

Diary Dates

Tuesday 5 and 12 March

Death and taxes

Taking family history and local history research beyond the basics. Investigating some of the probate and taxation records held at Shropshire Archives.

10am - 12pm at Shropshire Archives.

Cost: £15

Monday 15 April

Archive conservation: who cares - why bother?

A repeat talk and demonstration. Tutor Andrew Davidson.

2pm - 4pm at Shropshire Archives.

Cost: £7.50

Attention all Friends!

We would like to collect more email addresses from Friends of Shropshire Archives so that we can keep you up to date with news and events as they happen and to save postal costs. If you would like to be contacted in this way, please send your email address to Pat Kiernan at: patk1@blueyonder.co.uk

News Extra...

Do you have any stories to tell about Shropshire's history or have any news about Shropshire Archives? If you have, the editor is waiting to hear from you now. The contact details are below and photographs are always welcome.

Saturday 20 April

Ken Jones local history day

A day to celebrate the life and studies of Ken Jones, a local historian of Ironbridge and its environs, collector of oral memories, railway enthusiast and volunteer.

10am - 4.15pm at the Glass Classroom, Coalbrookdale, Telford, TF8 7DQ.

Tickets in advance only - see leaflet for details.

Forthcoming events

Saturday 14 September

Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society - pre history day

Shirehall, Shrewsbury

see www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk for further details in due course.

Saturday 28 September

Edith Pargeter day

A day of talks about her local connections and literary output, exhibitions and walks around the area she knew so well.

Time t.b.c. at Burton House, Dawley.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: The newsletter of the Friends of Shropshire Archives is edited by Alison Mussell and designed by Nat Stevenson, Shropshire Archives' Image Services.

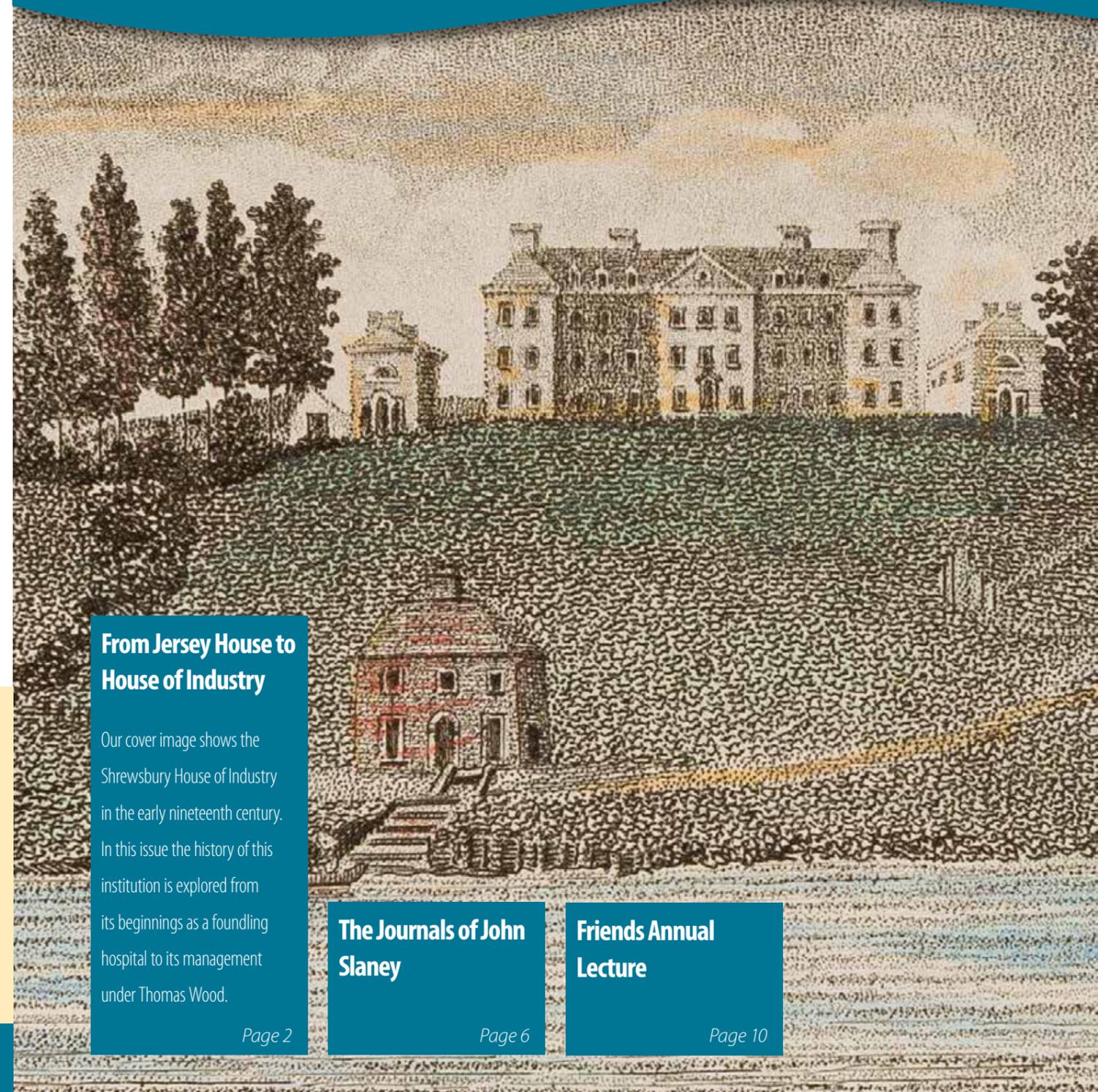
There are three issues per year, paid for by the Friends. The contents are provided by friends and well-wishers. If you would like to join the contributors, please contact the editor at the address below. Copy for the next issue needs to be submitted by 15 March 2013.

