summer, just before the start of the Great War, as the first World War (WWI) was then known.

Can you Help?

As 2022 comes to a close the Society's activities are gearing back up to normal levels after the unwelcome pause caused by the Covid pandemic.

And, starting with the Trustee Board, this re-start gives an opportunity to take a fresh look at the Society and its activities. We have a solid core of Trustees, who meet for a couple of hours each month. Our interests and skills are diverse, but we are united in a passion for Ledbury, a desire to improve civic life in the town and to protect its heritage.

Our newest Board member, Treasurer Holly Welford, joined in April and is already making an impact with fresh and original ideas which will bear fruit in the coming months, BUT we need more like her, people of all ages and backgrounds who share our passion for the town and think it's important to care for what we have.

If you have some time to spare consider joining us, we are a small, friendly and informal group.

If committee work is not for you there are a number of ways you can help as a volunteer- look at the range of activities described in this newsletter- there are opportunities to get involved in all of these either in small support roles or more actively.

Joining the society is another valuable way of supporting us so if you aren't a member or if you have friends or family who would be interested please pick up a membership form from the lobby in the Burgage Hall or from our website: ledburycivicsociety.org/about-us/join-the-society.

Ledbury & District Civic Society
“Looking After Ledbury”