DISCLAIMER: We have made every effort to ensure that the information in this publication is correct at the time of printing. We cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions.



Salopian Recorder

The newsletter of the Friends of Shropshire Archives,
gateway to the history of Shropshire and Telford



From Jersey House to House of Industry

Our cover image shows the Shrewsbury House of Industry in the early nineteenth century. In this issue the history of this institution is explored from its beginnings as a foundling hospital to its management under Thomas Wood.

Page 2

The Journals of John Slaney

Page 6

Friends Annual Lecture

Page 10

Contact... For further details or to pass on your comments, please contact:
Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury, SY1 2AQ • Tel: 01743 255350
Email: archives@shropshire.gov.uk • Website: www.shropshirearchives.org.uk

From Jersey House to House of Industry

Richard Greenwell

The building overlooking the River Severn, which now forms the main teaching block of Shrewsbury School, housed very different residents before the school moved there from Castle Street in 1878. It was originally built in 1765 by the Captain Coram Foundation to house orphans from London. Known as the 'Foundling Hospital', the building was expensively equipped with workshops where the children were taught the skills that they would need when they were apprenticed between the ages of ten and twelve. Children were an important part of the workforce, in domestic service and the new mines and factories created during the industrial revolution. As it transpired, this venture was very short-lived; after just seven years it was abandoned in Shrewsbury.

Following this, the building was used in a variety of ways; as a refuge for residents of Abbey Foregate, after they had lost their homes in a devastating fire; as a factory by a local textile manufacturer and as a prison to house Dutch prisoners of war. In 1784 it became a workhouse, housing the paupers of the six Shrewsbury parishes and subsequently known as the 'Shrewsbury House of Industry'. For the next eighty-seven years the buildings on Kingsland were occupied by those poor, aged and infirm parishioners, whose only salvation was the accommodation offered to them there.

The opening of the House of Industry in 1784 was not the first time that workhouse provision had been attempted in Shrewsbury. The parishes of St. Chad and St. Mary, also probably St. Julian, had all tried previously to provide for the poor in this way. In the cases of St. Chad's and St. Mary's, both parishes referred to these workhouses

as being 'Jersey Houses', since the inmates were employed in textile processing in return for the help that they received. The Jersey House of St. Mary's was in the vicinity of the old upper castle gate and that of St. Chad's was in Barker Street. By forming the House of Industry as a joint venture, all six of Shrewsbury's parishes hoped to reduce the ever-increasing costs associated with poor relief. There were two principles embodied in this scheme: firstly, that the only poor relief available should be in the House itself, and secondly that those inmates capable of it would work. Some paupers would be set to work on the land around the House on Kingsland, growing crops and keeping livestock. A dairy was established there to produce butter and milk. The inmates would consume some of the foodstuffs, while the surplus would be sold. Some able-bodied paupers would be offered as labourers to local employers. The money they earned went back to support the House, while they received just a small gratuity. Others were employed in the House manufacturing textiles, making the paupers' clothing and



Below: North East view of the Foundling Hospital, Salop. Shropshire Archives ref. PR/3/489

cloth to be sold. Children were taught the skills of manufacturing and domestic service, in order that they may be apprenticed out to employers.

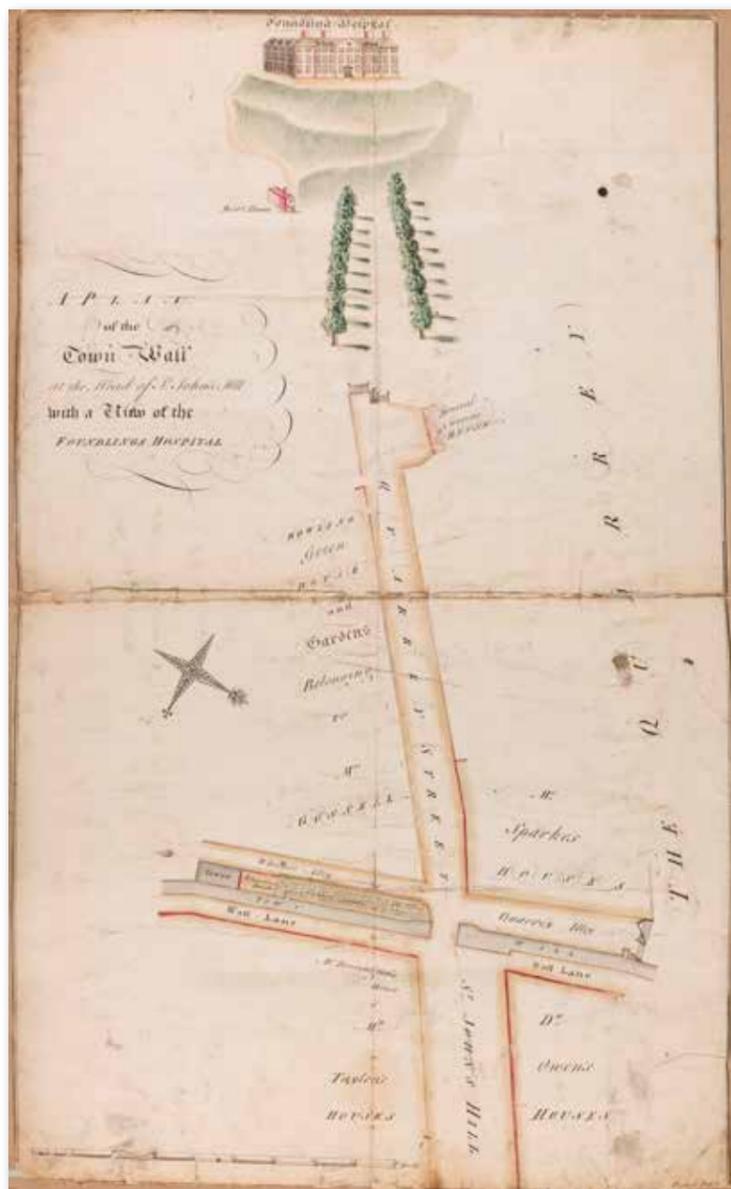
One of the Directors of the House of Industry was Isaac Wood. He was a watchmaker who lived in the High Street, Shrewsbury. Wood, in common with other ratepayers, wanted to reduce the amount of money being demanded of them by the parishes. However, this parsimonious attitude was tempered by his humanitarian outlook, which stemmed from his being a member of the Unitarian Church. Wood produced a book entitled *Some Account of the Shrewsbury House of Industry*, where he outlines the ethos of the House. He believed that idleness was the main cause of both poverty and debauchery. By coercing and encouraging the unemployed back into work such problems would be avoided.

Wood tells us that entry was by the ferry across the river, followed by the steep climb up the bank. Upon admission, paupers were taken to a reception building, 'a bow shot away' from the main block, under the supervision of the nurse and apothecary, where they were washed and medically checked. They were later admitted to the main block, where they were immediately segregated. Their day would start with the bell at 5.30am and they would work from 6am until 6pm. Prayers were said morning and evening in the chapel. Three simple meals, usually of bread and broth with occasional meat and cheese, were served in the segregated dining room, 120 feet long. They slept in lofty, well-ventilated dormitories also 120 feet long. Individuals were not allowed to leave the site without special permission. In 1788, 250 of the 350

paupers worked six days a week, in the manufactory, in tailoring or shoemaking, on the farm, in surrounding businesses or in the House itself. Water for the House was hand-pumped from the river by the paupers using 'a small machine.' Sunday was for worship in the chapel adjacent to the dining room. There were ten days regarded as holidays each year, including one for the Shrewsbury Show held then on Kingsland. There was great emphasis on the training of the young setting a pattern for adulthood, with children entering the spinning room at the age of five. Wood suggested that the guiding principles were 'honesty, sobriety, diligence, cleanliness and decency'. Good conduct was rewarded. Three men and three boys were chosen to wear blue coats, three women and three girls were chosen to wear brown camblets, all embroidered with the words, 'The Reward of Good Conduct'. Punishment for infringing against the rules ranged from loss of gratuity and solitary confinement in the dungeon, to the stocks and corporal punishment.

Wood claimed that the House offered, "...a comfortable asylum for the deserving poor, whom age, disease or infirmity have disabled from pursuing their various employments." But that relief should be withheld "from those clamorous claimants who seek it only as a substitute for labour." Wood was well aware of the deterrent factor involved and maintained that paupers' rents should not be paid, as some suggested, simply to keep them in their own homes. He claimed it was found that, "...if a family was brought into the House then they soon applied for discharge and did not claim out-relief again."

Shrewsbury Orphan Hospital. Shropshire Archives ref. 6001/299



The History of Shrewsbury by Hugh Owen M.A. - A plan of the town wall at the head of St John's Hill with a view of the Foundlings Hospital. Shropshire Archives ref. 6001/200

He goes further when he suggests that, if a family claim out-relief for children's clothes, "...a part of their children shall be taken into the House." This policy not only reduced expenditure on out-relief, but also enabled the children to be trained in the ways of industriousness. Wood claimed that in 1785 it cost the parishes £1,930 less than it had in 1783; and that over a ten year period a saving of over £16,000 was achieved. It can be argued that the incorporation was indeed viewed as being successful in the surrounding locality, since similar institutions were created at Oswestry in 1790 and Atcham in 1792.

However, this success did not endure. By the beginning of the nineteenth century costs were rising and the system was proving unworkable. In later years the House gained an altogether more foreboding reputation. Conditions were often criticised and management fell below acceptable levels on several occasions. However, one feels that in the early years there really was some degree of genuine altruism evident in its ethos. Isaac Wood died in 1801 of a sickness caught when visiting the House at Christmas. His epitaph read:

*"Thy movements, Isaac, kept in play,
Thy wheels of life felt no decay
For fifty years at least;
Till by some sudden secret stroke,
The balance or the mainspring broke,
And all the movements ceas'd."*

Some Account of the Shrewsbury House of Industry. Copies at [Shropshire Archives](http://archive.org/details/someaccountshre00howlgoog) and available online at: <http://archive.org/details/someaccountshre00howlgoog>

New books

- White, Rodger **Wroxeter Roman City**
- Hussey, D and Ponsonby M **The single homemaker and material culture in the long 18th century**
- Castle, Malcolm **All fired up: tales of a country fireman**
- Peacock, Edward **Army List of Roundhead and Cavaliers in the Civil War**
- Sims, Joy and Taylor, Ina **Much Wenlock past and present in photographs book 2**
- After Offa - **living life along the border (book, trail map and oral history DVD)**

Book Review

Ruth Ellis

Ludlow through time

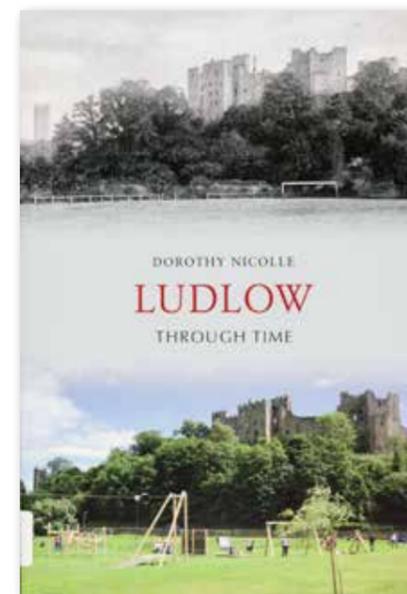
By Dorothy Nicolle

This attractively produced book of pictures documents the changes in appearance of Ludlow and some of its surrounding area through the last century up to the present day.

After a short introduction on the history and development of Ludlow, the author divides the town into streets, with special sections on the Castle and St. Laurence's Church. Each page contains two images – at the top a photo in sepia or black-and-white, sometimes tinted, of the street or building in the past, with a modern colour photo below. Each photo has a few lines of text giving information about the history of the place in question, with some fascinating anecdotes (for instance, the architect appointed to cost the proposed demolition of Ludlow Castle in 1765 saved it by over-estimating so that the job was considered too expensive!).

The author has gone to a lot of trouble to find the exact viewpoint from which the older photo was taken so that the comparison with the present day is most effective. She has a good eye for architectural detail and points out many things I had never noticed, such as the carved beehive over the door of Lloyds Bank and the different styles of glazing bars in the windows of the Broad Gate.

Another interesting fact is that many buildings, which now appear as half-timbered, were once covered in plaster – and have since been restored to their original appearance!



Ludlow through time, by Dorothy Nicolle. ISBN 978-1-4456-0847-1 Amberley Publishing Price £14.99

The modern photos were all taken in 2012, as can be deduced from the Jubilee bunting in the streets and the references to this summer's Ludlow Festival Shakespeare production – thus giving a snapshot of the town at this point in time. Most show the buildings well with clear streets, though others certainly illustrate Ludlow's traffic and parking problems! The old photos are largely undated, though occasionally a date is mentioned in the caption or accompanying text. They could be any time from

...the architect appointed to cost the proposed demolition of Ludlow Castle in 1765 saved it by over-estimating so that the job was considered too expensive!

1900 to the 1960s. However, in a book like this which is not intended to be an academic architectural history, this is not so important. It's intriguing to try to work out the period by studying the vehicles and people – something I have done a lot of while cataloguing photos at Shropshire Archives!

On the outskirts of the town the old photos show us views which can no longer be seen because of the growth of the trees. Finally the author goes further afield to show some surrounding villages, including Stokesay, Bromfield, Clee Hill and Craven Arms – possibly even more interesting than well-documented Ludlow.

Unfortunately, some mistakes have crept into the text. The misspelling of "St Laurence's" (sic) is a particularly glaring example. Emma Hamilton's husband was Sir William, not Lord, Hamilton. It was the Lord President, not the Lord Lieutenant, who presided over the Council of the Marches in Ludlow under the Tudors.

Even as a relative newcomer I find I forget, only a few years after some change, what the original street, or building, looked like and this book will awaken memories for Ludlow residents as well as fascinating visitors.

The Journals of John Slaney 1807-1882

Wine and Spirit Merchant, Wellington, Shropshire Founder of Slaneys Vaults

“A Journal should be kept by every young man. Put down something against every day in the year, if it be merely a description of the weather. You will not have done this for one year without finding the benefit of it.”

Advice to Young Men: And (Incidentally) to Young Women: In the Middle and Higher Ranks of Life, By William Cobbett, 1829

John Slaney, having read the above, took it to heart and began a series of Journals on 17 September 1829 just three months before his 22nd birthday. The first entry was a résumé of his career from 28 June 1827. The last entry he made was on the 2 June 1878, only a few pages into his eighth Journal. He was aged 70 and his sight had been failing for some time. Five of the Journals are known to have survived and are located in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. They kindly allowed me to photograph all five volumes in their entirety, to assist in transcribing them. Having now finished the transcriptions, copies of both my photos and transcriptions have been made available at Shropshire Archives and Wellington Library.

In 1827, Slaney was beginning a career as an excise man. His first journal is a hard read, as he details his daily tasks and the rounds he travelled collecting duty. He was one of many young men hopeful of progressing upwards in the “excise” and it was little wonder that the official term for these young men seems to have been “expectants”. Despite the initial heavy read it is worth persevering; in due course he begins to record his life rather than the minutiae of his work. In October 1830, he breaks his ‘acquaintance’

(i.e. engagement) to Elizabeth Hiatt of Birmingham:

“I wrote a Letter and in a day or two after my Brother came over, and express’d much surprise at my conduct, and described to me the unfavourable effect it had had upon H & which rather staggered my resolution. On the following day I received a Letter from her Father full of the most severe invective against what he considered my perfidy, & which I conceived had for ever putt an end to the acquaintance, but on the following day I received a Letter from H without the knowledge of her father describing to me her situation in the most pathetic terms and I should have been devoid of feeling had I not been sorry for the misery I had caused and with the intention of palliating my conduct; on the following day I wrote a Letter offering every reparation in my power.”

He obtained a licence on 30 October and married her on the 31st. Their first child, John Hiatt Slaney, was born 13 months later. (John Hiatt Slaney’s widow became the owner of Sunnycroft, Wellington, which is now looked after by the National Trust.)

By 1832 John was considering setting up in business on his own account with the financial assistance of his father-in-law. Unfortunately his 2nd, 3rd and 4th Journals do not seem to have survived. They would have covered the period October 1832 to September 1843. No doubt they would have revealed the circumstances that led to him leaving the Excise and taking over William Wardell’s Wine and Spirit business in Wellington.

The 5th and 6th Journals cover the period September 1843 to August 1857, during which his wife was delivered of stillborn twin girls and, after another stillbirth, she fell ill and died in September 1844. Fourteen months later, John married again after an awkward courtship. His intended second wife was a cousin, Eliza Slaney, from Colchester who was at the time engaged to another:

“Today Rob. show’d me a letter which he had recd. from his Sister E, and from several allusions in it I am induced to think that my cause is not quite hopeless; I fear that she is so far involved in her present engagement that she cannot honourably relinquish it, & I am so far situated that I cannot communicate with her again or offer any advice unless some fortunate accident turns up.”

Eliza’s extrication from her previous relationship was successfully negotiated, and she and John went on to raise ten children in addition to his first son.

John expanded his business in 1844; he anticipated the arrival of the railway when deliberating whether to open a shop in Oakengates. His son, John Hiatt Slaney, was eventually installed there to manage the business, whilst another shop in Shrewsbury was opened under the management of his brother-in-law, Robert Slaney. Other themes in the Journals relate to travel; in earlier years by stage coach:

“Intended starting this morning for Lawley Bank, [from Birmingham] but disappointed of three Coaches, and obliged to wait till ½ past 3 o’clock for the Emerald to Ironbridge which I could only go find as far as Shiffnal.”

and in later years by railway:

“An excursion train from here to Shrewsbury to the show, more than 2000 persons were book’d at our Station and a train with three engines & 52 carriages came from Stafford.”

He was involved in public life: he claimed to have increased the market days at Wellington to three days per week in 1850; the Wellington Waterworks Prospectus in 1851 listed him as a Provisional Director and on 1 Nov 1853 he was appointed one of the Town Improvement Commissioners for Wellington. With the permission of the vicar, Mr Banning, he planted a quantity of Lime, Yew and Lignum Vitae trees on the Railway side of the churchyard in Wellington. However after contravening licensing laws at his Oakengates business he records:

“I have resigned all my public appointments in Well. & have given up all public matters.”

As an ex excise man, the prosecution he suffered in January 1857 must have been embarrassing and newspaper reports stated that:

“the court was crowded by an unusual number of tradesmen and other respectable inhabitants of the Town, in consequence of the charge instituted against Mr Slaney by the Excise authorities.”



1863 Handbook to the Severn Railway. By John Randall

The magistrates reluctantly fined him the maximum of £220 for the offences which had occurred on 4 and 8 December, and they offered to join in a plea to the Excise for a reduction. Slaney declined this and paid in full. He did afterwards seek and obtain a refund of £120. The offence seems to have occurred as a result some sort of contretemps with his tenant at Oakengates:

"5 Dec 1856: Finding that I could not continue to carry on business at Ogates without danger of further penalties I have today closed the shop, having failed to make an arrangement with my tenant Williams who has turned out a regular traitor. I have today given him 6 months notice to quit."

Having closed the shop the day after the first offence, the second seems to have occurred after the closure and so must have been perpetrated without Slaney's knowledge.

In his early years at Wellington, John had various homes, but in March 1853 he was considering a major change:

"I have been over Parville, and never was more disappointed in a house in my life, it is in a very dilapidated unfinished state and would require hundreds to be laid out upon it. The only good part about it is the land and situation. I have determined to have nothing to do with it."

But two years later:

"After a good deal of negotiation with Mr Goodall, Mr Marcy [Slaney's solicitor] finally agreed with him to day for the purchase of Parville for £900 & taking all matters into consideration I think I could not have done better."

And after another seventeen months:

"Am now fairly launched into my alterations at Parville, & see no obstacle to my making it a good & comfortable home by an outlay of 4 or £500 at the outside."

Finally in May 1857:

"After spending a fortnight in Parville, and getting matters around us in a more finished state: both Mrs S & myself are highly pleased with our changes; as we find the home very convenient & in fact in every respect fully equal to what we expected of it, & the appearance & convenience of the home is much admired by all who have seen it."

Transcribing the journals was not always easy. Often his handwriting was difficult to decipher and sometimes my own photographs of the pages were not as clear as I would have wished. I would hope that these excuses are the main reason for the inevitable errors I have made, but for all mistakes I apologise. ■

New accessions

- Parish registers and records for Astley, Badger, Beckbury, Bishop's Castle, Church Stretton, Clun, Bettws y Crwyn, Clunton, Newcastle on Clun, Kemberton, Ryton, Stockton, Sutton Maddock and Upton Magna.
- Parish Council records for Pontesbury and West Felton.
- Tom Edwards collection - Wem (8540)
- David Lloyd collection - Ludlow (8541)
- Market Drayton Methodist Circuit registers and records, 1809-1989 (8551)
- Survey and valuation of Ryton Manor, Craven Estate c.1773 (8555)
- Kynaston of Hardwick family papers, 15th-19th century (8557)
- Correspondence of Thomas Hill of Attingham, 1700-1735 (8558)
- Apley estate records, 1609-1980s (8566)
- Meole Brace School admission registers, 1878-1911 (8585)
- Severn Trent Water records, 20th century (8590)

The New Year is now begun and time spent with family and friends a fond memory. With the wrapping paper recycled and the presents finding homes, there is a little time to reflect on who gave what. The DVD on Ayrton Senna's life, reflecting my Formula One interest, a 'tongue in cheek' history of Britain's relationship with the French, and other unexpected gifts were joined with 'Landscape History Discoveries in the North West' which I had seen advertised on leaflets in the coffee room at the Archives.

This book is a collection of the papers delivered at a conference of the same name in 2011 and mainly covers Cheshire, but also North East Wales and one very interesting paper, 'Black and White Houses to Black and White Cows', about the farming economy of Baschurch. The title of the book

From the Chairman

John Ravenscroft

John Ravenscroft reflects on a successful 2012 for the Friends of Shropshire Archives.

attracted me partly as a 'Cheshire lad' and partly by the intriguing term 'Landscape History' bringing together two areas of endless fascination. The introduction confesses that the term is 'a bit fuzzy round the edges' but comes down to, 'essentially [landscape] is a large, artificial artefact created, managed and changed by human beings over... thousands of years.' And the study of this is multi-disciplinary involving the varied technologies of fieldwork

as well as the many classes of documents held for us in local Archives.

The collection of papers has not disappointed and, as well as re-affirming the need to protect our legacy left to us in the landscape, the legacy of the written word, pictures, photographs and maps is also well-preserved and made available to anyone with an interest in the way Shropshire Archives does so admirably.

Our activities since the last edition started with *Discovering Shropshire Day*, at Shirehall. This was a very successful collection of interesting talks, combined with the exhibitions of various local history and other groups, culminating with a 'workshop' on traditional dance which got nearly all of us on our feet. We were delighted with the number of visitors, from the opening gathering in the council

chamber, to those who stayed on to enjoy the terpsichorial finish. We look forward to the next *Discovering Shropshire Day* in 2014.

In November we enjoyed the Friends' Annual lecture and Professor Malcolm Wanklyn's learned discourse on the soldiers and supporters of Parliament during the Civil War. If you have the chance to attend one of our lectures, held in the Autumn, try to do so as they always cast a serious look at some aspect that interests the Archives' many users.

Look out for the *Ken Jones Day* on 20 April, which I wrote about in the last issue. Book early as there is limited space and numbers will be restricted. Also keep a look out for the AGM and a guided, historical walk immediately after. Details will be given in the next issue. ■

George Alcock An appreciation

Mary McKenzie

Friends will be sorry to hear that **George Alcock** who was Chairman of the Friends from 1992-1996 died on 16 December 2012 at the age of 88. George was an incredibly kind and helpful man, who gave very generously of his time and expertise to anyone with an interest in Shropshire's heritage. Below are a couple of tributes from members of the Friends' Committee.

Sue Cleaves wrote, 'Many years ago George gave a group of us from the Newport History Society, a guided tour of St. Mary's church. His enthusiasm and knowledge stayed with me from that memorable day, and I often take my visitors in there to see all the wonderful features like the Jesse window with its stained glass from Europe and the window showing St. Bernard of Clairvaux cursing the flies of Foigny.'

Sylvia Watts added, 'When I was

researching my book on Shropshire almshouses George was very helpful, spending a whole afternoon showing me round his flat and all the other buildings at Millington's Hospital and telling me about its history, about which he obviously knew a great deal. He ended by giving me a copy of his book about the hospital. A few months later he kindly showed a group of people round the hospital on the occasion of the Friends' day about the Shropshire Enlightenment.' ■

Shropshire Soldiers who fought for Parliament 1642 -1660

Friends Lecture

Ruth Campbell



Above: Major General Thomas Mytton. Shropshire Archives ref. PR/1/744

The Friend's Annual Lecture held on 14 November was very well attended. It was given by Prof Malcolm Wanklyn, Emeritus Professor of Regional History at Wolverhampton University and a renowned author on the subject of the English Civil Wars.

Prof Wanklyn had researched the Shropshire people who had supported the Parliamentary side during the English Civil War, gathering his information from widely scattered sources. He had found only traces of such records in works such as the *Victorian History* and had compiled his knowledge over the years from diverse sources. For example, Commonwealth Exchequer papers held in London give details of payments to the Model Army serving in Ireland. Found in these accounts are details of their back pay earned in Shropshire, illustrating Parliamentary troop movements in Shropshire. Some documents concerning Shropshire are held at Cheshire Record Office. Personal letters written by participants were also a source of information. *The History of Myddle*, by Richard Gough, also has details of how the war affected and the inhabitants of Shropshire.

One of Professor Wanklyn's finds was an inventory of unusual amounts of ordnance held at Shrewsbury Castle. He was able to connect this to the movements of troops and he established that this was part of King Charles' baggage train en-route to Worcester, being kept securely at Shrewsbury.

The majority of the Shropshire landowners, such as Sir Vincent Corbet and Sir Francis Ottley, were Royalists. Both of these men were rewarded by King Charles for their support by a knighthood. Others of local prominence had also decided to support the King

after his visit to Shrewsbury in 1642. They recruited their tenants into fighting for the King's cause, their large fortified houses being ideal for housing these garrisons.

Those who opposed King Charles, were also men of influence who had grievances with him. However, these lesser landowners had no large base of tenants to call on for recruitment. Thomas Mytton of Halston, and Humphrey Mackworth of Betton, supported Parliament, both becoming prominent in the county, Thomas Mytton being appointed High Sheriff of Shropshire and Humphrey Mackworth, Governor of Shrewsbury. Sir John Corbet, who had been a Member of Parliament for Shropshire, was commanded by Parliament to form a Militia and proved to be a competent commander.

At first Parliamentary forces only had limited success in Shropshire. However, when the Royalists were busy elsewhere, for example when troops were needed at Edge Hill and Marston Moor, the garrisons were left undermanned and Parliamentary troops were able to move about the county with little opposition.

In 1643, Wem and Whitchurch were occupied by Parliamentary forces. Prof Wanklyn's account of the taking of Shrewsbury Castle via the Water Gate in 1645 was very entertaining. This route was inadequately and incompetently guarded. By 1646 Parliament had established control over most of Shropshire. ■



News

Mary McKenzie

Above: Evelyn Hosker repairing a document in the conservation department at Shropshire Archives, one of the many activities taking place as part of the Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage Project.

Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage Project

The Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage Project started one year ago. So far the volunteers have contributed an astonishing 2,117 days' work across the archive and museums services. Although I knew how much interest there was in Shropshire's heritage across the county, I have to admit to being slightly overwhelmed at the enthusiasm and commitment the volunteers have shown over the last year. The result of all this enthusiasm is that almost 40,000 records and objects have been catalogued and over 12,000 items have been digitized or conserved.

This is a great achievement and shows what can be done with a dedicated resource to support volunteers. As well as thanking

all the volunteers, I'd also like to express my thanks to the project team, John, Alison, Jackie, Megan and Karen, who have been key to this success, and of course to the Heritage Lottery Fund for supporting the project.

I look forward to seeing what can be done in the next two years!

Digitization of records

Work on digitizing parish registers and other records of interest to family historians is progressing to target and will be completed early in 2013. This work has been funded by Shropshire Council. Thanks for your patience while the records have not been available for access.

Following the digitization, we will be investigating the options for providing online access to the records on a subscription basis. The income from this will provide key financial support for the archive service. Free access to the records at Shropshire Archives itself will not be affected by this development, and we hope that allowing access to digital copies will improve the service we can offer. We are currently exploring the options both for access at Shropshire Archives and online, and will keep you informed of developments. ■

Please send any comments on these or any other areas to:
Mary McKenzie, Team Manager, Archives, Shropshire Archives,
Castle Gates, Shrewsbury,
SY1 2AQ, tel: 01743 255350
email: mary.mckenzie@shropshire.gov.uk
website: www.shropshirearchives.org.uk

